

REDISCOVERING THE RURAL FAMILY



Participatory methods for female
empowerment and the social inclusion of youth



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PRESENTATION

This book aims to present the actions of the Sustainable Rural Project (PRS) - Atlantic Forest and Amazon, that aimed at valuing and strengthening the role of women and youth in the Brazilian agriculture. PRS Atlantic Forest and Amazon contributes in many ways to addressing major changes in Brazilian agriculture, whether by protecting, restoring and managing natural resources sustainably, or by increasing the resilience of ecosystems and the services they provide. PRS contributes to alleviating the demand on natural resources, aligned with the productive vocation of each territory, and reducing the causes of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. With the Project, it was possible to enhance the value of nature and its sustainable use, generating institutional and decision-making changes by actors at the local level, subnational governments, financial system, businesses and individuals.

According to data from the 2017 agricultural census, the family farming manage 23% of rural properties in Brazil, sharing, among family members, all or part of the responsibilities related to the farm. A relevant aspect is the growing participation of women in rural areas, especially those in charge of rural properties, which represent approximately 18.7% countrywide. There are still many challenges to overcome in order to increase the participation of women in this environment. Therefore, advances in sustainable production systems open opportunities to leverage their participation. Specific training programs for the inclusion of women in rural areas are essential. This book exemplifies one such program, as well as the importance of the role of youth as actors of change at the local level, ensuring the successful implementation of programs and public policies.

With investments from the UK Government's International Climate Finance (ICF) of £24.9 million, the project reached 3,987 farms and trained more than 2,600 technical agents in low-carbon agriculture, improving the lives of 18,570 people in the two Brazilian biomes. Conducted 70 participatory workshops with the families of rural producers, training and sensitizing more than 4,000 people on gender and youth issues, including women and young people.

By the end, PRS brought 46,472 hectares under sustainable land management, directly avoiding deforestation by 8,550 hectares during project lifetime. Adopting low carbon agriculture systems makes agricultural land 7 times more efficient than in degraded land. With increased productivity, this brings financial benefits to farmers and in the long term will avoid carbon emissions caused by deforestation. As a result of increased agricultural productivity, the project is expected to save more than 175,000 hectares of land from being deforested.

We understand that through training and qualification it is also possible to leave a great legacy. The project showed that it has great potential for expansion and replicability. With its new phase in the Cerrado, Caatinga and, again, in the Amazon, the Project presents itself as an instrument to protect biodiversity and leverage the positive results of nature.

The Government of the United Kingdom, together with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), a major beneficiary of this initiative, believe that it is possible to bring innovation, knowledge and

a substantial transition to Brazilian agriculture. We are convinced that working in partnership, involving the whole of society and, more particularly, women amongst thousands of rural producers, is the way to achieve a more resilient, sustainable agriculture that guarantees resources for future generations.

Ana Gutiérrez

Senior Manager of International Climate Finance (ICF)
Agriculture and Land Use Specialist - British Embassy in Brazil





Dois Vizinhos, PR

PREFACE

Sustainable Development was formalized as a concept in 1987, and since then has been incorporated and disseminated by the United Nations (UN). With this political act, the UN promotes global discussions on the urgent need to consider environmental and social impacts, in addition to economic ones, of actions that aim to promote development. Only then can we ensure that current and future generations will have a healthy planet on which to live.

Unfortunately, decades later, we realise that the progress made so far has not been sufficient. We also struggle with numerous issues that sustain an unequal development process, which increases aggressions on the environment, makes the effects of climate change stronger, does not reduce poverty or social exclusion and does not overcome prejudice, among other problems.

Taking care of the economic, social, environmental and political dimensions of development is proven to be necessary to achieve sustainability, but it is not enough. In this context, I understand that we are no longer advancing because we systematically neglect an important and necessary dimension for the achievement of sustainable development: the affective dimension. This dimension covers human relationships and the involvement of every person. If people do not feel that they are part of the change process, it doesn't happen.

Promoting sustainable development is, therefore, at the same a complex and a simple task. Complex because it depends on the relationships between people. And simple for the same reason. It is up to us to find a way to simplify the process.

And that is what this book is about. It tells the story of people truly involved in achieving sustainability. It tells the story of a project that

seeks to bring new production practices and new life practices. From the funders, initial creators, executors, technicians and consultants, to the main actors, the beneficiary farmers, especially women and young people, all share the desire to build a new way of living, that is more harmonious and respectful.

This book brings us not only the results of the Low-carbon Agriculture Project, but also tells us about the philosophy adopted, which steered each step taken by the executing team. This book shows us that the project dared to put into practice actions aimed at all dimensions of sustainability, including the affective.

In addition to all the activities aimed at ensuring the adoption of new, more sustainable production techniques and favorable conditions for the development of families, the executive team defined, whilst still in the construction phase of the project methodology, that women and young people should be included in the implementation process. And with this, an invisible, yet very strong barrier, was broken. A barrier which historically has formally excluded part of the family from decision-making processes. It was a revolutionary act, as it guaranteed the conditions for a substantial change in relations. And it provided voice and attention to key actors, not always considered. When perceiving themselves as an effective part of the project, women and young people grew and revealed themselves in all their creative and productive potential.

In this very diverse Brazil, inequality, exclusion and limited access to basic rights, common features in all regions, are even more present in rural areas and among family farmers, who are most vulnerable to an unfair development process which only considers economic growth. Any effort to change this reality has to be strengthened.

So, when we seek to serve precisely this family farmer, it is worth asking what family is this? What family could this become from involvement in the project? How can this project achieve its objectives and bring about changes in production practices? When they learn about new productive techniques, these farmers also start to relate

in a different way to nature and among themselves. These families are transformed based on the reflections brought by the project implementation process.

Taking care of the environment requires a change in attitude, commitment and involvement. And this behavior necessarily involves the expansion of the decisive role of women and young people in all instances of society, thus promoting gender equality and generational respect. And this is especially necessary in more vulnerable territories such as where family farming is practised. As the project gives a voice to women and youth, it builds a new history for each family, bringing to light values, not always perceived, that reinforce care for others and for nature.

The affections recovered in this process nurture involvement and bring the prospect of success to the project, since all the actors are present. Everyone's joy and contentment are seen in the photos that illustrate the book. Contemplating these records brings the certainty that it is worth being bold and bringing love to our activities. This is the way forward.

In times when a political shadow seems to be hanging over the planet, the opportunity to witness the results and the philosophy assumed by the project, and get to know the beneficiary families, especially women and youth, is like a ray of sunshine, bringing illumination and hope.

This book, therefore, is an act of resistance in difficult times, times that demand unity in a commitment to a way of living that respects the environment and others, in all their diversity. All the actors involved in the project, protagonists in the plot of this book, represent this possible and necessary social transformation.

Suely Salgueiro Chacon

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INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Rural Project (PRS) - Atlantic Forest and Amazon, with the objective of implementing low carbon emission agriculture in properties of small rural producers, offered to its target audience different activities of awareness, training and qualification. To promote sustainable rural development, in addition to technical training, the project invested in working on social issues sensitive to the rural environment, such as gender inequality and the lack of educational and job opportunities for rural youth.

From this perspective, between August 2018 and January 2019, participatory workshops were structured and held for the families of small farmers in the project's area of influence. Considering that this public is comprised of family farming production, in which the roles of family members and the productive force are closely related, we opted for a methodology that ensured the participation and the place of speech of all family members and preserved the family unit.

Instead of promoting activities in which only women or young people would discuss their realities in the rural areas, the workshops were open to families, with proposals for reflections and conversations in which everyone could talk about their challenges in their daily work in the field, listen to each other's perspectives, and, together, plan for a better future. With this dynamic, developed during two days of work, in a natural way, gender and youth issues were revealed and worked on, without the need to create oppositions between men and women and to raise conflicts about different generational perspectives.



Working to reverse the masculinized and aging scenario in the Brazilian countryside is a huge challenge in Brazil, and projects like the PRS can undoubtedly be catalysts for this transformation. Besides the project's concern with the theme, the proposal to implement sustainable productive systems brings innovation to the Brazilian countryside, which naturally promotes an opportunity to review productive concepts, distribution of tasks in production, and the need for new skills, favoring the strengthening of interest among women and young people in remaining in rural areas.

To address the theme and present the project's experience, the book was divided into four chapters. In the first, we address the important role of women and young people for Brazilian rural production. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - FAO (2018), rural women are responsible for 45% of food production in Brazil and in developing countries. And, in most cases, in addition to their work in the fields, they carry out an arduous workday within their homes and communities.

Women work about 12 hours more per week than men and approximately 90% of what they earn in the field is reinvested in education and family welfare. Considering this relevant role of women, female empowerment in the rural areas can represent a 30% increase in agricultural production and ensure the planet's food security (FAO, 2018).

In the same vein, the International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD (2012) highlights the importance of youth for

the sustainability of the countryside and for food security. In addition to the perpetuation of family farming over generations, incentives for youth to have better opportunities in the rural areas enhance technical innovation and production management, consequently promoting improvements in land use and occupation, increased productivity, and reduced socio-environmental impact.

The second chapter deals with cognitive and cultural barriers to the perception and construction of dialogue. Taking into account that the PRS has as the backdrop of its activities the mitigation of climate change through the adoption of low-carbon agricultural technologies, in this topic we briefly address the socio-cultural perception barriers regarding climate change and the importance of investing in participatory methodologies to create spaces for new perceptions and collective vision of the future. It is in this chapter that we present the participatory methodology used and adapted for the project, which we call *Café com Prosa*, and its objective of valuing each member of the rural family, their history and perspective, with emphasis on the protagonism of women and youth.

In the third chapter, the structure and methodological organization of the participatory workshops are detailed, including the lessons learned from the implementation of the activities. Finally, in the last chapter, we address the results achieved in the workshops, with comparisons between gender and youth participation, as well as between biomes.

With the analyses presented here, we hope not only to leave a record of the potential of participatory methodologies to promote dialogue and social inclusion, but also that the lessons learned can generate opportunities to improve the method and its application. We hope that the PRS participatory workshops can inspire other projects and programs to find their own ways of valuing the social groups involved, of addressing sensitive

topics, such as gender and youth, and that, based on their choices, they can consider the local reality and the importance of any change being made with the participation of the community, respecting its culture, its rhythm, and its individual and collective knowledge.

The Authors





THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN BRAZILIAN RURAL PRODUCTION

In Brazil, according to Law 11.326, of July 24, 2006, for an agricultural establishment to be classified as family farming it must be small (up to four fiscal modules¹), it must have a strictly family production management, half of the workforce must also come from the family and at least half of the family income should come from agricultural activity on the property.

According to the latest Agricultural Census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2017, family farming represents the largest contingent of agricultural establishments in Brazil (77%) but, because they are small, they occupy a smaller area compared to total agricultural establishments, 23%, representing about 81 million hectares (IBGE, 2017).

However, considering the food that goes to the Brazilian tables, family farms have a significant participation. In permanent crops, the sector accounts for 48% of coffee and banana production value, and in temporary crops, they account for 80% of cassava, 69% of pineapple, and 42% of bean production value (IBGE, 2017).

Still regarding the numbers raised by the Agricultural Census, it is worth mentioning the data related to gender and youth in rural areas, which reveal a characteristic that has been prevailing over the years, masculinization and aging. Although the visibility of the female workforce and the increase of women driving rural properties in Brazil are increasing, the numbers are still very uneven when comparing genders. According to IBGE (2017), of the general total of identified establishments (5.07 million), women own only 19%, while men own 81%.

With regard to youth, the data reveal even greater concern. In addition to highlighting aging, they show that the number of young people present in rural areas continue to decrease, which reinforces

¹ In Brazil, the size of the fiscal module varies from 5 to 110 hectares, depending on the municipality where the property is located (Law 12.651/2012, Forest Code).

the challenge of maintaining family farming. In the 2006 Agricultural Census, people over 65 years old represented 17.52% of the rural population (IBGE, 2006). In the 2017 Census, this group was around 21.4%, and the age group between 55 and 65 years old also increased by four percentage points, from 20% to 24% of the total. On the other hand, the group between 35 and 45 years of age shrank from 21.93% to 18.29% of the rural population and young people between 25 and 35 years old, who represented, in 2006, 13.56% of the rural population, was reduced to only 9.48% (IBGE, 2017).

In family farming, the relationships are evident and influence modes of organisation and production, especially when it comes to small and medium-sized properties. The fact that family members fulfil fundamental labour roles makes the activity more vulnerable, since it is directly influenced by the physical condition of family members and the quality of family bonds, factors that, in unfavourable conditions, can contribute to rural exodus. Another characteristic of



family farming is that it stems from a practice shared by generations, in which professional activity, heritage (biophysical and cultural) and the way of life, linked to contact with nature, are passed on in succession (SILVESTRO et al., 2001; LITRE, 2010).

Generally, decision-making about productive activities is organised based on the family itself, its needs, expectations, values, composition and workforce. Therefore, in order to understand forms of organisation it is essential to consider the division of activities among family members (MEDEIROS; RIBEIRO, 2003).

At the same time, the vulnerability of small and medium-sized farmers to the internal dynamics of their families is far from being the only vulnerability faced: family farmers are the most severely affected by climate change, such as the changing rain patterns and increase in temperatures caused by the greenhouse effect (IPCC, 2014; AZEVEDO; CAMPANILI; PEREIRA, 2015; BURSZTYN; RODRIGUES FILHO, 2016).



Padre Paraíso, MG

As studies show, in Brazil the total amount of rainfall has not undergone major changes, but the intensity of rainfall has varied significantly, generating uncertainties among rural producers. This results in increased erosion, loss of fertilisers and flooding of productive areas such as riverside areas, occupied mainly by small-scale producers (AZEVEDO; CAMPANILI; PEREIRA, 2015).

Regarding temperature, a change in the geography of agricultural production in Brazil is forecasted, with the displacement of some crops to the south, where the climate will be milder. For family farmers, this displacement is much more difficult than for large scale agribusiness, as most families are fixed in a specific location for reasons that go beyond income generation.

The relationship with the land touches on elements of belonging and the link between identity and agricultural production (LITRE, 2010). Another factor that exacerbates losses for small and medium-sized farmers is the fact that, in most cases, family farming is the only source of income (ASSAD, 2013). Examples of losses are orange and coffee production where temperature extremes, both high and low, alter crop flowering causing losses to the quality of fruits.

In order to try to minimise the impacts of the climate on family agricultural production, the Low-carbon Agriculture Project proposes actions that minimise the emissions of gases that cause the greenhouse effect. In addition to a real concern with reducing agriculture's effects on climate change, the objective of the Project is to contribute to solving existing problems that arise from climate change among small and medium farmers in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest biomes.

In this context, the Project recognises the fundamental role of women in agriculture, as well as their empowerment as a catalyst for positive solutions to climate change, a topic that has also received increasing attention from key institutions and UN bodies in recent years (UNDP, 2016; FAO, 2015).

With women contributing significantly to the agricultural workforce, as we will see later, their knowledge is highly valuable. However, the fair representation of this knowledge is not reflected sufficiently in decision-making processes, both inside and outside the farm. Cultural, cognitive and legal barriers to effective adaptation to climate change need to be overcome, so that channels and methods for participation are present in the daily lives of women, for example, by recognising access to land as owners of a productive unit (DEERE; LEÓN, 2014; FAO, 2011, 2013).

Given the fundamental role played by women in agriculture, it is necessary to make gender-disaggregated data available for more countries and agricultural systems.

Continued collaboration with rural women's networks is also crucial for the effective development of climate change policies and their implementation. These networks provide important channels for sharing and disseminating information. Finally, rural women must be included in the development of information materials and dissemination strategies, reflecting a participatory approach to knowledge management and sharing (HUYER et al., 2015).

And what about rural youth? What threats and opportunities do they face in the context of climate change? This topic has been little explored in specialised literature, which, in general, discusses other important issues about rural youth, such as the permanence of young people in the countryside and family succession, analysed below (CAMARANO; ABRAMOVAY, 1999; LITRE, 2010).

As mentioned, analyses of what Brazilian rural youths think and feel about climate change are still scarce. The UNFCCC has a chapter dedicated specifically to young people (Youth for Climate Action)² and Unicef pointed out in its 2016 report that climate change is a dangerous and disruptive force for many children around the world and is affecting particularly the most vulnerable in the southern hemisphere (UNICEF, 2016).

² <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-outreach/workstreams/youth-engagement>

In Europe, children and young people have greater access to education and are already better understanding the consequences of climate change. In general they are appropriating the analyses and discussions about the “future we want”. Youth fear the negative consequences of environmental damage and envisage a catastrophic future scenario if mitigation and adaptation measures are not taken.

In 2018, a report by Eurokids and Unicef, covering 23 European countries, showed that 41% of the children and young people interviewed are afraid of the consequences of climate change. The report, based on more than 13,500 responses, pointed out that the three main fears selected by children and young people were: 1) not finding a job (53%); 2) the possibility of war or terrorist attacks (48%) and 3) climate change (41%). The three main recommendations that children and young people made to the European Union (EU) were: to help maintain peace in the world (54%); protect the environment (46%) and help ensure that everyone is treated equally (41%). They also recommended that the EU respect the 2015 Paris Agreement, which could “guarantee a healthy future for all children” (EU-ROKIDS / UNICEF, 2018).

In Brazil, although we still have to deal with structural social issues, such as the difficulty in accessing quality education, especially in rural areas, we realise that rural children and young people have enormous potential to become great preservers of the environment and have a global ecological conscience, in which issues related to climate change are inserted.

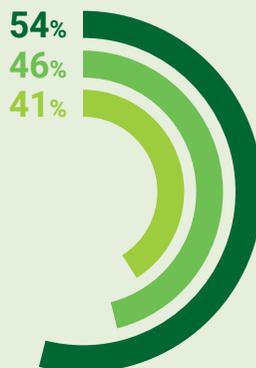
Even though rural youth often do not have the opportunity to receive quality formal education on the importance of environmental preservation, sustainable production and climate, they already have the experience of connecting with nature, that is, they feel in practice the consequences of human action modifying the environment and, because of their knowledge of the natural environment, they start to care. Often, there is a different reality for children and youth in the

Main fears of children and young people



- Not finding a job
- The possibility of war or terrorist attacks
- Climate change

Main recommendations of children and young people



- Help maintain peace in the world
- Protect the environment
- Help ensure that everyone is treated equally

urban environment. Many access formal education more easily, but are deprived of meaningful experiences in nature.

In this sense, actions and projects that bring these young people another way of looking at the environment and how to produce in a sustainable way are sowing on fertile ground, which may bear fruit for current and future generations.

The participatory workshops, recognising the potential of women and young people, sought to create spaces for dialogue that allowed women and youth to seek ways to face the socio-environmental challenges of their regions by building on their previous knowledge and the group's collaborative intelligence. The workshops made it possible, in particular, to debate, in an open and constructive manner, the invisibility of the productive value of rural women and young people and the possibilities of transforming their realities to be more sustainable and inclusive.

1.1 WOMEN: EMPOWERMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The theme of women's empowerment in rural areas is still a subject that, not infrequently, suffers prejudice, due to historical cultural processes. The clearly defined roles in rural families, which place the man as the head of the house and production and the woman as responsible for the household chores, mask a reality that has been modified, over the years, by the needs and dynamics of the culture itself.

The female presence in the rural areas' daily life has always been present, especially in family farming, which requires the work force of family members to support it. However, due to the lack of adequate recognition, it became necessary to debate about the valorization of this workforce and the empowerment of women, not only to ensure gender equity, but especially to strengthen and develop rural production.

Women's empowerment in rural areas is in line with Goal 5 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda to achieve sustainable development. Under this goal to eradicate all forms of violence against girls and women, countries must "achieve gender equity and empower all women and girls" (UN, 2015).

As we have already seen, women are important actors in agriculture and sustainable rural development, representing 43% of rural workers in developing countries (FAO, 2015) and, approximately, 19% of the total rural workforce in Brazil (IBGE, 2017). Women invest, on average, 372 hours per year in rural activities, while the average for men is 368 hours (UNDP, 2016; FAO, 2015).

Equitable access to information could increase agricultural production in developing countries (FAO, 2015). Despite this observation, women still face structural inequalities, including the invisibility of the productive value of their work, given that some activities are

culturally and historically attributed to men. Thus, even if a service is performed by a woman, such as milking cows, this service appears as an activity that assists men and not as a productive activity that results from women's work.

Rural women are also vulnerable to economic instability due to restricted access to land, rural credit and financial support. As a result of these vulnerabilities, they are more susceptible to the impacts of climate change in rural areas, especially in poor regions (QUISUMBING et al., 2014; LITRE; ROCHA, 2014).

Collective action is crucial for women to build resilience to climate change and economic restrictions and develop a dignified and equitable way of life in the countryside. Collective action can also be an effective alternative for building social capital and tackling gender inequalities (HUYER et al., 2015; UNDP, 2016).

In order to strengthen the social capital of women and rural youth, the participatory workshops encouraged the participation of these actors in the context of their families. The mobilisation of participants sought to mirror the results of the most recent Census of Agriculture of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2017), which brought positive and negative news about the rural demographic base in Brazil.

The good news is that in the face of the marked masculinisation of the countryside, Brazilian rural areas are slowly becoming more feminine, with almost 2 women for every 10 men assuming the leadership of a productive unit. It is worth mentioning that 11 years ago, in the previous census, the proportion was 1 woman for every 10 men at the head of a production unit. In percentages the census points to an increase from 12.68% in 2006 to 18.64% in 2017, in relation to the number of female leaders of agricultural establishments.

An explanatory factor for this clearly positive phenomenon is the increase in technology available in the field, which considerably



Nova Londrina, PR

relieves the load on family labour. In addition to the increasing number of tractors, which grew by around 50%, the tractors themselves also increased in power, which allows the farmer to carry out an operation in less time, generating important results for agriculture due to the agricultural calendar and climatic conditions. It is clear that the purchase of a tractor is still very restricted among small and medium farmers, with scales of productive units and capitalisation capacity still low. The census figures clearly illustrate this phenomenon: there are more tractors and more land for agriculture, but there are also fewer people in the countryside.

The area destined for agriculture and livestock grew 5% and exceeds 350 million hectares. The expansion was greater in the North (which coincides with the Amazon biome) and the Midwest of the country, since in the Centre-South and Southeast (which largely coincides with the Atlantic Forest) the agricultural frontier it is already extensive and almost completely utilised.

From 2006 (date of the previous Agricultural Census) to 2017, the number of tractors grew by almost 50% in the country. In the same period, 1.5 million people stopped working in the fields. The equation seems simple: more technology, less labour in the field (including young people), however, it includes several other factors such as environmental and marketing issues and the use of less viable production models

The bad news is precisely this aggravation of a historic trend in Brazilian rural areas (also seen worldwide): that of increasing urbanisation and the aging of the rural population, with more and more young people abandoning their rural way of life and migrating to cities when they do not recognise alternatives in the countryside. Indeed, the proportion of older farmers has increased whilst the participation of younger people has decreased.

The greater possibility possibility of education and job opportunities in urban areas are among the reasons that cause young people to migrate out from the countryside (CARNEIRO, 1998, 2007). In fact, the participation of young people in the production process, in many cases, is not enough to sustain production. The problem of succession to children, rural properties without significant activity and the lack of access to quality higher education are some of the determining factors of the exodus, as we will see later.

Regarding the female presence in the countryside, why, despite these mild positive trends, do women remain “invisible”? Or if they are more visible than in the past, why is the productive potential of their work still less valued?

Women have an important knowledge of agriculture and nature and also good skills in managing livestock and crops, which are often ignored or underappreciated by men in the family, researchers and decision makers. At the same time, rural women are not traditionally seen as agents of change, but as passive observers (QUISUMBING et al., 2014). This is because social relations of rural production use the gender distinction, socially and culturally constructed, to assign social roles to men and women.

Regarding the specific case of schooling, the 2017 Agricultural Census points out that, of the total number of interviewed farmers, 15.5% stated that they had never attended school, 29.7% had not passed the level of basic literacy, and 79.1% did not go beyond the primary level. In addition, 1,163,354 Brazilian farmers (23.05%) declared that they did not know how to read and write. Despite the negative data, it is worth noting that women are preparing themselves better to assume the functions of managing rural properties, often with a higher level of formal education than men of the same age.

One factor seems to explain the fact that women are increasingly prepared to take over the management of rural properties: due to historical difficulties in raising girls to be the heads of the family farm, parents tended to invest more in the education of their daughters than their sons. Thus, it is possible to identify in the rural environment a tendency for women to perform better than men in relation to educational indicators, especially among the younger ones (IBGE, 2017).

In this sense, and despite the advances already mentioned, there is a low recognition, including by women themselves, of their participation in family work, perceived as domestic work, auxiliary to that

Rural woman schooling



of the husband or frequently characterised by themselves as simple help (COURDIN; LITRE; CORREA, 2014; BRUMER; DOS ANJOS, 2008).

As a consequence, and despite recent progress, knowledge about the real role of women in productive activities is still very limited, which makes it difficult to create policies aimed at women to improve their living conditions and the productivity of their work (FARIA, 2009).

In the rural world, the undervaluation of female work is even greater than in urban areas, as the statistical definitions of what is “productive work” and “non-productive work” are often arbitrary and confusing. Censuses sometimes use very limited definitions of what is “agricultural activity”, or “family labour”, including within this category the cultivation of land and livestock management and field work linked to these farming activities in an indistinct way. Other tasks, such as seed selection, cultivation without pesticides, storage and conservation and the transformation of agricultural products, in which women are strongly involved, are often ignored by researchers (FIOCRUZ, 2017).

Following this logic, as already mentioned, women are systematically seen as passive or secondary in the sphere of productive relations, as an auxiliary force to that of men. You don't have to go very far to see how false that idea is. Without domestic work, productive work is not possible, since the conditions of production and reproduction of tasks considered productive depend on the performance of domestic tasks. Many times, women go beyond domestic chores and perform jobs traditionally considered “male”, such as livestock management including health and calving, tractor management, accounting and marketing.

As a result of their “invisibility” in rural areas, women increasingly opt for alternatives to improve their bargaining power within the productive unit, either through education, association with other women, the implementation of their own enterprises with the help of small loans or even migration in search of non-agricultural work.



According to Brumer and Dos Anjos (2008), the traditional female exodus from agriculture is equivalent to the male exodus of non-successors. There is a historical tendency to leave the land with the oldest or youngest son even though in family production women are as active as men.

Siliprandri (2009) recalls that the different practices of inheritance and succession are generally accompanied by female exclusion from succession in a family establishment. Women, while not being recognised as likely “bosses” of the productive unit, enter this activity through marriage. “Women are driven to different forms of giving up family land (marriage with dowry, exodus, celibacy), which can be considered equivalent to mechanisms of female exclusion from being the head of agricultural establishments” (BRUMER; DOS ANJOS, 2008, p. 13).

In a survey cited by the same authors and carried out in a region of family farmers descended from Italian immigrants in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Spaevello (2008) found that the interviewed parents be-

lieve that male children are the most qualified to succeed them. Daughters are only inheritors of the land by exception, in cases where they are single daughters or when they remain unmarried and the land is explored together with their brother (COURDIN; LITRE; CORREA, 2014).

According to Deere and León (2002), despite advances in legal matters so that both men and women have formal equality in land ownership, women are less likely to be effective buyers. They depend to a greater extent on inheritance, and even so, as we have already seen, male children are more likely to be chosen as successors to command the paternal productive unit.

Significantly, the inheritance prospects of rural women also condition their possibilities for marriage. Land ownership affects women's ability to influence family economic decisions and secure rights. But property can also be a cause of tension and domestic conflict, as it challenges the power relations between men and women (DEERE; LEON, 2002).

In the expansion of property rights, as indicated by Deere and León (2000), until the beginning of the 20th century, one of the factors that most limited access to land ownership among women was the restricted nature of married women's property rights. Deere and León (2002) argue that "the joint ownership of land and other assets, such as housing, is an extremely important mechanism for the inclusion of women". It has "the potential to benefit more rural women than any other measure", especially in cases of abandonment, separation or widowhood.

With regard to property rights, the Brazilian Federal Constitution establishes mandatory joint land titling for couples. Another regulation in this sense is Incra Ordinance No. 981/2003, which has caused a decrease in the practices of submission of women in relation to men in the private sphere of rural properties, since its implementation.

The *Bolsa Família* policy contributed to the empowerment of women - more than 90% of the members of the Program are women. However, significant challenges regarding the realisation of gender equality in Brazil still remain (UNDP, 2016).

Furthermore, in Latin America, there is a growing body of evidence that shows that women are more likely to place any income they receive individually in the common fund for the benefit of the family. This fact has been widely confirmed in other regions, such as Africa and India. On the other hand, men are more likely to “spend part of their income on personal desires, contributing only a part of their earnings to the family fund” (DEERE; LEÓN, 2002).

Other factors that influence decision making are traditions and the division of tasks based on gender, which establish that men must dedicate themselves to productive work, and women to reproductive work. Consequently, it is understood that in this context it is the man who must make the decisions, take control and be responsible for production, and that the woman must perform this role in relation to the domestic universe.

Brumer (2004) affirms that the low value attributed to the work of women and the lack of perspective of receiving land as inheritance



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contribute to the “masculinisation of the countryside”, which has resulted in a relatively greater rural exodus of women than of men. Additionally, as rural-urban migration was also historically higher among the working-age population (14 to 65 years), there occurs a population aging in rural areas, compared to urban areas.

The strong trend of increasing the number of unmarried men in the rural environment (slightly reduced in the data from the last Agriculture Census, as we have already seen), had negative consequences for the development of agricultural productive activities, in view of the important role of women and children as unpaid family labour. An example is the possibility that men alone, or living only with a partner, have a preference preference for less complex productive systems, largely supported by labour-saving technology. In cases of low level of technological capital they can opt for livestock production.

Regarding the value of social capital, linked to collective action and associativism, rural women in Brazil have been organising themselves in autonomous associations since the 1960s. From the 1980’s women began to join the union movements in different Brazilian states (DEERE, 2004). In the 1990s, violence and patriarchal domination were on the agenda.

Despite all these analyses, we cannot speak of the universal characteristics of women living in rural areas or problems that are shared by all. However, some themes were consistently addressed by women in the family workshops, to a certain extent bringing convergent points to the agendas of the most different groups. Thus, when talking about rural women, there are at least four paths that intersect:

» 1. The productive question

In general, women have demanded greater justice in the distribution of land, as well as demanding the implementation of more sustainable and agroecological agriculture. They possess a more combative profile in relation to unsustainable agribusiness and the use of agrochemicals. The women

want to achieve a diversified and healthy productive system for self-consumption and income generation.

» 2. Self-esteem

Rural women struggle to be recognised as human beings capable of making decisions regarding their own lives, to have their opinions and decisions validated within the family and to achieve what they want for the future.

» 3. Equitable use of time

The third path relates to the distribution of household chores and productive tasks, as well as the use of time, between women and men. Although they are still primarily responsible for cleaning the house and its surroundings, preparing meals and caring for children and the elderly, women living in rural areas raise debates about the need to rethink these distributions and to be recognised also in productive activities as workers and not just as mere helpers.

» 4. Female protagonism and political participation

Finally, the fourth path is linked to the protagonism and political participation of women. They fight to participate in formal and informal institutions and value this participation. Women living in rural areas demand recognition of their ability to occupy decision-making spaces (whether in public or domestic spaces), having the freedom to plan and defend personal and collective interests.

1.2 RURAL YOUTH: STRENGTHENING AND INNOVATION IN PRODUCTION

Research on the theme of “youth” is popular in the social sciences focused on the study of the rural environment, especially when statistics confirm, as we have already seen, the aging of the rural population.

As Brumer and Dos Anjos (2008) point out, the interest in this theme stems, on the one hand, from the high migration rates from rural



areas towards cities, with the predominance of young people and, among them, women, implying the aging and masculinisation of the rural population (a trend that, as we have seen, is being reversed in some rural sectors); and, on the other hand, the increase in problems related to generational succession in family establishments, “either due to the difficulty of finding successors among the children of the owners, or due to conflicts between the legal heirs over the sharing of family assets” (BRUMER; DOS ANJOS, 2008, p. 8).

A survey carried out by Litre (2010), of 25 families in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, showed that young people face at least two major challenges:

1. In the short term, the challenge of contributing financially to meeting the basic needs of their families;
2. In the long term, to reproduce (and as far as possible, improve) the conditions of their way of life over the generations, including the economic and environmental sustainability of the property.

Regarding the second point, the same study showed that 9 out of 10 families want their children to continue in farming, even if combined

with a professional activity. The results were similar in surveys carried out in Argentina and Uruguay (LITRE, 2010). Only those whose amount of land was not sufficient to guarantee succession among all the children expressed the intention that at least some of them would look for work outside the productive unit.

Asked what they would like to do if they won a large amount of money, 95% of respondents answered that they would like to buy more land and cattle to be able to leave their children as an inheritance thus ensuring the continuity of the rural family activity. These results remained stable in the three countries studied.

The reproduction of ways of life in the short and long term can only be achieved (when there is sufficient land to share among the children) through a successful transmission of the productive unit from the older to the newer generation. However, succession faces at least three obstacles: (i) the increase in the price of land, which prevents or hinders the the purchase or lease of new land to divide among the heirs; (ii) rapid fragmentation (“parcelling out”) over the generations, which converts the productive units into economically unsustainable smallholdings; and (iii) a much less studied topic: the role of communication within the family (PITTS et al., 2009), closely linked to the communicative rationality of small and medium rural producers.

The quality of dialogue and communication between parents and children substantially interferes with the planning of the transference of the production unit. Following Pitts et al. (2009) for the study of succession in family production units in Pennsylvania (USA), Litre (2010) identified three categories of transference planning in the Atlantic Forest:

» 1. Meaningful planning

These families developed transference plans for the Productive Unit (PU) and worked to implement these plans. Among other characteristics, these families showed clarity when it came to identifying the successor(s) and how the capital would be divided among the children. A sense of “urgency” was evident in

the speech of some of the older members of this kind of family, of the type “we must complete the transmission whilst we are alive”, or “we must do everything possible to keep land in the hands of the family”. The specific transmission strategies of these families were varied.

» 2. Moderate planning

This type of family has started to develop transference plans and ways to implement them. Although these families also attach a high level of importance to the succession theme, for different reasons these plans have not been finalized or implemented. Young family members clearly understood their parents’ commitment to keeping the PU within the family. However, the specific succession plans were not clear. Issues such as how capital would be divided (land, machinery, vehicle, house, etc.) between the brothers and the specific roles and responsibilities for each family member had not been defined.

» 3. Limited planning

This type of family had not developed plans for the transfer of the PU. No efforts were made to address the issue of transmission nor was there a sense of urgency about it.

As stated by Woortmann and Woortmann (1997), in all cases the maintenance of the paternal or maternal home is highly valued, but above all, the reproduction of the way of life linked to agricultural activity is considered most important. However, traditional succession strategies are failing. Proof of this is the rupture of the chain of succession, the massive exodus of young people from rural areas, the closure of family production units and the reduction of the possibilities of innovation and renovation that are so necessary for the sustainability of their ways of life (DURSTON, 1997; BARDOMAS, 2000).

The division of production units takes place in a context of rupture of the previous pattern of transference and the absence of an



alternative model, clearly defined and legitimised by family members (DE MELLO et al., 2003).

In his work for the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), Durston (1997) indicates that youth is a stage marked by tension and conflicts established as a result of the typical processes of building an adult personality, since generally, children reach physical and productive maturity and yet are still subject to parental authority.

This process takes on quite dramatic contours when singles over 30 are still under parental authority. In these cases, the contradiction is due to the fact that young people are capable of developing their own projects, but have no autonomy to exercise these capacities (Durston, 1997).

The author also draws attention to the fact that the majority of rural youths are interested in carrying out their own projects, independent of their parents. However, they are often forced to postpone their autonomy due to family interests.

One of the first difficulties that arises in discussions and, consequently, in proposals for actions aimed at youth living in rural areas is the very concept of young people, or what it means to be young. Considering only the age criterion or trying to frame the concept in theoretical simplifications is reductionist and will do little to contribute to effective propositions.

According to the National Youth Council, youth should not be understood from an “age and generational dimension”, or even as a “transition into adulthood”. It is, rather, “part of a broader process of constitution of subjects that have specificities that mark the trajectory of each one. Hence the importance of considering the plurality and circumstances that characterize the experience of being young (BRASIL, 2011, p. 17).

Weisheimer (2005) proposes some approaches in which the varied concepts of youth can be anchored, which are: (a) youth as an age group; (b) youth as a period of transition from puberty to



adulthood; (c) youth as a sharing of common experiences; (d) youth as a way of life or expression of a culture; (e) youth as a position in the social hierarchy based on social representation and self-representation.

The concept of youth used in the participatory workshops of the Rural Sustainable Project was that of the individual who, in the context of the family nucleus, assumes the role of a child and who, whilst participating in the productive process, is hierarchically subordinate to their parents. This concept is more aligned with the last approach pointed out by Weisheimer (2005).

If delimiting a concept for what it means to be young is not simple, nor will it be simple to be able to identify all the difficulties that young people face and, here specifically, young people living in rural areas. Even when recognising young people as a group, it is not possible to see them as having homogeneous characteristics. The locations where they live and work, life experiences and the way family relationships occur are some of the factors that diversify the difficulties faced by each young person.

Despite these limitations we try to identify three types of difficulties that, if not experienced by all young people, are at least recognised as situations that can negatively affect the lives of rural youth:

» 1. Limited access to formal education

One of these situations is the scarce access to education and professional training, mainly at the high school, undergraduate and graduate level. Despite recent processes of ruralisation of high schools and higher education institutions, young people living in rural areas generally need to travel long distances when they want to continue their studies, which results in the migration of these young people to cities or the abandonment of studies.

» 2. Limited access to income

The second situation concerns access to income and the characteristics of work. Young people seek income, but also fulfillment and identification at work, and these desires cannot be understood as belonging only to city dwellers. Young people who live in rural areas aim to enhance their professional activities and wish to be recognised in the work they do.

» 3. Living conditions in the countryside

The third situation is related to living conditions in the countryside. Access to leisure in the countryside is restricted, causing many young people to seek options outside their reality. Also, the reduced availability of a communication and internet access structure in some rural communities keeps young people isolated. In addition, the diminishing number of young people in the countryside means that those who remain feel alone, with little prospect of establishing bonds of friendship or building relationships and forming families.

In view of the three situations highlighted, we perceive the difficulty of the discourse on what is necessary to maintain youth in the countryside and in agricultural activity. In this sense, the family workshops sought to highlight these issues related to young people who live in rural areas and who, in some way, feel forced to migrate to the city, either because they are unable to recognise appealing perspectives of work, or because they end up seeing, often mistakenly, urban spaces as an environment that offers more ease and facility.

Thus, in the workshops it became evident that young people living in rural areas demand more adequate conditions so that they can have education, work, generate income, enjoy leisure and quality of life.

For young people who wish to stay in the countryside, it is necessary to guarantee access to land in sufficient quantity for them to

develop their agricultural activities. But access to land alone is not enough, young people need to access lines of credit, technical assistance and space so that they can implement innovations, whether in production, processing, management or marketing.

It is worth noting that in order to overcome the difficulties indicated in this report, young people need to be understood not as those who in the future will take over a property, or who will continue agricultural activities in the future, but as subjects who build the rural space today.

In summary, when we address the socio-environmental vulnerabilities faced by women and young people in rural areas, the need to talk about what actions are being developed and whether they are (or are not) appropriate. However, beyond just criticising the actions that are proposed by different rural extension programs and projects, the participatory workshops with families aimed to capitalise on the “lessons learned” to do things differently and to provide women and youth with protagonism and more opportunities for inclusion.

Segato (2003), in a text that presents the experience of a workshop with indigenous women, highlighted that the relevance of the workshop was to provide training for indigenous women to elaborate their demands themselves, resulting in a document with guidelines, public policies and actions. The author adds that the intention was to gather ideas, opinions and experiences from indigenous women.

The author concludes that the ideas were many and enriching, and what had been lacking was simply to listen to the women and what they had to say about the interests of the group as a whole.

Oyarzún (2010) points out that the problem is not the absence of a voice from certain groups, but the absence of listening to what these groups have to say. These voices, which arise in unusual, clandestine, or even anonymous settings, are often not heard.

The conclusions of Segato (2003) and Oyarzún (2010) allow us to understand the harmful and ineffective consequences with which many

projects, programs and policies have been implemented and how, often, involuntarily, these actions may have reinforced the invisibility and exclusion of rural women and youth, either because they don't consider the customary ways of sharing ideas within the communities, or because they are not close enough to learn. In the specific case of women and young people who live in rural areas, sometimes identified as less capable of verbalising their demands, many supposedly participatory strategies bring their propositions into a hierarchical and imposing way, without considering what has already been said. At the same time, they present the idea of sustainable development



as a “coming to be”, which will occur when women and young people are reached by these interventions, giving little or no attention to the alternatives already undertaken (SEGATO, 2003; OYARZÚN, 2010) .

Based on these reflections on the (in)visibility of women and young people in the countryside, the next chapter will present the foundations that supported the elaboration of participatory workshops for the promotion of female empowerment and social inclusion of young people in the social inclusion of rural youth in the context of family development, as well as the path developed in the workshops to prioritise people, their stories and knowledge.







2

OVERCOMING BARRIERS AND CONSTRUCTING COLLECTIVELY

The development of the Low-carbon Agriculture Project in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest biomes, with small and medium-sized farmers, confirms the possibility of implementing family farming with sustainable practices, which mitigate the negative impacts of global warming.

Biomes in which the project operated



Not only have many of the farmers appropriated and implemented low-carbon techniques in their properties, but the Project also prioritised people and their local knowledge, creating fertile ground for the creation of ideas, dialogues, partnerships and actions cre-

ating a glimpse of a promising future in the social, environmental and economic spheres.

Even with a very preliminary analysis of the impacts of the Project on the beneficiaries' productive activities, it can be said that the proposal to put people above method, respecting individual and collective trajectories, has been successful.

In this project it was important to implement low-carbon agriculture, but this could only be achieved if it made sense to the local rural population and contributed to an increase in quality of life. Thus, throughout the process, strategies were used to break barriers of mistrust, to respect the pace and reality of the countryside and to generate in farmers, of all age groups, empowerment over their destinies.

With this guiding principle, in the understanding that people are more important than any technique, the Project followed the path of building sustainability. There is no ready model, there is a path and this must be followed by people, with dreams, beliefs, feelings, willpower and everything else that comprises the complexity of human nature.

Like any experience of opening up to the process, many challenges were faced along this path and, at the same time, many opportunities arose. In addition to the socio-environmental and economic diversity of each region, there were the difficulties of managing a large-scale project, present in three states in the Amazon and four in the Atlantic Forest, which depended on a network of partners and regional and local actors.

The team knew that there was no place to talk about a unilateral and imposing "transfer" of technology, nor to disregard the need for empowerment of local actors. It was also vital to take into account that low-carbon technologies, adapted to the local reality, should be supported by the Project, but their continuity should go far beyond the existence of the Project.

From this perspective, the path to take became more evident. In addition to low-carbon technologies, the Project invested in people, in their knowledge and in their construction and transformation capac-

States in which the project operated



ities, also welcoming their eventual resistance, doubts and contradictions in this process.

Considering these subjectivities, the family workshops organised by the Project were oriented precisely to overcome cultural and cognitive barriers that, many times, transform rural extension into empty words and automated actions for small and medium farmers and their families.

So, before entering into the participatory methodology of family workshops, we must examine how these barriers appear, often cre-

ated by a kind of rationality, and the ways to overcome them. As we will see, among them, there is, in many cases, a perception barrier about climate changes and the need for mitigation and adaptation to climate risk.

2.1 COMMUNICATIVE RATIONALITY

Rural extension in Brazil is often thought of from an instrumental and not a communicative rationality. This largely explains the frequent and frustrating experiences of farmers and their families with the technical “recipes” of rural extension, including those considered most promising and best planned.

But what is communicative rationality and how is it different from instrumental rationality? Why is understanding the communicative rationality of the Project beneficiary producer so important when it comes to thinking about inclusive and effective family workshops for more sustainable family farming?

With the process of modernisation, a way of thinking widely disseminated and valued in industrial societies has prevailed: instrumental rationality. This rationality is defined by means to ends relationships, that is, by the organisation of adequate means to achieve certain ends or by the choice between strategic alternatives, with a view to achieving objectives.

Using mechanistic concepts, which had been spreading in the scientific environment since the 16th century, the development process appropriated a mathematical rationalism, removing the value of subjective and non-measurable constructions. In this context, the physical environment, for example, had no value in itself, but only in its potential to be exploited by humans (CAPRA, 1982).

Habermas (1929), contemporary German philosopher and sociologist, whose name is associated with the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, sought to overcome the concept of instrumental rationality by expanding the concept of reason. With this proposal, he created a

concept of reason that contains the possibility of reconciliation with itself, which he called communicative reason (rationality).

This concept does not take a radical stand against the instrumental rationality of science and technology, as it recognises the function and applicability to humans of this approach. What it defends is that reason is something to be implemented socially in the process of dialogical interaction of the actors involved in the same situation, acquiring more rigor through what Habermas calls discourse. In communicative action, each interlocutor raises a claim for validity when referring to facts, norms and experiences, and there is an expectation that this interlocutor can, if he so wishes, contest this claim for validity in a well-founded manner, that is, with arguments. For Habermas, therefore, rationality is not an abstract faculty inherent to the isolated individual, but an argumentative procedure by which two or more subjects manifest, dialogue and interact in the analysis of a given theme (FREITAS, 1993).



Alta Floresta, MT

In this context, both in everyday dialogue and in discourse, all the truths previously considered valid and unshakable (as suggested by technical rationality), according to Habermas, can be questioned. All current rules and values must be justified; all social relations are considered as the result of a negotiation in which consensus is sought and reciprocity is respected, based on the best argument. Communicative reason, therefore, circumscribes a concept for which questioning and criticism are constitutive elements, not in a monological form, but in a dialogical way, in social situations, in which the truth results from a dialogue between peers, following the logic of the best argument (FREITAS, 1993).

Considering communicative rationality and bringing its precepts to rural extension, we realised the need to establish limits in relation to the use of instrumental rationality, which is frequently used in the Brazilian rural environment. This type of technical (instrumental) rationality, as mentioned, is defined by a “means to an end” relationship, that is, by the organisation of adequate means to achieve certain ends or by the choice between strategic alternatives with a view to achieving objectives (in the case of agriculture for example, increased productivity).

Despite the usefulness of this proposal, it is worth considering that it is not just the establishment of agricultural techniques and ways of producing that matter, since this perspective excludes the subjectivity of the farmers which includes their desires, their own objectives, their capacities for analysis of their own reality and their need for individual and social fulfillment within the productive activity.

Considering all these aspects, the strategy of the family workshops sought to go beyond the technical approach. Considering the proposal of communicative rationality, it sought to identify and recognise the subjects in order to establish dialogical bridges, in which communication, the exchange of knowledge and collective construction became a reality.

Regarding communication, Habermas (1981) defends that it is manifested by the relationship that the subjects establish among them-





Camamu, BA

selves, mediated by speech acts, from three “worlds”: the objective world of things, the social world of norms and institutions and the subjective world of experiences and feelings.

Relations with these three worlds are present, although not to the same extent, in all social interactions. One of the main objectives of the methodology developed for the family workshops was precisely to highlight and value these three spheres: the objective, the social and the experiences and feelings of farmers. How to value such complex spheres? By recalling some basic facts, such as, for example, that people, when interacting, coordinate their actions. The success or failure of their joint actions depends on the knowledge they share in the objective world, and the violation of technical rules leads to failure.



Capelinha, MG

Second, people interact by orienting themselves according to social norms, which already exist previously or are produced during the interaction. These are directly linked to fundamental issues of the Project's participatory workshops, such as gender and the definition of youth. These gender and generational norms are embedded in cultural and even religious issues, as they define reciprocal behavioural expectations, which all participants are aware of. As internal family and/or community rules, their violation can generate sanctions, even if only perceived at psychological levels. Third, in all interactions, people reveal something about their experiences, intentions, needs, fears, etc., in such a way that they reveal their interior. Although people, to a greater or lesser degree, can control the manifestations of their subjective experiences, conclusions can be drawn from their actions regarding their transparency and their decision to share their feelings openly or not.

In this sense, the workshops aimed to create spaces of trust, openness and respect so that experiences were transmitted with the greatest freedom and spontaneity possible, remembering that, as we will see, one of the guiding premises of the meetings was that "nobody is the owner of the truth".

And how does this manifest itself in the experience of rural extension? In view of the Project's actions in the field, it was found that rural producers use both rationalities, instrumental and communicative, with greater propensity for the second. If, on the one hand, there is a financial analysis (rational and objective) on the risks of innovating, on the other, there is a more subjective perception of reality, which includes, for example, the preservation of family unity. If the implementation of a new technology is a way to create new opportunities for rural youth, this will certainly be included in the balance of risks and benefits.

With all these elements in mind, assumptions were made for the development of participatory workshops to promote female protagonism and the social inclusion of rural youth. They are:

» 1. Communicative rationality

Small and medium farmers, in general, use a communicative rationality and not exclusively an economic or technical-scientific one. This communicative rationality is much more oriented to the maintenance of the traditional way of life (their livelihood) and to the well-being of the family and even of the animals, than to the attainment of a higher income;

» 2. Identity linked to production

Most farmers identify themselves with their farm and their activity, are proud of their way of life and would like their children to have the chance to continue in it with dignity;

» 3. Risk exposure

Due to the overlapping of risk exposure frameworks (socioeconomic risks, such as price fluctuations or market regulations and sickness in the family, and risks linked to climate change), in all the trajectories of farming families there are moments of progress and also setbacks, both among the farmers in favour of technological improvements and among those most conservative and averse to innovation;

» 4. The reactions of rural producers

The reactions of family farmers in relation to risk and uncertainty are determined, first, by their personalities, by their expectations and by their personal relationships (networks of dialogue), and in second place by environmental, political or administrative contexts.

From these assumptions, it is clear that family farmers consider a large and varied amount of risk possibilities in their daily decision-making processes. In addition to the danger of a disturbance, they assess the environmental, socioeconomic and political-administrative context, along with the possibilities offered by their production system and type of productive unit (mainly size and soil quality).



In addition to this, they consider family well-being and the possibility of maintaining the property, among other subjective factors.

2.2 CLIMATE CHANGE AND COGNITIVE AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

» MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Much is said of mitigating the impacts of climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, such as carbon. But what is mitigation? Mitigation, related to the environment, consists of human intervention in order to reduce or remedy a certain harmful environmental impact (PFEIFFER, 2014).

In the context of the Project, it would be the adoption of more balanced and sustainable production systems, such as agroforestry systems; crop-livestock-forest integration; the planting of commercial forests; the recovery of degraded areas with pasture or forest and the sustainable management of native forest. From an environmental perspective, these production systems, called low carbon technologies, have the ability to reduce the emission of greenhouse



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gases (GHG), such as CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and, in some cases, to capture carbon, or that is, to keep carbon in the system instead of releasing it into the atmosphere ³.

In addition to mitigation, another key measure in this climate change context is adaptation, which can be understood as a series of responses to the current and potential impacts of climate change, with the aim of minimizing possible damage and taking advantage of potential opportunities (DEL OLMO, 2017) ⁴.

In the scientific universe, there is a consensus among researchers on climate change that the planet will warm up by 1°C in the

³ This process is also known as carbon sequestration, which occurs mainly in forests, oceans and other places where organisms, through photosynthesis, capture carbon and release oxygen into the atmosphere.

⁴ https://www.wwf.org.br/natureza_brasileira/especiais/dia_do_meio_ambiente/mudancas_climaticas_adaptacao/

coming decades, regardless of any actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that countries may implement. It is the so-called inertial effect, resulting from a warming of 0.7 to 1°C, which occurred in the last decade, according to the fourth report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007).

As a result, scholars also foresee, both as a result of the warming that has already occurred and that which will come, a strengthening of hurricanes, floods and droughts, as well as the possibility of these phenomena becoming more and more frequent (IPCC, 2007).

In this scenario, one of the adaptation measures would be the protection of ecosystems, which, in return, will offer more protection to the population. Preserving, for example, forest cover in addition to avoiding the emission of greenhouse gases, essentially contributes to the preservation of the soil and the maintenance of the water table, which, in turn, are essential to ensure agricultural production. The preservation of this system sustains the evapotranspiration of the plants, which maintains humidity and influences the rainfall regime in other regions. The maintenance of this system reduces vulnerability to droughts, desertification and floods and increases the capacity of the system to regenerate in the face of a climatic event.

We realized, therefore, that the adaptation process must take into account two variables: vulnerability, which is the degree of susceptibility of the systems (ecological, geophysical and socioeconomic) to deal with the adverse effects of climate change, and resilience, which is the ability of the system to return to its original state or recover its capabilities after a traumatic event, such as a weather event. In general, the lower the vulnerability of a system and the greater the resilience, the greater its potential for adaptation (DEL OLMO, 2017).

Assad (2013) also indicates other ways for farmers to adapt to climate change which is already irreversible: first, via biotechnology which seeks cultivated varieties that are more tolerant to drought and high temperatures, and second, seeking in biodiversity species that are already naturally adapted and which have high market potential.

The first path to adaptation is the easiest and certainly, in the short term, this type of tolerant seed will be on the market. The second is slower, since even when species with high market value are known, production systems and value chains must be developed.

In this sense, it is fair to value the role of the Project, which, in addition to providing and supporting measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, has given great importance to the development of professional dialogue networks between small and medium producers and technical assistance agents. The Project treated rural extension as a window between the producer and the possibilities of technological innovation in search of sustainability and, also, a bridge of dialogue between the rural producers themselves, who, in many regions, remained isolated.

It is worth mentioning that rural extension, when talking about family farming, presents both potentials and limits. This will be reflected on below.

» CLIMATE PERCEPTIONS AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS OF DISTRUST

As seen, the participatory workshops with the families sought to value the communicative rationality of small and medium producers in the Amazon and the Atlantic Forest. The focus on two themes often overlooked in this type of low-carbon agriculture project, female protagonism and the inclusion of rural young people, was encouraging and promising, as it allowed us to see the reality of producers and their families in all its wealth and also in its complexity.

The task of recognising the wealth and challenges presented by the communicative rationality of family farmers was arduous. Historically, social and cultural contexts, which play important roles in the perception of individuals and in their adherence to actions and policies designed to respond to socioeconomic and climatic shocks and stresses, and which have been valued by the Project, have not been properly considered. This has generated a mismatch between scientific and technological discoveries, as well as in the design of



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public policies and programs related to low-carbon production to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and the applicability of this knowledge in the daily life of Brazilian farmers.

In general, we can point out that, in the process of adapting to climatic and socioeconomic changes in rural production, farmers' perceptions of climatic and socioeconomic risks are part of the first of the three phases of a true adaptation of producers and their families to climate change: (i) understanding of risk; (ii) adaptation planning and (iii) adaptation management (MOSER; EKSTROM, 2010).

A better understanding of cultural barriers and the values and processes involved in the incorporation of new low-carbon agriculture technologies, both in relations between groups and between them and the environment, constitutes an indispensable step for overcoming real barriers to adaptation.

This is especially true in the case of those working in family farming, who selectively perceive the risks linked to climate change and

socioeconomic shocks in their biomes. In reality, the perception is temporal, because it is a short-term phenomenon, which makes it difficult to record changes that happen in the long run, such as climate change (LITRE; BURSZTYN, 2015).

At the same time, it is vital for any strategy such as that of the family workshops to remember that the way rural producers carry out the process of perceiving the challenges imposed by the climate evolves as their experiences are enriched or their needs and motivations vary.

Thus, it becomes difficult to perceive new factors, of which family farmers have no previous experience, such as new parameters in climate change and variability. Also, it is not easy for the farmer to perceive and react to subtle changes that take years to reveal their impact.

It is worth mentioning that there is also a “perceptual defence”: people naturally tend to deny what is not convenient for them, unconsciously avoid having unpleasant stimuli, and may even distort infor-



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mation that is incongruous with their needs, values, religious beliefs, etc. (CURI et al., 2016).

Based on this reality, a participatory and bottom-up construction strategy, like the one we adopted in the Project, put the perceptions of users of natural resources and key actors in the foreground. However, as already mentioned, the existence of perceptions about the risks posed by climate change or by unsustainable property management does not always imply a concrete transformation of attitudes and actions by the beneficiaries. This, in our view, is the main challenge: to link scientific-technological information and knowledge with concrete actions and with a real transformation of attitudes and behaviours in search of socio-environmental sustainability (MATSON; CLARK; ANDERSSON, 2016).

Fortunately, the social and cognitive barriers to these adaptive transformations are not absolute and can be overcome through concen-



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trated efforts, creative management and communication, changes in thinking and institutional structures, setting priorities, presenting new ways of using natural resources and, mainly, by the valorisation of the local knowledge and the promotion of dialogue between different social actors.

In fact, the productive and economic transformations proposed by the Project started from the assumption that the end users of shared knowledge would only act if the proposals for low-carbon agriculture technologies were perceived as really relevant, credible and legitimate.

Returning to Matson, Clark and Andersson (2016), the authors remember the sad reality that many scientific or technological discoveries never leave the pages of scientific journals or academic books, leaving potential solutions distanced from numerous problems that could be resolved. For the authors, the only really influential knowledge is reliable knowledge. And, to be reliable, this knowledge must overcome, from the beginning, the usual distrust existing between the “producers of scientific information” and the users of this information.

In other words, the barrier of mutual distrust must be overcome through knowledge produced, from the beginning, in a collaborative way. Often, knowledge producers or experts assume that they understand a priori what are the problems and solutions that will improve the well-being of “end users” (decision makers, target communities, etc.). However, this agenda of priorities established by scientists and other specialists, even if loaded with good intentions, does not always coincide with the agenda of the so-called “target audience”, which does not grant legitimacy, credibility and relevance to the knowledge offered.

In the case of the Project, which has already concluded its activities in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest biomes, the strategies used to overcome the barriers of mistrust were many and varied. Since the beginning of the activities, investments have been made in human relations and in the understanding of all the partners involved about the local reality, demands and community expectations.



In this process, the relationship and interaction of the technical assistance agents, regional coordinators and IABS monitors with the producers was of great relevance, whether during the Field Days, in the exchanges and dialogues established or in the formal assistance provided by the Project in the implementation of technologies.

With the same proposal for interaction and approximation, six educational booklets were developed for rural producers. In a comic book format and in a language adapted to the Project's public, the booklets reported on the possibilities of sustainable production and dealt with the themes of the workshops - female protagonism and social inclusion of rural youth.

Another important strategy was the participatory workshops, which were held between October and December of 2018 in the Project beneficiary states, in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest biomes, which, among their objectives, sought to promote a network of dialogue, prioritising local knowledge and the collective construction of knowledge.



2.3 COFFEE WITH PROSE: VALUING PEOPLE AND COLLABORATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Inspired by the Art of Hosting methodology, the participatory workshop, which we call Coffee with Prose, was designed to promote a collective reflection on the importance of the place of women and young people in rural areas. To this end, we use the participatory methodologies of World Café, Circle and Open Space, proposals that have been used by several groups around the world to facilitate conversations and generate collaborative intelligence.

To this end, Coffee with Prose asked the coordination and facilitation team for more than just technical knowledge, it required a generous heart and a sincere openness to see each other. The facilitators, by placing themselves as mediators in a process, were instrumental in promoting dialogue and witnessing the collective construction of



something rich, creative and meaningful for all farmers present in the workshops.

Reversing the logic of knowledge transfer or formal events, in which project representatives present the possible “solutions” and the target audience participates as a mere spectator, the workshops were activities of meeting people, thoughts, dreams and actions.

Project representatives in these activities did not go to the field to “teach” rural producers, they facilitated an exchange of knowledge, through dialogue and sensitive listening. With this perspective, all actions, trajectories and knowledge were produced by the participants themselves.

The participatory workshops took place between October 1st and December 7th, 2018. Their realisation in the field involved a network of executors, supporters and coordinators. During execution there was a

pair of facilitators (always a woman and a man), who directly counted on the support of the local IABS team, coordinators and monitors.

Considering the socio-environmental reality of the families of small and medium-sized rural producers in the referred biomes, the target audience of the Project, it was decided to work on the themes of women and young people from the perspective of families, that is, within the family nucleus . Thus, all family members, men, women, youth and children, were invited to participate in the workshops.

The proposal was to replicate and explain, to some extent, the internal dynamics of each family, instead of creating “laboratory” situations, which have little connection with the participants’ everyday reality. This methodological choice was intended to promote inter-generational and intergender dialogue, so that the learning built during the workshops could be more easily socialised within the family and the community.

Regarding this choice, it was considered that promoting female protagonism in workshops aimed exclusively at women and discussing the inclusion of young people in rural areas in workshops exclusively for young people, that is, without the participation of adult men who are still, in most cases, the heads of production units, might not have practical effects, since this important family member would not have had the opportunity to reflect on these issues and recognise the importance of valuing women and young people in family and productive activities.

Although we found some particular needs in workshops in some regions, we can say that the choice was valid and the reflection promoted has the potential to generate good results.

Still on the methodological option, it is worth mentioning that the choice of participatory techniques took into account the expected number of participants in the workshops. The idea was that we could facilitate activities with up to 100 participants and World Café and Open Space allow this number of members.



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2.3.1 The Art of Hosting

The Art of Hosting is a practice guided by values inspired by living and self-organised systems. It explores new emerging patterns, such as: being at the service of a consistent purpose and connected with the essence of individuals; anchor actions in what really has meaning; experience sensitive listening and rotational leadership. Among the tools used, we have: the World Café, dialogue, the circle, appreciative investigation, the art of asking questions and reaping results that matter, and the Open Space).

World Café is a dialogue facilitation technique that was developed in 1995 by Juanita Brown and David Isaacs. As the authors say, they were waiting for a group of 20 people to promote a strategic dialogue on Intellectual Property and, due to the rain that fell on the day, they had to rethink the group's form of organisation. Thus, in an improvised way, they used the breakfast space to create an atmosphere of conversations. They arranged the small tables available with towels and flower pots in the centre. They left papers and pens on the tables for notes and drawings (BROWN; ISAACS, 2005).

The participants arrived, chose their places and the dynamics of exchanging knowledge and impressions developed. Later, someone got the idea to find out what was going on at the other tables. They then decided to switch places and talk to other people. Given the result of the dynamics, they realised that this could be a great way to build collective knowledge (BROWN; ISAACS, 2005).

Thus, in California, from an improvised and spontaneous practice, the World Café was born, known in Brazil as *Café Mundial*.

Juanita Brown quotes the perception of her partner, David Isaac, at the end of the work: "We witnessed something for which we had no language. It was as if the intelligence of a larger collective being, in addition to the individual beings in the room, had become visible to us" (BROWN; ISAACS, 2005, p. 33).

Still on the conclusion of the work, they emphasise that the Café process, in some way, enabled the group to have access to a collaborative intelligence, which became increasingly powerful as the exchanges of places and knowledge took place (BROWN, 2007). The strength of the practice of World Café was revealed, then, through



the new associations and different perceptions that presented themselves with the cross-pollination of people and ideas.

As a method, World Café can be defined as a way to improve our ability to establish real dialogues or meaningful conversations. In a more metaphorical perspective, we can understand it as a way of perceiving conversation as the main process of our human way of doing things (BROWN; ISAACS, 2005).

To achieve the goals idealised by the application of the method, it is necessary to consider the principles that guide the art of hosting the World Café, as Brown (2007) teaches. The seven principles are illustrated in the figure below.

Guiding principles of World Café



Analysing the listed principles, we realised that they create a sense of community, of group, of affection, which was exactly what we were looking for with the application of the family workshops.

The entire program for the two days of Coffee with Prose (Module 1 and Module 2) was designed to ensure a safe and welcoming environment so that people could express their opinions, thoughts and emotions in a free and more integrated way. With this type of dynamics, the sharing of stories and personal experiences of great value with people who met at that exact moment was recurrent among the participants.

The favourable environment allowed quality speech and sensitive listening, which shaped the sharing of dreams and individual and collective projects. There is certainly something very old in these conversation circles. A kind of symbolic and ancestral knowledge, which is characterised as an exercise of our humanity.

Regarding the Open Space methodology, which was also used in Coffee with Prose, it is worth mentioning that it is an activity in which themes are defined by the participants to be worked on in smaller groups. Subsequently, the raised contributions are shared in a plenary session.

2.3.2 Building dialogue and the role of the facilitator

As we saw above, the role of the facilitators in the application of Coffee with Prose was to create an environment of dialogue, allowing the exchange of knowledge and the construction of collective intelligence. To do so, they had to gain a theoretical foundation, which was made available to facilitators before the workshops as a form of preparation and training for applying the methodology in the workshops.

Among the significant references used, it is worth mentioning the proposed reflection on the meaning of dialogue and the ways to build something that broadened the perception of reality and went



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beyond a literal rational construction. To this end, we used the analysis of scholars on the subject, such as the educator Paulo Freire and leading researchers on the subject, such as David Bohm, Martin Buber, Georges Gusdorf and Humberto Maturana.

According to Freire (2007), knowledge occurs through dialogue. It is in the relationship with the other and with the environment that human beings learn, mediated by the world. In the same vein, Bohm, one of the most renowned scholars on dialogue, presents the following meaning of the word:

Dialogue comes from the Greek dialogues. “Logos” means “the word” and “day” means through (by means of), it does not mean “two”. The dialogue can take place between several people, not just two. Even a single person can have a sense of dialogue with himself, if the spirit of the dialogue is present. The image of this derivation suggests a flow of meanings between us and through us. This makes possible a flow of meanings in the entire group, which

generates a new understanding. It is something new, which may not be the starting point. It is something creative. And the shared meaning is the “glue” or the “cement” that aggregates people and societies (BOHM, 2005, p. 34).

The author also discusses the importance of penetrating into the elements of thought that are present in the dialogue, drawing attention to the need to realise that, many times, our thoughts can be wrong, as they are always immersed in our assumptions and opinions about a certain issue. Therefore, in order to arrive at a true and effective dialogue, we need to get rid of our own prejudices and assumptions. In a dialogue, the proposal is to infiltrate the flow of thoughts of the group, in order to build a new perception of the problem in question. The intention is to move from literal thinking to participatory thinking (BOHM, 2005).

Bohm also comments on environmental or ecological problems. He says that the heart of the matter is in thinking, in the wrong way of thinking and in the lack of perception of the other (in this case, nature) as an integral part of the system. It emphasises that this fragmented way of thinking is relatively recent in the history of mankind, since in older civilisations there was a participatory way of thinking (BOHM, 2005).

In view of the author’s considerations, it can be said that the collective dimension of the human being, which places him as an integral part of the whole, derives from participatory thinking, which can even be transcended through an awareness process. A reflection on sensitivity, therefore, also presented by Bohm (2005), can be a way to build a territory of meanings.

Sensitivity means being able to perceive that something is happening, feeling your reactions and those of others, feeling the subtle differences and similarities. The senses provide you with information, but you have to be sensitive

to it, otherwise you will not perceive it. (...) What blocks sensitivity is the defence of assumptions and opinions (BOHM, 2005, p. 85).

Buber (1982), in turn, highlights the complex nature of dialogue, emphasising that it goes far beyond words or a simple communication process. He emphasises that dialogue is a true encounter with the other, a transformation of communication in communion, which takes place as a “taking of intimate knowledge”, a perception of the other, which can be a human being or another living being. Buber (1982) highlights three types of dialogue:

» 1. Authentic

It doesn't matter if spoken or silent. In this form of dialogue, each participant, in fact, has the other or the others in his presence and in his way of being. Thus, their action reflects their intention to establish a living reciprocity between them and themselves based on communicative rationality (which includes subjective values and previous experiences of the participants);

» 2. Technical

Driven solely by the need for an objective understanding (scientific-instrumental rationality);

» 3. Monologue disguised as dialogue

Where two or more people gathered in one place speak, each to themselves, on tortuous and strangely intertwined paths. With a tangent on the subject, each one from his unchanging point of view, believes that he is in dialogue, but is only exposing thoughts and relying only on his own resources.

In the same perspective, Gusdorf (1970) says that the understanding of language resides in a meeting between human beings, the world and the other with whom I communicate. The other, intellectually and



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materially, is a condition for the existence of each one. In this sense, the author resumes the more “traditional” perception of the other as part of the individual’s participation in the world and not an isolated existence of the human being, as proposed by the rationalism/materialism of the modern world.

With the same intention of recognising interaction with the other as a structure for dialogue (of conversation), Maturana (2002) highlights the intertwining of language and the emotional in the language process. It emphasises that in every rational argument we express, an emotion is present. So, for our conduct to be understood in a rational way, we need to realise our emotions and know their flow.

In his reflections, the author states that perceiving and accepting our emotions is related to accepting the other and, in this process, considers that love, as a “biological phenomenon”, can play a fundamental role in our socialisation and acceptance from the other. It would be a form of antidote against tyranny, the destruction of nature and abuse of other human beings. Love allows, in Maturana’s

view, the acceptance of the other and opens space for cooperation (MATURANA, 2002).

With the same function, empathy is also spoken of as the basis for dialogue. This can be defined as the individual's ability to put himself in the other's place. Through empathy we avoid extremes, sympathy or dislike. Empathy is a virtue that seeks a balance point in relationships, a way of understanding different points of view, without judgment or biased decisions.

Raising the rational and emotional elements that validate the existence of an authentic dialogue was necessary, not only to serve as a reference for facilitators in the field, but to build the team's relationship (coordinators, facilitators and supporters) with the target audience, before, during and after the workshops were held.

The proposal was to ensure that the facilitators recognised the needs of the group and that they created a welcoming environment for dialogue and knowledge exchange to occur.

It is worth mentioning that, despite this guiding thread, the proposed methodology did not aim to eliminate the possibility of conflicts in the groups. On the contrary, this was a risk inherent to the work.

What was recommended to the facilitators is that they trust the process and the participants, and be willing to take risks. If conflicts arose, they were instructed to assist the group in identifying the problem and support members in dealing with possible ambiguities and uncertainties in the process.

In practice, it was possible to perceive that different views on an issue do not necessarily create problems. When everyone realised the importance of the subject being discussed, the dialogue was established and the differences contributed to the production of collective knowledge, different from the individualised parts, but containing something that passed through the imagination of all members.

One of the thermometers to affirm that dialogue was present in the participatory workshops was to realise that there was no arguments,

there was no energy wasted in convincing one way or another. Some disagreement may have occurred, but the space for mutual creation and learning was safeguarded. Each person learned a little from the other, about the other and about the common situation.

At the end of the process, from the facilitators' reports and the evaluations applied at the end of the workshops, it can be said that, in general, the participants had the experience of having been heard and left with the perception that their participation was important and necessary.

2.4 GETTING TO WORK! COFFEE WITH PROSE IN PRACTICE

Considering the characteristics of the participatory methodologies, Coffee with Prose was built based on the belief that people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to overcome challenges and adversity. This was the driving force behind the dynamic and, in order for it to be applied, the Project coordinating team sought to elaborate relevant questions, which were applied in small groups, to generate meaningful reflections.

The dialogue on the questions presented was structured through 'cross-pollination', directly related to the rounds of conversations about each question and to the roles and functions of the participants at each table. Thus, adapting the traditional roles of World Café (Host, Travelers or Ambassadors of Meaning and Time Keeper) to the reality of small and medium rural producers, the following roles were presented:

» 1. Host or "owner of the house":

The one who receives the group and encourages everyone to participate. They write down the main ideas that come up and, in the moments of group change, stay at the table. Whenever there is a turnover between the participants, the host receives the new group, shares the key ideas from their previous conversation and invites the new group to participate at that table.

» 2. Travelers

Those who, in each round, bring the key ideas and themes from their tables to their new conversations.

After the first round of workshops in all states, the figure of the Time Keeper was suppressed. As the facilitators controlled the time, they felt that there was no need to formalize this task for a group member.

The Coffee with Prose workshops were designed for two non-consecutive work days, called Module 1 and Module 2. In most regions, there were approximately two weeks between the first and second modules, but, on one occasion, due to scheduling issues, a workshop in the state of Paraná was held with consecutive modules.



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In Module 1, we used the World Café methodology, in which the participants worked on the questions established in small groups and then shared what was produced in plenary sessions, performed after each question. This module was held in a space rented for events in one of the municipalities within the micro-region.

In Module 2, we use the Open Space methodology. Based on the contributions of the participants in each reflection on the questions presented in Module 1, the facilitators defined major themes. These themes were presented in Module 2 and the participants chose, by affinity or interest, the theme they wanted to work on. Subsequently, the contributions of the groups were shared in plenary. This module was carried out, in most cases, at a rural property that was a Project Demonstrative or Multiplier Unit, which allowed the insertion of a guided tour by the family that owns the land to learn about the low-carbon technologies implemented. In general, Module 1 occurred as follows:

1. Participants arrived at the site and were received and welcomed by the Project facilitators and local team. They were

registered, signed an authorization to use images from the day, received their name tag and had breakfast. All of this in a friendly and relaxing atmosphere;

2. Participants were invited to form a circle. In some places, they sat and in others, stood. In this structure, in which everyone could look at each other, the Project team welcomed and presented the final phase of the Project. Afterwards, the speech was passed on to the facilitators, who led an integration activity. After that, the participants were distributed in groups and any adjustments were made to ensure that members of the same family were distributed among the groups and that there was a balance of men and women at the tables;
3. The Coffee with Prose rules were explained, as well as premises of the dynamic, which were as follows:

-
- Everybody is different
-
- No one is better than anyone else
-
- No one owns the truth
-
- Everyone has something to contribute.
-

Then each group chose a host and the question was asked;

4. At the end of the first round, it was explained that there would be an change of groups. The person chosen as host should remain at the table and the others should change tables, with another group to work on the same question;
5. The host received the new group and presented the main ideas raised by the previous group. After the host had spoken, the new members of the table shared what they talked about at their original tables;
6. After the groups worked on each question, with or without changing tables (pollination), there was the moment of

harvest. Each group defined a pair (a man and a woman) to present, in plenary, what was produced by the group.

7. While one of the facilitators assisted the process of conducting the plenary, the other listed (on a flipchart) the main ideas raised by all groups.

Module 1 stages



The activities were interspersed with lunch breaks, afternoon snacks and group dynamics, which were always very important to keep participants motivated and awake and to generate integration among them.

Throughout the process, the facilitators and their team were instructed to circulate between the tables to check whether everyone was having the right to speak and whether they were being heard by the other members of the group.

Following the ideal of relaxation proposed by World Café, all tables had flip-chart sheets, pens and crayons for notes and graphic records, and a container with treats (candies, chocolates, etc.).

In Module 2, following the same assumptions and guiding principles as Module 1, the activities were structured with a circle, integration dynamics and group work. The difference, as already mentioned, is that the methodology applied was not World Café, but Open Space. Another particularity of this module, also already mentioned, is that the workshop, in most states, was held in rural properties that were already aligned with some of the low-carbon technologies proposals presented by the Project.

In this second meeting, as in the first, the participants were well received and respected in their speeches and contributions. The proposal of Module 2 was, based on the major themes, to collectively build the Action Plan, something more concrete that they could put into practice through individual and collective effort, regardless of the Project.

It is worth noting that the facilitators had the flexibility to adapt the schedules, dynamics, the choice of the location, etc., according to



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the demands and the local reality. In some places, for example, due to the rainy season, it was not possible to carry out Module 2 in the rural zone. The facilitators, with the local Project team, had to adapt the activity so that the workshop could be held in a space in the city.

Regarding these adaptations, one of the main recommendations to the facilitators was that they humanised the process of applying the methodology to the maximum, that is, that people were placed above the technique. The rigid application of a methodology, in which the group's pace and the needs are not considered, hampers the process and does not produce the expected results.

2.4.1 The importance of powerful questions

The programming of two modules aimed to accommodate the reality of farmers, based on a memory of the past, a diagnosis of the present and a dream for the future, in which individual and collective trajectories were traced to achieve the objectives desired.

In order to think about these temporal aspects, which were focused on the figures of women, young people and men, group dialogue was used, based on powerful (motivating) questions.

The great challenge in preparing the program was to define questions that could really mobilise the participants to reflect on the importance of female protagonism and the inclusion of young people in rural areas and, at the same time, to promote new knowledge and definitions of actions.

For the first round (Module 1 and 2) in a micro-region in each state, the questions were broader and issues around the role of women and young people in rural areas appeared in a diluted way in the answers. There was care amongst the activity coordinators not to generate discomfort in the families, in case the questions promoted a kind of gender dispute and/or generational conflict.

The results of the workshops, in this first stage, were satisfactory, but after an evaluation round, considering the comments and reflections



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of the facilitators, the coordination decided to modify the questions to more powerful ones. The questions that remained as definitive and provided a guide for reflections on the female protagonism and social inclusion of young people in rural areas are presented below.

MODULE 1

Question 1	What was it like to be a rural young woman or man in your grandparents' era?
Question 2	What remains the same and what has changed in relation to young people, both women and men? What is it like to be a young, rural woman or man today?
Question 3	How do I want rural young people, women and men, to be in the future (5 years from now)?

The three questions above were part of Module 1. In Module 2, facilitators took participants to the Open Space moment. At this stage, the participants, who had the opportunity to work on the desirable future in Module 1, dedicated themselves to building an Action Plan, in which they identified actions to achieve the desirable future (Question 4) and defined individual trajectories and collective to implement these actions (Question 5).

MODULE 2

Question 4	What can we do to achieve this dream, this desirable future? Create a list of actions, according to the chosen theme.
Question 5	How can we implement the proposed actions? Who should be responsible for actions?



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With more objective questions and with the bond of trust created in the group, for example, a reflection on violence against women in the countryside emerged. A dialogue that took place with the presence of men, who were able to see, in a more realistic way, the situation of vulnerability faced by many women.

Reflections also appeared on the importance of encouraging female and youth participation in property management activities, as well as the need for men to help more with domestic work. There was a recurring perception that there is little incentive and attraction for young people in rural areas and that this needs to be changed.

In addition to the specificities related to women and youth, the questions and exchanges of knowledge in the groups provided a joint analysis, with the participation of women and men, on the best path for the family, for rural property and for community life in the countryside.

In general, the leadership of many women in the rural area was also noticeable, either as a mobiliser of rural associations and unions, or through a qualified speech on the situation of women and youth in the countryside, or as protagonists of environmental preservation.





LESSONS LEARNED: PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE PROCESS

In this chapter we will deal with the lessons learned. These lessons are based on observing the dynamics of the 70 participatory workshops for the promotion of female empowerment and social inclusion of rural youth, in the Amazon and Atlantic Forest biomes. Perceptions are related to the process itself, which includes the choice of format, the team and the inclusive approach taken.

3.1 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN ORGANISING TWO-DAY WORKSHOPS

The choice of conducting 2-day, non-consecutive workshops brought opportunities and challenges. Among the positive aspects we can mention the possibility of working with more time and quality on the reflections shared and sensitive listening as well as the chance to better assimilate the experience between the modules.

Module 1 was a time for people from different communities to get to know each other, to strengthen bonds of friendship, work on common values, remember the past, diagnose the present and think about the future. Module 2 aimed to continue the construction started in Module 1 and, from the perspective of the future, identify the actions necessary to get there and to create individual and collective commitments to the desired future.

The organisation of the second module included a visit to a property with the low-carbon technologies implemented. The group was hosted by the family who owned the property. This was a moment of great exchange between the farmers. In this constructive perspective learning about what their neighbour was doing, asking questions about implementation and cost, and sharing the activities happening on their own property generated empathy and synergy within the group, as well as creating possibilities and interest in partnerships.

The main challenge in relation to conducting the workshops in two parts was to maintain the same audience for both modules.

Although it is not impossible to maintain the participants in a 2-module participatory workshop, it is worth mentioning that the challenge is enormous, since many factors affect this dynamic, including:

1. The mobilisation process for inviting families;
2. Difficulty for farmers to be absent from their productive activities for two days to participate in workshops, even if not consecutive;
3. The impractical content of Module 1, causing disinterest in some participants.



To overcome the challenges to participation, after the first round of workshops, we started to strengthen mobilisation during Module 1, emphasising the importance of their participation and sharing some activities that would be conducted in Module 2 to awaken interest. Another strategy was to create links with rural producers. Personalised invitations were delivered and, in many regions, WhatsApp lists were created.

The difficulty for farmers to be absent from productive activities is a point that must be carefully considered. The dynamics in rural areas



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do not allow for absences, requiring participants to organise themselves in relation to the daily demands of families and properties.

These questions were raised and considered in the elaboration of the proposal of the participatory workshops. Good results were obtained in both modules and, in general, expectations were met. However, the question remains: would a 1-day workshop have been more profitable?

Many lessons were learned from this process. It became clear that analysis of the particularities of each region is a fundamental aspect in defining the most appropriate format for participation.

In some states, such as Pará, the territorial reality was a determining aspect, considering the great distances which increased travel time and also the costs with logistics.

Meanwhile, in Paraná, adaptations to the schedule needed to be considered for the region's milk producers, who require the early morning period to carry out their productive activities.

And, thinking mainly about young people, care was taken with scheduling due to school activities, with the belief that the participation of this public would be greater if the workshops were held on the weekend.

Despite all the challenges, we concluded that the two-day structure was necessary in order for participants to reflect on the past, present and future trajectory. In addition, it was essential that total freedom was given to facilitators to adjust the start and end times of the workshops, as well as the duration of activities, in consideration the regional productive context of the farmers.

Adaptations and adjustments were made and the characteristics of each group were recognised and valued. One of the guiding principles of the workshops was to put the people above the method, that is, to prioritise the needs of the group, give voice to the participants and respect the collective rhythm.

Finally, it is worth making some comments on the structure of the workshops in relation to the more theoretical content of Module 1 and more practical content of Module 2. In order to implement the proposal to work on the memory of what the countryside was like before (past), as it is today (present) and how it can be improved in the coming years (future), there was no way to invert the order of the programme and start with the practical part in Module 1. It is worth considering how to bring more practical elements to activities about the past, present and future, worked on the Module 1, or even the possibility of creating other ways to facilitate these reflections.

The methodologies of Art of hosting, World Café and Open Space, applied in the workshops, were successful in the objectives of the Project and made it possible to create spaces for dialogue and collective construction. This was essential for farmers to analyse the condition of each member within the family and within the productive system, as well as to reflect, in an integrated way, on the importance of valuing the role of women and young people, groups historically undervalued in the productive activities of the countryside.

It can be said that the participatory workshops mobilised everyone present - women, men and young people, since, at all time, responsibility was given to the participants for building their future, and that of their families and communities.

Taking the symbolism of a tree, the workshops aimed to strengthen the roots of the participants and, at the same time, make them look upwards, towards the future, where their dreams can touch the sky, while still bearing fruit on the ground.

3.2 SELECTION AND ALIGNMENT OF FACILITATION TEAMS

In order to ensure the quality of the execution of the workshops, academically qualified professionals were identified and selected in all states, preferably also with experience in facilitation or participatory processes in rural areas.

The choice of facilitators from the state itself or with some prior knowledge of the region where the workshops would be carried out was a success in the process. Far beyond the financial issue of optimizing expenses with logistics, the familiarity of local facilitators with the social, environmental and economic issues of the region certainly contributed to better understanding of the words and feelings of the participants and appropriate facilitation of the work. As they also already knew the region, difficulties with transport due to the characteristics of local infrastructure, were faced with ease.

To assist in the workshops, two facilitators (one male and one female) were selected. The idea that the workshops were always facilitated by a man and a woman was based on the need to ensure gender representation and, consequently, to value the rural family and all their demands.

This format was a great challenge when selecting professionals. At the same time, the effort was clearly worth it: the mixed teams functioned in a synergistic and well-adjusted manner, and allowed men and women, especially young people, to identify themselves.

Those selected were prepared to work and received, in addition to prior alignment with the Project and workshop objectives, the necessary teaching materials with regard to the application of the World

Café technique and the specific dynamics of the workshops . This “laboratory” served to identify in a timely manner, two key aspects related to team work, which greatly improved the prospects for the workshops in all states: i) the need to clearly explain the motivations, intentions and the emotions behind each action; and ii) the need for objective, fluid and constant communication between team members, regardless of the role of each one.

This process resulted in a synergy that was fundamental. Without this, the same level of intensity and efficiency of the work carried out in such a short time and over such a large area would have been impossible. In some cases, team members went up to 4,000 km in approximately one week, including successive trips by plane, car, taxi, motorcycle and boat, following the programming of different workshops with the utmost dedication and care.



Nova Londrina, PR

3.3 ENSURING PARTICIPATION IS HARD WORK, BUT THE LESSONS ARE WORTH IT

Participation has always been a guiding principle in the workshops and also a major challenge. At all stages of the process, the effort of the organising team to ensure the participation of Project partners and beneficiaries was seen.

Let's look at some examples. In order to learn about the regional and local context in which the beneficiary farmers of the Project were inserted, previous socio-environmental diagnoses of the micro-regions were prepared, voluntarily filled out by rural extension institutions; the families invited to the participatory workshops were mobilised by the project's technical assistants and accompanied, at a second stage, by regional coordinators and, in some regions, by the facilitators themselves; the elaboration of the program proposal was created with the participation of the Project team, including the facilitators; the methodological option chosen was a participatory technique, in



Vacaria, RS

which all members of the families participating in the workshops had space to reflect and put forward their ideas and points of view.

In relation to the participation of rural extension institutions in the elaboration of diagnoses, we extracted two lessons. The first was one of specific interest for facilitation and the second lesson was on the assessment of project execution in general.

Regarding the first lesson, the responses to the semi-structured questionnaires allowed confirmation of the challenges and opportunities of each micro-region, as well as adding some topics of local interest. The second lesson referred to the dynamics of the institutions themselves in the final phases of project implementation and was based on the number of effective responses to the guiding questions as an objective indicator of their level of participation and effective involvement with the Project.

The support of technical assistants for the mobilisation of families was a sensitive point in the process. For organisational reasons, the workshops' executive team did not have direct access to rural producers and producers and, therefore, depended on other actors within the Project to invite and mobilise beneficiary families for participatory workshops. In that sense, it was difficult to follow this process of how and when invitations to families were being made and, in some places, whether they were actually being made.

The schedule underwent some adjustments, especially from the first round to the second. The constant monitoring of the process made it possible to evaluate the results of the first workshops and, based on this valuable experience, to arrive at a new improved version of the methodology. Thus, the first round of workshops in all states served as a kind of "pilot" for the other 56 workshops that were yet to come.

The mobilising questions of each workshop, as mentioned in the previous chapter, were simplified and even more focused on the problems of rural women and youth in the past, the present and the



Agudo, RS

future. This improvement was only possible because the process followed the same logic of participation, with rounds of evaluations between the teams, where the facts and the different perceptions of the team were considered. Conversations, and adjustments were necessary before, during and after the workshops, and always in a transparent, constructive and objective way.

All of these actions contribute to achieving the main objective: reuniting families and building pathways for the sustainable realisation of dreams, encouraging female protagonism and the social inclusion of young people in rural areas.

This trajectory, taken collectively, shows that it is not an easy task to ensure participation, but that the results are rewarding, as they express the reality of the communities, thus generating commitment and benefits for all involved.

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURE: MORE WORKSHOPS OUTDOORS

The holding of open-air workshops in the Project's Demonstrative or Multiplier Units was a request that was frequently expressed by the participants to the facilitators, or registered in written evaluation forms. This demand is based on the huge (and logical) interest of farmers in knowing more about low-carbon agricultural practises and receiving more information on how they were implemented by their neighbours. Not to mention that, when dealing with people accustomed to contact with nature, they may feel more comfortable in open and familiar places.

Despite this demand representing greater logistical and financial effort, the difference and the quality in participation is noteworthy because of the informality and familiarity that this environment provided. Let us see some manifestations registered in the evaluation forms:



More workshops like these outdoors when possible.

(Female, Ciríaco, Rio Grande do Sul)



Do more workshops and field days on more properties to have more integration among the beneficiaries of the programs.

(Male, Machadinho, Rio Grande do Sul)

3.5 CREATING CONNECTIONS

During the workshops the participants greatly appreciated the opportunity of being able to talk to other farmers and make new friendships, thus overcoming the isolation that characterizes many rural properties, especially in the Southern and Northern regions of the country.



I believe that these meetings have brought us closer together and that ideas to strengthen us and about cooperativism may arise.

(Male, Alta Floresta- Mato Grosso)



I wish my whole community could participate.

(Female, Valença- Bahia)



It was excellent. It took me out of my routine, I made new friends, I met people and learned about their dreams.

(Male, Dois Vizinhos- Paraná)



The positive appreciation of the interaction between people and the exchange of experiences was also reflected quantitatively in the evaluation forms.

The space for genuine, relaxed, open dialogue and the possibility for rural youth and women to manifest themselves without fear and be listened to with respect, perhaps for the first time, were also highly valued:



I really liked it, it was great to hear the opinion of the parents about the role of men, women and youth.

(Female, Terra Nova do Norte - Mato Grosso)



I liked it because it made everyone think and talk, to express their opinions.

(Male, Terra Nova do Norte - Mato Grosso)

Many compliments were made about the new teachings, especially those that allowed young people to learn about their parents' and grandparents' lives in the countryside and how fast reality is changing, generating both positive and negative factors.





RESULTS

4.1 THE CHALLENGE OF MEASURING IMPACTS

The real impact of the project can only be measured over the years, with rigorous evaluations of carefully selected indicators. Thus, despite the success of the Project in general and the implementation of this workshop strategy in particular, the scale of the impacts that the project will achieve has yet to be demonstrated.

On the one hand, the geographical scope of the project, covering 35 microregions across 70 municipalities in seven states of the Amazon and the Atlantic Forest, means that there is potential for generalized changes, replicated on a large scale. But what happens within each home, each productive unit, each family, is, to a large extent, difficult to predict.

Even so, indicators of success were identified. The positive impact of participatory workshops was monitored through quantitative and qualitative indicators.

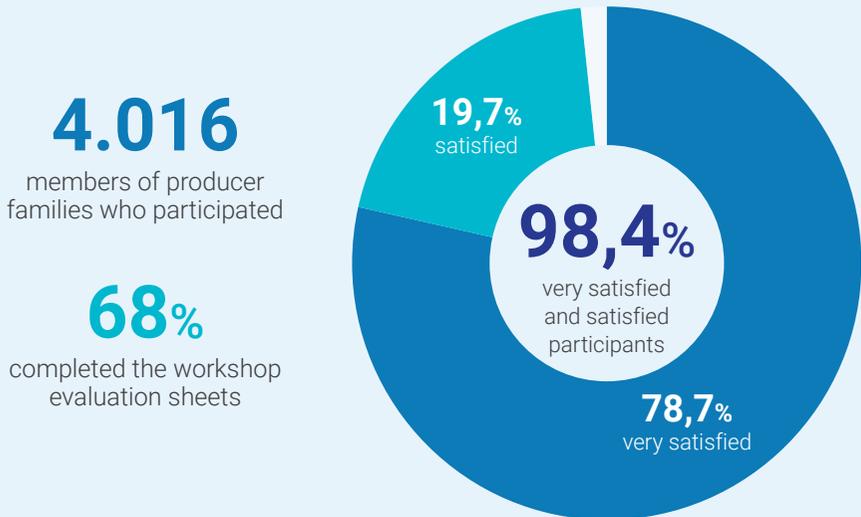
Quantitative Indicators. The basic premise was to monitor the number of people (of the profile contemplated by the Project) of the total of invited/mobilised producers, who participated in Module 1 and how many participants in the first Module returned to Module 2, held between 7 and 15 days after the first workshop. Another aspect measured considered how many people Module 1 participants invited to join in with Module 2, and what was their representation, in terms of geography, gender, age, etc.

It is worth considering that it is not possible to measure the success of the workshops exclusively by the number of participants present in the second module. Several teams suggested that the measure of the “success” of the workshops could be made by the number of hugs and thanks that the team received at the end of the activity, as well as through the satisfaction assessment forms that were, markedly, positive.

Qualitative Indicators. Qualitative indicators, on the other hand, include information collected in the short, medium and long term. In the short term the information was collected through the observation of participants by the Project team and through the voluntary and anonymous completion of an evaluation form by the participating producers.

Conclusion: A total of 4,016 members of farming families participated in the workshops between the months of September and December 2018. Of these, 68% completed the workshops' evaluation forms and rated the meetings with a high level of satisfaction. Indeed, 78.7% of participants were "very satisfied" and 19.7% "satisfied", totalling 98.4% of participants very satisfied and satisfied with the participatory workshops.

Satisfaction level, quantity and percentage of participants



These results confirm that this activity, within the scope of the Low Carbon Agriculture Project, can be considered a successful and especially innovative example in the field of international co-operation for the sustainable development of agriculture in Brazil. Among the reasons it is worth mentioning:

» 1. Understanding perceptual barriers

The design and execution of participatory workshops with the families of producers took into account the perceptual barriers and the different “non-economic” rationalities of small and medium producers. The methodology used revealed the resistance to new proposals (in the diagnosis of past and present), but, at the same time, in the vision of the future, it was possible to present sustainable agriculture, combined with traditional knowledge, as a safe and efficient way to improve the local socio-environmental reality. This understanding was not brought in from outside, but, was a consequence of the participants’ reflections during the workshops.

» 2. Innovative strategies

Another aspect that deserves to be highlighted is that the workshops ensured the recognition of the “other”. Getting to know the life, dreams and challenges of farmers who had been trained to implement low-carbon agriculture allowed the project to go beyond being purely technical, focussed on technology transfer. The proposal gained the identity of these farmers, who came to see the objectives of the Project as life projects which, as such, do not end with the Project, but extend throughout the social, environmental and economic development of these beneficiary families.

4.2 WHAT DO WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THEIR REALITIES?

The problems faced by Brazilian rural women and young people, as described in the 2017 Agricultural Census and literature on the top-

ic, were clearly mirrored in the 70 family workshops organised by the Project in seven Brazilian states: four in the Atlantic Forest and three in the Amazon. In all cases, there were coincident points in the two different assessments of the problem, the bottom up approach taken by the participation of rural women, youth and their families in workshops, and the top down approach taken by municipal, state and regional rural extension agencies.

MAIN CHALLENGES

» WOMEN

Both in the states of the Amazon and the Atlantic Forest, strong machismo was pointed out as the main challenge faced by rural women (in some cases, the words used were “misogyny” or “prejudice”), as well as the invisibility of the productive value attributed by men to female work in rural areas. Although women play a very important role in family and productive activities, which was evidenced in the participatory workshops, in practice, they continue to see their



opinions and participation, they continue to see their opinions and participation as subordinate to those of their male partners.

At the roots of the invisibility of the productive value of female labour, cultural issues were pointed out in all cases, such as: machismo, lack of appreciation of women, conservative division of labour in which only women are responsible for caring for their children and the home, lack of education on equal opportunities, lack of training for women in decision making, need for greater empowerment, need to encourage entrepreneurship and female associations to overcome isolation, etc.

Women in the Amazon

Regarding the problems of rural women, it can be said that different characteristics were identified from one biome to the other. In the Amazon, the lack of land rights for women, linked to the frequent lack of land titles in the name of women farmers, was considered as a fundamental aggravating factor in this situation. The problem is being gradually corrected in some regions of the Amazon, such as, for example, in some settlements in the state of Mato Grosso, where INCRA is giving preference to women in the registration and distribution of the lots⁵. In other rural areas, it is clear that women up to 40 years old are beginning to become qualified and practice social participation at a level more or less similar to that of men.

Women in the Atlantic Forest

In the Atlantic Forest, the general problem for rural women was less linked to issues of land security or access to personal documentation, and more linked to the historical lack of recognition of the value of women's work, including functions which imply hard physical labour, such as this is the case with dairy production.

Modes of production with high demand for labour, such as organic or dairy production, force women to work seven days a week, which,

⁵ Documents for the concession of lots are provided to farmers by Incra.

in a certain way, prevents women from leaving the production unit to dedicate themselves to creating social bonds or accessing educational and recreational opportunities.

» RURAL YOUTH

In the case of young people, the challenge highlighted in the participatory workshops can be summarised in two key concepts, already pointed out by the specialised literature on rural youth: the problem of future planning (family succession) and the lack of access to an education adapted to the rural context.

In fact, in both cases, the main cause for the marked rural exodus that worries young people and their families was the lack of opportunities for them to continue in the productive unit, generating enough income to maintain a dignified way of life. In particular, the problem of the succession of young people, as well as that of rural women, can also be attributed to both cultural and productive causes.



In the first question (cultural causes) the workshop participants mentioned, sometimes explicitly, sometimes seen when reading between the lines of their manifestations, was the lack of dialogue due to the taboos related to succession, according to which parents avoid talking about the transfer of functions and responsibilities to their children, either to avoid losing decision-making power within the productive unit, or to avoid addressing sensitive issues, such as aging and death. In the second question (productive issues), the land ownership situation was the key to the problem of young people, even if for different reasons in each biome.

Youth from the Amazon

In the workshops held in the Amazon, the challenges identified by young people and their families were typical of the extensive and exuberant local geography and included the isolation suffered in remote production units with little or no access to means of communication. Other elements identified were challenges with infrastructure,



Presidente Tancredo Neves, BA

with poor roads affected by extreme weather events, and difficult accessibility to urban centres, including health centres or schools.

Youth from the Atlantic Forest

In the specific case of the Atlantic Forest, the fragmentation of the production unit by successive intergenerational inheritances, together with the marked process of land concentration caused by the advance of monocultures, such as soy, tobacco, and commercial pine and eucalyptus forests in large scale, has eliminated a large number of productive units traditionally managed by families of small and medium rural producers. In view of the lack of access to land, young people expressed a feeling of being forced to seek new ways of life in urban areas, further increasing aging and masculinisation in the countryside.

Dreaming the future

In spite of many problems, dreams were also expressed in relation to the production method of family establishments, for example, the installation of new sustainable, low-carbon production technologies, new financing and incentives such as those provided in the Project, etc. In the specific case of family succession, families systematically pointed out, but more frequently in the Atlantic Forest, the dream of having educational content adapted to local, family and, especially, rural needs.

Thus, the desire to maintain and create new Rural Family Schools was often expressed, based on the French pedagogy of alternation, with children and young people studying and living for two weeks in the school followed by two weeks spent working at the family property with their parents. Many of these schools are closing due to lack of resources, especially in the southern states of the Atlantic Forest.

Young people and rural youth also expressed their dream of having the same educational and leisure opportunities as young people in urban areas, which in some cases led them to compare their cur-

rent expectations with those of their ancestors. Faced with these situations, the facilitators tried to avoid idealisations of the past, reflected in comments by adults and the elderly, in which they mention that young people from before worked more and better; that women were more dedicated to home and children and that today they are looking for more comfort; that current education creates unattainable expectations of quality of life in the countryside, etc.

The families gathered in the participatory workshops expressed that the tendency of young people (especially young women) to migrate to the cities to carry out higher studies causes a rupture in the rural family and in the productive unit itself that loses labour. Few young people return with some of the reasons identified being the lack of sufficient land in the face of a large number of heirs, the lack of a transparent and organised succession that allows them to work with autonomy and creativity within the family or because in the countryside they feel isolated and without prospects for personal, economic and professional growth.

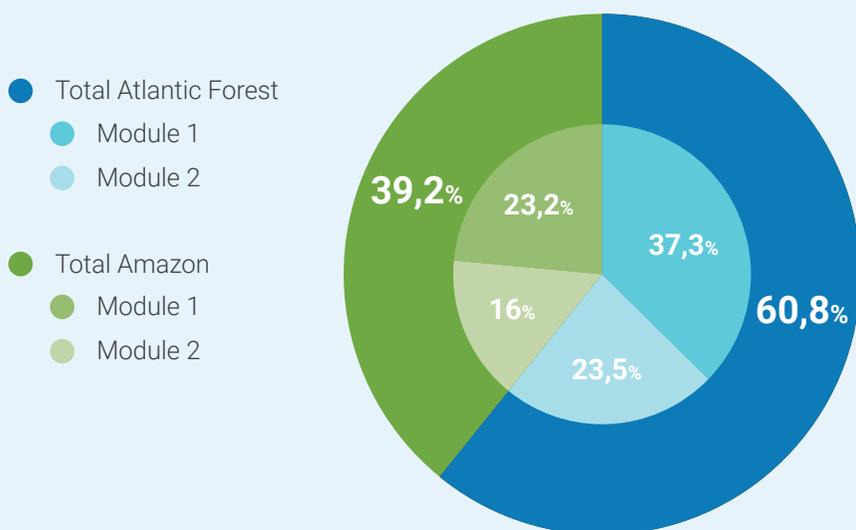
4.3 PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOPS IN NUMBERS

As already mentioned, a total of 4,016 people participated in the workshops, including men, women and children. If we exclude the children, we can conclude that a total of 3,844 people (including youth) participated in the modules, 2,323 in Module 1 and 1,521 in Module 2, in the Project's target municipalities.

In the Amazon, 1,506 producers participated, 891 in Module 1 and 615 in Module 2, while in the Atlantic Forest, the workshops had a total of 2,338 participants (1,432 in Module 1 and 906 in Module 2). This greater representativeness of the Atlantic Forest biome makes sense in two respects: first, this biome has a higher population density compared to the regions of the Amazon, and second, the project involved one more state in the Atlantic Forest. As already mentioned, the Project developed its activities in four states of the Atlantic Forest and three of the Amazon.

In all cases, the number of participants in Module 2 was lower than in Module 1. This can be explained by several reasons explained above, including logistical problems, especially travel and also the fact some families interpreted that both modules would repeat the same content. This eventual misunderstanding was quickly noticed and corrected during the closing of Module 1 and in the invitations to Module 2.

Distribution of workshop participants by module and biome



When comparing the relative percentages of the profile of the participants to that of the most recent IBGE Agricultural Census, carried out in 2017, it is possible to state that the workshops achieved their double objective of creating a space for empowerment and inclusion of rural women and young people. While the Agricultural Census shows that the total of agricultural establishments in which the farmer is female rose from 12.7% to 18.6% (approximately two women for every eight men), between 2006 and 2017, the workshops more than doubled this female representation: over the two





Dois Vizinhos, PR

modules, the ratio was approximately two women for every three men in both biomes. The representation of women and young people in the workshops, in some cases, was around 60%.

Regarding the representation of young people in the workshops, although the number was relatively low compared to the presence of adults (13% in the Atlantic Forest and 11% in the Amazon), these percentages are more than double the reality presented by the rural census which indicates that young people, under the age of 35, today represent 5% of rural workers in Brazil. Between 2006 and 2017, the representation of young people aged between 25 and 35 years in rural areas fell from 13.56% to 9.48%.

It is worth remembering, however, that part of the “high” representation of young people in the modules can also be attributed to the criterion used to classify a participant as a young person. This criterion wasn’t limited to age but included the individual’s role within the rural property. Thus, those who still play the role of “children” were considered young, in the sense of having to abide by the decision of the head of the productive unit (in general, the parents). Thus, there are numerous cases of elderly farmers who resist the idea of the succession of the property, which leads the children, sometimes in their 40s or more, still having to abide by the decisions of their parents.

4.4 COMPARISONS BETWEEN BIOMES

The comparison of the profile of workshop participants in the two biomes must also be carried out with great care, because in some cases, as in the Atlantic Forest, there exists a great diversity among the states involved, which can take the average to an extreme.

In the case of age groups, there are states of the Atlantic Forest known to have an aged population: the 2017 Agricultural Census confirmed, for example, that in Rio Grande do Sul, of the 983 thousand people who occupy the 365 thousand agricultural establishments, 57% are in the age group between 30 and 60 years. The

same Census showed that, in the last decade, the number of young people in the state has decreased - from 1.9% to 1.2% in the age group of up to 25 years. Even more: 39% of rural establishments in Rio Grande do Sul are headed by men over 60 and many of them have not yet planned family succession due to the lack of dialogue with the younger generation.

The same care must be applied in the case of female presence in rural areas in each biome: the supposed numerical “superiority” of women farmers who participated in the workshops of the Atlantic Forest in relation to women in the Amazon should not hide the strong trend towards the masculinisation of rural areas in the southern states of the country, such as Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais (all Project beneficiaries in the Atlantic Forest biome), as well as the strong female presence in the rural areas of the state of Bahia, with regions classified as Atlantic Forest .

According to the IBGE Agricultural Census, 194,533 women head rural establishments in Bahia. This number of women is equivalent to 25.6% of the 760,373 registered farmers, which leaves Bahia with the second highest percentage of women farmers in Brazil, just behind Pernambuco (27.2%).

In fact, all Brazilian states saw an increase in the percentage of female agricultural producers, between 2006 and 2017. Even though it is difficult to identify, it can be said based on IBGE’s quantitative data, that the reasons for the advancement of women’s leadership in rural areas, reflected in the participatory workshops, is related to the process of female empowerment in society as a whole, where women have conquered other places and acted in different spaces.





4

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Like the Low-Carbon Agriculture Project, many other conservation and sustainable development projects in the agricultural sector, financed by international cooperation, have used multiple tools to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions among small and medium-sized farmers in Brazil.

These tools include information, training and financial incentives as potential agents of change in the use of natural resources and land by rural populations. The originality of the Low-carbon Agriculture Project, which makes it a singular initiative, was to combine all these tools in a single large-scale project, trying to make them interact and complement each other in order to meet the social, environmental, economic and cultural needs of the farmer and his family.

Over 5 years, information, technical assistance, rural credit, financial incentives, actions for awareness and empowerment were combined to generate changes not only in opinion, but especially in behaviours related to the construction of more sustainable agriculture.



Camamu, BA

These transformations go beyond the strictly economic, as they also act directly in the environmental sphere (less soil degradation and less emission of greenhouse gases) and social, looking for a greater feminine role in the field and more opportunities for decent and rewarding work for rural youth.

As mentioned, the socioeconomic and environmental changes that will emerge as a result of the implementation of participatory workshops have yet to be assessed and their impact will only be appreciated in the long run. Results depend on the fact that the more than 4,000 women, men, youth and children who live and build their futures on small and medium-scale properties realise that it is possible to face the fear of risk and innovation and invest in new paths whilst still respecting their rhythms and needs.

Realising that it is worthwhile choosing path towards sustainability includes valuing what is being done well on the property and being willing to change unsustainable production methods. In this sense,



Ariquemes, RO



Nova Londrina, PR

the planning and execution of the Project's family workshops allowed confirmation of the key role of rural extension, but also the urgent need to improve the technical capacities and interpersonal relationships of the technical assistants and extension agencies, which can be the best entry point into the productive units and rural communities, but, that can also represent a significant bottleneck in innovation for sustainability.

It is worth remembering the enormous wealth of knowledge and experience that farmers of different generations already have. The 70 reports from modules 1 and 2 of the workshops held in 35 micro-regions illustrate the great knowledge that families have about their environment, their productive potential and resilience strategies in the face of the challenges of climate, social and economic changes they face.

In this sense, it becomes obsolete to only talk about "transferring solutions" from technicians to farmers. It would be much more ap-

appropriate to speak of “co-construction” or “co-production” of solutions that value, in an authentic dialogue, what each one already knows. With this, certainly, a collaborative intelligence can be created and, when done properly, generate good results for families and their respective communities.

Even though this is not the goal of participatory workshops, the meetings have also become an opportunity for producers to express themselves freely about the progress of the Project. Thus, many participants, when feeling really listened to by the facilitators, took advantage of the modules to express the need for greater professionalisation and engagement by many of the technicians involved with the project, qualifying strongly the role and the principles of a more effective technical assistance based on dialogue and the exchange of knowledge.

As a final reflection, we emphasise the importance of seizing the opportunity to maintain and develop the social capital generated among farming families during participatory workshops, to complement the traditional proposal of technology transfer. This social fabric is the key to authentic bottom-up social transformation. In the workshops, women recognized and verbalised, some for the first time, manifesting themselves in front of the male presence the productive value of their work, as well as their past, present and future rights and challenges.

It is clear that creating space for manifestation and listening will not solve the problem, but it may be the beginning of a new trajectory. It now remains to be seen whether the seeds of ideas planted during these more than two months of workshops will be irrigated and internalised by the families to produce the future they desire.

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Execution:



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