AGROECOLOGICAL AMAZON

Magazine

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AGROECOLOGICAL AMAZON

Magazine

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EXPEDIENT

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Cover Photo: João Albuquerque | The image highlights the SAF of Sir Valdivino Campos, located in the Menino Jesus community, municipality of Trairão, in the region BR 163, West of Pará. The farmer's family is part of the project Create for Empower, carried out by the Menino Jesus Community Association (ACMJ) and supported by the Dema Fund, through the Agroecological Amazon Project.

Amazônia
Agroecológica

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Ney Kwazady Xipaia Mendes

| LUZIA DOROTHY DO ESPÍRITO SANTO FUND
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foto: *Yuri Rodrigues/Arquivo FASE*

INTRODUCTION

The Dema Fund [Dema Fund] is pleased to release the publication Amazônia Agroecológica [Agroecological Amazon], which brings to the public the results of the Agroecological Amazon Unified Public Call for Proposals, which arose from a partnership between the Federation of Social and Educational Assistance Organizations (FASE), the Dema Fund [Dema Fund] and the Fundo Amazônia/BNDESc [Amazon Fund/BNDESc]. From the moment it was launched in 2019, many challenges have been confronted in the implementation of the approved projects, but today, after five years, the call for proposals has come to an end with 38 community projects being developed in different traditionally occupied territories in the state of Pará.

Through a joint effort by members of FASE and the Dema Fund, the projects show the struggle and strength of the communities involved against the great hurdles that have been experienced over the past five years, with intense social, political and environmental transformations in the Amazon, in Brazil and in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) plus the extreme right-wing government of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022) and, notwithstanding, the great drought that affected the Amazon in 2023, were events that further exposed the territories to the advance of predatory activities led by agribusiness and mining. These have been years of record levels of heat, fires, deforestation, pollution and violence. It has been a very long period of vulnerability that has gradually been overcome by organizations and communities resuming their collective and political life and reorganizing the fronts of struggle and resistance in the territories.

For this reason, more than the one-off and systematic execution of a project, the resources from the Agroecological Amazon Call for Proposals have made it possible for many communities to resume actions to defend their territories and bolster their organizations and networks. Above all, the appreciation of their production systems and concepts of biodiversity management based on traditional and ancestral knowledge indicates ways of opposing agricultural intensification and the overexploitation of the land. The conflicts that have been faced and the impacts of the historical and current scenarios are still present, but the experiences have achieved extremely important results in view of the great hardships, and reverberate in the present and future of the territories, thus unfolding into many possibilities for action and thought, presented today in this publication.

FOREWORD

Felício Pontes Jr.

Desde que a ditadura civil-militar lançou na década de 1960 o Plano de Integração NaEver since the civilian-military dictatorship launched the National Integration Plan (PIN) in the 1960s, the region has clashed between two different development models. The first can be called predatory development. The second, socioenvironmental development.

The predatory development model can be summarized in five basic activities, namely: timber, extensive cattle ranching, mining, monoculture and energy. In simple terms, the plan was to exploit timber in the first place. What was left of the forest would be cut down to plant grass (extensive cattle ranching). In parallel with these activities, the plan was to exploit all possible minerals for export. Rivers were seen only as a source of electricity, and their multiple uses were neglected. And more recently, the most biologically diverse forest on the planet has been exchanged for commodity monocultures.

Three main public sources were used to finance this plan: Banco do Brasil [Bank of Brazil], Banco da Amazônia [Bank of the Amazon] and Superintendência do Desenvolvimento da Amazônia – SUDAM [Superintendence for the Development of the Amazon]. There was no shortage of money. However, the result was not in line with the Amazon. The region had a deforestation rate of 0.5% in the 1970s. This rate reached 20% in the second decade of this century. In other words, in around 40 years almost ¼ of the Brazilian Amazon has been deforested.

Another consequence was a strong rural exodus. In 1960, 35% of the population of the Amazon was living in urban areas. Today, after the wide-spread implementation of these projects, around 80% of Amazonians live in cities. And the region's Human Development Index (HDI) is lower than the national average – which in itself is shameful.

Therefore, the injection of public money promoted more concentration of income, deforestation and violence. This model, based on predatory activities, has not been successful.

In contrast to this model is the socio-environmental model. It starts from a basic

principle: articulation between biodiversity and socio-diversity. In other words, it reconciles development with environmental preservation.

The main activities can be condensed into the term agroecology. These are products that are increasingly strong on the market, such as açaí, Brazil-nut, cocoa, andiroba and copaiba oils... Not to mention what hasn't been studied yet. The Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MPEG) estimates that, out of every 10 species that exist on the planet, one is in the Amazon. Only 5% of the pharmacological potential of Amazonian flora has been studied. The National Institute for Amazonian Research (INPA) estimates that 788 species of seeds in the region are of economic interest, but only half of them have been studied.

It is an income redistribution model because of the predominance of collective forms of land use, such as extractive reserves, indigenous lands, Quilombola territories and sustainable development projects. Cultivation is undertaken by traditional peoples and communities - such as indigenous peoples, Quilombolas, small-scale fishermen, andiroba collectors... - as well as peasants and family farmers. This form of agriculture is responsible for around 70% of the Brazilian food supply.

It is also about the perception that development can be about maintaining what you have, i.e. "clean water and protected forest", as stated by Munduruku Chief, Arnaldo Kaba Munduruku.

Even if only the economic aspect is taken into account, the set of, for example, 17 types of activities in the Amazon ecosystem — from water supply and climate regulation to the supply of food such as fish, fruit and nuts — amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

This shows the latent conflict between the heralds of this colonialist vision of (predatory) development and the traditional peoples and communities of the Amazon. As taught by Loureiro, this conflict arises from the attempt to replace nature with standards that are considered rational "by transforming it into pastures, homogeneous crops, slash and burn, without its enormous potential having been recognized, raised and exploited."

Therefore, this clash between such different worldviews brings together environmental, social, territorial and cultural elements, among others, constantly linked by a matrix of social exclusion exposed by the defenders of the predatory model, in a lethal mixture for a large part of those who dare to challenge this situation.

The Amazon is in dispute and the following pages are an encouragement to those who dream of a respectful relationship between human beings and nature, freeing us from the predatory and suicidal path.

Drought in Amazonas State causes food shortages in isolated towns.

(09/22/2023)

Global warming combined with two simultaneous climatic phenomena are influencing the worsening of the dry season in the Amazon, causing the volume of rainfall to be much lower than normal for the period, leading to food shortages and isolation in several cities in Amazonas State

https://amazoniareal.com.br/seca-no-amazonas-deixa-cidades-isoladas-e-com-escassez-de-alimento/

Defesa Civil

El Niño causes drought and puts 42 rivers in the Amazon and Pantanal in critical condition . (09/28/2023)

The El Niño phenomenon has favored drought in 38 rivers in the Amazon and another four in the Pantanal, which are expected to remain with flows below the historical average until at least December.

https://www.terra.com.br/planeta/noticias/el-nino-provoca-seca-e-coloca-42-rios-na-amazonia-e-no-pantanal-em-estado-critico,fe35741ffaacf22ab924a43f5df47bf1z88hb2u0.html?utm_source=clipboard

Floating houses run aground on river that has dried up in the Amazon; boats take longer to travel. (09/29/2023)

Drought in Amazonas State is affecting floating homes and businesses. Regions are already experiencing a shortage of drinking water and food. 60 of the state's 62 cities are suffering from drought; 18 are in a state of emergency.

https://g1.globo.com/bom-dia-brasil/noticia/2023/09/29/casas-flutuantes-encalham-em-rio-que-secou-no-amazonas-embarcacoes-levam-mais-tempo-em-viagens.ghtml

In the Amazon, more than 100 river dolphins are dying because of the extreme drought. (10/01/2023)

The death of tucuxi dolphins adds to the drama of communities without water and supplies for their survival, while the drought tends to worsen.

https://climainfo.org.br/2023/10/02/na-amazonia-mais-de-100-botos-morrem-por-causa-da-seca-extrema/

Miguel Monteiro / Instituto Mamirauá

Tapajós River is 38 centimeters below Santarém's historic drought. (10/08//2023)

According to Civil Defense data, the level of the Tapajós River reached 94 cm on Sunday (8). The historic level in 2010 is 1.32 meters.

https://g1.globo.com/pa/santarem-regiao/noticia/2023/10/08/rio-tapajos-esta-a-38-centimetros-da-seca-historica-de-santarem.ghtml

Madeira River has lowest level in 56 years, says National Water Agency. (10/10/2023)

The National Water and Basic Sanitation Agency (ANA) declared on Tuesday (10) in Brasilia that the Madeira River in the Amazon is in a critical situation of water shortage. The measure was published in the Federal Official Gazette and is valid until November 30, 2023.

https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2023-10/rio-madeira-tem-menor-nivel-em-56-anos-diz-agencia-nacional-de-aguas

Santarém and other municipalities in the region are in a state of public calamity due to extreme drough. (10/11/2023)

Cities in Pará are in a state of emergency due to the extreme drought in the state. Santarém should declare a state of emergency to request aid from the state government and the federal government.

https://tapajosdefato.com.br/noticia/1248/santarem-e-outros-municipios-da-regiao-vivem-situacao-de-calamidade-publica-devido-seca-extrema

Isabelle Maciel

Drought in the Amazon turns the tropical landscape into a desert. (10/16/2023)

River levels approach historic lows. Without a waterway, riverside communities are isolated. The region is also affected by forest fires.

https://www.dw.com/pt-br/seca-na-amaz%C3%B4nia-transforma-paisagem-tropical-em-deserto/a-67110708

Tv Globo

Severe drought in Amazonas State has already affected more than half a million people, according to Civil Defense. (10/16/2023)

The state has 50 municipalities in a state of emergency, 10 cities on alert and 2 in a state of normality. Approximately 138,000 families are affected by the drought.

https://g1.globo.com/am/amazonas/noticia/2023/10/16/seca-severa-no-amazonas-ja-afeta-mais-de-meio-milhao-de-pessoas-aponta-defesa-civil.ghtml?mc_cid=2c01606775&mc_eid=d8dc55f01c

MPF *[Federal Public Prosecutor's Office]* recommends a study be conducted to evaluate declaration of emergency in view of the drought in the Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve (Pará State) (10/16/2023)

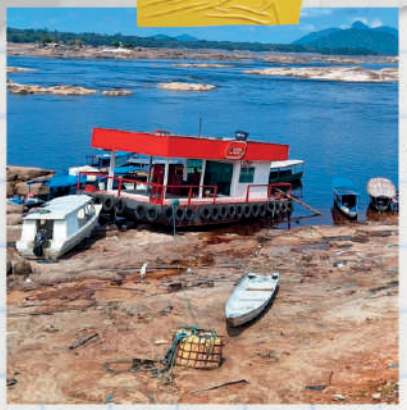
The Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF) has sent a recommendation to Santarém City Council, in Pará, to collect data and information on the drought in the Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve.

https://www.mpf.mp.br/pa/sala-de-imprensa/noticias-pa/mpf-recomenda-estudo-para-avaliar-declaracao-de-emergencia-diante-da-seca-na-reserva-extrativista-tapajos-arapiuns-pa

Rio Negro experiences historic drought, and São Gabriel da Cachoeira is at risk of blackout. (10/19/2023)

Impacts in the northwest of Amazonas State have affected essential services, with changes to opening hours at health centers and schools. The city is undergoing rationing.

https://www.socioambiental.org/noticias-socioambientais/rio-negro-vive-seca-historica-e-sao-gabriel-da-cachoeira-corre-risco-de



Ray Baniwa/Rede Wayuri

Fish deaths in a stream in Alenquer, Pará State, get riverside communities worried. (10/19/2023)

Residents believe that high temperatures and the rain that fell in the region the day before may have caused thermal shock, killing the fish.

https://g1.globo.com/pa/santarem-regiao/noticia/2023/10/19/video-mortandade-de-peixes-em-igarape-de-alenquer-no-pa-preocupa-comunidades-ribeirinhas.ghtml

Extreme drought causes Negro, Solimões, Amazonas and Madeira rivers to reach historic lows. (10/19/2023)

The extreme drought in the western Amazon has produced historic lows at points on the Negro, Solimões, Amazonas and Madeira rivers, according to data from the Port of Manaus, the Geological Service of Brazil and the Civil Defense of Amazonas.

https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2023/10/seca-extrema-faz-rios-negro-solimoes-amazonas-e-madeira-atingirem-minimas-historicas.shtml

Municipality with the largest indigenous population in Amazonas is the first to go on power rationing due to drought. (10/21/2023)

São Gabriel da Cachoeira, 850 kilometers from Manaus, is one of the 59 cities in Amazonas in a state of emergency due to the historic drought affecting the state.

http://glo.bo/3rSftxTv

Drought leaves indigenous communities isolated after historic low in Amazonas State. (10/26/2023)

The Negro River is experiencing its worst water shortage in more than a hundred years. Indigenous peoples in the Amazon are suffering from a shortage of supplies and also have to deal with an extra factor: smoke from wildfires.

https://infoamazonia.org/2023/10/26/seca-deixa-comunidades-indigenas-isoladas-apos-vazante-historica-no-amazonas/

THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE DILEMMAS OF THE CLIMATE ISSUE

Declared in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the strength of social inequalities in the world and in Brazil, exacerbating critical situations of exclusion, violence and environmental degradation. In the Amazon, the marginalization and vulnerability to the risks of illness and death of indigenous peoples, Quilombolas, traditional communities, family farmers and peasants have been highlighted in light of the advance of predatory fronts of economic exploitation favored by the Bolsonaro government (2019-2022), with a sharp increase during the pandemic.

The agribusiness and mining sectors were strongly favored during this period. According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAPA), headed at the time by ruralist Teresa Cristina, 131.5 million tons of agricultural products were exported in 2020, including grains and meat, for a total profit of US$61.2 billion (sixty-one billion dollars). In the midst of the pandemic, Brazilian agribusiness achieved a record volume of grain production, especially soybeans, which reached a level of approximately 121 million tons in 2020.

A 2022 Oxfam report showed the economic growth of mega food corporations during the COVID-19 pandemic. While millions of people fell into extreme poverty, the billionaires in the industry profited from the rise in food prices, which in 2021 registered a global increase of 33.6%. In the first year of the pandemic, US giant Cargill increased its net profit fivefold due to the "favorable" market conditions that produced millions of miserable people around the world. According to the report, the pandemic and the way in which states and companies have dealt with it has pushed social inequality to a new world record.

Regarding the main mineral commodities produced in the country (iron, gold, copper, niobium, manganese and aluminum), according to the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2021), cumulative exports amounted to around 35 billion dollars. According to the National Committee for the Defense of Territories against Mining (2021), mining companies' profits increased during the pandemic:

> *In 2020, the total turnover of the Brazilian mineral extraction sector was R$209 billion, an 36% increase compared to the R$153 billion turnover in 2019. These gains are associated with the continued activities of the mineral extraction sector, the increase in ore prices as of the second half of 2020, and the constant devaluation of the Real. [...] The payment of R$ 12.4 billion in dividends from Vale S. A. in 2020 is equivalent to more than 10 months of the R$600 emergency aid for 2.06 million Brazilians, or it would provide for 20.6 million Brazilians for one month, almost 10% of the population (National Committee in Defense..., 2021, s/p).*

são gigantes demandadores de terras e territórios que, atualmente, disputam palmo a palmo a região, projetando permanente expansão e criando diversos problemas sociais, econômicos e ecológicos. A própria pandemia pode também ser entendida como um resultado direto da forma de exploração capitalista da Terra. A base dessa torre é a ilegalidade, envolve grilagem de terras, destruição ambiental e violência contra os povos indígenas, quilombolas, camponeses e demais comunidades tradicionais.

Ao mesmo tempo, o atual momento da crise climática e da posição da Amazônia nesse cenário, demanda questionar o papel desempenhado pelas grandes corporações nesse avanço contínuo de um quadro de degradação e injustiça socioambiental que se instala a partir do momento em que se mobilizam forças para a tomada de novas áreas voltadas à incansável expansão do agro e da mineração. Os impactos socioambientais desse processo misturaram-se aos efeitos do agravamento das mudanças climáticas na Amazônia, sobremaneira marcado pelo evento extremo conhecido como "a grande seca de 2023".

A grande seca de 2023: os povos da Amazônia frente à crise climática

Amazônia e o ponto de não-retorno

Em 2022, foi publicado um estudo na Revista Nature Climate Change mostrando que, nas duas últimas décadas, mais de 75% da área total da Amazônia sofreu perda de resiliência por conta do avanço do desmatamento e dos impactos do aquecimento global, aproximando-se do chamado ponto de não-retorno. Esse termo é usado para explicar que a floresta está perdendo sua capacidade de recuperação/regeneração frente aos processos de degradação. Segundo a pesquisa, trata-se de um ponto de inflexão em que ocorrerá uma transição brusca e irreversível: a floresta úmida e densa, tal como a conhecemos hoje, se transformaria em um cenário de vegetação degradada e seca, dominada por arbustos e gramíneas, muito mais suscetível a incêndios. O ponto de não-retorno pode levar a Amazônia a um processo chamado de "savanização", com consequências imprevisíveis e irreversíveis para a crise climática global. De acordo com o Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE), em áreas mais suscetíveis, aproximadamente 2 milhões de quilômetros quadrados do bioma já estão muito próximos do ponto de não-retorno.

Entre os principais efeitos, certamente destaca-se a alteração drástica dos regimes de chuva em todo o Brasil, já que a Amazônia é uma grande geradora de umidade, levada para diferentes regiões do país por meio dos rios voadores. Trata-se de um fenômeno que consiste em correntes de ventos úmidos que se formam com os vapores d'água do oceano atlântico, que, ao serem transporta-

being driven to the Midwest, South and Southeast of Brazil. The flying rivers influence the national hydrological cycle and also that of border countries such as Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina. According to the Climate Observatory (OC), it is estimated that flying rivers accumulate more water than the Amazon River itself, amounting to 20 trillion liters per day.

The great drought of 2023 in the Amazon was considered an extreme and unprecedented climate event by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations (UN) agency specializing in climate. The convergence of a number of factors and the effects of forest degradation have affected the rainfall and river water regime, resulting in the historic drought that affected several areas, such as the Negro and Solimões river basins (Amazonas), western and central Acre State, the Branco river (Roraima State), northern Rondônia State, and a large part of western and northern Pará State.

Deforestation is directly related to the great drought because, as well as being one of the main emitters of Greenhouse Gases (GHG), it was also responsible for a reduction in rainfall by 15% to 30% in many areas of the Amazon, thus altering the entire humidity dynamics of the region and causing disturbances in rainfall regulation and the supply to rivers. When it comes to the current state of extreme weather events affecting Brazil and the Amazon, this data points to a very concerning reality for the forest and the survival of its peoples.

Amazon deforestation data

Between August 2019 and July 2020, the area of deforestation in the nine states of the Legal Amazon was 11,088 km², according to data from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE). The states of Pará, Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Rondônia accounted for 80% of the total deforested area.

The following year, 2021, deforestation increased to a record 13,235 km² between August/2020 and July/2021. Once again, the states of Pará, Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Rondônia accounted for the majority of total deforestation in the Legal Amazon, at 87.25%. The largest absolute contribution came from Pará, with 5,257 km² of deforested area.

In 2022, even with a reduction by 11.27% compared to the previous year, deforestation remained very high, at 11,568 km², which corresponds to 58% of the total deforested in the entire country. Pará continued to be the state with the most deforestation, with 4,141 km², followed by Amazonas (2,607 km²) and Mato Grosso (1,906 km²).

The occurrence of the El Niño phenomenon and the warming of the North Tropical Atlantic are also responsible for worsening this situation, leading to an increase in periods of drought and producing a scenario that is even more conducive to fires and forest fires. INPE reported that in the first ten days of September 2023 alone, a total of 3,925 forest fires were recorded in the state of Amazonas alone. In September as a whole, Amazonas had 7,066 wildfires, while the state of Pará had a total of 8,359. In October 2023, Pará reached an all-time high, when INPE recorded a total of 11,378 hotspots in the state, the highest number since 2008.

Deforestation and agricultural activities, especially monocultures and extensive cattle ranching, are the main causes of fires in the Amazon. Normally, burning takes place after deforestation and is carried out as a way of consolidating areas for use as pastures, monocultures, mining, among other environmental crimes, producing a veritable chain of destruction and contamination of the environment by pesticides and mercury. The Institute for Environmental Research in the Amazon (IPAM, 2020) identified that 50% of the hotspots in the first half of 2020 were recorded in medium and large rural properties with agricultural activities. In other words, the forest is being burned to become pasture, following a continuous trajectory since the 1970s, when military governments began to favor the advance of cattle ranching in the Amazon. Soy monoculture also makes up the current scenario, and is expanding at an ever faster rate over Amazonian lands.

The occurrence of illegal mining also constitutes an important vector of pressure that can result in deforestation, fire, destruction and many diseases (IPAM, 2021, p. 10) and has expanded into Indigenous Lands and other protected areas in the form of extreme and unprecedented violence against forest peoples in the Amazon.

Agribusiness is advancing, supported by the creation of favorable public policies, tax incentives, agricultural credit, investments in research and technology and infrastructure development, in addition to the work of the ruralist caucus, which is leading a real dismantling of Brazil's environmental and territorial protection policies and promoting agribusiness-oriented agendas and the perpetration of environmental crimes by making more flexible rules and weakening laws. The so-called "Destruction Package" includes the infamous 'Marco Temporal' [Time Frame] Act No. 14.701, which was recently enacted and which violates indigenous peoples' original right to their lands and creates legal instability over demarcations, including of Indigenous Lands (IL) that have already been ratified. There is also the Poison Bill (14.785/23), which makes it even easier to approve new pesticides while keeping IBAMA and ANVISA out of the control process.

Currently, according to the Climate Observatory (2024), 25 bills and three proposed amendments to the Constitution (PECs) are being processed in Congress that directly threaten the environmental regulation of predatory activities. These are changes that, among other things, affect environmental licensing at various levels, facilitate land grabbing and the invasion of protected areas and traditionally occupied territories, and make the Forest Code and legislation on water resources, mining, the ocean and coastal zones more flexible.

Deforestation, land use changes and Brazil's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

Deforestation and changes in land use represent the main sources of Brazil's emissions. The Climate Observatory's (CO) Greenhouse Gas Emissions Estimates System (SEEG) reported that in 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brazilian greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions rose by 9.5%, the highest amount of emissions since the last record in 2006, when 2.1 billion tons of GHG were produced. In 2021, an upward trend followed, with emissions of 2.4 billion gross tons of GHG, which corresponds to an increase of 12.2% compared to 2020.

Out of this total, the high rate of deforestation and changes in land use in the Amazon and other biomes account for 49% of gross emissions in Brazil in 2021, followed by the agricultural sector (which is directly linked to deforestation), with 25% of total emissions, corresponding to 601 million tons of GHG dumped into the atmosphere. Cattle production dominates agribusiness emissions: cattle ranching accounts for no less than 79.4% of the sector's total emissions (OC, 2023, p. 13). Grain production accounted for a total emission of 254.4 million tons of GHG, in a production area of 86.7 million hectares, 3.9% more than in 2020. Soybean production increased by 11%.

Together, emissions from deforestation and agriculture accounted for 74% of total emissions in Brazil in 2020. That is, following a historical trajectory of predatory occupation, changes in land use and the destruction of forests, with the displacement and sickening of traditional peoples, have a direct impact on the global climate issue today

With the extreme drought of the rivers and the low volume of rainfall that hit several regions in the Amazon in 2023, the lives of people in towns and communities have been affected in many ways. Productive and economic activities, for example, have been compromised or made unviable in many regions of the Amazon, as well as the navigation of vessels that supply cities and transport people for trade, study and medical purposes. This has led communities, villages and entire towns to isolation and food shortages, seriously affecting the food and nutritional security of populations whose livelihoods are totally associated with forests and the socio-economic flows that circulate along rivers. The extreme drought and the drying up of the rivers have also caused a huge die-off of fish and other aquatic species in various regions of the

Amazon, affecting food and nutritional security, health and the economy of various communities that work with, consume and sell fish.

As part of the projects supported by the Agroecological Amazon Call for Proposals, many experiences from the territories affected by the great drought of 2023 in the Amazon were reported during the monitoring of activities. Last year, this was one of the most important and widely debated issues among the various organizations linked to the territories, and it was very evident in the collective meetings held during the implementation of the AA projects. This has further highlighted the importance of agroecological initiatives and practices as direct actions to confront the vectors producing the major environmental changes experienced historically and today in the Amazon.

Foto: *André Coelho / Instituto Mamirauá*

THE AGROECOLOGICAL AMAZON UNIFIED PUBLIC CALL FOR PROPOSALS, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FASE, FUNDO DEMA AND FUNDO AMAZÔNIA

METHODOLOGY NOTES

The results of the projects supported by the Unified Agroecological Amazon Public Call for Proposals are described based on the systematic monitoring of activities and actions undertaken throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024 by FASE and the Dema Fund with the supported organizations. Workshops, seminars and exchanges represented moments of intense exchange about the realities and experiences of each territory and region, and expression of knowledge, understandings and social and ancestral technologies based on the projects developed. In these spaces, where it was possible to meet people from various territories, the perceptions and reflections of the communities on the situation and its convergences in reality are also revealed, which will also be highlighted throughout the publication.

Systematization Workshop Agroecological Amazon Public Call – 15 and February 16, 2014, Belém/PA..

Systematization Workshop of Results Lower Amazonas (Santarém) - *March 5th to 7th, 2024.*

Interchange between BR 163 projects and Transamazonian/Xingu projects – March 06, 2024, Menino Jesus community, Trairão/PA. Project Create to Empower, carried out by the Association Child Jesus Community (ACMJ)

Fotos: *Arquivo Fundo Dema*

Interchange betwen Lower Amazon projects - March 06, 2024, community of Dourado (Arapixuna Region), Santarém/PA. Agroecology and Healthy Environment Project for the Present and Future Generation/PAE Lago Grande, carried out by the Association of Residents of the Community of Dourado (Arapixuna Region, Santarém) (ASMOD); Project Women rural workers, empowered in the struggle for agroecology and food and nutritional security, carried out by the Women's Association Rural Workers of the municipality of Santarém (AMTR)

Systematization Workshop of Results Transamazônica and BR 163 (Itaituba) - March 19-21, 2024

Systematization Workshop Northeast Pará/quilombola communities – March 19 to 21, 2024, Altamira/PA.

Exchange between projects of the Northeast of Pará/communities quilombolas – March 21, 2024, quilombola community Pimenteira, Santa Luzia do Pará/PA. Project Agroecological Backyards, Security Food and Solidarity, for nature and life in abundance. Communities Exchange Quilombolas, carried out by the Association Family Farmers Quilombola of Pimenteira (AQUAFAP).

Fotos: *Arquivo Fundo Dema*

I Agroecology Summit in Pará – 08 – 25 March 2023, Santarém/Pará.

This monitoring has produced a vast research collection of videos, images and recordings.

Based on the systematization of the material and the data and information produced by the Dema Fund, the magazine describes the main contributions of the agroecological and collective projects supported by the call for proposals, showing the results achieved and the main benefits to the territories where they were developed. The agroecological experiments that have been undertaken demonstrate the importance of such initiatives in the current scenario of degradation of the Amazon biome, and reveal a diversity of knowledge and community actions that come from the accumulation of experiences of indigenous peoples, the Quilombola and peasants, who have combined generations of struggle against the exploitative and developmental fronts that have led the lives of these populations to very profound socio-environmental transformations.

The Agroecological Amazon (AA) Unified Public Call for Proposals (CPU) is the second partnership signed between the Federation of Social and Educational Assistance Organizations (FASE), the Dema Fund and the Amazon Fund, managed by the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES). The first took place in 2011, with 7 public calls for proposals and support for 112 collective community projects.

The objectives of the Agroecological Amazon CPU were as follows: 1) to strengthen the collective actions of family farming and agroextractivist organizations, Quilombola communities and indigenous peoples in promoting sustainable economic activities and actions to manage and defend territories by promoting practices for agroecological transition; 2) to promote the improvement of food and nutritional security conditions for communities, and actions to reclaim degraded areas and to protect permanent preservation areas in the Pará state's Amazon in order to bolster organizations and to reduce pressure on forests and common assets.

Three main thematic areas guided the proposal of projects to the AA, namely: 1) Economic activities developed on the basis of the sustainable use of the forest: agro-ecological practices and the appreciation of the standing forest; 2) Food and Nutrition Security; 3) Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The activities corresponding to each area seek to take into account experiences that many communities have already been developing through traditional and ancestral knowledge and practices.

The Agroecological Amazon CPU was published in March 2019 and initially approved 42 projects, 38 of which were approved and contracted following some drop--outs. The natural completion of the Call for Proposals, based on the schedule that was initially planned, has been affected, above all, by the crisis in socio-environmental management caused by the Bolsonaro government, the COVID-19 pandemic and the great drought of 2023 in the Amazon. From a government perspective, community projects - even those of indigenous peoples, which depended on permits and licenses from federal agencies in order to get started - ended up being delayed in the first instance due to the near-standstill in processing requests. In turn, the pandemic had an impact on the implementation of contracts and the start-up of approved projects. All activities that were linked to the schedule for performing the activities and implementing and monitoring the projects, such as training, work parties, exchanges, management workshops, monitoring and accountability, were completely halted. And finally, the great drought of 2023, which caused losses in the production of initiatives linked to the projects, many seedlings, seeds and medium-sized fruit trees died as a result of the long periods without rain.

Despite the difficulties faced by communities of small farmers, agro-extractivists, Quilombola and indigenous peoples during part of the implementation of the projects, by the end of 2023 it was possible to complete the transfer of funds to the 38 projects approved and contracted by the public call. During the monitoring visits conducted by the Dema Fund to the projects, some representatives of the associations emphasized that, despite the delays that had been imposed, the influx of funds revived the communities, allowing them to resume many of their productive activities and the defense of their territories, as well as actions to confront climate change in the Amazon.

SANTARÉM

ADHMA
CFR Lago Grande
AMOTAM
APAA
ASPRONIV
AMPROCOL
FEAGLE
AIASF
AMTR
ASMOD
FAMCEEF
ASPROGUA)
TAPAJOARA
AIMAI
AMPRAVAT

BELTERRA

AMABELA

ORIXIMINÁ

AMIRMO

ALTAMIRA

CFR de Altamira
AIPHX
AMORERI

ALENQUER

ASPROEXP

ALMEIRIM

APROMOVA

ANAPU

IBKRIN

PORTO DE MOZ

CDS

Territorial scope of the support of the Dema Fund through the Project Agroecological Amazon

Lower Amazonas
Northeast Pará
BR-163/Tapajó
Transamazônica/Xingu

SANTA LUZIA DO PARÁ
AQUAFAP

ACARÁ
AMARQUISI
ARQMASJ
ARQMMA

CAMETÁ
ARQUIPA

SENADOR JOSÉ PORFÍRIO
CFR Senador José Porfírio

GURUPÁ
ASPRORIOS
ARQJO

URUARÁ
MMUCC

TRAIRÃO
ACMJ
ASAFAB

PLACAS
ACOMCOSM
ACMUP

RURÓPOLIS
AMMR

General profile of the Agroecological Amazon Call for Proposals

The projects implemented with the support of the Agroecological Amazon CPU are located in Pará State (PA), along the regions of in the Lower Amazonas River (19), Transamazônica/Xingu (11), BR-163/Tapajós Road (3) and Northeast Pará/Lower Tocantins River (5). In all, 17 municipalities were reached (table 2; map 1).

Table AA Projects by region.

Region	Project	Applicant	Municipality
Lower Amazonas	Consolidating Agroecology in the Amazon (Western Pará).	Association for the Defense of Human Rights and the Environment in Amazonia (ADHMA)	Santarém
	Young People from the Forest Defend Agroecology and the Resistance in Our Territory.	Association of Casa Familiar Rural do Lago Grande do Curuai Families (CFR Lago Grande)	Santarém
	Community fishing agreements bolstering management and improving the lives of families settled in PAE Tapará, municipality of Santarém/PA.	Tapará-Miri Residents' Association (AMOTAM)	Santarém
	Awareness Project: consolidation of fish farming in pond-nets in the Anã Community, Tapajós-Arapiuns RESEX.	Anã Agro-Extractive Fish Farmers' Association (APAA)	Santarém
	Promoting family farming and agroecology in food production.	Nova Vista Residents, Rural Producers and Fishermen's Association (ASPRONIV)	Santarém
	Sowing the seeds of agroecology and building sustainable territories with healthy food.	Cabeceira do Ouro Community Residents and Agro-Extractive Workers Association (AMPROCOL)	Santarém
	Sowing the seeds of agroecology and empowering the territories with our resistance.	Federation of Gleba Lago Grande Agroextractivist Settlement Associations of Residents and Communities (FEAGLE)	Santarém

Baixo Amazonas	Projeto Capacitação, Floresta e Sustentabilidade .	Associação Indígena Açaizal Sagrada Família (AIASF)	Santarém
	Mulheres trabalhadoras rurais, empoderadas na luta pela agroecologia e a segurança alimentar e nutricional.	Associação de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais do município de Santarém (AMTR)	Santarém
	Agroecologia e Ambiente Saudável para a Presente e Futura Geração/PAE Lago Grande.	Associação de Moradores da Comunidade de Dourado (Região do Arapixuna, Santarém) (ASMOD)	Santarém
	Agroecologia e artesanato contribuindo na renda das famílias do PAE Eixo Forte.	Federação das Associações de Moradores, Comunidades e Entidades do Assentamento Agroextrativista Eixo Forte (FAMCEEF)	Santarém
	Plantando Sementes Agroflorestais: Novas Perspectivas para Jovens do Campo.	Associação de Moradores e Trabalhadores Rurais Agroextrativista da Comunidade de Guajará (ASPROGUA)	Santarém
	Comunicação Sustentável e Sociobiodiversa.	Organização das Associações e Moradores da Reserva Extrativista Tapajós-Arapiuns (TAPAJOARA)	Santarém
	Capacitação Índio e Floresta 3.	Associação Indígena Munduruku de Auá da Aldeia Ipaupixuna (AIMAI)	Santarém
	Fortalecimento da organização e implementação da cadeia produtiva e de valor do vinho Mani-Oara, um fermentado à base de mandioca.	Associação de Moradores Agroextrativistas e Indígenas do Tapajós (AMPRAVAT)	Santarém
	Mulheres Empoderadas na Resistência, na Defesa do Território, com Agroecologia e sem Violência.	Associação de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais do Município de Belterra (AMABELA)	Belterra
	Fortalecimento da Cadeia de Fruticultura do Município de Alenquer.	Associação dos Pequenos Produtores Rurais Extrativistas e Pescadores Artesanais do Município de Alenquer (ASPROEXPA)	Alenquer
	Tarsom e Asïsï. Fortalecimento da Organização de Mulheres pela Execução do Manejo de Macaxeira e Horta de Pimenta.	Associação de Mulheres Indígenas da Região do Município de Oriximiná (AMIRMO)	Oriximiná

Lower Amazonas	Consolidation with sustainable practices generating income and well-being in the community.	Community Association of Rural Workers, Extractivists, Fruit and Vegetable Growers of the Morada Nova do Jarí Community (APROMOVA)	Almeirim
Transamazônica /Xingu	Frutas do Sítio Project - Agro-industrialization and training for sustainable production.	Altamira Casa Familiar Rural Families Association (CFR de Altamira)	Altamira
	Pro-açaí consolidation: sustainable management of native açaí (euterpe oleracea), as a way of boosting the economy and food security in the Tukamã village of the Xipaya ethnic group, Altamira municipality, Pará.	Pyjahyry Xipaya Indigenous Association (AIPHX)	Altamira
	Strengthening and consolidating the management of the Terra do Meio Canteen and Mini-Canteen Network.	Iriri River Extractive Reserve Residents Association (AMORERI)	Altamira
	Açaí in the Bowl.	Porto de Moz Sustainable Development Committee (CDS)	Porto de moz
	Production of poultry in a forest system for the food and nutritional security of students at the Casa Familiar Rural in Senador José Porfírio.	Senador José Porfírio Casa Familiar Rural Association (CFR Senador José Porfírio)	Senador José Porfírio
	Structuring the Imokti lake for consortium production of shrimp and fish, with sustainable feed made from local products.	Bepotire Xikrin Institute Association IBKRIN	Anapú
	Promoting Agroecological Fruit Growing in the Municipality of Uruará.	Uruará Rural and City Women's Movement (MMUCC)	Uruará
	Ecological Native Açaí Groves Management System and Cocoa-Cabruca System for the Sustainable Use of the Amazon in the Surroundings of the Itatupã District	Association of Agro-Extractive Producers and Fishermen of the Barbosa River and Communities Surrounding the Itatupã District (ASPRORIOS)	Gurupá

	Our Forest is a Source of Life	Association of the Jocojó Quilombo Descendant Communities (ARQJO)	Gurupá
	Ecologically United for a Diversified, Sustainable System.	São Miguel Community Association (ACOMCOSMI)	Placas
	Healthy Eating, Healthy Living and Environmental Care II.	Placas United Mothers' Club Association (ACMUP)	Placas
BR-163/Tapajós	Create for empowerment.	Menino Jesus Community Association (ACMJ)	Trairão
	Agroecology in the Batata: consorting to improve.	Batata Family Farmers Association (ASAFAB)	Trairão
	Women and Agroecology: expanding links and spaces.	Rurópolis Municipality Women's Association (AMMR)	Rurópolis
Northeastern Pará	Ilê do Açaí: Sustainable and Integrated SAFS Production System, Living Pharmacy and Meliponaries for the Socioeconomic and Food Empowerment of the Santa Quitéria and Itancoãzinho Quilombos	Association of Quilombo Residents and Farmers from the Santa Quitéria and Itacoãzinho communities (AMARQUISI)	Acará
	Networking for Collaborative Solidarity to Bolster the Socio-Productivity of Quilombola Communities in the Municipality of Acará, Pará Amazon	São José Jacarequara Quilombola Association of Residents and Farmers (ARQMASJ)	Acará
	Agroforestry Gardens: Socio-biodiversity and Food Security in the Monte Alegre Quilombola Community, Acará Municipality.	Monte Alegre Quilombola Descendants Association (ARQMMA)	Acará
	Viva Alegre Regional Free-range Chicken Breeding and Reforestation Consolidation Project.	Porto Alegre Association of Quilombo Descendants (ARQUIPA)	Cametá
	Agroecological Gardens, Food Security and Solidarity for nature and life in abundance	Pimenteira Quilombola Family Farmers Association (AQUAFAP)	Santa Luzia do Pará

The profile of the communities with AA-supported projects was quite diversified. Out of the 38 projects, 26 benefit family farmers and peasants, agro-extractivists and fishermen, settled in communities in sustainable use conservation units (RESEX Tapajós-Arapiuns, Porto de Moz and Iriri Extractive Reserves), and Rural Family Houses (CFR Altamira, Senador José Porfírio and Lago Grande); 06 projects are for indigenous communities (Kayapó Xikrin, Munduruku, Tapajós, WaiWai and Xipaya); and 06 are for Quilombola communities (4 in the Lower Tocantins, 1 in Northeastern Pará and 1 in the Xingu). Out of all the projects, 5 are from specific women's organizations (Belterra, Santarém, Rurópolis, Placas and Uruará).

As for the activities developed, out of the 38 projects, 34% implement agroforestry systems, reclaim degraded areas and manage native açaí groves; 29% of the initiatives supported include projects to raise small animals (free-range chickens and fish); 24% are for setting up fruit processing units (fruit pulps) and cassava processing units (cassava flour mills). The diversity of projects supported also includes mobilization, training, communication and marketing actions (11%); and fishing agreement actions (3%).

Table 1 – Types of projects supported

Types of projects supported	Number of projects	%
Agroforestry System, Reclamation of Degraded Areas, native açaí management	13	34
Small animal husbandry and fish farming	11	29
Small fruit and cassava processing plants	9	24
Mobilization, training, communication and marketing	4	11
Fishing agreements	1	3
TOTAL	**38**	**100**

Source: *Dema Fund Database, 2024.*

In the section presenting the project implementation results, we will see that many projects do not only undertake the activities defined as their main activities, but also combine various other practices and knowledge and develop complex socio-biodiversity systems designed for each specific territory. At the heart of this is the fact that the territorial issue runs through all types of project, which is why political activities to mobilize for socio-environmental and territorial rights are necessarily part of project design and implementation. The projects, therefore, represent spaces for strengthening the defense of territories in the face of the current situation in which the Amazon is the focus of multiple economic interests bidding to exploit it.

The time and background of the community projects being supported: accounts from the territories about the great drought of 2023 in the Amazon

> *After the pandemic there came this severe drought, but we know that this has a name, who caused it, who is causing this violent climate, I mean a very sudden change, the chaos that we are experiencing, which is a lot of heat. Our region of the Amazon is very deforested, there are many vehicles, ports everywhere, a lot of poison is being discharged, our trees are being destroyed, many beekeepers barely have any beehives, the bees are dead [...] (Ivete Bastos, of the Dourado/PAE Lago Grande Community, President of the Santarém Rural Workers Union – STTR/STM. Interview conducted during the Lower Amazon Agroecological Amazon Systematization Workshop, Mar/2024).*

The historical milestone of the supported projects and their territories was the great drought of 2023 in the Amazon. These are experiences that portray the transformations of the environment and socio-biodiversity in view of an unprecedented climatic event. The reports that were collected during the process of monitoring AA projects between 2023 and 2024 reveal the many layers of drought experienced in the Amazon, in various communities and regions. Ivete Bastos says that there were moments of despair with the loss of crops, the drying up of the rivers, the death of fish and the death of native fruit trees.

The entire biodiversity in the territories was affected.

The disappearance of the bees is related to other events facing the communities. In all regions, there were reports of the loss of native forest species, including fruit trees and agricultural species, which are sources of food for bees, for other animals and for people. Mrs. Ivete Bastos reported during the Lower Amazon Systematization Workshop (March/2023) that the crops are in trouble in all regions and many are threatened by the effects of the drought. Especially where agribusiness has been dumping pesticides, among other consequences, there is greater fragility in the seeds of various species, which, with the great drought, did not resist.

In the Transamazônica/Xingu region, Sister Marialva Vieira, from the Association for the Defense of Human Rights and the Environment in the Amazon (ADHMA), Xingu Prelature and Dema Fund Steering Committee, also reported the loss of crops and community production during the drought, which affected multiple crops and the management of forest areas. According to Sister Vieira, it is no longer possible to maintain the same crop cycles traditionally developed by the communities.

In the municipality of Gurupá, in the Transamazônica/Xingu region, the Quilombola Community of Jocojó also had problems producing açaí due to the drought. José Roberto Pombo, of the Jocojó Quilombo Descendant Communities Association (ARQJO), said during the Quilombola Project Systematization Workshop that the drought and major fires that occurred in the territory in 2023 affected the community's açai

groves, thus rendering any kind of production impossible, whether for sale or for individual consumption. The transportation of products and people was made impossible by the drying up of the territory's streams and the Jocojó River, used as a means of transportation by families in the communities.

Another traditional crop grown in various territories in all regions of Pará that was badly damaged during the drought was manioc. Edilena Oliveira, of the São Francisco Community/PAE Lago Grande, Lower Amazon, and representative of the Federation of Associations of Residents and Communities of the Agro-Extractivist Settlement of Gleba Lago Grande (FEAGLE), reported during the Lower Amazon Systematization Workshop that manioc cultivation throughout the PAE territory is currently undergoing great difficulties. The loss of crops and seeds has affected all cassava-related production, especially flour, one of the most important economic activities in many communities.

> *Last year a lot of people suffered from a lack of products, especially flour, and this year won't be any different, because last year there were a lot of people who bought flour, for example, but they had crops and sold a lot, but this year many people don't have crops. Now, in the hinterland, there's no one to buy flour from; you'll find it at R$15 a kilo, so this flour is bought from Santarém, but it's industrialized flour (Edilena Oliveira, FEAGLE, during the Lower Amazonas Systematization Workshop, Apr/2024).*

Josilene dos Anjos, from the Santarém Rural Women Workers Association (AMTR/STM), also during the Lower Amazon Workshop, said that the manioc seeds were lost during the drought. She reported that this impact raised the price of manioc products, with flour being sold for up to R$600 a bag during the drought. This prevented the communities themselves from consuming products that are part of their traditional dietary culture.

Regarding the loss of seeds during the great drought, Mrs. Edilena Oliveira points out that losing seeds means losing life itself.

> *It's a way of erasing our ways of life, our ways of feeding ourselves... during the drought, we were losing our seeds, we were losing our life, because the seeds are our life. Today, the manioc crops have dried up, we had varieties of seeds there, everything has dried up. So that's a piece of you that's being taken away. We've lost almost 80% of our seeds (Edilena Oliveira, during the Lower Amazonas Systematization Workshop, Apr/2024).*

Part of what was planted was lost and the result of all these losses has greatly affected food and nutritional security in all regions, as many of these crops are destined for self-consumption and are important for feeding the communities. The possibility of healthy and varied food, an essential human right that is seriously violated in this process, is therefore lost.

The loss of biodiversity can also be seen in the high mortality of aquatic fauna in various regions that is mainly caused by the low volume of rivers and other water bodies and the high water temperatures. In the Lower Tocantins region, for example, traditional shrimp fishing activities faced a drastic reduction in the 2023 harvest season. The shortage of shrimp and the consequent increase in price made it impossible for the region's communities to access this particular food. Ailton Cruz do Rosário, of the São José Jacarequara Quilombola Association of Residents and Farmers (ARQMASJ), in Acará, explains that the drought of 2023 meant the peak of a gradual reduction that had already been observed by the communities, as the region's waters have been undergoing various degradation processes associated with the expansion of farming and oil palm monocultures that have been pouring poison into the region's waters for decades. He points out that, in Acará, the expansion of farms at the headwaters of rivers where shrimp breed and contamination by pesticides are historical reasons for this decline, which reached its most dramatic point during the great drought.

On the other hand, the communities are reacting to this situation. Mrs. Edilena reports that the recovery of the territories in PAE Lago Grande, as well as other areas of the Lower Amazonas, is being achieved through seed exchanges among the various communities. This can also be seen in other territories and regions, where this exchange seeks to increase the resilience of managed species in view of climate change. In this scenario, community projects have the perspective of leveraging technologies developed by the very communities to reduce and combat the damage caused by drought and the worsening of the current climate situation in the Amazon.

Drought of 2023, in the Arapiuns River - Santarém/PA

Foto: *Maria Antônia Nascimento/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

THE PROJECTS OF THE UNIFIED AGROECOLOGICAL AMAZON PUBLIC CALL FOR PROPOSALS: RECOVERY AND DEFENSE OF THE TERRITORIES

In light of these circumstances, it is impossible not to wonder how the resources from the Agroecological Amazon Call for Proposals and the projects developed have reached territories so affected by the great drought of 2023 and threatened by problems and conflicts of various magnitudes. There are many results to be presented, but it should be noted that, more than the one-off and systematic execution of a project, the resources from the Call for Proposals have enabled many communities to resume actions to defend their territories and bolster their production methods, organizations and networks, which were impacted by the pandemic and the weakening of socio-environmental and territorial protection in Brazil during the Bolsonaro government.

In the monitoring visits undertaken by the FASE and Dema Fund teams and members of the Dema Fund Steering Committee to follow up on the projects, as well as in the workshops and other public call activities, some representatives of the associations emphasized that, despite the delays, the influx of funds brought new energy to the communities, thus allowing them to resume many activities that had been stagnating. In fact, the sense of greater social cohesion brought about many important developments for the communities, as will be described in this section.

Activities to support the Call for Proposals and project follow-up

After the pandemic, in a major effort to monitor the implementation and execution of the projects, FASE and Dema Fund conducted various activities with the organizations and communities that received the funds.

Visits and consultancies to monitor the projects underway by the Steering Committee, facilitators and the FASE/Dema Fund support team.

From May 2022 to December 2023, a total of 46 follow-up visits were carried out in all the territories, involving a total of 431 people, 256 (59%) of whom were women. The purpose of the monitoring visits was to guide the projects in the execution of activities and resources, check the process and result indicators and pass on instructions on management, monitoring and accountability to the coordinators of the community associations and families involved. It is worth noting that on almost all the monitoring visits, the team was joined by members of the Dema Fund Steering Committee, thus bolstering its governance and regional monitoring of the projects as they were implemented.

Two thematic meetings at the I Pará State Agroecology Meeting

The I Pará State Agroecology Meeting was held in Santarém/Pará in March 2023.

At the time, community associations and social movements took part in thematic meetings held by the Dema Fund, where two groups of projects from the Agroecological Amazon were specifically monitored, namely: Agroforestry Systems (SAFs), with the participation of 36 people (19 women); and Beekeeping (Apiculture and Meliponiculture), with the participation of 64 people (28 women).

Thematic Meeting on Agroforestry Systems.

Thematic Meeting Bee Breeding.

Four (4) training workshops on access to the PNAE

Four workshops were held in the northeast of Pará (with Quilombola communities), in the Transamazônica/Xingu region (Altamira), in the Lower Amazonas region (Santarém) and in the BR-163 region (Itaituba). In total, the workshops mobilized 87 people, 61 (70%) of whom were women. The workshops on the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) aimed to discuss the human right to adequate food and the community associations developed regional strategies to expand access to the program and improve relations with city councils.

PNAE Workshop on BR 163

PNAE Workshop in the Lower Amazonas

Source: *Dema Fund, 2024.* **Picture:** *Fundo Dema*

PNAE Workshop in the Northeast of Pará

PNAE Workshop on the Transamazônica/Xingu Highway

Four (4) workshops to systematize the results of the Agroecological Amazon CPU

Four workshops were held to systematize the results of the community projects. The first was held in Belém in February 2014, and the others (Lower Amazonas, Northeast Para/Quilombolas and BR-163 and Transamazônica Xingu) were held in March 2024.

Furthermore, the Dema Fund has also developed other tools for more systematic monitoring of projects, such as the Logbook, where organizations can take note of the activities being undertaken and the results obtained by the projects, thus gain more control over what has been developed.

The various results that the associations presented over the course of these months were organized according to the Dema Fund's system of indicators, which guides its lines of support and the verification of project results. There are five intersecting dimensions to the actions being undertaken:

1. ***Economy of forest peoples;***
2. ***Environmental conservation and socio-biodiversity;***
3. ***Food and nutrition sovereignty and security;***
4. ***Women's economic and political empowerment;***
5. ***Strengthening organizations and their networks.***

Based on the evaluation conducted by the Dema Fund for each indicator, a number of quantitative and qualitative results were identified that show a number of important developments as a result of the implementation of the projects.

Overall project results

Despite the difficulties faced by peasant, agro-extractivist, Quilombola and indigenous communities, by the end of 2023 it was possible to disburse funds to the 38 approved and contracted projects amounting to R$2,809,408.06.

The projects reached 17 municipalities in Pará (Acará, Alenquer, Almeirim, Altamira, Anapu, Belterra, Cametá, Gurupá, Oriximiná, Placas, Porto de Moz, Rurópolis, Santarém, Santa Luzia do Pará, Senador José Porfírio, Trairão and Uruará) and benefited approximately 11,709 people (5,925 women), 7,165 families in 239 communities. The high number of people considered to have benefited is explained by the scope of three projects in particular, which are developed by associations that articulate and involve many communities and families, namely: the Association of Residents of the Rio Iriri Extractive Reserve (AMORERI), in the Transamazônica/Xingu region, with 5,000 people and 3,500 families; the Organization of Associations and Residents of the Tapajós-Arapiuns Extractive Reserve (TAPAJOARA), with 3,500 people and 3,500 families; and the Federation of Associations of Residents and Communities of the Agro-Extractivist Settlement of Gleba Lago Grande (FEAGLE), with 1,000 people and 1,000 families, both from the Lower Amazonas region. The remaining projects have an average reach of 100 direct beneficiaries.

The 38 projects that were supported implemented a total of 55 production and community living spaces, including chicken coops (17), fish ponds (15), organic vegetable gardens (9), flour mills (7) and fruit processing units (7).

Table 2 – Implementation of community production and living areas

Spaces	Amount
Flour millsHortas	7
Vegetable gardens	9
Chicken coops	17
Fruit processing plants	7
Fish farming ponds	15
TOTAL	**55**

Sourc: *Banco de Dados do Dema Fund, 2024.*

The implementation of 50 agroforestry systems (SAFs), 73 agroecological yards and 83 tree seedling nurseries and the environmental reclamation of 7 water springs are underway. There are also plans to plant almost 160,000 seedlings of native forest species and fruit trees in the permanent area. The area recovered and managed in SAFs and productive backyards amounts to 26,060 hectares and the specific forest area directly managed as a result of the projects supported is 8,023 hectares. The signing of 4 community fishing agreements with rules defined by the communities for the sustainable management of fish stocks is also underway (PAE Tapará/AMOTAM). Much of the information presented herein is still preliminary, given the time needed to produce the projects' deliverables, as many activities are still in progress.

The dimensions of the Dema Fund indicators in a qualitative view of the results

During the follow-up of the projects, more than just quantitative results, it was possible to perceive a series of contributions that the process of implementing a project brings to the reality of the communities and territories involved. The social mobilization generated and the deepening of perceptions about the current state of threats to be faced are very important results of the projects in light of the scenario of climate change and degradation of the biome and its socio-biodiversity.

The agroecological knowledge and practices developed in the projects have made it possible to bolster community organizations and associations and their networks for articulating and defending the territories. Therefore, the very history of the projects reveals their importance for the communities in view of the conflicts and impacts of the historical and current scenario in the region, unfolding into many pos-

Fotos: *FEAGLE/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

sibilities for action and thought. Above all, the promotion of production systems and the management of biodiversity based on traditional and ancestral knowledge indicate ways of opposing agricultural intensification and the predatory exploitation of nature

For the economy of the forest peoples

> *Our life is not easy. The projects we have with FASE and Dema Fund have helped us to find alternatives for income generation, preservation and organization; they have improved income, various types of alternative income. Moreover, these are projects that have generated much greater understanding in the field of combating threats such as pesticides. And, on the other hand, we are making an alternative proposal, which is to make the population absorb, understand and talk more about, absorb more of the issue of agroecology. We do this in our territories (Ivete Bastos, STTR/STM, interview conducted during the Agroecological Amazon Systematization Workshop in the Lower Amazonas Region).*

Economy of the forest peoples

- Community organizations broadened families' access to PAA and PNAE;
- Encouraging the creation of community cooperatives ;
- Promotion of socio-biodiversity products;
- Increased income for families in the territories;
- Incentives for alternative food networks in a fair and supportive way.

The field of the economics of sustainable uses and agroecological practices has been a growing concern among the organizations and associations that have carried out projects through the Agroecological Amazon CPU. This aspect has come to be considered strategic for the defense of forests and traditionally occupied territories, but socio-biodiversity products still play a small role in the formal and institutional economy due to poor infrastructure, problems with the administrative and logistical management of production and a lack of support from public authorities. All these problems are also being tackled through the resources of the public call for proposals, thereby allowing organizations to improve their administrative and financial processes.

The Agroecological Amazon CPU projects have produced important results in overcoming the main limitations in the marketing of agroecological products and thus encouraging communities to become more involved in the projects. As a consequence, this result encourages people to stay in the territories, since the economic situation is one of the main factors that lead to the departure of community members in search of better professional, financial and material conditions. Given this context, organizations have increasingly focused on creating and stimulating new marketing processes that strengthen the autonomy of farmers, promote the promotion of socio-biodiversity-related products and local food cultures, and encourage alternative food networks in a fair and supportive manner.

“Strengthening and consolidating the management of the Terra do Meio Canteen and Mini-Canteen Network” Project, Transamazônica/Xingu region, Rio Iriri Extractive Reserve Residents Association (AMORERI)

The project aims to enable and bolster the Terra do Meio Canteen and Mini-Canteen Network and management thereof. Altogether, the project serves 18 communities in the Riozinho do Anfrísio, Rio Iriri and Rio Xingu RESEX. The network is made up of a total of 14 canteens and 4 mini-canteens throughout the territories. The canteens have enabled the communities to organize the socio-production of socio-biodiversity products and, consequently, to better sell them, a factor that has always represented a major challenge in terms of promoting the value of the communities’ products. According to AMORERI, the organization into a larger network has allowed for a production scale to sell most of the production that previously went unsold or did not get good prices with large buyers. The political strength of the Network has allowed these negotiations with large buyers to be beneficial for producers, thus achieving good contracts in terms of price and respect for the local way of producing. The main products sold include Brazil-nut, Copaíba, Rubber and Babaçu. This diversity is seen as a way of responding to the seasonality of the species.

The Rio Iriri and Riozinho do Anfrísio RESEX areas make up the Xingu Socio-Environmental Diversity Corridor, which covers 28 million hectares and includes 21 Indigenous Lands and 9 contiguous Conservation Units. Over the years, the two protected areas have been affected by illegal logging, land grabbing and illegal mining. During the Covid-19 pandemic, due to social confinement and the halting of productive activities, RESEX community members had their sources of income seriously affected, which led to a significant number of residents taking up mining and illegal logging. Based on that, the strengthening of the Canteen Network of the indigenous and traditional peoples of Terra do Meio made an important contribution as a source of economic recovery for these peoples and the consequent protection of their territories.

With a view to boosting the marketing of the Network’s products, the community associations have also been participating more frequently in local and/or municipal fairs, as well as expanding into institutional markets such as the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) and the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), which constitute a possibility for expanding the consumption of agroecological products in society in a broader way, therefore securing access to healthy, poison-free food to the population.

One of the main results of the projects is increased access to institutional markets, such as the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) and the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), which broadens the socio-economic outreach of agroecological production. In this regard, the Dema Fund held four workshops on the PNAE in the northeast of Pará (Bragança, with Quilombola communities), the Transamazônica/Xingu (Altamira), the Lower Amazonas (Santarém) and the BR-163 (Itaituba) regions. The workshops discussed the human right to adequate food and the importance of promoting and securing real food in schools as a way of bolstering small-scale family farming. Regional strategies were developed by the community associations to expand access to the program and to improve relations with the city councils.

In general, many associations still need to make progress in improving their management due to the requirements of institutional markets in terms of the organization's compliance with tax regulations and the delivery of products sold. For this reason, marketing via the institutional market has been thought of in combination with other forms of sale, such as the now traditional fairs with direct sales to consumers, but also fairs aimed more specifically at marketing agroecological production, stimulating the construction of new markets and short marketing circuits. These are strategic to securing the dynamism of family farmers' production.

The fairs

Led by women, the fairs have also been actions undertaken by the organizations in order to articulate experiences to cooperate and boost agroecological community projects through the sale of their production. These spaces are very rich and representative of the socio-productive diversity of the communities, as they go beyond the buy-and-sell relationship, thus allowing for the discovery and exchange of flavors, experiences and knowledge. It strengthens ties between the territories, which is why the fairs are also tools for inter-regional exchange of seeds, seedlings of native species (some endangered, such as mahogany) and pesticide-free products. Exchanges make it possible to strengthen community relations and are fundamental for the formation of networks and articulations to strengthen agroecological production, thus leveraging the defense of territories.

I PAE Lago Grande Family Farming Fair, PAE Lago Grande, Santarém, Lower Amazonas

The I PAE Lago Grande Family Farming Fair was organized through the support of the Agroecological Amazon CPU, which was conceived by family farmers of the PAE Lago Grande communities and coordinated by FEAGLE, FASE Amazônia, STTR of Santarém and Grupo Mãe Terra. The fair was held at Vila do Curuai in June 2023 and showcased a variety of agro-ecological products and regional food culture, including fruit, honey, oils, vegetables, medicinal plants and all manioc derivatives, as well as artifacts from the region's material culture.

I Family Agriculture Fair of PAE Lago Grande, PAE Lago Grande, Santarém, Lower Amazonas, June 3, 2023. Marketing and exchange of agroecological products from food cultivation regional, such as flour, gum, tucupi, free-range chicken, fruits, medicinal plants, handicrafts. Source - FEAGLE, 2023.

To complement the ways in which agroecological production is sold, the territories also supply products to local grocery stores and markets, restaurants and hotels. Sales via apps and social networks have also been bolstered. This contributes to the empowerment of communities and the defense of territories by boosting local economies and promoting ancestral food cultures.

Contributions of agroecological projects to environmental conservation and socio-biodiversity

Environmental conservation and socio-biodiversity

- Socio-biodiversity production assurance;
- Promotion of socio-biodiversity products;
- Variety of seeds and seedlings;
- Intensification of seed and seedling exchange processes between communities;
- Promotion of agroecology in the development of productive activities;
- Promotion of traditional knowledge and community management and production systems.

Create to Empower Project

Picture: *CFR Lago Grande/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

The relationship between cultural aspects and land production methods in traditionally occupied territories enables the development of management methods in accordance with the environmental conditions of each ecosystem. Traditional agricultural systems tend to be low-impact and are associated with other practices such as various forms of extraction, fishing and forest management, which shows the importance of the ways of life of traditional peoples and rural dwellers in forest conservation and the reclamation of degraded areas. The results of the Agroecological Amazon CPU projects in this context are quite significant, as they provide for the recovery of a total of 26,060 hectares through Agroforestry Systems (SAFs) and agroecological productive farmyards. The seedlings and the planting process are currently being developed. The specific area of forest directly managed as a result of the projects supported was 8,023 hectares.

The importance of indigenous and traditional peoples for forest conservation in view of climate change

According to the Global Forest Watch, forests today represent 30% of the solution for regulating global temperature; however, their ability to absorb carbon from the atmosphere could be compromised by deforestation for conversion into pastures, commodity production and urbanization. Faced with this situation and the risks it poses, it is necessary to highlight the importance of indigenous peoples, Quilombola communities and family farmers working to defend the forests in order to deal with the current crisis in the Amazon.

In their study, "Forests need people", Oviedo and Doblas (2021; 2022) analyze the spatial and temporal drivers of land use trajectories in traditionally occupied territories and corresponding buffer zones in all Brazilian biomes (CUNHA; MAGALHÃES; ADAMS, 2021). The authors showed that areas with the presence of Indigenous Peoples and traditional populations, including Indigenous Lands (IL), Quilombola Territories (QT), Extractive Reserves (RESEX) and Sustainable Development Reserves (SDR), are responsible for protecting approximately 30.5% of Brazil's forests. If we consider other categories, such as agrarian reform settlements, this contribution will certainly be even greater. In the Amazon, Indigenous Lands and Conservation Units with traditional occupation have the highest rates of native vegetation conservation and environmental regeneration compared to their surroundings, which show a trend towards degradation and greater management intensity (OVIEDO; DOBLAS, 2022, p. 1).

Seven springs were also recovered in seven municipalities in western Pará (Trairão, Itaituba, Placas, Rurópolis, Santarém, Alenquer and Oriximiná, in the BR-163, Transamazônica/Xingu and Lower Amazonas region) through the project "Consolidating Agroecology in the Amazon (Western Pará)", by the Association for the Defense of Human Rights and the Environment in Amazonia (ADHMA), where the springs were reclaimed in a collective and formative way, involving groups from various municipalities coordinated by the ADHMA. The seven municipalities in which the springs were reclaimed are undergoing intense processes of degradation of the water bodies tributary to the region's major rivers due to mining, the installation of bulk cargo ports and hydroelectric dams, among others, which make actions of this nature even more important.

Foto: *ADHMA/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

Project Consolidating Agroecology in the Amazon (Western Pará) / ADHMA

Community agroforestry systems and agroecological farmyards in the framework of agricultural intensification in the territories

Currently, Agroforestry Systems are present in a significant number of projects supported by the Agroecological Amazon CPU. Community SAFs are an important demonstration of how communities mobilize various traditional management practices and bring together new technologies learned throughout the development of the projects. Under the call for proposals, a total of 50 SAFs and 73 agroecological production farmyards are being implemented, thus securing both food production and the reclamation of degraded areas and the protection of forests.

The SAFs and productive farmyards of the community projects are of great importance to the socio-biodiversity of the territories, since they are constituted through complementary management between fauna and flora, wild and cultivated, feeding and health, and between conservation and production. Knowledge about how to establish an agroforestry system is the result of an in-depth study of the different forest species and biodiversity and their uses. It therefore represents the exact opposite of the standardized business model of agricultural systems, such as the extensive monocultures of agribusiness, which are aimed at "controlling or exploiting the animal and plant world through confinement, the use of chemical inputs, among other 'modern' techniques that annihilate the diversity of life" (Lima; Oliveira; Shiratori, 2021, p. 21). The term agroforestry is also widely used among community organizations as a way of differentiating native concepts of management from business concepts.

Foto: *Yuri Rodrigues*

“Our forest is a life source” Project, Jocojó Quilombola Community, Gurupá, Transamazônica and Xingu region, Association of Quilombo Jocobó Descendants Communities (ARQJO)

The project “Our forest is a life source” is developed by the Jocojó Quilombo Descendants Communities Association (ARQJO), at the Jocojó Quilombola Community, Gurupá Municipality, in the Transamazônica/Xingu region. It develops a series of actions aimed at the sustainable production and cultural promotion of the Jocojó Quilombo. The Agroforestry Systems implemented as part of this project are intended to reclaim areas degraded by logging activities on the banks of the Jocojó River, based on the management of various forest species.

The Jocojó Quilombo was badly affected by major wildfires in 2023. According to ARQJO’s own data, 60 hectares were lost within the community and 221 hectares of forest were affected in the territory as a whole. The seedling nurseries that had been implemented and many areas managed with SAFs within the projects were lost to the drought, which forced ARQJO to rearrange its actions, especially considering the installation of irrigation systems next to the productive areas. ARQJO is also considering reforesting the areas most recently lost to drought and has been mobilizing efforts through the project to carry out this reclamation.

The project managed to build 6 cassava flour mills that serve a total of 13 families in the community and consolidated the implementation of ecological kilns for the production of cassava flour. The kilns are built to save the use of wood and reduce production time, thus improving working conditions and product quality.

Fotos: *ARQJO/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

Community SAFs are based on the diversification of community production, thus promoting the management of endangered forest species and strengthening the independence of the communities involved. This leads to a break from socio-economic dependence on the market, which is based on the principles of territorial and food sovereignty of the peoples that agroforestry/SAFs should promote, with independence and control over production processes, especially that related to seeds. Contrary to the agribusiness perspective, the accounts of the projects' experiences showed that community SAFs are based on the principle of self-consumption, within the peasant logic that prioritizes the needs of the families , which in itself already reveals a great diversity of arrangements, as they involve species such as açaí, cassava, cocoa, Brazil-nut, taperebá, corn, rice, beans, pumpkin, among other agricultural and forestry species.

'Articulation in a Network of Solidary Collaboration for the Socio-Productive Strengthening of Quilombola Communities in the Municipality of Acará' Project, Pará State Amazon, Acará, Lower Tocantins, São José Jacarequara Residents and Farmers Quilombola Association (ARQMASJ).

O projeto iniciou a implementação de Sistemas Socioprodutivos de Referência nas coThe project has started to implement Benchmark Socio-Productive Systems in the São José do Jacarequara, Trindade I and Trindade III communities, in the municipality of Acará, which will be developed in an area of around 20 hectares and is geared at promoting family farming production of the communities and prevent the deterioration of traditional crops such as manioc, corn, cassava, maxixe, pumpkin, beans; and fruit species such as mango, cupuaçu, pupunha, watermelon, passion fruit, taperebá, bacuri, Brazil-nut and açaí. The proposal to work on Benchmark Socio-Productive Systems was discussed collectively and follows the need to develop new production mechanisms that secure the sovereignty and food and nutritional security of the communities involved based on their traditional production.

The municipality of Acará has experienced a number of impacts as a result of the constant expansion of oil palm monoculture with large companies installed in the

Fotos: *ARQMASJ/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

region, such as BBF - Brasil Biofuels and Agropalma, which have historically unduly occupied lands traditionally occupied by peasant farmers and Quilombola peoples. The dumping of pesticides on oil palm plantations has caused contamination of the soil and water bodies in Acará and other municipalities in the region. As a result, productive areas in quilombola communities have been consecutively lost, thus undermining food production and the socio-economic reproduction of families. In this regard, the project is important because it bolsters the communities' efforts to contain this escalation by keeping families connected to the territory through productive activities and securing the communities' food and nutritional security.

Ilê do Açaí Project: SAFS Sustainable and Integrated Production System, Living Pharmacy and Meliponaries for the Socioeconomic and Food Empowerment of the Santa Quitéria and Itacoãzinho Quilombos. Acará, Lower Tocantins region, Santa Quitéria and Itacoãzinho Quilombo Descendant Residents and Farmers Association (AMARQUISI)

The Ilê do Açaí Project: SAFS Sustainable and Integrated Production System, Living Pharmacy and Meliponaries for the Socioeconomic and Food Empowerment of the Santa Quitéria and Itacoãzinho Quilombos aims to strengthen social organization and food sovereignty through the dissemination of SAFs and the processing of açaí pulp from the Guajarina region. The implementation of a "Farmácia Viva" (Living Pharmacy) and meliponariums are linked to these main axes, but the latter are still smaller-scale actions. The project has benefited 20 families so far and has already produced 3,000 native açaí seedlings, created from the community's own açaí groves and with arrangements that include various other forest species, which also serve the communities themselves.

Production is expected to reach more than 20 baskets during the harvest period. The next planned action is the installation of a mini açaí processing plant, as the communities of Acará, and the Lower Tocantins as a whole, still rely heavily on middlemen to sell their açaí.

Os SAFs desenvolvidos também tiveram como desdobramentos importantes aponTaThe SAFs developed also had important outcomes that were pointed out during the projects' follow-up activities, namely: the enhancement of agroecology in the development of productive activities; the promotion of traditional knowledge and community management and production systems; a change in working practices on the land, with the exclusion of degrading techniques; the guarantee of the communities' sovereignty and food security; and the defense of territorial rights.

During the Thematic Meeting on SAFs, also at the I Agroecology Summit in Pará, the organizations argued that the use of agroforestry development technologies should be put on the agenda as a proposal to combat hunger in the Amazon and in Brazil, and also to tackle the climate crisis and its impacts as a proposal for the conservation and sustainable use of forests. In this regard, as a political development of the projects, SAFs must be bolstered and transformed into a government policy that is in line with the regional differences in the Amazon.

The promotion of SAFs as a policy also involves the recognition of the guardians of socio-biodiversity and the independence of production processes, especially with regard to seeds, since agribusiness has also sought to increasingly exploit this diversity, determining what should be planted and standardizing the types of crops. In this sense, the creation of seed banks in the territories was mentioned several times during the public call activities as one of the ways to guarantee that species of Amazonian biodiversity are preserved.

Agroecology and the fight against pseudo-solutions "based on nature"

Throughout the monitoring of AA projects, the defense of agroecology in the fight against predatory activities continued with an emphatic critique of the view of nature as a business. In this sense, political organizations and social movements have also become increasingly concerned with confronting the "new" perceptions that justify the persistence of colonial models, in direct opposition to the major economic interests that compete for the exploitation of the Amazon. This includes not only classic developmentalism, but also the most recent approaches linked to the so-called "green economy" and the bioeconomy. According to Nunes (2022), the bioeconomy is emerging as a model that combines development and conservation and has been mobilized worldwide as a major political alternative for maintaining the Amazon biome. In this scenario, climate policies are guided by economic solutions such as the carbon market and other mechanisms to compensate for greenhouse gas emissions.

Because of this, criticism of the vision of nature as a business was among the main issues raised by the projects, especially since the bioeconomy is understood by organizations and social movements as a concept that has been appropriated by the market as a new business strategy and a competitive conservation model, which

provides a false “nature-based” solution.

According to the Charter of Belém (2011) group, the Conventions debating climate have given too much prominence to corporate proposals and market solutions, which take the place of action that should be taken by national states and governments, thus delaying the implementation of effective reduction measures among the world’s main emitters, the richest countries, which is in fact the most urgent in terms of the current stage of the climate emergency in the world (Charter of Belém, 2011).

Professor Maria Emília Pacheco, of the National Advisory Group of the Federation of Social and Educational Assistance Organizations (FASE) and of the Executive Nucleus of the National Articulation of Agroecology (ANA), presented an analysis of the situation during the I Agroecology Summit in Pará, highlighting the new enclosure processes underway in the Amazon, which, according to her, are at the heart of the current bioeconomy proposals, especially with regard to the carbon market. According to Maria Emília, there is a predominance of large companies and private corporations trading carbon credits without any kind of regulation imposed by the state, that is, without rules that prevent peoples and communities from being harmed in unequal exchanges. This is a process of commercialization of the public goods and of nature, in the professor’s words, which consists of the plastering of traditional practices to the benefit of a single market, which transforms complex agroecological systems into mere products and renders the traditional knowledge associated with them invisible.

This was emphasized in the summit’s Commitment Charter:

> *The violence against which we have always fought has intensified in recent years, and is present in new enclosures that are no different from the one that emerged at the advent of capitalism and continues to violate us today, albeit in new forms. Old threats are given new guises: the same old business interests are presented under advertising jargon such as bioeconomy and green economy. The forest does not only represent opportunities in the carbon market. Its loss, highlighted in the public debate, is also the loss of one of the foundations that sustain traditional production systems in the Amazon (Commitment Letter from the I Agroecology Summit in Pará, Santarém, Mar/2023).*

A comunidade Morada Nova do Jarí, localizada em Almeirim, Baixo Amazonas, mThe Morada Nova do Jarí community, located in Almeirim, in the Lower Amazonas, shows the level of confrontation experienced by various communities and territories in the Amazon today in the face of carbon business offensives. According to the De Olho nos Ruralistas Observatory, the community is part of a huge territory that has been proven to have been grabbed by the Jari Celulose company in the municipality of Almeirim. Today, the land grabbed belongs to the Jari/Pará Project to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), a partnership between Jari Celulose and Biofílica Ambipar Environmental Investments, which specializes in initiatives to sell carbon credits. Initially, the project covered the entire area of Jari Celulose, but after legal disputes, the area of Jari/Pará is now 496,000 hectares and

covers 58 communities that live off rural farming in the region. It won the support of many communities with the promise of a payment of R$5,000 for the families involved in maintaining the preserved vegetation to generate carbon credits. However, the companies restricted the families' use to just 20% of the land in their property. Traditionally, the communities in this region grow açaí, Brazil-nut, manioc and corn, among other food crops, and were directly impacted by the project.

The Morada Nova Community, with around 30 families, has become a focus of resistance by denouncing the project and fighting to maintain the communities' traditional production. The project "Consolidation with sustainable practices generating income and well-being in the community" makes up this field of resistance and emphasizes agroecological production as a way of conserving forests through traditional practices and not accepting corporate impositions on the use of their lands.

Quilombola communities in the Lower Tocantins have also suffered from the harassment of companies mobilizing new strategies to occupy public lands and areas of traditional occupation. These are situations that pose new threats, but the community organizations recognize the inconsistencies of the models presented as an alternative to the destruction of the forests, denouncing that at the moment, as has happened over the decades, the people of the Amazon have been excluded from decision-making processes and from building effective strategies to defend the biome and combat the climate emergency. It is a claimed place, which shows its importance through systematized practices of conservation and food production, and presents itself as a form of collective socio-environmental and territorial governance opposed to the current privatizing and predatory model.

Food and nutrition sovereignty and security

> *The projects supported by the Dema Fund enhance access to income distribution and healthy food supply policies, such as the PAA and the PNAE, which are instruments that family farming has achieved in Brazil and which took a long time to be implemented. However, projects like those supported by the Dema Fund strengthen the management capacity of community organizations as well as communities, people, and leaders and this allows them to access other resources that they need in order to manage access to markets, and relationships with other requirements as well; and then, in this case, the PAA and the PNAE and some states also have state instruments (Luciene Figueiredo, Amazon Community Fund Network, during the National Agroecological Amazon Seminar, Belém, Apr/2024).*

Os benefícios diretos da associação entre os diversos sistemas produtivos desenvoThe direct benefits of the association between the various production systems developed through the projects begin with securing the communities' food and nutritional security with a variety of products intended for selling but, above all, for the communities' self-consumption. In this regard, the importance of agroecology for the promotion of the living forest is also fundamentally based on healthy, poison-free food.

The project actions that have a direct effect on the food and nutritional security of the communities include planting and reforestation, based on the diversification of species; the reclamation of degraded areas through SAFs; the production and planting of seedlings of species of the Amazonian biodiversity; the development of seedling nurseries and productive farmyards; the abandonment of pesticides; and the development of natural pesticides and fertilizers.

Foto: *ACOMCOSMI*

Food and nutrition sovereignty and security

- Improvement in the food and consumption patterns of families in the territories;
- Socio-biodiversity production assurance;
- Increased production diversity;
- Appreciation of local food cultures;
- Community empowerment;
- Encouragement of alternative food networks in a fair and supportive manner

The communities' food and nutrition security was badly affected during the 2023 drought. In this respect, despite having incurred a number of losses, the projects have still managed to bolster local production and to boost the various socio-biodiversity production chains. Food and nutritional security assurance is one of the main drivers behind the process of defending territories, as it encourages people to remain in their communities. With this in mind, the promotion of family farming creates ways to prevent young people from leaving and to encourage many families to return to their communities.

Project "Sowing agroecology and empowering territories with our resistance", Lower Amazonas region, Federation of Gleba Lago Grande Agroextractivist Settlement Associations of Residents and Communities (FEAGLE)

In the Lower Amazonas region there is a consistent movement of actions developed by traditional and peasant communities and their organizations, which together foster a system for protecting territories and forests. In Santarém, the Federation of Gleba Lago Grande Agroextractivist Settlement Associations of Residents and Communities (FEAGLE) plays an important role as an instrument of unity among the 155 communities of PAE Lago Grande. It is led by women who help promote the struggles in various territories.

In the Agroecological Amazon public call for proposals, FEAGLE coordinates the project "Sowing the seeds of agroecology and empowering the territories with our resistance", which aims to produce and reforest degraded areas and produce food using agroecological practices. In total, the project encompasses 6 communities that develop agro-ecological initiatives, such as agro-forestry systems, productive farmyards, agro-ecological gardens, small animal husbandry, nurseries, and it is geared at supporting the sales channels for community production. The activities are intended to secure food and nutritional security and strengthen youth and women's

movements for resistance within the PAE. According to the president of FEAGLE, Rosenilce dos Santos Vítor, the project's production is now able to serve more communities than those directly benefited.

According to FEAGLE, all the initiatives seek to make the most of the local resources available in the family's own production unit, such as manure, seeds, plant residues, branches, roots and straw, and to encourage production diversification, sustainable land use, food security and forest conservation.

PAE Lago Grande is a 250,000-hectare agro-extractivist settlement comprising 155 communities. Although the PAE's territory is recognized, the land regularization process with the granting of collective titles has not yet been completed, which has facilitated encroachments and the illegal harvesting of resources. This is a region that is under serious threat, as there are interests from large economic sectors in the lands of Gleba Lago Grande. Soybean is one of the biggest threats, since it has dominated the Santarém plateau region and is now expanding in search of new areas. Mining, especially represented by ALCOA Alumina do Brasil, which already operates a bauxite mine in the Juruti Velho PAE, close to the settlement, is also looking to expand its operations to Lago Grande and, to this end, has used various forms of harassment to obtain areas illegally. In addition, illegal logging has intensified considerably in recent years and has begun to encroach on land in the Upper Lago Grande.

Fotos: *FEAGLE/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

Project “Pro-açaí consolidation: sustainable management of native açaí (euterpe oleracea), as a way of boosting the economy and food security in the Tukamã village of the Xipaya ethnic group, Altamira”, Transamazônica/Xingu region, Pyjahyry Xipaia Indigenous Association (AIPHX)

Indigenous peoples have also accessed resources from the Agroecological Amazon CPU. This is the case of the Pyjahyry Xipaia Indigenous Association (AIPHX), an organization representing the Tukamã Village, Xipaya Indigenous Land located on the left bank of the Iriri River (municipality of Altamira), which, since 2015, has been working to strengthen the village’s economy and food security through the sustainable management of native açaí. The resources from the public call for proposals have consolidated these initiatives.

According to the AIPHX, the project has stimulated the reinvigoration of traditional agricultural and extractive practices, which had been abandoned due to the replacement of traditional food with industrialized food as a result of the environmental “compensation” program for the Belo Monte hydroelectric plant (HPP). According to the Xipaya, this process has led to many chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity. In this regard, according to AIPHX, the sustainable management of native açaí groves is of paramount importance for food sovereignty, forest conservation and income generation for the Xipaya community of the Tukamã Village. One of the project’s objectives is to include the village’s food production in the PAA and PNAE, including açaí, but also other fruit species, nuts, vegetables and herbs.

The Xipaya Indigenous Land is directly threatened by the increase in deforestation and the growth of illegal mining. Neighboring areas such as the Altamira National Forest (FLONA) and the Riozinho do Anfrísio Extractive Reserve (RESEX) have also been experiencing a strong advance in mining and logging activity in recent years. According to the Xingu+ Network, the mining activity that is currently spreading throughout the Amazon, especially in Indigenous Lands, has industrial characteristics and is responsible for the destruction of vast areas, since huge machinery is used and a whole infrastructure of illegal roads and airstrips is in place.

Fotos: *AIPHX/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

The diversification of production allows communities to realize the increasing importance of their independence over the way they produce and consume food. For this reason, many projects have also led to an improvement in the communities' practices and forms of management, which in turn has also led to an increase in the circulation of traditional foods and a greater appreciation and sales of regional products.

Project "Sowing the seeds of agroecology and building sustainable territories with healthy food," PAE Lago Grande, Santarém, Lower Amazonas, Cabeceira do Ouro Community Residents and Agro-Extractive Workers Association (AMPROCOL)

The project serves 30 families and has developed training in agroecological practices and soil management for young people, women and the elderly in the Cabeceira do Ouro community, also in the PAE Lago Grande. It collectively develops food production through the implementation of crops for diversified production systems (Agroforestry Systems and agroecological farmyards), as well as the formation of a nursery and the production of seedlings of native plants, including the Brazil-nut tree, and the formation of vegetable beds for the implementation of a healthy menu based on traditional food culture as a way of securing the food and nutritional security of the families involved. Currently, 6,000 seedlings of fruit trees and forest essences of the Amazon are being grown to enrich SAFs and reclaim degraded areas.

The project also serves the surrounding communities, who are now looking to the project for seedlings to diversify their production units and reforest their areas, as well as building new vegetable beds. Another aspect covered by the project in the food production process is the raising of small animals, such as free-range chickens.

The project contributes to the dissemination of agroecology through collective actions and training processes as a development proposal based on the knowledge and experiences of local farmers in order to improve the resilience and sustainability of agri-food systems. AMPROCOL also sends surplus produce to agroecological fairs held in partnership with other organizations and associations in the PAE Lago Grande.

Fotos: *Yuri Rodrigues/Arquivo FASE*

The community organizations highlighted the need for actions to expand the consumption of agroecological products throughout society, also as a way of promoting the living forest and securing more democratic access for the population to food with important nutritional bases and free from poisons and pesticides. In this regard, it was highlighted that the use of agroecological technologies should be placed in a relevant way as a proposal to fight hunger in the Amazon and in Brazil with nutritional quality and against the standardization of food by the agribusiness and the food industry. As a proposal for the conservation and sustainable use of forests to tackle the climate crisis and its impacts, agroecology is a structural part of a project for society that respects traditional knowledge and secures territorial rights and the necessary foundations for the well-being of the peoples of the Amazon.

The role of women in the conservation of socio-biodiversity and the defense of territories

Economic and political independence of women

- Women take a leading role in organizations and at the head of projects;
- Empowering women's organizations and groups in the territories;
- Development of marketing activities, such as fairs, which encourage financial independence and partnerships among women.

> *The project's goal is to empower women; it has managed to qualify our debate a little more; it has managed to make us aware of our importance as women, as leaders of our territories and of our well-being. The project allows us to see ourselves, to see ourselves in our place, to see ourselves as belonging to the territory and to seek out the right we have, our right to the land, to the forest, our right to biodiversity (Ivete Bastos, STTR/STM).*

In the projects supported by the Agroecological Amazon Call for Proposals, the great involvement of women in all regions is notorious, whether in positions of coordination of community organizations and associations, by performing tasks and activities, or even by participating as beneficiaries. Dema Fund educator Beatriz Luz pointed out that this prominence is not a natural occurrence, but rather the social result of the inequalities and violence that women experience and the urgent need to remain grouped, united and organized.

> *This is a condition of life. Associations and collectives are also a space for socialization, where the limits of the isolation of the private domestic environment are overcome. Spontaneity guided by a sense of justice also involves the social formation in which they are built and where they build up their resistance (Beatriz Luz, Dema Fund educator, Apr/2024).*

In the context of the territories with supported projects, women's political action is based on the intertwining of nature conservation actions, productive activities, economic strengthening and the struggle for territorial rights. The complex political work of women in the Amazonian territories is based on the act of caring for the land, ensuring the well-being of communities and strengthening social cohesion through a collective perspective.

It is important to note how this is reflected in the profile of the projects supported by Amazônia Agroecológica [Agroecological Amazon]. Usually, the women coordinators or managers of the projects are also part of other organizations, unions and associations, as presidents, vice-presidents, among other leadership positions. Dona Ivete Bastos said during the Lower Amazonas Workshop that the predominance of women in organizations and in involvement with projects today is due to the current crisis, a scenario in which women are taking charge of life in general. This is embodied in political action, in the sense of recognizing the importance of maintaining institutions that represent communities and peoples. In this regard, the recovery effort that women have been undertaking in their organizations, unions and associations in the face of all the major economic interests that are currently challenging the Amazon territories is ongoing.

There are also specific women's organizations that are developing 5 projects out of a total of 38, with actions specifically aimed at bolstering the political and economic independence of women in their communities and municipalities, breaking with the historical bonds of patriarchal violence. In a broader context, there are many organizations and associations implementing projects that have women in coordination and management positions: the Lower Amazonas (19), Northeast Pará/Quilombolas (4) and BR-163 and Transamazônica/Xingu (4). So, out of 38 projects, 27 have women as coordinators or managers.

Projects run by specific women's organizations

Project	Organization	Municipality
Healthy Eating, Healthy Living and Environmental Care II.	Placas City United Mothers' Club Association (ACMUP)	Placas
Promotion of Agroecological Fruit Growing in the Municipality of Uruará.	Uruará Countryside and City Women's Movement (MMUCC)	Uruará
Women Empowered in Resistance, in Defense of the Territory, with Agroecology and without Violence.	Belterra City Rural Women Workers Association (AMABELA)	Belterra
Women rural workers, empowered in the fight for agroecology and food and nutrition security.	Santarém City Rural Women Workers' Association (AMTR)	Santarém
Women and Agroecology: expanding links and spaces.	Rurópolis City Women's Association (AMMR)	Rurópolis

Project “Women rural workers, empowered in the fight for agroecology and food and nutrition security”, Santarém, Lower Amazonas, Santarém City Rural Women Workers’ Association (AMTR)

AMTR is an important organization in the Lower Amazonas. It is widely represented and participates in the political life of different territories in the region. As a member of the Dema Fund Steering Committee, it played an active role in monitoring the projects developed in various areas and in promoting women, their bonds of friendship and struggle. The project, supported by the Agroecological Amazon CPU, is a reflection of AMTR’s way of working, since the implementation of agroecological projects, such as community vegetable gardens and small animal husbandry, is specifically intended to bolster seven women’s centers in different territories of Santarém, namely: Ituqui, Arapixuna, Arapiuns, Tapajós, Várzea, Curuá-Una and Eixo Forte.

The project stimulates the political mobilization of these women through the production and sale of products from the communities involved, as well as providing training and technical support to promote women’s agroecological production.

In February 2024, AMTR took part in the Rural Women Workers’ Exchange, held in the municipality of Placas-Pará, which also included the Placas City United Mothers’ Club Association (CMUP), São Miguel Community Association (ACOMCOSMI), and Uruará Countryside and City Women’s Movement (MMUCC). The exchange was attended by 5 projects supported by the Agroecological Amazon CPU. This was one of the main results observed among the projects, as it shows the spontaneous organization of different women’s groups in the Lower Amazonas and Transamazônica-Xingu regions. As an organization, AMTR has been debating extensively with its beneficiaries and partners about the importance of agroecology in women’s lives and for the territories as a whole.

Foto: *AMTR/Arquivo Fundo Dema*

Marta Campos, coordinator of the AMTR and a member of the Dema Fund Steering Committee, highlighted the importance of opposing agribusiness in all aspects during the exchange of projects in the Lower Amazonas region held in the territory of Dourado, PAE Lago Grande, in March 2024, and that strengthening the agroecological production of the communities that benefit from it is one of the factors to be taken into account, but there is a whole food pattern imposed on society that needs to be countered. For this reason, she reiterates the importance of promoting this production during collective mobilizations, meetings, exchanges and in marketing spaces such as fairs. There was also encouragement for exchanges and other collective actions to be more present in the territories, moving away from the urban centers, so that the productive diversity and experiences that the communities present as a possibility for society with regard to environmental conservation and the production of poison-free food can be felt.

Women's organizations understand that strengthening women's perspectives in the territories means developing processes of independence through a rupture with socio-economic dependence on the market, based on the principles of territorial and food sovereignty of the peoples. For women, independence also means overcoming situations of domestic violence and, in this sense, breaking away from dependence on men in family life is a very significant outcome in this context. Violence in institutional and political environments also affects many women, who are often forced to withdraw from scenes of struggle for the sake of their own survival and that of their families. However, the experience with the women shows a sense of solidarity that is increasingly louder against the violence suffered and highlights the importance of being together in order to be strengthened.

Women: guardians of seeds

"We are the land and the land is us" (Mrs. Maria Odila Godinho, Anã Community, Tapajós-Arapiuns RESEX).

To maintain the culture of seeds is to secure the history of each people. The words of the women heard in the hours of accounts of their life experiences in the territories reveal how their concern for life comes right from the seeds. During the great drought of 2023, part of the women's efforts in view of that situation was dedicated to seeds, in a systematic work of observation of what was affected, what died and what remained alive, which resulted in the development of a delicate process of rescuing, harvesting and multiplying seeds of forest species, especially those that proved to be most vulnerable to long periods of drought. In this respect, women stand as the true guardians of seeds and, therefore, as a possibility for maintaining Amazonian biodiversity and forest resilience.

The restoration of the territories has been led by these guardians who, by tracing their paths and observations, exchange with their neighbors in the community and with women from other communities, territories and regions, thus forming real networks for the multiplication of seeds and seedlings. Mrs. Edilena Oliveira (FEAGLE) says that even in the face of the adverse environment produced by the drought in

the Amazon, the women continued planting, looking for seeds and exchanging at every possible meeting, including the collective activities of the projects such as workshops and exchanges.

The women's work with seeds is developed as a socio-environmental technology that culminates in this process of exchanging seeds and seedlings of forest and agricultural species between communities, which is certainly one of the most important events reported among the projects supported by the Agroecological Amazon CPU. These spaces of exchange were intensely experienced, thus promoting the productive diversity of the communities and generating income alternatives based on cultural knowledge and traditional ways of life. Women's care for the land and its waters while protecting the forests, growing plants, collecting seeds and exchanging them is weaving the resistance networks of the territories, it is the doing that sustains life and is designed to combat the predatory exploitation of the territories and guarantee socio-environmental and climate justice for the peoples of the Amazon.

Strengthening organizations and networks

During the follow-up of the projects, the importance of the initiatives for strengthening community organizations and associations in all regions was highlighted. According to the Lower Amazonas Systematization Workshop, held in Santarém from March 4 to 7, the resources from Agroecological Amazon came into the lives of the communities from a very difficult context of vulnerability and, for this reason, encouraged them to take up the fronts of resistance against the attacks on their territories. And, as we've reported throughout the magazine, the projects were also strategic for strengthening communities in view of climate change.

The presentations of the projects showed that there are some key pillars linked to the process of bolstering organizations and communities, which consist of maintaining traditional production processes and forms of management, promoting the economic and social aspects of agroecological production and securing the territorial rights of indigenous peoples, Quilombolas and traditional and peasant populations. For this reason, the projects developed are fully connected to the political action of the communities in defense of their territories, mobilizing the fields of territorial rights and the discussion on the environment and the climate emergency.

Strengthening organizations and their networks

- Strengthening community organizations and their leadership;
- Strengthening associations' capacities in project preparation, management, registration and monitoring;
- Strengthening the Steering Committee: strategic planning and monitoring policy;

- Establishing and strengthening agroecology networks with common agendas in the regions covered by the Dema Fund in Pará;
- Strengthening women and youth in the territories;
- Articulation and structuring of the Community Funds Network as a political player in the Amazon.

The strengthening of the organizations was a process that took place throughout the implementation of the projects. Collective work parties, meetings and workshops, exchanges and other activities related to the projects were moments when the communities' social cohesion was strengthened. The exercise of productive activities among the communities is connected to the struggle for territorial rights and demonstrates the positioning of the organizations in the face of antagonists and situations of adversity and conflict. They are also ways of politically strengthening the various solidarity networks in the face of the advances historically endured by traditionally occupied territories.

The progress and implementation of the planned actions led to recognition of the credibility of the community associations and other organizations, such as the Dema Fund and FASE, which gained the trust of the project beneficiaries, which spread to people and families who were not directly involved in the projects, but who became closer during the course of implementation. As soon as many community members saw the seriousness of the projects, people became more involved by donating materials and labor, as well as participating in meetings, joint efforts and other collective work. In this context, the members of the Dema Fund Steering Committee played a key role in advising and monitoring the projects in each region.

The credibility of the representative associations has also had a positive effect on valuing family farming through more systematic work on the creative marketing of agroecological production, which has resulted in an extension of the work performed and a broadening of the effects of the projects beyond the territories in which they were developed.

Mrs. Maria Odila, from the Anã Community, Tapajós-Arapiuns RESEX, highlighted the importance of exchanges between territories as a way of exchanging and circulating knowledge, know-how and practices of the community initiatives carried out, praising the Dema Fund's encouragement of this form of meeting. In the exchange, each organization has its own space for sharing and debating the results achieved and the challenges they face in staying afloat. According to Beatriz Luz, exchange is an irreplaceable political-pedagogical proposal, because in it we affirm that it is in dialogical action that knowledge aimed at transforming realities is founded. In this regard, the exchanges made important contributions to each project and all the organizations shared the feeling that they were not alone in facing difficulties.

Understanding the importance of exchanges, the organizations began to organize these meetings on their own, such as the aforementioned Rural Women Workers' Exchange, which brought together five projects supported by Agroecological Amazon CPU from the Lower Amazonas and Transamazônica/Xingu regions, to discuss the experiences of each organization and debate issues such as the defense of territo-

ries and agroecological production based on experiences in the management and processing of forest products, the recovery of degraded areas and the marketing of agroextractivist products. The exchanges also contributed to the creation and expansion of networks between associations and other organizations working to defend the territories and to the strengthening of women in this context. In general, the spaces dedicated to monitoring the projects were important spaces for collective construction and sharing information and knowledge.

Another fundamental issue directly related to the defense of territories that the organizations pointed out is the challenge of encouraging greater participation by young people in the productive and political life of the communities. The projects encourage this through training mechanisms aimed at directly benefiting the communities themselves.

Project "Forest youth defend agroecology and resistance in our territory", Santarém, Lower Amazonas region, CFR Lago Grande do Curuai Families Association

CFR Lago Grande develops a complex training process focused on various areas that are defined collectively, in assembly, according to the priorities and needs identified by the communities. It seeks to develop community empowerment through a series of courses aimed at young people, but it is not restricted to this group and ends up covering other age groups as well. Specifically, the resources from the Agroecological Amazon CPU were directed towards strengthening the pedagogical organization of rural schools by regulating documentation and gaining recognition for the diplomas awarded to students. Within the scope of the call for proposals, consultants were also retained to advise on CFR and community productions. The project develops a set of activities aimed at agroecology, including the implementation of plantations for diversified production systems and reforestation through SAFs.

The courses run by the CFR are as follows:

- **Agroecology:** provides guidance on environmentally friendly forms of management to be applied within the territories. The young graduates have the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained in their own community associations and, together with FEAGLE, to be multipliers of the agroecological practices they have learned throughout their training.
- **Agriculture and livestock:** geared towards the rearing of small herds of cattle with the management of areas and control of land use; it also includes the rearing of small animals.
- **Community-based tourism:** an activity that is already being developed by some communities in the region and presents itself as an opportunity for young people to work in the community.

• **Zootechnics:** also geared at the management of small animals.

School secretarial services: school activities are often performed by people from outside provided by the education departments. In this respect, the training serves as an incentive for young people to take up these positions and vacancies in community schools.

All the courses developed by CFR Lago Grande are intended to keep young people in their territories through professional practices and productive activities.

The capacity-building process as a whole also includes, as a overarching theme, the organization of community associations, which addresses the technical and bureaucratic issues involved in management.

Another important issue noted during the monitoring of the projects is the presence of organizations and social movements with a presence in multiple territories and active in regional mobilization processes, such as the STTR of Santarém and FEAGLE in the PAE Lago Grande, Lower Amazonas; MALUNGO in the Quilombola territories throughout the state of Pará, with direct monitoring of projects in the Lower Tocantins and Transamazônica/Xingu regions; the Terra do Meio Canteen and Mini-Mills Network, in the Transamazônica and Xingu regions, which includes large conservation units and traditionally occupied lands; in the Transamazônica/Xingu region, there are also organizations such as the Prelazia do Xingu, which also play a regional role; in the BR-163 region, the role of the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) in Itaituba stands out.

At PAE Lago Grande, FEAGLE, for example, plays a role of unity between the communities and works to strengthen the autonomy of existing community associations and encourage the creation of new ones. According to its president, Rosenilce dos Santos Vitor, FEAGLE's political work is aimed at making communities understand community associations as a tool for struggle and empowerment. Rosenilce says that although FEAGLE does not yet have the technical structure to monitor all 155 communities in the PAE, it is already possible to see important achievements from this work. The Guardians of Good Living group is an example of how new political organizations emerge from the active role of older ones. In the case of the Guardians, FEAGLE presents itself as the parent organization and, like the former, has also worked to inform and mobilize the PAE communities against the harassment of mining and soybe-

an production companies for the irregular acquisition of plots of land in the settlement areas. The group is made up of 15 young people and has already visited several communities to discuss issues relating to the PAE's land regularization and the threats facing the territories, exposing the companies' strategies to the community. They are active in communication processes and in the debate on climate change.

Last but not least, the resources from the funds make it possible to better organize production systems and manage agroecological marketing, which undoubtedly improves the general conditions of the associations and attracts the participation of more people in projects, initiatives and political life as a whole.

Establishing and strengthening agroecology networks

In Pará, the river of agroecology has many springs, many sources that flow into the agroecological movement, the convergence of a plurality of struggles by social movements. Many are the challenges, but the collective resilience that has brought us this far allows us to project the future through a new construction: an articulation that connects different experiences, collectives and networks that resist throughout the state (Letter of Commitment from the Pará State Agroecology Articulation, 2023).

The articulation networks represent the convergence of a plurality of struggles, connecting diverse experiences and collectives, and enhancing the influence of these groups on the formulation and strengthening of policies to defend territories and promote agroecological practices and traditional knowledge, which play a fundamental role in keeping forests alive and building a fair climate policy that is not based on market mechanisms.

The Pará Agroecology Articulation emerged from a process of collective construction that culminated in the First Para Meeting of Agroecology, held in Santarém from March 22 to 25, 2023. With the theme "Agroecology, weaving networks for food and popular sovereignty in the Amazon territories", the meeting brought together around 200 people from various organizations and social movements in the Pará Amazon from different territories in the Lower Amazonas/Tapajós regions; BR-163; Transamazônica/Xingu; Lower Tocantins/Northeast Pará and Southeast Pará. A Letter of Commitment was signed by 81 organizations of various kinds, including social movements, trade unions, councils, committees, cooperatives, associations, forums, institutes and others. Communities without formally constituted representations also make up the document, as well as state, regional and national organizations. Dema Fund supports this articulation as well as its Permanent Campaign Against Pesticides and Pro-Life.

Among other things, the Pará Agroecology Articulation is committed to: 1) De-

fending Amazonian territorial rights based on the multiple dimensions of existence [..];2) Fighting against the expansion of agribusiness, mining, hydro-business and bio-business; 3) Fighting for free access to and use of biodiversity and defending the groups' and communities' own strategies on the management of the common assets; 4) Safeguarding socio-biodiversity and securing the protection of associated traditional knowledge; 5) Defending the seeds and seedlings of creole varieties as the heritage of humanity and the means of reproducing life; 6) Promoting the various food cultures of the Amazon as a structuring dimension of food and nutrition sovereignty and security [...].

The full Charter and all the commitments listed by the organizations can be found at <https://agroecologia.org.br/2023/04/14/carta-compromisso-do-encontro-paraense-de-agroecologia/>

Foto: *João Paulo Guimarães*

Autonomous Community Funds

The creation of autonomous community funds was indicated during the Agroecological Amazon CPU activities as a possibility for strengthening projects in the various territories, a movement that Dema Fund's own actions have been stimulating in the regions where it operates.

Graça Costa, president of the Dema Fund, explained during the National Seminar on Agroecological Amazonia, held in Belém (Apr/2024), that the articulation of a Network of Funds is a leap that the Dema Fund is taking in relation to the work that has already been underway for 20 years in the Pará Amazon. In this regard, she says that getting closer to other community fund experiences and joining a network makes it possible to build perspectives for the construction of public policies and to advocate with governments and state bodies. Above all, she highlights the fact that the network comes to

> *[...] improve the quality of the initiatives that are being put forward in this field of agroecology as a proposal that really comes to qualify not only*

the production process, but also a whole process of strengthening our socio-biodiversity (Graça Costa, Dema Fund President), 2024).

This proximity between Dema Fund and the communities and their organizations through the Steering Committee results in the consolidation of the credibility of the work carried out from the moment the projects are implemented to their execution and conclusion, which also makes it possible for more people and more communities to take part in community projects. The responses to the difficulties faced by the projects are also an improvement in bureaucratic, financial and administrative skills within the organizations.

During the Lower Amazonas Workshop, Sister Marialva pointed out that the way in which Dema Fund develops its activities with the associations helps a lot in solving the problems that arise during the implementation of the projects. She highlights, above all, the presence of educators and managers in constant exchange with the people of the territories and the holding of collective meetings to monitor projects, which makes it possible to exchange knowledge. These are ways of doing things that organizations are increasingly adopting to build strategies collectively, such as holding exchanges and seminars.

The Dema Fund's way of doing things and its great contributions have also inspired the creation of other community funds, such as the Babaçu Fund, the Luzia Dorothy do Espírito Santo Women's Fund and the Mizizidudu Quilombola Fund, which, like the Dema Fund, are made up of management committees with various organizations that dialogue and act on the realities in which they live, observing the specific actions of certain social groups. According to Graça Costa, the challenge facing the Dema Fund and other community funds is to strengthen them as instruments of socio-environmental and climate justice, which means amplifying the community and territorial voices of women, young people, agro-extractivists, indigenous peoples, quilombolas and peasants. It is the social strengthening of diversity, through a form of collective and active grassroots governance.

Foto: *Luma Rodrigues*

FUTURE HALLENGES FOR THE PROJECTS

During the various moments of systematization and evaluation of the AA projects, the main difficulties faced by the organizations during the implementation of the initiatives were also presented. There are various technical and bureaucratic dimensions that represent challenges that need to be considered and overcome in future experiences by organizations and funders. In addition, there were questions specifically related to the impacts of the pandemic and the great drought of 2023 on implementation schedules, the release of resources and the execution of project activities.

Technical and bureaucratic aspects

1. Technical support for the development of activities

Regarding the technical aspects of agroecological projects, questions were raised about: a) pest control and how to handle it without the use of pesticides and considering the resources that the land itself provides; b) how to cope with the particularities of some forest and agricultural species in terms of soil and types of management; c) how to tackle the problem of degraded soils by identifying the agroecological possibilities for restoration; d) how to make agroforestry systems more productive; e) better support from public policies for logistical support and market access issues.

2. Quotes and purchases

As a result of the organization of local economies and the development of businesses, fulfilling the obligation to provide quotations for project purchases required a great deal of effort on the part of the organizations, which reported: a) difficulties in obtaining the three tenders needed to buy materials from local traders in the towns where the projects are located. Many organizations said they had to go to neighboring municipalities in order to solve this problem; b) also highlighted was the difficulty in obtaining invoices for the purchase of materials, especially sand, clay and pebbles, to perform construction works. The refusal of building supply store owners may indicate that there are irregularities in the origin of these materials.

Technical and bureaucratic aspects

3. Specific financial support for project coordination

Not all organizations and associations have forms of remuneration for their members in management positions, who usually conduct projects on a voluntary basis. For this reason, it is necessary to think about ways of remunerating the work performed in the projects that do not affect some specific social security schemes, such as pensions, as well as benefits such as 'Bolsa Familia' [Family Stipend] and 'seguro-defeso' [unemployment allowance for fishermen].

4. Project implementation time

The type of agroecological projects developed require more time to consolidate the results, which is not normally covered by the duration of a contract with a funder. However, the implementation itself already demonstrates the significant contribution that each project has made to its communities, territories and regions.

Aspects related to the pandemic and the great drought

1. Resource shortfall after the COVID-19 pandemic

Inflation affected most of the materials needed to implement certain project activities. The rise in prices after the pandemic has led to a resizing of objectives as a way of responding to this shortfall and ensuring that the planned actions are performed.

2. Time to rearticulate communities

The organizations also referred to the challenge of re-engaging communities in the political activities of the territories after the pandemic. However, the projects also showed positive responses to this problem as actions began to be implemented and brought people back together for collective work.

3. Impairment of productive activities

Some organizations reported that the impairment of productive activities during the 2023 drought made it impossible to deliver products that would have been marketed by the PNAE and PAA and affected food and nutritional security in the territories.

Aspects related to the pandemic and the great drought

4. Lack of support from public authorities in serving communities

Both in relation to the pandemic and the great drought, the organizations report that the public authorities acted with negligence and omission in the face of the various social, environmental, economic and health problems faced by the communities during these two moments.

Many considerations arose from these challenges presented by the implementation of the projects, where the organizations also stimulated changes in the processes and showed the reality of many Amazonian territories in terms of socio-environmental, geographical and economic aspects. These are factors that deserve to be considered based on the experiences posed by each project.

Faced with the challenges, the organizations showed a real drive to carry out the projects by reflecting that understanding bureaucratic issues and resource management is also part of the knowledge built up during this process.

> *A project brings renewal, a lot of hope, a lot of perspective too. Although we know it's a fund, it also has its criteria, rules and responsibilities, so I believe that these rules, these criteria, they are also necessary for us to qualify, so that when we have other types of funding, for example, we are also better prepared, and they have trained us a lot, a lot, because people are beginning to understand that they are the ones who make it happen and make it work (Ivete Bastos (STTR/STM). Interview conducted during the Lower Amazonas Agroecological Systematization Workshop, Mar/2024).*

The good relationship established between the Dema Fund, its Steering Committee and the organizations with supported projects deserves to be highlighted in this context, as it is a form of constant, systematic and qualitative monitoring, which certainly contributes to the achievement of such relevant results by the projects as those described herein. There will undoubtedly be more positive developments and effects to come from this Amazônia Agroecológica experience.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We haven't given up on our collective constructions and we've learned from the pedagogy of the territories to agroforest the borders frayed by capital. Thus, we assume Agroecology as a structuring part of a project for society that has life as its center and sovereignty as the principle of exercising popular power in the Amazon territories (Letter of Commitment from the I Pará Agroecology Summit/2023, Pará Agroecology Articulation).

The writing of this magazine was developed from the systematic monitoring of the projects of the Unified Public Call for Agroecological Amazonia, which showed very important results on various scales of what was done in each territory. Many actions have only just begun and many of the projects' effects can still be better evaluated in the future. But what has been developed so far shows the great contributions of agroecology to the resistance processes of traditional peoples and peasants in the current context and its importance for the survival of forests and socio-biodiversity in the Amazon.

Therefore, more than the execution of activities per se, the projects are now part of the political work of the organizations, constituting collective trajectories that make up a framework of strategies for territorial and political strengthening, as described throughout the publication. Along with agroecological initiatives, community organizations and associations are also reinforcing the importance of guaranteeing compliance with recognition processes, such as collective land titles and demarcation of Indigenous Lands, as provided for in the 1988 Federal Constitution and related legislation. These are rights that the National Congress and the rural caucus aim to weaken day by day, but which are being actively challenged by social movements, indigenous and quilombola organizations, rural workers' unions, among many other entities.

In this regard, mechanisms to protect territories, such as Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), ratified in Brazil by Decree No. 5.051/04, have

also been widely used as a form of defense. Many of the communities supported by the public call for proposals have already started or completed drawing up their Free, Prior and Informed Consultation Protocols. As part of a governance structure for peoples over their territories and lives, the Protocols are conceived as a set of guidelines and directives that govern the social, economic and political relations of communities with external agents, whether public or private. Nature management based on traditional knowledge has also been supported by the construction of Territorial Management Plans, Use Plans and Community Management Plans, which are instruments that help manage territories and nature by establishing rules for the use of resources and bans on predatory actions such as the use of pesticides, illegal logging and mining. These instruments allow for the strengthening of independent decision-making processes on territories in the face of the old and "new" threats that are currently affecting the Amazon in the midst of the climate emergency.

All these initiatives are driven by the strengthening of the territories, which was also expressed in the projects through the creation of networks between organizations, social movements and communities, the stimulation of youth participation in the political and community life of the territories and the promotion of the independence of associations and communities in the formulation of their own advocacy actions. For this reason, the organizations say that it is imperative to expand the development of community projects and other mechanisms to protect traditionally occupied territories as a way of securing the basis for the survival of forests in the Amazon and as a way of politically strengthening networks of solidarity between peoples. Based on good living and the defense of climate justice, the community organizations outline the confrontation with the current economic models and highlight their contributions on the possible paths to the global climate crisis and its effects on the Amazon.

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