

# BRAZIL



## Mission of Family-based Agriculture and Agroecology

*The role of collective action devices in agro-ecological transition on a community scale.*

### Map

The Agreste da Borborema is a region marked by high levels of rural poverty. It is located in the Brazilian semi-arid region, in an environmental transition between the humid coastline and the dry backcountry. The region is densely occupied by family farms producing basic food for the cities and monoculture sugarcane farms to the east and large farms of extensive livestock to the west. The region has lived through a severe drought cycle approximately 8 years.



### Context



The region is marked by the interests of rural oligarchies that occupy or abandon parts of the territory. A strategy of deforestation has been initiated on the former Queimadas farm, a property with 2000 hectares. It continued until the drought from 1979 to 1983. Many farmer-residents had to leave the area. In 1997, landless farmers from the region occupied the property and in 1999 2 settlements were legally installed : Queimadas with 100 families and Oziel Pereira with 50 families.



## Description

The community of **Oziel Pereira** is organized by **Collective Action Arrangements**, CAAs, that are **self-managed socio-organizational arrangements** aimed at **regulating cooperative participatory work processes** for the **construction and socialization of knowledge** linked to territorial networks of production, processing and food distribution. It is a **locally established mechanisms** aimed at mediating **economic transactions** in territorial base agri-food systems.

For example, the following CAAs were established in the trajectory of agroecological innovation : **Collective work task force, local cooperative, community seed banks, Rotating solidarity funds, collective kitchen, construction of agroecological knowledge and political training and access to markets.**

The agrosystems developed in the settlement were strongly influenced by the CAAs present in the community. **Biodiversified systems**, with well-structured house surroundings, **polyculture mowing**, animal-plant integration practices, use of **Creole seeds** and infrastructure for capturing and storing rainwater allow the reproduction of **autonomous economies**.



12 different  
local networks  
involved in the  
CAAs

## Trajectory

1976 : many farmers resided at the farm

1979-1983 :  
Severe drought in the region

1999 : installation of the settlement

2010 : installation of a seedling production nursery



## Results and Benefits

The gradual incorporation of technical and organizational innovations in the agroecosystems of the settlement, made possible by materials investments associated with local learning and experimentation processes, contributed to expand the family self-controlled resource base and to improve the conversion of these resources into a diverse range of products intended for sale and self-consumption.

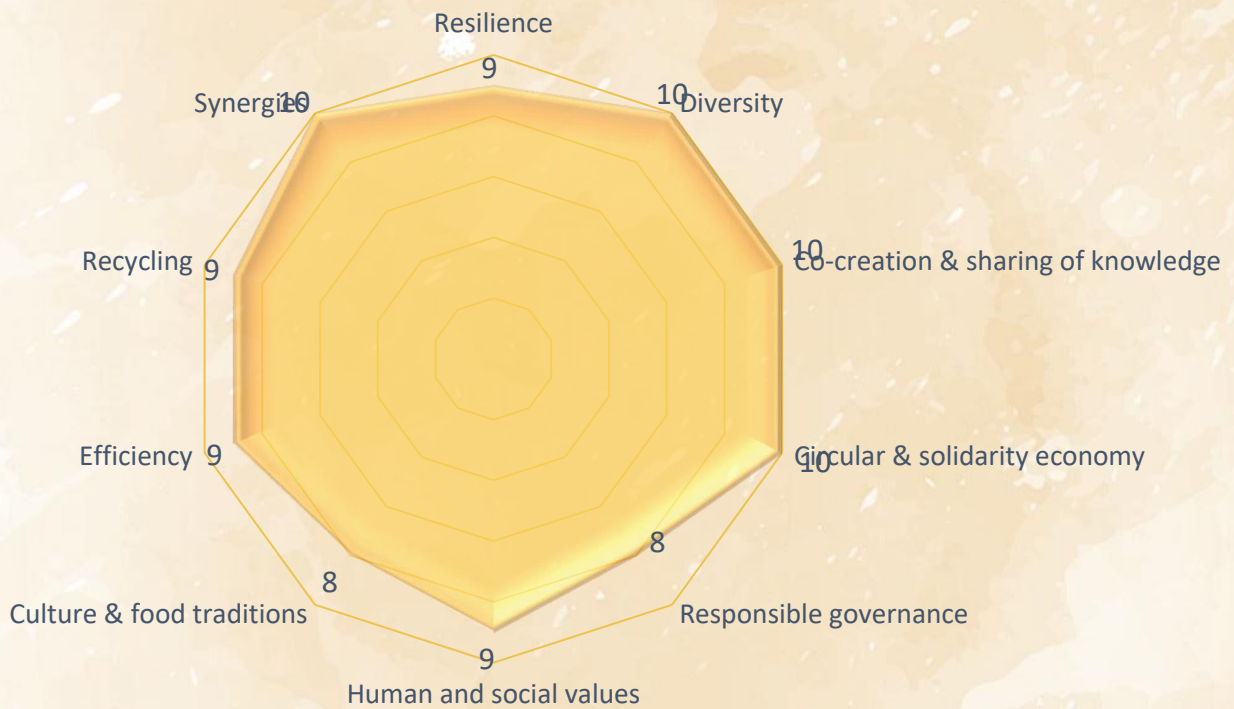


The seed banks and the task force ensure a transgenic-free community, in contrast to neighbouring communities. It also contributes to participatory management of sustainable land use and use of water, balance of production and depletion of organic materials above and within soil, and strengthening sustainable use of biodiversity. The construction of CAAs, contributes to increasing the autonomy of agroecosystems, while making them better prepared to face negative external influences.

The creation and consolidation of various self-managed processes in the community made it possible to strengthen community sense and build bonds of belonging. This is essential in the organization of economies based on reciprocity, generating a high degree of autonomy. CAAs play a central role in organizing cooperative processes at community level to guide trajectories and to manage community's self-controlled resource base.



# Lessons learned & reflected FAO principles



## Resilience: 9

The CAAs contribute to the continuous development of the resource reserves such as water, seeds and fodder, and also the diversified marketing channels, food sources and economic activities that give flexibility to agroecosystems.

## Human & social values: 8

CAAs are socio-technical arrangements created and controlled by the users themselves of collectively managed goods and services. Some of the CAAs created were women's self-organizing initiatives.

## Diversity: 10

CAAs are essential elements for the construction of economies of diversity, which are produced from the combined management of various biological species and economic activities.

## Culture & food traditions: 8

The initiative contributes to the production of healthy and culturally appropriate foods, by the structuring of diversified agroecosystems. The sort circuits favor close contact with local consumers and so their preferences and food demands.

## Co-creation & sharing of knowledge: 10

Agroecological innovations were incorporated in a trajectory constructed from the broad involvement of community families. Agroecological knowledge is assumed as a common good, shared by all the actors of the initiative.

## Efficiency: 9

By valuing and acting to develop the locally controlled resource base, the trajectories of agroecological innovation contribute to the development of productive systems that are low on intermediate consumption.

## Synergies: 10

Actors, economic activities and ecological processes are organically connected forming self-organized socioecological systems. CAAs play a central role in the development of agroecosystems whose economies are based on the optimization of self-controlled local resources.

## Responsible governance: 8

CAAs are institutional arrangements aimed at democratizing and decentralizing the governance of food systems. They are configured as mechanisms for building autonomy at the local level.

## Recycling: 9

By apprehending the agroecosystem as a self-organized economic-ecological system, it is understood that the residues of economic activities are used as inputs for economic activities that will be carried out in the sequence.

## Circular & solidarity economy: 10

CAAs are based on the active participation of different actors of food systems in the management of the processes that chain the production to food consumption.

# Contacts

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The Avaclim project aims to create the necessary conditions for the deployment of agroecology in arid areas.

For more information : [www.avaclim.org](http://www.avaclim.org)

## Financial partners:



FONDS FRANÇAIS POUR  
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