

PAULO FREIRE PROJECT



  
YOUTHS, PARTICIPATION AND  
EXPRESSION IN THE SEMI-ARID

# PAULO FREIRE PROJECT

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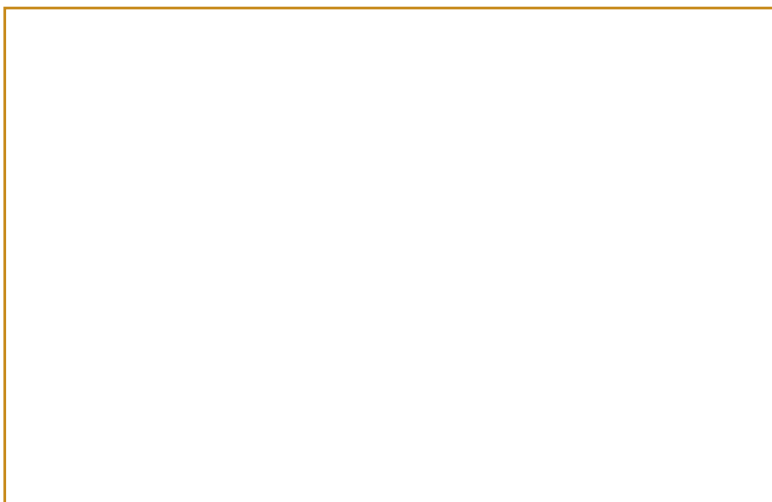
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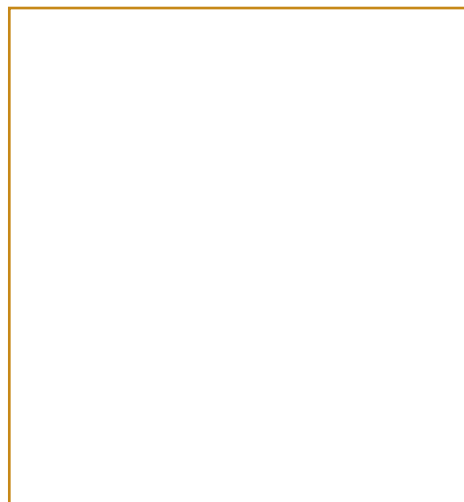
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CONTENTS

"I really learned from the birds."

PATATIVA DO ASSARÉ

06

ARRIVAL BIRD

08

TO LIVE WELL IN THE SEMI-ÁRID

17

PAULO FREIRE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

22

BET ON THE YOUTHS

29

LOOKS AND WORDS

41

PARTNERSHIPS AND LEARNINGS

69

MOBILIZING IS NECESSARY

82

A LETTER FROM THE SEMI-ARID YOUTHS

86

LESSONS LEARNED

# ARRIVAL BIRD



Farinheiro, bird of the caatinga (biome),  
flies and comes back after the rain.

It comes up asking:

– Is there flour in there?!

name of the strong food that nourishes the body and roots.

If he goes, he comes back.

Youth also speaks. They go, they come back.

The sertão does not leave the soul and the dream...

feed on food, feed on culture, take your voice to the world.

Bird that flies knows the value of the nest!

Build, but for the birds to come.

It doesn't matter if it's on the asphalt floor or on the dirt floor.

Any ground is made to resist and exist for the sertanejo (people from sertão).

What matters is the flight that each one can take.



**Marina Valente**



A stylized sun with a spiral center and a cactus are positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page. The sun is a dark green color with a lighter green spiral. The cactus is a simple, dark green silhouette. The background is a solid dark green color.

# TO LIVE WELL IN THE SEMI-ARID



**Road to make the dream come true...**

*Milton Nascimento*







It was the year of 2013. The purpose: to fight rural poverty and raise the standard of living of farming families from Ceará. This is why the Productive Development and Capacity-Building in the State of Ceará – Paulo Freire Project (PFF) was born, built to promote the social and economic inclusion in a sustainable way, contributing to the income generation. As its main strategy, the project works on two frontlines: development of human and social capital, and productive sustainable development, in the agricultural and non-agricultural field; with youth and women as a priority audience.

The project's main objectives: to strengthen the capacity of the rural population in organizational purpose and problem solving, to stimulate community and family productive initiatives, increasing their skills to create income-generating businesses. Also seeking to promote sustainable productive development that guarantees productivity, linked to the construction of more solidary social relations, in an agroecological perspective.

Hence the support for the implementation of productive initiatives, benefiting families in activities such as: raising small animals, productive backyards, beekeeping, greywater reuse, biodigesters, handicrafts, processing units and artisanal fishing. Betting on the construction of a permanent process of technical assistance to the communities and family mobilization, which values the knowledge of female farmers and rural workers.

Focusing on these ideals, the Paulo Freire Project's intervention in the reality of Ceará's hinterland has allowed the rise of favorable factors for the consolidation of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, developing intensive production in the beneficiary family units. Sowing the idea that the sustainable use of natural resources consists in a technical solution to align the desires of the

sertanejo people (hinterland people) with the geographic characteristics of the region, the Project found in Agroecology the bases of its action.

Coordinated by the Secretariat for Agrarian Development (SDA), the PPF is financed by the partnership between the Ceará State Government and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), an agency linked to the United Nations (UN). In addition to being responsible for managing the resources provided for the execution of the Project, SDA promotes institutional articulations with the three spheres of federal, state and municipal power; with the private sector and, mainly, with family farmers and their representative entities: associations, unions and federations.

For the execution of action plans, the Secretariat works with seven civil society organizations with extensive experience in the semi-arid region. They are: Cactus (Support Center for Sustainable Development in the Semi-arid Region), Cáritas Diocesana of Crateús, CEALTRU (Center for Studies and

Assistance to Rural Worker Struggles), Cetra (Center for Labor Studies and Assistance to Workers), Esplar (Research and Advisory Center), IAC (Antônio Conselheiro Institute for Support, Advisory and Research for Human Development) and Flor do Piqui Institute.

The project's activities cover an area of approximately 23,530 km<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to 18.5% of the total area of the state of Ceará. There are 31 municipalities in six territories served by PPF: Cariri (Altaneira, Antonina do Norte, Araripe, Assaré, Campos Sales, Nova Olinda, Potengi, Salitre, Santana do Cariri, Tarrafas); Sertão dos Inhamuns (Aiuaba, Arneiroz, Parambu, Quiterianópolis, Tauá); Sertão dos Crateús (Hidrolândia and Ipueiras); Sertão de Sobral (Coreaú, Frecheirinha, Graça, Massapê, Moraújo, Mucambo, Pacujá, Pires Ferreira, Reriutaba, Senador Sá, rural Sobral and Varjota); Serra da Ibiapaba (Ipu) and West Coast/Curu Valley (Irauçuba).

A wide network of people and organizations that – united by the ideal of a great coexistence with the semi-arid – values and promotes Family Farming as the great foundation of the hinterland, supported by the rich culture of the peoples whose

...They recognized themselves as part of a larger dream, of watching their homeland progress, and progress along with it.



incessant knowledge resides within the heart of the semi-arid region of Ceará. Individuals who recognize the region's potential, but do not ignore the difficulties faced by a people who resist the fences of large estates and the aridity of the absence of consolidated public policies.

This network works to reduce poverty and improve rural life in Ceará. For this reason, they organized themselves to make the Paulo Freire Project a reality, which seeks to strengthen strategies for coexistence with the semi-arid region, based on Agroecology, Food and Nutrition Security, Promotion of Gender and Race/Ethnicity Equality, and Protagonism and Expression of Rural Youth. Thus, developing the productive capacities of the beneficiary families and creating conditions for their autonomy.

In nine years of existence, the Paulo Freire Project is already considered one of the greatest experiences in the elaboration and execution of public policies with the direct participation of the population. Guided by the combination of knowledge dynamics and practical experience, the PPF innovated with its actions and became the fourth highest ranked initiative in the IFAD Global Portfolio Performance Ranking, which comprises 280 social projects in 120 countries.

In this context, youth stand out as an expressive and resistant example of defending the rights of rural society. An alliance was made between the principle of coexistence with the semi-arid region and Agroecology, anchored in the empowerment and dynamism of youth. Aiming to tell this story of dreams, challenges, struggles and achievements – with rural youth taking the reins of their lives – that this book was created, whose name already says what it came for: ESPERANÇAR (to hope): Youths, Participation and Expression in the Semi-arid.

They are young people, aged between 15 and 29, from different communities, located in the regions of Cariri, Inhamuns and Sobral, who recognized themselves as part of a bigger dream, of watching their homeland progress, and progress along with it. A caravan that beckons you to follow it!



# THE YOUTHS AND THE VERB TO HOPE (ESPERANÇAR)

Rones Maciel - Youth and Communication Specialist/PPF

**A** new semi-arid region is emerging and transforming the lives of many families in Ceará. The verb “esperançar” by Paulo Freire is no longer just in the sky, waiting for the rain. It is also in popular knowledge, social technologies and productive activities. In women, in men. Especially in young people, agents of transformation..

The Paulo Freire Project defined youth as one of its priority audiences. According to the National Youth Policy, people are classified as young when they are between 15 and 29 years old and, according to the IBGE/PNAD (2017), they correspond to about ¼ of the Brazilian population (48.5 million people). More than 50% of them live in families with per capita income of up to half a minimum wage. According to the latest Agricultural Census (IBGE, 2010), 7.8 million young people live in rural areas of Brazil.

Considering this reality, the Paulo Freire Project had as its goal: to train young leaders, to stimulate youth protagonism in productive investments organized in a network, and to promote the inclusion of young people in the use of digital technologies, through Popular Communication and ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies).

The Project Management Unit (PMU) adopted the term Youths, in the plural, in line with Abramovay et al. (2007), for whom one cannot speak of youth, in the singular, since they are heterogeneous groups that allow for numerous cuts. Furthermore, in the PPF, a diversity of subjects is inserted. They



The verb "esperançar" by Paulo Freire is no longer just in the sky, waiting for the rain. It is also in popular knowledge, social technologies and productive activities.



are women, men, LGBTQIA+, farmers, quilombolas, indigenous people, fishers, leaders, artisans, EFA students...

The Paulo Freire Project rural youths represent around 20,000 young people (out of a universe of 74,000 beneficiaries), corresponding to about 28%. They received Continuous Technical Assistance to develop their capacities and productive investment plans. 4,151 families headed by young people (23,766 families/PPF) were covered by Productive Investments, and 255 young people occupy leadership and management positions in community associations.

In order to develop generation-focused actions, the Project hired a specialist in the area to prepare a Strategy in the year 2017, and the implementation and monitoring of actions, in the period from 2018 to 2021. The Strategy – the Action Plan for Youth and Popular Communication in the Paulo Freire Project – is structured on three fronts: Popular Communication, Capacity Development and Productive Development.

The initiative involved strengthening actions: youth leadership and social organization capacities, productive inclusion and economic empowerment, as well as protagonism and expression, through popular communication. The PPF then developed processes of organization, mobilization, training and political and social action of young people and technical advisory entities to strengthen organizations (ATC's and young people).

Before, the Rural Youth Being brought many limitations imposed by the lack of access to public policies, quality education, information technologies and internet access. Now, the opportunities for work, income generation and community par-

ticipation/integration mean that young people no longer need to migrate from the countryside to the city.

The journey so far has already yielded us a good harvest. There are many potentialities, talents, resistance and resilience to continue transforming the semiarid region and public policies for our youth. We've made progress, and we want more!



It is in the semi-arid that life pulses and youth resists"

# COMMUNICATION AS A STRATEGY FOR GOOD COEXISTENCE WITH THE SEMI-ARID

Bernardo Lucas Filho - Journalist/ SDA Technical Team

When thinking about communication, we commonly think of large media, known as mass communication. However, this is just one aspect of what communication really is. Over time, several other means of communication emerged.

As an example, we highlight the digital influencers who, through their large numbers of followers on multiple platforms, have become important opinion makers, producing entire content from their homes, and often using simpler equipment, like a cell phone camera.

It is worth mentioning that, in the world of large media companies and alternative forms of communication, there are three key points: power, concentration and democratization of the media. These central keys to communication help us understand how we became popular communicators.

After all, have you ever thought of communication as a dynamic of power, and what does power have to do with the narratives that are presented to us? Possibly not. So, let's try to understand how communication works in the Brazilian context.



To understand the relationship between communication and power, it is necessary to realize how the media and political power have been linked for a long time. Since the first printed publication in Brazil until today, narrative disputes have taken place to legitimize the power of the elites. It was in this context that the Brazilian press emerged.

Another key point is the concentration of the media, which presents itself as a major obstacle to Brazilian democracy, since, currently, only five families control half of the 50 communication vehicles with the largest audience in the country.

It is important to remember that this concentration is completely unconstitutional, as the Federal Constitution states that it is illegal for the media to be the object of a monopoly or oligopoly, which is when one or a few companies control the market.

If we understand that the contents released in the media are fundamental for public opinion formation, we will also understand that the lack of diversity of points of view, language and individuals present in reports, newsrooms and TV shows is harmful. So, it is worth thinking: How many indigenous, quilombola, black or LGBTQIA+ journalists do you know?!

In this sense, we must think about the democratization of communication, a subject little discussed in more traditional media, as it is a struggle that proposes communication models that regionalize the production of broadcasters and expand access to the internet for all Brazilians.

Precisely because there is this deficit of democratization and diversity in the mainstream media, it is necessary to pay attention also to alternative media, strengthening and increasing their reach, through participation and collaboration.

It should be noted that communication is a fundamental human right and represents one of the pillars of a democratic society. It is essential for respecting human dignity and for the political participation of citizens. This means recognizing the right of everyone to have their opinion and to be able to express themselves.

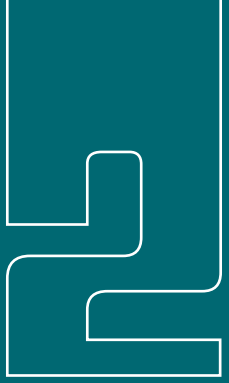
Furthermore, only a well-informed population is capable of questioning the actions of the Government, in order to monitor, propose and demand the development of public policies that meet the interests of the population. Given that well-informed people acquire more autonomy, as they no longer depend on the opinion of others to make their own decisions.

This reinforces the importance of communication to encourage people's participation in the democratic process and also for the exercise of citizenship. In this sense, it is essential to democratize, in addition to access to information, the forms of production and the means of communication.

Using communication as a strategy for human development and fostering good coexistence with the semi-arid region was one of the biggest bets of the Paulo Freire Project, giving visibility to the multiple realities and voices of the hinterlands, in particular, the realities and voices of youth.

communities in 31 municipalities of the semi-arid region of Ceará





# PAULO FREIRE PROJECT IN NUMBERS



**You don't know how far I've come  
to get here**

*Cidade Negra*



# CONTINUOUS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - CTA

07

civil society organizations in Continuous Technical Assistance - CTA



600

communities in



31

municipalities of the semi-arid region of Ceará



23.766

families, of which:

13.578

women-headed households



4.151

youth-headed households



111

indigenous families



723

quilombola families



613

artisanal fishers families





# INVESTMENT PLANS



4.880

sheepfolds  
built



6.192

sheep/goats  
purchased



6.776

aviaries  
completed



198.528

chicks  
acquired



2.179

pigsty built for  
pig farming



2.853

Productive  
backyards  
completed



7.200

hives  
acquired for  
beekeeping



179

canoes  
acquired



280

Sewing  
machines  
purchased



## SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES



## ACCESS TO WATER

• **1.606** biodigesters

• **5.498** cisterns and

• **2.287** water reuse systems

• **30** school cisterns implemented

• **349** 349 eco-efficient stoves

• **5.526** cisterns supplied by Mobile Water Treatment Stations (ETA's)



## COMMERCIALIZATION

**280** agroecological and community fairs (municipal, regional and virtual) with agricultural and non-agricultural products



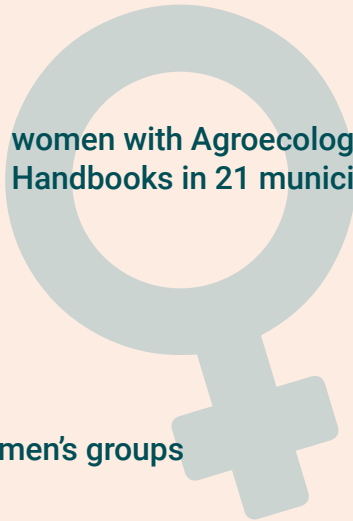
# GENDER, RACE AND ETHNICITY

• **144** women with Agroecological Handbooks in 21 municipalities

• **323** women in leadership positions in community associations

• **86** women's groups

• **30** traditional communities



**MORE  
HEALTH!**



**400** trained professionals (ACS, ACE and Technicians)

**60** health education actions in 15 municipalities



# BET ON YOUTHS



**We have all the time in the world, our sacred sweat...**

*Legião Urbana*



# OUR JOURNEY...

4 Territorial Festivals

EXCHANGES

CONVERSATION GROUPS

SOCIAL MOBILIZERS

WORKSHOPS

SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES

PRODUCTION UNITS

CONTINUOUS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - CTA

INVESTMENT PLANS

2018/  
2019

Preparation of the Youth and Communication Strategy and Action Plan

20  
17





SEMINARS  
WEBINARS  
FOCUS GROUPS



TERRITORIAL  
FESTIVALS



STATE  
CARAVAN

Creation of  
the Young  
Communicators  
Network

DIGITAL  
WINDOWS



4.151  
young people with  
Productive Projects

2.500  
10 young people trained  
in social issues,  
communication and  
production

44  
young social  
mobilizers

110  
Youth Groups  
mobilized

20  
young communicators  
Digital Reporter (2020)

20  
19

State Caravan  
for Youths of  
the Semi-arid  
Region

INFORMATION AND  
COMMUNICATION  
TECHNOLOGIES

2019/  
2020

DRAWN  
TALK





← Povoado

Escola creche

Atendimento Médico

Transporte Escolar

Praça

Rede Elétrica

Cisterna de Calçada

Cisterna de encanada

Horta

Cidade de

Cidade de



m. n. carrocharia

Igreja católica Jesus, Maria e José

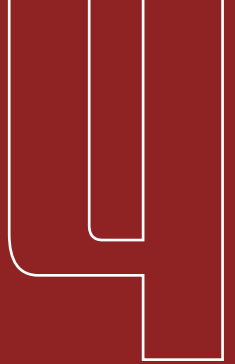
campo

Galpão Comunitário

Galpão Comunitário

Galpão Comunitário





# LOOKS AND WORDS:

The lenses reveal the youthful verb



Your look out there. Your gaze in the sky... Your look improves mine

*Arnaldo Antunes*



Our old house  
and our aviary.  
Past and future:  
sustainability.

*Diego Abreu - 27 years old  
Community of Batoque/Pacujá*

# THROUGH THE WINDOW, LENSES THAT SEEK...

Someone, one day, decided to pay attention to what those eyes born in hinterlands saw.

Because it was the look of young people who learn to grow; growing to learn.

Because they were beautiful looks from those who have the courage to live the beauty of real dreams.

The year: 2020, and the world scared into social isolation.

Nevertheless, life is re-signified when hope dares to create!

They improved the view, and from the window or the porch, they started photographing...

Curious, I wanted to spy on what those who see saw.

Innocent, I decided to peek, thinking I would see the same.

However, the feeling of those who think is singular, and people never see the same!

**When I found myself, the photographs ran through my imagination.....**

What trees are those? What's the name of that place? What meanings are there in the landscape? What sustenance to find? Was it arrival or journey?

I don't know the first answers that the young lenses reveal. That's when I understood.

Who was that lady? Is anyone dreaming over there? Where does the joy of living come from?

Those photographs carried meanings of those who felt them before they even existed. Building and reconstructing senses with each walk.

Because they are shapes, colors and textures; impressions and expressions of everyday life in particular universes.

Because that's how territories are formed, the places of every sertanejo heart. More than geography, it's people making history!

Pictures of captured realities that are modified by the spectator's gaze. Then take care of spying the clear view in the hinterlands of Ceará.





The certainty that better days come when we look at the sky and believe that God is taking care of you.

**Marcos Cristian Alves da Silva - 17 years old**  
*Community of Altamira/Carrapateiras-Tauá*



From the porch, Mrs. Luiza waits...

**Cosmo Veras - 23 years old**  
*Community of Engenho Velho-Ipueiras*



# DIGITAL WINDOWS

Photo shoot made by 17 members of the Network of Young Communicators in the Semi-arid Region. This initiative emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic, given the scenario of social isolation, introduced in 2020, as a health measure to contain contamination by the new coronavirus. The kids accepted the challenge of recording their daily lives in those atypical months. They photographed from the windows and porches of their homes.

The photographs bring the vision of young people aged between 17 and 27 years old, about themselves and about the place where they live. They reveal singularities of their communities, documenting the beauty of people and rural landscapes, located in the areas of Cariri Oeste, Sertões dos Inhamuns and Sobral – territories where the Paulo Freire Project operates.

Antônia Milena Rodrigues de Sousa - 22 years old  
Community of Santa Teresa I (Ipu)



Diego Abreu - 27 years  
Community of Batoque (Pacujá)



Cosmo Veras - 23 years  
Community of Engenho Velho (Ipueiras)



Kaique Ruan Oliveira Santos - 25 years old  
Community of Serra dos Limas (Parambu)



Itanael da Silva Rodrigues - 18 years old  
Community of Corridor (Graça)



Eliana Maria Teles - 25 years old  
Community of Sitio Guritiba  
(Santana do Cariri)



Adriany Rodrigues - 20 years  
Community of Angicos de Baixo (Reriutaba)



Cícero Ryan de Oliveira Sousa - 17 years old  
Community of São João dos Cándidos - Marruás (Tauá)



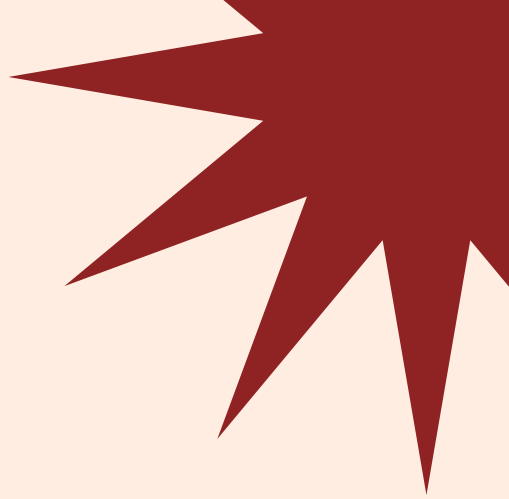
Elson Henrique - 18 years old  
Community of Barreiros (Tauá)



Cícero Pereira da Silva - 22 years old  
Community of Sítio São Gonçalo (Santana do Cariri)



Tiago Soares - 20 years  
Community of Santa Teresa 2 (Pires Ferreira)





*The place where I live, a simple community.  
The remote houses, with such simplicity...  
We stand united in any difficulty.*

**Eliana Maria Teles - 25 years old**  
*Community of Sítio Guritiba-Santana do Cariri*



About the potential of my community...  
the stored water and productive backyards.

**Itanael da Silva Rodrigues - 18 years old**  
*Community of Corredor – Graça*

# Over the blue and green of the land I inhabit

**Elson Henrique - 18 years old**  
*Community of Barreiros – Tauá*





In the backyard of my house, there is food culture! Strengthening family food security and sovereignty!

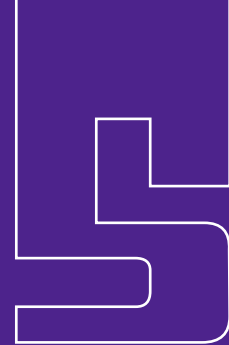
**Itanael da Silva Rodrigues - 18 years old**  
*Community of Corredor - Graça*

From the window, I can see the church.  
Pandemic postponed the patron's party. But it didn't  
stop the rain that fills the lagoon, which belongs to the  
Angel, with life. Of the dry land, only memory remained.  
It's beautiful to see!

**Laissa Pereira Gomes - 20 years old**  
*Community of Lagoa do Anjo – Parambu*







# PARTNERSHIPS IN LEARNING



**A dream that you dream together is reality!**

*Raul Seixas*



# RESILIENCE AND RESISTANCE IN THE FIGHT!

2021 celebrates the centenary of the pedagogue and philosopher Paulo Freire, considered the greatest educator in Brazil. Paulo Freire defended that educating does not consist only in transferring knowledge, but in creating and recreating possibilities for each subject to produce knowledge, based on their own context.

Following this perspective of resilience and learning, the Cáritas Diocesana of Crateús, since 2017, carried out the Paulo Freire Project, benefiting 3,133 peasant families in the Inhamuns region. The Project's actions follow the guidelines of the Investment Plan and Technical, Agricultural and Social Monitoring, better known as Continuous Technical Assistance (CTA).

"The Continuous Technical Advisory (CTA) is based on the assumption of sharing experiences and experimenting with agricultural and non-agricultural techniques, aiming to create economic opportunities and political influence for young people who live in communities with few resources, who suffer from discrimination for living in these vulnerable places.", explains Sandro Teixeira, Cáritas agent, who works in the municipality of Tauá.

The challenge of providing quality and emancipatory technical advice demands dynamism, empathy and skills in deconstructing some historical



**Educating does not consist only in  
transferring knowledge,**

**but in creating and recreating possibilities**

taboos through agroecological strategies such as the implementation of productive techniques, soil care, sustainable management of animals and the construction of more fraternal social relationships.

Strengthening the identity of young people in the countryside, encouraging them to be the protagonists of processes, is one of the focuses of the Paulo Freire Project. Little by little, this new look turns hinterland communities into more egalitarian and inclusive places for everyone.

“The will of young people to grow, update themselves and take advantage of every opportunity for youth entrepreneurship is notorious”. Nagila Feitosa, Cáritas agent, emphasizes how monitoring the project makes rural youth feel motivated to leave the sphere of invisibility that often affects rural people.

From this perspective, the events promoted by the Paulo Freire Project, such as the Youth Festival, are spaces that guarantee visibility to the youth, through the claim of their rights and the rescue of peasant identity. These are moments that also serve as an opportunity to bring together young people from different places and social situations, but with similar needs and demands.



## This union motivates rural youth to believe in the existence of possibilities in the countryside

““This union motivates rural youth to believe in the existence of possibilities in the countryside. But, unfortunately, the biggest challenge remains the obligation of leaving the communities in search of work or study”. Sandro Teixeira highlights, adding that the Paulo Freire Project has contributed a lot to the development of communities, but there is still a lack of public policies for youth.

This challenge is still fought by rural youth, “who can count on Cáritas Diocesana of Crateús as a partner in this struggle, because the true mission of Cáritas agents is to build, alongside young people, possibilities for them to change their own reality and prove that the countryside can be a place full of opportunities”, concludes Sandro.

Thus, the results of this journey along with the youth express significant advances, with emphasis on the involvement in the life of the communities. Before the Paulo Freire Project, the youth had not awakened to their importance in the actions developed in the community. “Gradually, they began to get involved in decision-making, attending association meetings, training workshops and conversation circles. Young people today participate much more!”, celebrates Nagila.

A strengthened rural identity is thus a major step forward. “Before, it could be shameful for a young woman or young man to say that she or he was from the countryside. Nowadays, it is a sign of honor, of satisfaction!”, observes Sandro. This is a result of the several actions developed when young people from the semiarid region became empowered and understood that the place where they live has its value. And more! They found that it is possible to generate income and live with quality in the countryside.

With youth mobilization, the creation of youth groups deserves to be highlighted. In this circle, youths strengthen unity, collectivism, and the exchange of experiences. Results of knowing, building and intervening, through diagnoses, conversation circles, awareness and empowerment of young people from the hinterlands. With organized youths, the culture of the communities took on new guises and meanings. For example, the har-



vest festivals and June Festivals – generally organized by youths nowadays – gained the freshness and vitality of this age group.

When looking at the entire path taken, along with the feeling of accomplishment, comes the conviction that it is possible to advance further and further! After all, it is challenging to continue living in the countryside without resources to support yourself. Our youth need more opportunities, specific public policies, contextualized education, access to credit to generate income... because being bold is to dream and make the dream happen!

... because being bold is to dream and make the dream happen!





We are seeds in the soil of the semi-arid region of Ceará, stigmatized as infertile, dry and lifeless. But, just like the caatinga, whose plants lose their leaves on dry days to re-gain them when the rain comes, we are resilient! And, with the fertilizer of strength, courage, partnerships and actions, we make the most beautiful of paths sprout, colored by the flowers of resilience and resistance in the fight!

... we make the most beautiful of paths sprout, colored by the flowers of resilience and resistance in the fight!



# SO MANY DREAMS, VOICES AND ACTIONS...

The different youths are leading the main transformations of practices, habits and values in rural areas. To lead these transformations, they seek to appropriate, (re)build and improve a set of theoretical-practical references, whose foundation lies in individual and collective experiences.

In this journey of searching for different references, rural youth meet with the contributions of Agroecology, which is understood as productive practice, social movement and human relations. Thus, rural youths become subjects of agroecological construction in Brazil.

However, conceptualizing rural youth requires knowing and understanding their specificities and the contexts in which they are inserted in communities, families and ongoing social processes. It also requires understanding how they deal with individual projects and the projects of social and economic reproduction of family cells.

Within these cells – structured by the patriarchal family model – the participation of young people in productive activities is almost invisible. This invisibility occurs both within the family and in many social programs aimed at these families. This prevents the particular demands of young people from being considered, as it reinforces an action focused only on the collective aspect of the family production unit.

Comprehending the need for organization and insertion of youths in the spaces of the community, the municipalities, and in the leading role of



social struggles, the Antônio Conselheiro Institute of Support, Assistance and Research for Human Development (IAC) seeks to build activities that dialogue with the various languages expressed by youth.

A partnership was built with the Paulo Freire Project for the development of activities that value the most diverse desires and possibilities of rural youth in the face of denial of rights. The strategy was to focus on mobilizing young people from communities located in the Territory of Sobral II, to encourage youth participation in training processes. Moments in which the speech of youths, based on a process of listening to their desires, was valued.



From this perspective, workshops related to themes such as: Rural Identity, Popular Communication, Contextualized Education and Food Sovereignty took place. There were also festivals and activities that sought to listen to young people, making their family, cultural and work realities, starting points for educational processes. The experiences provided by the Paulo Freire Project stood out as the first collective experiences lived by the youths.

Among all the actions carried out with young people, the most outstanding action was the State Youth Caravan of the Semi-Arid Region, which served as the culmination of a process of mobilization and training, not only for the festivals, but for the entire work of the ATCs. Young people from different regions of Ceará gathered, bringing stories of unique lives in their luggage!

By gaining notoriety at the state level, the youths showed that they are plural and are in the countryside pulsing for better living and working conditions, alongside their families. At that moment, different expressions of desires and dreams emerged, fostered by training processes that brought different contents and approaches, to foster youth protagonism. Even more! The strength of youths sparkled when stimulated by social projects.


The Paulo Freire Project has made and will keep making history as it bet on the youth from the semi-arid of Ceará. It paid attention to the youngsters that dream with and act on the construction of spaces that de-construct established ideas, directing to new perspectives for those who are young and live in the countryside. It is an action that believes in the strength of contextualized education to build a more healthy relationship of coexistence with the semi-arid.



O Projeto Paulo Freire fez e continuará fazendo história, porque apostou nas jovens e nos jovens do Semiárido Cearense.



# BELIEVING IN YOUTH IS BETTING IN THE PRESENT



No one is so big that he cannot learn, nor so small that he cannot teach.

It is a mistake to believe that learning is a one-sided act. An ancient Greek writer, Aesop, once said that “no one is so big that he cannot learn, nor so small that he cannot teach”. After all, when education is guided by human emancipation, it fosters different perceptions about the world, by individuals who recognize themselves as subjects of their histories and understand that they only achieve freedom if it is collective and based on the common good.

“I will never forget the shy faces in the back of the room. A little embarrassed, just watching the discussions...”. Jaiane Evangelista, technical advisor of Instituto Flor do Piqui in the Paulo Freire Project, says, adding, without hesitation: “This project changed my life. It was my first professional experience with youths. I feel so accomplished by their achievements that I can’t even hold so much happiness in my chest!”

In that first meeting between the community and the technical team, the shyness of the young women and young men was justified. They were out of place. The methodological proposal of the Paulo Freire Project – of prioritizing women and youth in the semi-arid region – displaces the sexist imagery, built on hinterland paths. What commonly happens is disbelief and silencing...

And the commonplace scene was repeated by the adult lines that echoed in the room:

- Young people don’t know how to choose anything!
- They don’t even know what they want for life!
- I take responsibility for him.
- Not possible?! So let’s see if this works...

The disbelief in the looks and buzz of the elders began that day, along with the Paulo Freire Project. It proved to be a challenge for the technical team, because it carried the marks of ideas and habits that, based on the male world of adults, rejected the freshness of youth. However, unlike the project, that astonishment, this time, did not stay. “We’ve heard so many no’s! But here we are, pro-



ving to everyone that young people know how to decide. They know how to do the right thing and take advantage of opportunities.”, celebrates.

That day, in the face of astonishment, incredulity, shyness and insecurity, those kids saw that it was possible to hope. They took advantage of that opportunity, believing that it was possible to build a different future by transforming the present. After all, it is not every day that someone says: I want to listen to you, know about your dreams, desires, potential and difficulties.

This is how the Flor do Piqui Institute’s journey began, in the territory of Cariri Oeste, together with 823 young people involved in the actions of the Paulo Freire Project. The priority, at all stages of the project, was the youth. From registration, whi-

... But here we are, proving to everyone that young people know how to decide. They know how to do the right thing and take advantage of opportunities.

ch gives visibility by registering the existence of young people (who now have names and faces), to active participation during the preparation of the Participatory Rural Diagnosis (DRPs). From Community Development Plans to the processes of building Productive Investment Plans, based on the skills and desires of each young person.

From meetings with young people to prepare and plan a Youth Festival, which took place in the municipality of Campos Sales, to the formation of commissions by microterritories to organize the State Youth Caravan of the Semi-arid Region, preparing materials and preparing presentations, exposed to the public during that event that happened in Fortaleza. The Project incorporated methodology and methods into each action, to bring the youths closer to the ATC teams.

Simultaneously, youth groups were created in the communities. Strengthened by training, exchanges, field days, planning and technical guidance focused on their needs, the youth groups took a leading role in the project's actions and gave visibility to the work they carried out in the communities.

They planned and promoted several events: tributes on commemorative days; religious, formative, cultural and artistic events. Representatives of youth groups also participated in specific training in Popular Communication and Digital Communicating, in order to expand the forms of communication and dissemination of youth actions. Thus, youthful effervescence spread to rural communities in the region.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic has arrived, bringing an unexpected challenge. The virus spread through an unprepared hinterland and claimed victims, especially among the elderly population. Something had to be done! And those youngsters, previously discredited, mobilized themselves to defend life through educational information. Thus, campaigns to combat Covid-19 emerged and were fundamental to maintaining hope for better days.

Over the months, many ideas and plans became realities. The Commission for Systematizing the Actions of the Paulo Freire Project emerged with the end of the project in order to gather everything that was done. From this systematization, collected reports that bring a feeling of accomplishment and the realization that, among so many subjective results, they interconnected to issues such as



Youth not only stopped being invisible, but also took on the roles of leaders and citizens in their communities.



self-esteem and identity valorization, the project financially changed the lives of young people who started to develop income-generation activities.

Expectations were exceeded! Youth not only stopped being invisible, but also took on the roles of leaders and citizens in their communities. They are girls and boys who contribute significantly to the development, preservation of local culture and provision of services, valuing the common good. Youth broke down the barrier of exclusion and the image that young people should not be taken seriously.

Today, communities respect the opinions and support the actions and ideas proposed by rural youth. It is exciting to see that the proposed mission was accomplished, reaching the goals of the Paulo Freire Project. "The project is coming to an end, but the friendships and the outcomes were so many that they are immeasurable. We will remain connected via social media and I will help them in what I can. They know I will always be available", says Jaiane.

In the end, hoping, the youth and their communities learned. And we, the ones who should teach, learned too.



... The friendships and the outcomes were so many that they are immeasurable

Youth broke down the barrier of exclusion and the image that young people should not be taken seriously.



# ORGANIZED YOUTHS

To value and strengthen family farming, emphasizing the importance of youth and women in this system. Carry out activities and stimulate new ways of thinking, with the aim of giving visibility to the voices of young people and women who live in the semi-arid region of Ceará. With these goals in mind, the partnership between the Support Center for the Sustainable Development of the Semi-Arid Region (Cactus) and the Paulo Freire Project was established, operating in the West Cariri territory, more precisely in the municipalities of Altaneira, Nova Olinda and Santana do Cariri.

On the other hand, the search for income generation opportunities in rural areas combined with the precepts of sustainable development and the need for activities aimed at leisure, culture and the appreciation of popular traditions – linked to productive and organizational activities, essential to ensure better quality of life – guided the Cactus' technical assistance work. The forestry engineer Jardel Costa was in charge of the execution."



To value and strengthen family farming, emphasizing the importance of youth and women in this system.



“The Project was essential in the development of activities that further helped the struggles of youth in the countryside. Both in the search for public policies that favor sustainable rural development, such as social technologies that allow coexistence with the semi-arid region, and in the promotion of Popular Communication, especially through the use of the internet, as a tool that can boost communication made by young people.”, evaluates Jardel.

The action strategies were successful, resulting in the strengthening of the work developed with young people in the search for recognition of the importance of remaining in their communities. From there, a demand for a youth organization that would encourage youth autonomy, protagonism and participation in the community arose. In addition to seeking improvements for the group and consequently for the communities.

The Project was essential in the development of activities that further helped the struggles of youth in the countryside.

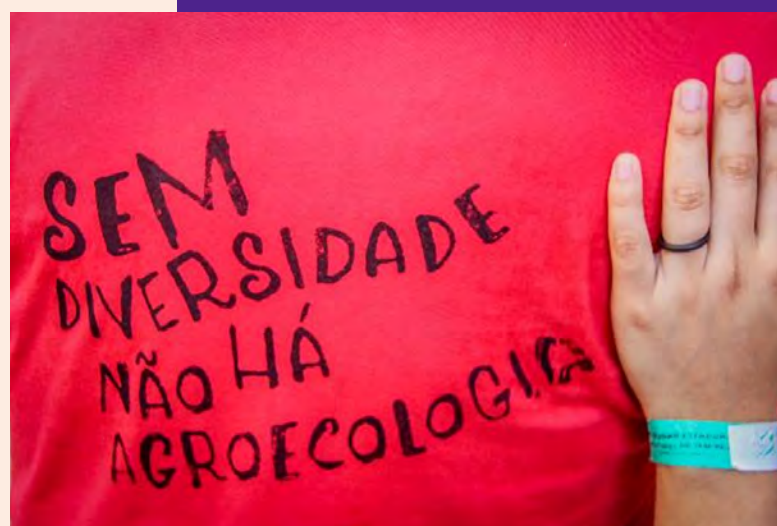
Such actions contributed to the creation of the Young Kariris Collective, composed of rural youths from the Cariri region in Ceará. The articulation, based on the collective, stimulated the struggle for permanence in the countryside between those girls and boys. The group realized that it is possible to overcome one of the main obstacles for those who work for the development of the semi-arid region: the rural exodus. “Now, the challenge is to stay organized and fight so that other projects, similar to Paulo Freire, can be inserted in the communities”. Alert Jardel, who, in addition to being a technician, is a young man from one of the communities he monitors.

Another strategy developed by the project was the promotion of popular culture, valued for the specificities of each place and for the dialogue with cyberculture. There was a process of stimulating artistic creations, such as cordel (folk-popular poetry) writing, theater, creation of webseries, and dissemination of this products on social networks. A significant moment in the entire trajectory of the Paulo Freire Project in the territory was, without a doubt, the Semi-arid Youths Festival, in the municipality of Campos Sales. The festival was a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and to legitimize Young Kariris as a collective of strong young people who never give up fighting for their beliefs!

“In this context, I was able to grow, both professionally and personally. After all, this was my first opportunity to act as a professional. All this work made the desire to remain in my community come true. Today, I can say that it is possible to work and live in the countryside, without the urge of moving to big cities to survive.”, teaches the apprentice Jardel.



... A collective of strong young people who never give up fighting for their beliefs!





# EXPANDING THE HORIZONS OF EDUCATION

The Paulo Freire Project, in partnership with the Center for Labor Studies and Assistance to Workers (Cetra), developed the project's actions in the territories of Sobral 1 and Sobral 2. Since 2015, Cetra has provided technical assistance in agroecology with youth, a strategic line of action for that organization. However, in 2017, the expansion of operations in the territory of Sobral 1 intensified the work.

One of the first developed actions, based on the Participatory Rural Diagnostics (DRPs), was the identification of groups of young people already existing in the communities. Thus, it was possible to strengthen the active groups and contribute to the creation of new initiatives.

From conversation circles, exchanges, field days – when these young people and the technical team got to know better the different realities of the youths in the territory –, the youth protagonism was stimulated. Simultaneously with this action, the rural succession process was renewed, with the inclusion of young people in the Productive Investment Plans (PIPs).

The partnership with the Chico Antônio Bié Family Farming School- EFA Ibiapaba, located in the municipality of Tianguá, in Serra da Ibiapaba, stands out with joy. In 2016, seven young people from the communities assisted by the Paulo Freire Project passed the EFA selection and entered the



2nd training group for agricultural technicians. Of these, six completed the course and graduated in 2019. Namely: Alex (Massapê), Itanael (Graça), Gerlene (Senador Sá), Hemerson (Pires Ferreira), Carlos Eduardo and Diego (Pacujá).

The training process involving the agroecological technical assistance of the Cetra/PPF partnership, associated with the debate on contextualized education of the EFA, was extremely important for the construction of youth leadership in the territory. In 2020, four more young people assisted by Cetra/PPF joined EFA Ibiapaba. They were: Antônio (Moraújo), Kainan (Mucambo), Moisés and Mastroyane (Irauçuba).

Another action worth mentioning was the Sobral 1 Rural Youth Festival in 2018, which was attended by 300 young people. This experience really mobilized the youth of the Paulo Freire Project's areas of activity. Connecting rural youth with city youth, the event involved conversation circles, practical activities, percussion workshops for women and capoeira. There were also debates about traditional peoples, exchanges and a lot of hip-hop. At all times, the voices of the youth set the tone for the meeting's schedule.


A highlight of the Festival was the moment of exchanges between experiences of youths from the countryside and from the city of Sobral. The protagonists, represented by various activities and experiences, reverberated throughout the ter-

ritory of Sobral. It was possible to stimulate and even discover new young protagonists and animators for other actions of the project; both in their communities and in the territory as a whole.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought many challenges to humanity, especially for the most vulnerable populations, such as youth who resist in the semi-arid region. In the project, the biggest challenge was to keep the youths mobilized and connected during this delicate period. One of the strategies was to hold weekly conversation circles through an online platform. The idea was to promote moments of interaction and collective construction. The youth also led lives through Cetra's social networks.

Together, all these actions in the territory of Sobral resulted in the creation of the Youth Work Group, supported by the Territorial Network of Agroecological Farmers and the Network of Young Communicators of the Paulo Freire Project. The WG has about 25 young people.

Analyzing our entire trajectory, it is possible to say that working with rural youth is rewarding and, at the same time, challenging. After all, youth are plural and have particular needs, and this diversity needs to be respected! We must continue with the desire that pulsates in young people, to show their voices and potential and to express themselves as they are. To live and produce food, culture and resistance in rural areas!



"Analyzing our entire trajectory, it is possible to say that working with rural youth is rewarding and, at the same time, challenging."

# THE WORK THAT MAKES DREAMS POSSIBLE

Since September 2017, CEALTRU (Center for Studies and Assistance to Rural Worker Struggles) has been operating in partnership with the Paulo Freire Project in six municipalities located in the Sobral II Territory: Hidrolândia, Ipu, Ipueiras, Pires Ferreira, Reriutaba and Varjota. With training actions in the Social, Productive and Technical Assistance areas, the partnership serves 1,636 families in 51 communities.

Among the training courses, the following stand out: the Participatory Rural Diagnosis; Conversation Rounds in which youths debated topics such as Identity of Rural Youth and Rural Succession, Protagonism of Rural Youth; mobilization and participation in Youth Festivals and in the Semi-Arid State Youth Caravan. There were also workshops on Gender, Race and Ethnicity, and on Associativism.

The project also gave rise to several exchanges aiming at learning about production units, social technologies for water reuse and biodigesters; workshops on natural pesticides, food and health management in the productive activities of poultry, swine, sheep and goat farming, and training in beekeeping, artisanal fishing, fish farming, handicrafts with straw and clay; as well as technical assistance in non-agricultural activities and in various meetings with community associations.



During four years of operation, 200 young people were followed in the development of Investment Plans, based on technical assistance in agricultural and non-agricultural activities. There were 51 conversation circles and six municipal workshops on Entrepreneurship and Rural Business Management. All this experience culminated in the 1st Festival of Youth of the Semi-arid Region, held in Ipueiras, which involved around 130 young people from the communities of the Sobral II Territory.

The participation of youths in the State Caravan was also remarkable in the workshops on Popular Communication with five Youth Groups and in the Popular Communication Workshop promoted by

the UGP, which brought together youth representatives from all over Ceará. Other moments were also attended by the representation of young people: Fetraece Regional Festival, Inhamuns Semi-Arid Youth Festival, 1st Sobral I Semi-Arid Youth Festival, and Workshop on Drugs and Sexuality in the Boqueirão-Ipueiras Community.

In addition, 20 young people were encouraged to sign up for the AJA program, from the São José Youth Project, and to participate in municipal, regional and state fairs (FECEAF) and in the production of videos about the experience of the youth, with backyards and social technology of water reuse.



The learning trajectory, built with the youth, brings growth possibilities. Today, it is already possible to identify the engagement of young people in EFAs, seeking a contextualized education, based on the opportunities provided in the Rural Youth training and festivals, supported by the Paulo Freire Project. These young people also play a leading role with family units, in decision-making spaces in their communities and in the processes of production and commercialization of Family Farming items.

The learning trajectory, built with the youth, brings growth possibilities







The youth found their strength; they realized that it is possible to build a dignified life in the semi-arid region. They have found a horizon of possible dreams and are already celebrating their first achievements, aware that they still need to overcome challenges. After all, the need for public policies becomes evident, as it is essential to keep youth mobilization and organization in dialogue with their needs. Moreover, in addition to specific events, it is necessary to encourage the participation of these youths in the elaboration and execution of investment plans, favoring access to markets for Family Farming products.

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The outcomes of this journey also reach those who provide technical assistance, applying the Freirean maxim that those who teach learn, and those who learn teach. “As a rural young woman, settled and an activist in the labor movement, I brought personal experiences related to my attitude of persistence, especially because, as a young black woman, I had overcome countless difficulties and prejudices. On the other hand, I understood that there is permanent learning from the history of struggles in the countryside and organizational processes, whether through movements, unions or associations. There is a constant desire to achieve effective results, through collective action for youth protagonism.”, says Cláudia Avelino, technical advisor at CEALTRU.





# AMID THE PANDEMIC, THE UNION IS BORN...

Specific public policies for youth are not enough to meet the needs of this public. Few spaces promote the participation and even less the protagonism of young people. Therefore, the specific activities with youths in the execution of the Paulo Freire Project seek to promote and strengthen the participation of rural youth in the various society spaces. This objective guided the work developed between Esplar (Research and Advisory Center) and the PPF in the municipalities of Aiuaba, Arneiroz, Parambu, Quiterianópolis, Tauá and Território dos Inhamuns.

Youth actions also need specific methodologies that require research, study and training for intergenerational and multidisciplinary technical teams. After all, the dialogue between generations

that carry different experiences enriches the technical work even before contact with the field. It was with this vision that Esplar constituted its ATC.

To accomplish the challenge faced, in August 2018, an internal training was carried out with the team that would work directly in the Paulo Freire Project. In the methodology, the dialogue between the policies of youths conquered until then and the reality of rural youths was addressed, associated with debates on gender relations, as inequalities and violence begin and are accentuated mainly between 15 and 29 years old.



Subsequently 17 workshops with young people from 20 communities were carried out in the municipalities where the PPF operates. The proposal was to promote reflections about the identity of rural youth and work on the dissemination of the culture of rights, through the Youth Statute. This action made it possible to identify the way of living and thinking of the youths involved in the Project, while the youths exposed their ideas and feelings, making protest posters, letters to the President of the Republic, parodies and painted panels, in a rich exchange of knowledge.

There, more challenges presented themselves. Among them, guaranteeing the exclusive participation of young people in specific youth actions, as the world of adults affects rural communities. "These are historical difficulties, such as the permanence of young people in their communities (some go out to work, others to study) and the discredit of adults regarding the potential of youth.", explains Silvana Holanda, Esplar's technician.

However, one of the biggest difficulties was involving young married women. "Some, when they were not impeded by household chores, especially taking care of children, were stopped by their spouses," recalls Silvana. These challenges remained during the workshops, festivals, caravans, preparation meetings and training. "Even so, we managed to carry out a lot of actions! But with the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in rural communities, we had to adapt and guide the work", she said.

Thus, if the virus brought uncertainty, it also brought the chance to innovate, to bet on creativity in search of ways to touch life and dreams. Thus, an ally emerged: digital technologies that became very useful both in the execution of the ongoing work plan and for communication during social isolation.

Cyber networks took the practice of producing and participating in lives to the region. So, Fala Inhamuns (Speak up, Inhamuns) was born – a process of training young people that took place through lives broadcast on Esplar's social networks. There were three editions that discussed the themes: Education, Political Participation of Youth and Agroecology. "It was a great challenge! Learning about the use of platforms and rehearsing in each edition with the participants, elaborating scripts... Also working on the emotional side of the participants, because knowing that we would be live and that anyone in the world could watch us, made people feel little fear", remembers Silvana.

Faced with the new practices, the participation of youths in the communities became indispensable, as they were already familiar with the technologies, with the use of the internet and social networks. In addition, it was the least vulnerable public in the face of the pandemic... "and the social inclusion of youth, so dreamed of in our Youth Action Plan, became easier to happen".

From then on, young people and adults got together, sharing among themselves actions such as: receiving, checking and delivering material for the acquisition processes; collection of beneficiary signatures, virtual surveys, among others. Some communities created pages on social networks to market their products and publicize the actions they carried out. All managed by young people, through the Young Communicators Network.

In August 2020, the increase in the participation of young people on the boards of the 45 community associations monitored by the Project was already evident. In 2017, when the actions started, the participation of young people in the Association's Board of Directors was 11.96%. In 2020, the share increased to 16.02%. "It is a small increase, but very significant, since we also encourage the participation of women in these spaces", explains Silvana. In the case of women, participation rose from 46.27% to 51.69% in 2020.

Realizing these advances and how each small step has been achieved, makes all the energy spent worthwhile. And, as Silvana says: "Whenever I hear of a young woman who has come out of

a situation of domestic violence. Whenever a herd increases. Whenever young people organize a protest. Whenever a young man or woman tells me: I was selected on a notice. Whenever a young woman posts that she is a feminist... It will always be worth every achievement. What if it's to start over? You can call me and I'll go!"





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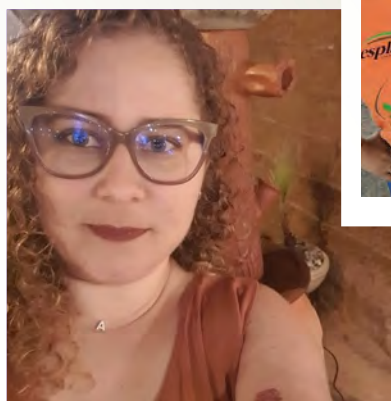
*CACTUS (Support Center for the Sustainable Development of the Semi-arid Region)*

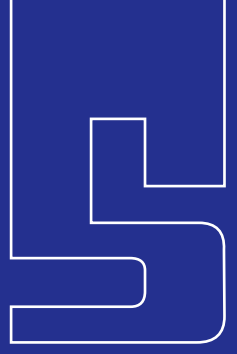
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**Images:**

ATC Archives: CACTUS, Cáritas Diocesana de Crateús, CEALTRU, Cetra, Esplar, IAC and Flor do Piqui Institute Archives of the SDA (Secretariat of Agrarian Development). Paulo Freire Project Team





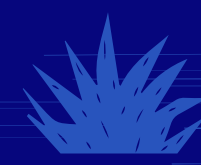
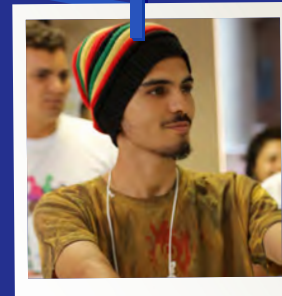
# MOBILIZATION IS NECESSARY

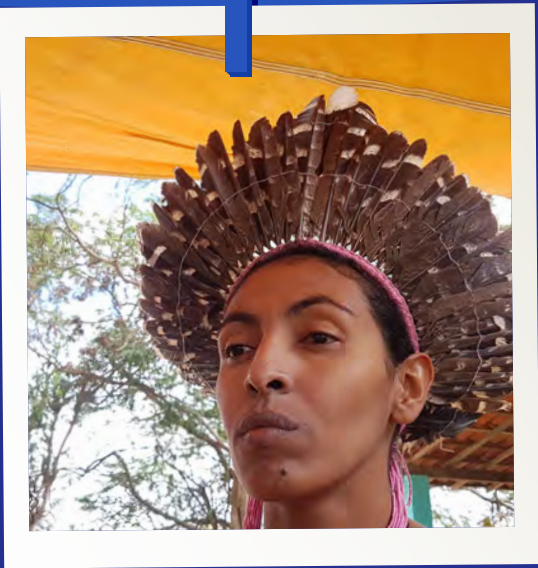
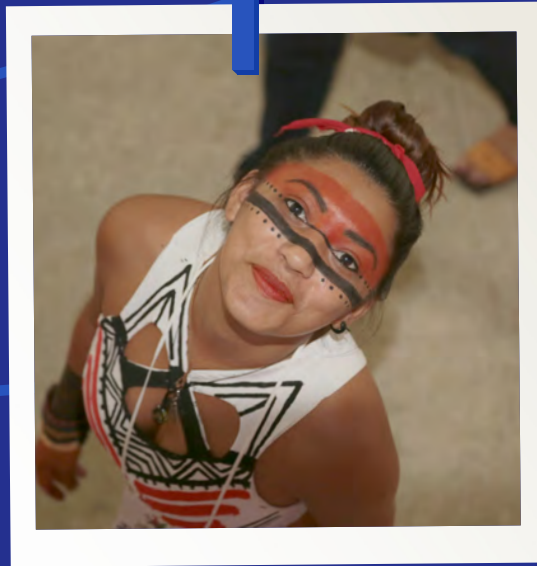


**So come, let's go. Because waiting is not knowing. Who knows makes the time. And don't wait for it to happen..."**

*Geraldo Vandré*

# YOUTH IDENTITIES





# MAKING HISTORY...

Lucilene Batista de Lima - sociologist/technical team of the UGP/PPF/SDA

... the work done by the Paulo Freire Project is challenging and, at the same time, pleasurable.

**M**obilizing and articulating the youths of the Paulo Freire Project was a task full of resignification, a good challenge for a popular educator, who came from rural areas and, even so, remains enchanted with everything that belongs to this place. It is noticeable that there is a new youth in rural areas, full of diversity, expertise and dreams. Describing these subjects and the work done by the Paulo Freire Project is challenging and, at the same time, pleasurable.

The youths responded to the Paulo Freire Project's invitation and brought all their energy to the Project's experiences. In the beginning, we had a team of social mobilizers, made up of young people, who followed the youth groups more closely, always with the collaboration of the Continuous Technical Advisory entities (ATC) and the UGP (Project Management Unit). The activities were successful in different aspects: training in different themes, fairs, exchanges, territorial festivals and the State Youth Caravan of the Semi-arid Region.

Surprising those who believe that young people only know how to cheer the processes, the young people of Paulo Freire masterfully assumed the management of their production units, absorbing the technical guidelines of the ATCs, seeking to innovate and improve the generation of work and income in rural communities. This public, a priority for the Paulo Freire Project, took a quantitative and qualitative leap. They came out of invisibility and assumed the role of protagonists.

Participating in the team and being in the process of motivating and articulating these youths was extremely enriching, especially in 2020, when we reached the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic. At that moment of great vulnerability, the youths were examples of solidarity and citizenship, collaborating with associations and technical advisory teams. Above all, they were working together with families in communities.

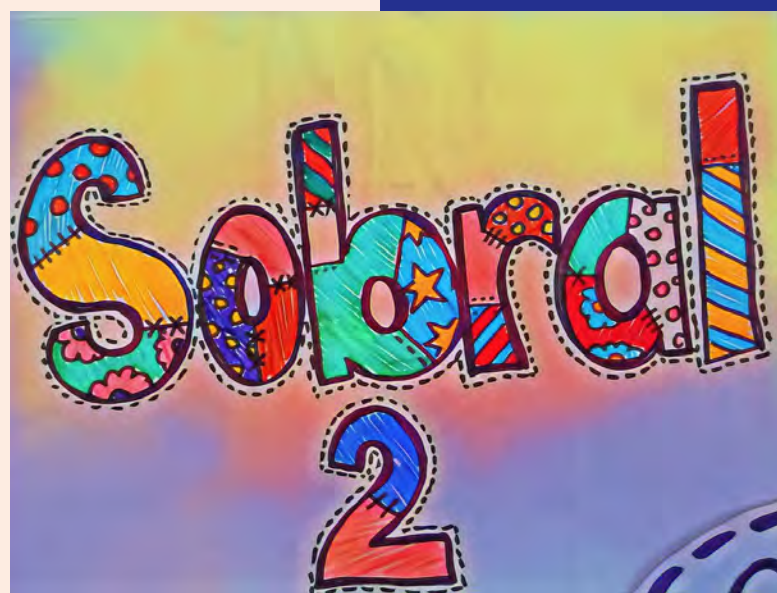




It was a time to reinvent themselves and learn from new habits. The hugs left the scene, the smile was covered by a mask. The eye to eye had to be through a cell phone or computer screen... And learning to use social networks was the way out to meet, work, study and socialize. This is how the youths' leading role became even more evident, especially when those youngsters embraced Popular Communication, bringing a new direction to work with youths.

Analyzing the entire trajectory of these three years, there is no doubt that working with the rural youths of the Paulo Freire Project was the beginning of a new cycle in my life. An intense sharing of knowledge, expansion of consciousness, commitment and new feelings. It was revisiting my origins and the place I belong... All this makes me reflect on the guidelines that echoed, and still echo, in the Letter from the Semi-arid Youths, written and approved by the State Caravan.

Finally, all this experience only strengthened in us the certainty that Brazil needs public policies that take into account this diversity, that are inclusive and that have a social and economic scope. It is clear that rural succession needs to stop being a theory, presented in documents, and be a practice that affirms this vision of the new subjects that make life in the countryside pulsate.



An intense sharing of knowledge, expansion of consciousness, commitment and new feelings.

# NEW LOOKS ABOUT YOURSELF

Elisanara Carvalho de Castro - Social Mobilizer from the Cariri Oeste territory

I come from Fazenda Serra Verde, in the municipality of Campos Sales, and I was a social mobilizer for the Paulo Freire Project between 2018 and 2019. In contact with the rural communities of Sítio Flores, Serra da Lagoa and Lagoa do Carmo, I stimulated the mobilization of female farmers and their organizations, for an active engagement in the actions of the Paulo Freire Project.

I followed the work closely, also monitoring the progress of the Investment Plans, carried out in partnership with the IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and which benefited families with projects in: productive backyard, beekeeping, and goat and sheep breeding. Along with the

resources made available to the production units, the Paulo Freire Project also carried out training for a better execution of the plans, optimizing results and increasing family income.

Knowledge exchange, especially in the workshops aimed at women, brought up debates on important topics, such as violence against women. Also from there, groups emerged to work with local crafts, strengthening a culture so often despised. Many understood the need to get closer to the union to strengthen the process of struggle in defense of Family Farming.



March of the Daisies, 2019

Elisanara Carvalho de Castro  
(Social Mobilizer)

The most precious thing about it all is that the youth did not stay. We formed youth groups to stimulate initiatives, develop their potential. We brought together young people from different regions in meetings, in which they expressed their ideas and feelings about: family farming, rural succession, diversity, racism, appreciation of culture... And not even a pandemic stopped us, because we moved on and occupied social media.

It was a privilege to be part of this story, which broke taboos and prejudices installed over time. I will take with me the teachings of technical training and living in each community. I keep in my memory the experiences in workshops and plenary sessions; at agricultural fairs and festivals; in the March of the Daisies and in the Cry of the Earth. I continue with another look at the rural environment where I came from... and, more than ever, I know the importance of strengthening Family Farming, through continuous participation with the association and the union, in the fight for public policies aimed at the countryside.

It was a privilege to be part of this story that broke taboos and prejudices installed over time.



# FROM BENEFICIARY TO MOBILIZER

Maria Veramires Moreira Rodrigues - Social Mobilizer from the Sobral territory

I started working as a social mobilizer on April 3, 2018 in my community of Lages, municipality of Ipu, and in other communities in the Sobral II Territory: Cajazeiras, Quixeré and Marruas dos Paivas. Together with the partnership with the IAC (Antonio Conselheiro Institute of Support, Advisory and Research for Human Development), I develop activities related to mobilization and participation in various activities.

At first, I had to gain the trust of the beneficiaries in the communities where I work, for whom only the technicians were relevant. Gradually, the ties beca-

me closer as the mobilization actions took place. I then got to know the reality of each family and contributed to strengthening the activities of the Paulo Freire Project.

Today, I bring a differentiated view, also expanded by the lessons learned as a beneficiary of the Paulo Freire Project: knowledge acquired through the Investment Plan for Productive Backyards, associated with the creation of free-range chickens and the reuse of greywater at home, also improving the income of my family.



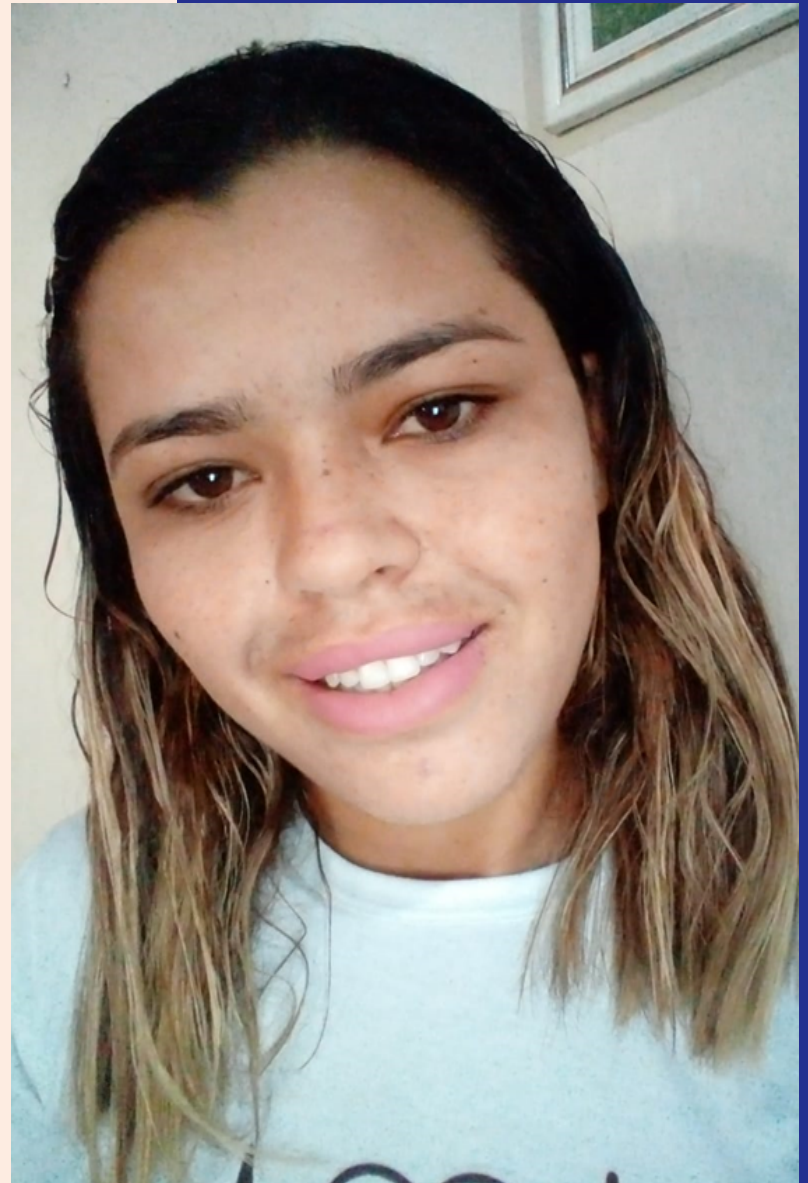
Cajazeiras Community (Ipu)

Maria Veramires Moreira Rodrigues  
(Social Mobilizer)

But the greatest treasure I conquered was the knowledge that stimulated my personal growth and facilitated the mobilization work with the youth. Significant changes, such as developing communication with the people who make up the communities and gaining recognition from local organizations, including the rural union, brought a new color to the movements linked to Family Farming.

So, I reap fruits that warm my soul, which is happy to see the satisfaction of benefiting families when they develop their investment plans and see their youths engaged.

Then, I got to know the reality of each family and contributed to strengthening the activities of the Paulo Freire Project.



# BELONGING, FIGHTING AND EVOLVING

Antony Lucas - Social Mobilizer from the Inhamuns territory

I am from Barreiros, a rural community in the municipality of Tauá, located in the Inhamuns region. With great pride, I say that I was a young beneficiary of the Paulo Freire Project when I had the opportunity to become a social mobilizer in my community and in the communities of Açudinho, Oiticica and Riacho das Pedras. Small communities, but which added values and principles that today are part of what I have become and what I believe in.

If I had to summarize the meaning of the Paulo Freire Project in my life in three verbs, they would certainly be: belonging, fighting and evolving, as they were combined in practice, through the actions taken. With the appreciation of associations and participation in activities, for example, the feeling of belonging was strengthened. Now I know where I come from and where I'm going, always honoring my roots and who I am.



Youth exchanges

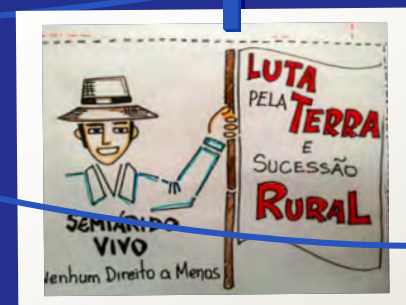
Antonny Lucas  
(Social Mobilizer)

Through formative sessions, my involvement with youth groups, and by supporting women's groups, I have seen up close struggles being discussed and faced by rural youth who are black, feminist and LGBTQIA+. A youth that is youths! These struggles, especially those related to identity issues, touched the conscience of each young person that the Project embraced, creating leaders and references in their communities.

Through youth festivals, exchanges, seminars and the Semi-Arid Youth State Caravan, I was able to witness up close the evolution of critical thinking and understanding of the social role of all of us. Hearts and minds have been opened to diversity of gender, race and culture. They also opened up to collective action in building a more just and egalitarian society. Today, when I look at who I was and who I am now, I see and feel how much I have matured... Part of this I owe to the Paulo Freire Project and the Social Mobilization, a unique opportunity in experiences that, by investing in human potential, were essential for my personal and professional evolution.

Now I know where I come from and where I'm going, always honoring my roots and who I am.







# SER TÃO FLORADO

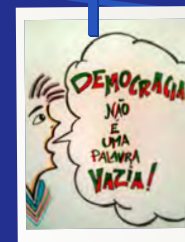
(Song by Parahyba de Medeiros)

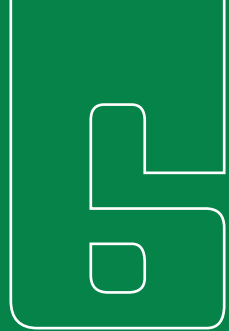
Hope is fight  
Hope is attitude  
Is to see this youth  
Praising their place  
Of libertarian education  
On sustainability  
Gender, diversity  
Family succession

When I say country estate  
You say agrarian reform  
If I say the fight is hard  
You say it is necessary  
It has beauty and it has flavor  
Of community life

Farinheiro bird  
I am an arrival bird  
I flew throughout the world and I  
came to the conclusion  
That the most beautiful place  
Of powerful culture, the loveliest  
people are here from my sertão

The Paulo Freire idea  
It's important to understand  
Because it raises important  
questions  
Turn out better than expected  
Inspire in the semi-arid  
Justice, work and income





# LETTER FROM THE SEMI-ARID YOUTHS



## Document written during the Semi-arid Youths State Caravan



### SEMI-ARID YOUTHS STATE CARAVAN

We, Rural Youths from the semi-arid region of Ceará, originated from indigenous peoples, quilombolas, family farmers, agrarian reform settlers, landless people, fishers, pastoralists, social movements, trade unions, NGOs, Youth Network, Students from Family Farming Schools (EFA), gathered at the State Youth Caravan of the Semi-Arid Region, whose theme was: “Agroecology, Youth and Democracy”, which took place between the 15th and 17th of June 2019, in the city of Fortaleza, at the Hotel Recanto Wirapuru, with the representation of young people benefited by the Paulo Freire Project,

from the Cariri, Inhamuns, Sobral 1 and Sobral 2 territories and other regions of the State of Ceará, we express and synthesize, through this letter, the feelings and reflections on the political situation and its impacts on life, knowledge, realities and dreams of each and every one of us, young people.

We are 300 young people, representing the diversity of colors, races, ethnicities, beliefs, cultures, knowledge, accents, and ways of loving and we understand that we are a reflection of a new Brazil, the Brazil that has been implementing public policies for education, health, housing, access to land, water, seeds, social security policies, employment, income and opportunities.

However, in recent years, we have been experiencing a profound attack on all the achievements of the people, of our people. The current Federal Government disregards the semi-arid region and disrupts all the policies that are our right, because we conquered them.

Thus, we affirm ourselves in favor of Sustainable and Solidarity Development and we are against the measures that come to withdraw the achievements of the Brazilian working class.

We are against cutting investments in Education;  
We are against the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC 06\2019);

Those who resist and insist on the front line want to see a new horizon rise!



We are against large projects in dispute, such as the Uranium Extraction Project in the municipality of Santa Quitéria;

We are against the way in which the Federal Government does not guarantee resources for the strengthening of Family Farming.

We bring with us the feelings of revolt and indignation in the face of the increase in the rates of: femicide; LGBTphobia; genocide of the black youth; and threats to indigenous peoples and their territories.

There are many challenges to guarantee the permanence of the rural youth in the countryside, namely: growing violence in rural areas; prejudice against women and LGBTQIA+ youth; racism; lack of employment and income; few incentives in sports, culture, leisure; and the low participation of young people in decision-making spaces in their communities, municipalities and territories.

Fortunately, in the opposite direction of this process, we perceive a State Government that promotes and implements public policies to support family farming, effectively combating inequalities and rural poverty. It is in this sense that we understand that our collaboration is necessary and urgent.

We are the Youth that grew up in a scenario of conquests, of change in the reality of the lives of millions of Brazilian women. We don't want to go back to what our family members tell us about how they survived in the past. We are currently fighting, so that in the near future we can enjoy rights and public policies. We carry in our hearts the yearning for freedom, equality, justice and love.

We are completely different and distinct, but what makes us equal is the thirst and hunger for having a countryside that gives young people the opportunity to be subjects with an active voice. A countryside that understands all the diversity that exists there. A countryside where we can live and celebrate the pains and delights of being who we are.

This is the message that the Youths of the Semi-arid region carry in their hearts.

*Fortaleza-Ceará, June 17, 2019.*



It is in the semiarid that  
life pulsates and youth re-  
sist



# WE CLAIM:

- Approval of the Project No. 03/2019 establishing the STATE PLAN FOR YOUTH AND RURAL SUCCESSION, approved by the Legislative Assembly and forwarded to the Governor of Ceará to approve the bill;
- Opening of public notices to promote specific actions, projects and initiatives by youths;
- Strengthening of agroecological practices in the semi-arid region, thus ensuring food and nutritional security;
- Continuity of the Paulo Freire Project as a policy of Continuous Technical Assistance of quality, guaranteeing the agroecological perspective and coexistence with the semi-arid region;
- Provide access to institutional commercialization channels, strengthening community and agroecological fairs and guaranteeing rational exploitation of the native forest, through extractivism, as income alternatives;
- Implementation of projects and technologies for coexistence with the semi-arid region;
- Provide access to public policies of a social and productive nature aimed at youth;
- Massify access to quality and public education; from early childhood education to university;
- Construction and support for the Family Farming Schools (EFA), safeguarding the alternation methodology and contextualized education;
- Valuing and including people with special needs, indigenous peoples, quilombolas and LGBT-QIA+ in government actions;
- Land titling of traditional peoples;
- Implementation of spaces for leisure, sport and appreciation of the local culture;
- Support for mass activities, mobilizing rural youth;
- Expand land access and credit policies;
- Build and give visibility to affirmative policies.



# LESSONS LEARNED...



**Faith in life, faith in man, faith in what will come  
We can do it all, we can do more  
Let's do what will be!**

*Gonzaguinha*

The process of articulation, mobilization and participation of the youngsters assisted by the Paulo Freire Project has generated substantial results in the incidence of public policies by including young people in social and productive activities and, consequently, expanding actions that culminate in rural succession in the state of Ceará. Given this scenario, considerable advances and challenges were identified from the Paulo Freire Project:

**Specialized Advisory on Youths and Action Plan on Youths and Communication:** the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the Strategy and Action Plan specific to rural youth;

**Continuous Technical Assistance:** training and performance of Continuous Technical Assistance entities focused on youth actions and themes;

**Continuous training processes:** training and exchanges in themes and techniques; festivals and caravans;

**Popular communication and ICTs:** Strengthening the agendas of “youths” through the media, languages and communication techniques; appropriation and use of techniques and media; systematization and dissemination of good practices, local knowledge and results; space for training, information and expression of youth;

**Productive inclusion and economic empowerment:** implementation and development of productive investments. Need to define targeted and specific investments for young people and insertion of more young people in IPs; encouraging young people to join EFAs for professional qualification; stimulation of processes and innovations in commercialization, such as social media;

**Self-organization and political and social participation of youth:** Networking, with the creation of the Semi-arid Youth Network, as a space for social

and political action by young people in debates and promotion of public policies for rural youth. Formation and/or strengthening of youth groups, leadership and participation; enabled the inclusion of some youths in associations, unions and other propositional and decision-making spaces;

**Strategic use of communication tools and instruments in times of the Covid-19 pandemic:** The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many challenges to the most vulnerable populations, especially the youth, to remain mobilized and connected. One of the strategies was to hold weekly conversation circles over the internet.

The lessons we carry, however, are much deeper. After all, to change the imagination of a sertão marginalized by its climatic characteristics, seen as a place of backwardness and inhospitable. And more! Concretely bringing to the region actions and public policies that generate opportunities, betting on the youth as a creative source, owners of multiple potential, going against the usual predatory practices and, therefore, the oppression so widespread throughout the semiarid region.

... Bring concrete actions and public policies to the region that generate opportunities, focusing on youth as a creative source

When the Paulo Freire Project arrived in the interior of Ceará, it found young people willing to dream. But they were shy in the face of the challenges that exist when one wants to concretely live dreams and ideals. They lacked the necessary stimulus to hope, to believe in themselves and to continue overcoming problems and discovering their powers, also awakening values of the common good that lead to a sense of community belonging and practices that foster good coexistence with the semi-arid region.

The seeds planted over these years are already germinating. They grow, fertilized by technical learning, by financial incentives, by the bonds built in the family, in the community and between regions. Hope flourishes in the sertão, because the souls of the youths from the sertão were awakened and today, these young people, who made the Paulo Freire Project happen, know that in order to live beautiful, it is necessary, first, to dream beautiful! Plan and execute dreams to make them real!

When the Paulo Freire Project arrived in the interior of Ceará, it found young people willing to dream.









# PARTNERS



INSTITUTO  
Antonio Conselheiro

**IAC**



**Caritas Diocesana  
de Crateús**

CETRA



*desenvolvimento, sustentabilidade e solidariedade*



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CENTRO DE ESTUDOS E ASSISTÊNCIAS ÀS  
LUTAS DOS/AS TRABALHADORES/AS RURAIS



Desenvolvimento e Sustentabilidade



Centro de Pesquisa e Assessoria



**CACTUS**

CENTRO DE APOIO AO DESENVOLVIMENTO  
SUSTENTÁVEL DO SEMIÁRIDO

# BELONGING, FIGHTING AND EVOLVING

Government of the State of Ceará  
Secretariat of Agrarian Development – SDA  
International Fund of Agricultural Development – IFAD  
Loan Agreement No. I-882-Br/E-17-Br

REALIZATION:



PROJETO  
**PAULO FREIRE**  
DESENVOLVIMENTO PRODUTIVO E DE CAPACIDADES



**CEARÁ**  
GOVERNO DO ESTADO  
SECRETARIA DO  
DESENVOLVIMENTO AGRÁRIO

FINANCING:



Investindo nas populações rurais

SUPPORT:

