

NAPRA PRESENTATION

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NAPRA

Núcleo de apoio à População Ribeirinha da Amazônia
“Social Development with Environmental
protection”

NAPRA began its activities in 1995 and it became an independent non-profit organization in 2003. NAPRA's mission is to support and strengthen riverside communities situated in isolated areas of the Amazon forest, surrounded by legal conservation units. These populations are generally excluded from basic public services. NAPRA has a fixed base lodge on the Baixo Madeira River, a branch of the Amazon River in the São Carlos do Jamari community. The organization is currently composed of 60 professionals, lecturers, and undergraduate and post-graduate student volunteers from more than ten universities in Brazil. Student volunteers involved in NAPRA's work learn about the needs of the local communities and have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real-life situations. NAPRA's main activities are in the areas of education, health services and Production&Organization. The traditional and indigenous communities along the rivers in the Amazon are vital for the preservation of the adjacent forest. NAPRA fully believes that support for the livelihoods of the target communities will in turn foster the preservation of their environment and natural habitats. In addition, strengthening and empowering traditional and indigenous communities by helping them to develop their livelihoods in a sustainable manner is the primary way of deterring the strong tendency of riverside people to migrate to urban areas. NAPRA's longstanding and

successful experience is based on the following principles (i) engaging in dialogue with communities about their needs; (ii) establishing long lasting relationships of trust with the communities; (iii) encouraging and valuing traditional culture; (iv) participating in setting short and long term objectives; and (v) promoting the facilitation of multisector projects based on community needs. In following these principles, NAPRA spurs sustainable development decisions from within communities themselves.

1. BRAZILIAN AMAZON RAINFOREST CONTEXT¹

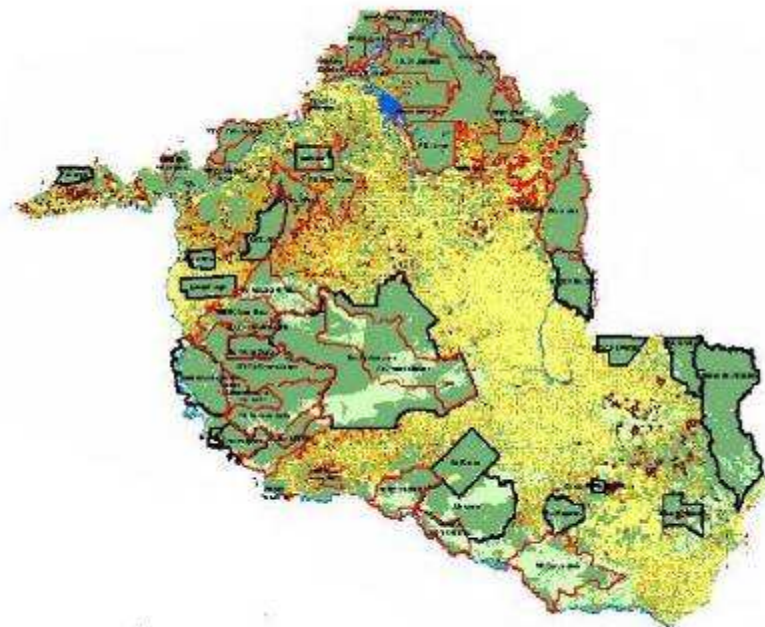
The Amazon forest represents 26% of the world existing rain forest. This forest protects one of the biggest biodiversity of the world and contributes for the regional climate regulation. From 2003 to 2006, 70,000 km² were cleared for plantations, timber harvesting and cattle ranching. Currently, cattle ranching, soybean monoculture, and logging represent the greatest threats to the Amazon. Extensive, low-yield cattle ranching is the main cause of deforestation in the Amazon. Roughly 70% of the area deforested is cattle pasture, containing 65 million head of cattle, or 33% of Brazil's cattle herd. Some invaders use strength to banish traditional families from the region and guarantee the land with false documents. First come the farmers with cattle raising and then with soy plantations.

¹ Most of the information of the Amazon Rainforest Context and production&organization project was taken from the paper “Empowering isolated communities from the Amazon Rain Forest through the Mini-Factory, a diverse concept of processing Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP)” wrote by Jeferson Straatmann and Marcelo Salazar published and presented at the XII International Conference on Production Technology, Berlin. October, 11 and 12 of 2007.

This Amazon devastation cycle rupture, the protection of the forest and of the forest citizens are some of the main current objectives of the Environmental Ministry of Brazilian government, civil organizations, some enterprises and universities.

Besides governing the region through providing security, the infrastructure, health and education, the government plays an important role for the forest and communities preservation. The creation and implementation of different kinds of Conservation Units is an important step taken by the government with the support of NGOs and social movements to reduce the speed of devastation and to legalize and officially recognize the territories occupied by citizens that have traditionally used the forest in a sustainable way.

There are in the Brazilian Amazon Rain Forest 286 Conservation Units - 99,978,704 ha² that represents 19.97% of the legal Amazon. From that 103 are for integral protection (6.96%) and 183 are for sustainable use (13.01%). Those are just the area without considering the indigenous demarcated lands that are responsible for other 20% of the legal Amazon forest and 12% of the Brazilian total territory. The importance of those protected areas becomes clearer on the map that show Rondônia state in North of Brazil for example (Picture 1). Almost all the preserved areas are Conservation Units or Indigenous demarcated Land.



Picture 1: Map of Rondonia State. The yellow and orange colours shows the deforestation. The Green areas are the Conservation Unities Areas and the white areas are forest without any legal protection. Source: MMA and SEDAM.

² This area is equivalent to 2.8 times the Germany area.

The protection of those areas depends on different factors, as follows: continues fiscalization, researches in different areas, political transparency, guarantee of communities' rights, education adapted to communities' reality, health improvement and income generation through the sustainable use of the forest. The empowerment and development of the forest communities are especially important due to the traditional forestry activities and ecosystem conservation services that they have been rendering to the globe for centuries.

2. RIVERSIDE COMMUNITIES

There are about 23 millions of people living inside the Amazon rainforest today. The occupation of Brazilian Rainforest involves different historical issues. Part of the population are traditional communities composed by indigenous people and the other part is composed by the “caboclos” (denominated riverside communities on this paper). There are, as well, in the Amazon area, non traditional people composed by city population, small and large farmers.

A. BRIEF HISTORY OF AMAZON OCCUPATION

Before the 16th century there were just indigenous people occupying the forest. Between 16th and 19th occurred some Portuguese incursion because of mineral exploitation and territory occupation. But it was between the end of 19th century and 1950 that the Amazon had the main important economic moments. It was caused by the acceleration of automobile industry demanded a lot of Rubber to the cars' tires. In almost 50 years, the rubber production has involved around 100,000 people, many of them from northeast of Brasil, region with a several dry periods.

After the end of the 1st War, the Rubber demand decreased and in addition, some countries of Asia started to produce Rubber, encouraged by England. Many people, without conditions to return back Home ended up establishing residence in the forest.

In the beginning of 2nd War, the US entered into agreement with Brazilian government in order to provide Rubber to US, because Malaysia and other countries of Asia were blocked by Japan.

In addition to these historical aspects, in the Madeira River Region in 1870 the Bolivian Government began to construct a Railway linking Bolivia to the Atlantic

Ocean through the Madeira and Amazon River in the Rondonia State. During such Railway's construction, two local wars occurred and one indigenous tribe was exterminated. Almost 25,000 people was employed to the construction of such railway and many of them died because of Tropical diseases (Malaria), snakes, tigers and conflicts with Indigenous communities. Again many of the remaining people that migrated to work in the Railway construction established residence in the forest.

A New cycle of Rubber has initiated and the Brazilian government has encouraged the northeast population to migrate to the Amazon again. After the end of the 2nd War and the beginning of Synthetic Rubber production, the demand for natural rubber was largely decreased. Again, around 25,000 immigrant survivors in the Amazon which had no money and no to return back home, ended up establishing residence and family in the forest.

This brief history shows that the riverside communities have a more recent occupation in the Amazon rainforest than the Indigenous people. However, many of them are already between the 4th and 6th generation. Therefore, the riverside communities acquired the status of traditional communities and are allowed to live in the forest. The riverside communities are known in the academy and government by their knowledge about the forest and especially by their relationship with the nature, their sustainable way of life, their traditional medicine and culture. Those were some of the points that enabled them to live in harmony with the nature for hundreds of years without deforestation or big injuries to the bio-system.

B. LOWER MADEIRA RIVER COMMUNITIES

The communities among the Madeira river are part of a specific kind of traditional forest communities in Brazil, recognized by the government officially in 2007.

The main source of incomes for those communities always were the NTFP (Non Timber Forest Products), specifically Rubber and Brazil Nuts. By decades those were the main products commercialized by the “bosses of Rubber”, that kept these population into a semi-slavery system. In that system the producer were always in debt with the bosses, exchanging their



products for industrialized ones, usually double cost as in the city. Without Rubber as the main resource source they had to diversify their activity with other collected forest products, fishing and subsistence agriculture to feed their needs. Therefore, products used before just for their traditional use became income for living.

The economy was changed but the same dependency relationship for commercialization and production still happening nowadays. The “middlemen” are the actual buyer of the communities. He does know processor industries or has contact to market and fairs. He usually works exchanging products with the communities - the industrial products costs double or triple that in the city -, creating dependency relationship with the inhabitants.

The Low Madeira River communities are part of three federal Conservation Units (Extrative Reserve of Cuniã Lake; National Forest of Jacundá and Ecological Station of Cuniã). They can be directly inside the Conservation Unit, as a sustainable one, or indirectly, as part of the boundaries of the reserves. Those areas are in theory protected by law and by the government against loggers, miners, farmers and invaders. However the population, legally living in those areas, needs alternative ways to develop and to guarantee access to their rights.

The Brazilian law that regulates the Conservation Units around the country and regulates the utilization of lands for traditional communities says that those units were created to preserve the environment and the traditional way of life of the forest communities, being a civil and government duty the promotion of the welfare of those inhabitants. That’s now the challenge to be faced by the communities, government and the organized civil institutions.

3. ABOUT NAPRA - ORGANIZATION FOR THE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF RIVERSIDE COMMUNITIES IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

NAPRA is a Brazilian NGO established in 1996 to support and strengthen riverside communities in the Amazon Rainforest. It is composed of 60 volunteers of professionals and undergraduate students from different



universities in Brazil. NAPRA works in the region along the Madeira river between the communities of Aliança and Calama, in Rondonia State, supporting about 30 different communities.

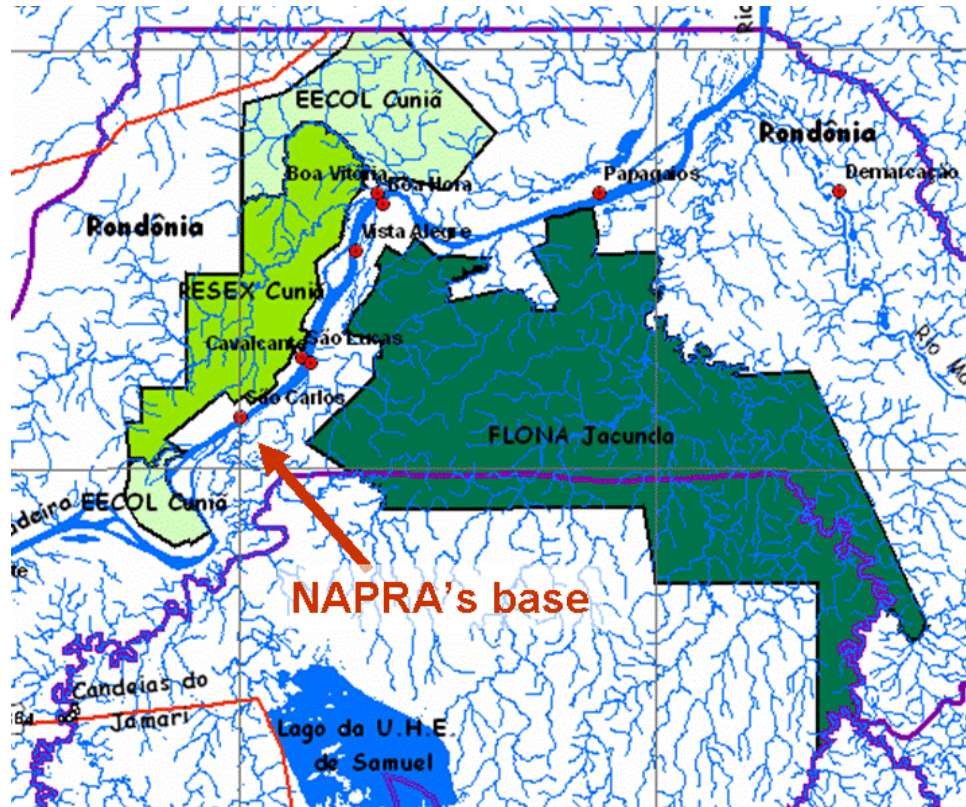


Fig. 1: Main Madeira river communities
Source: NAPRA Report (2006) [5]

The NGO's main activities, as described in Figure 2, are in the areas of education, health services and agriculture. During the performance of such volunteer work, students can learn about the local population's needs and have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills.

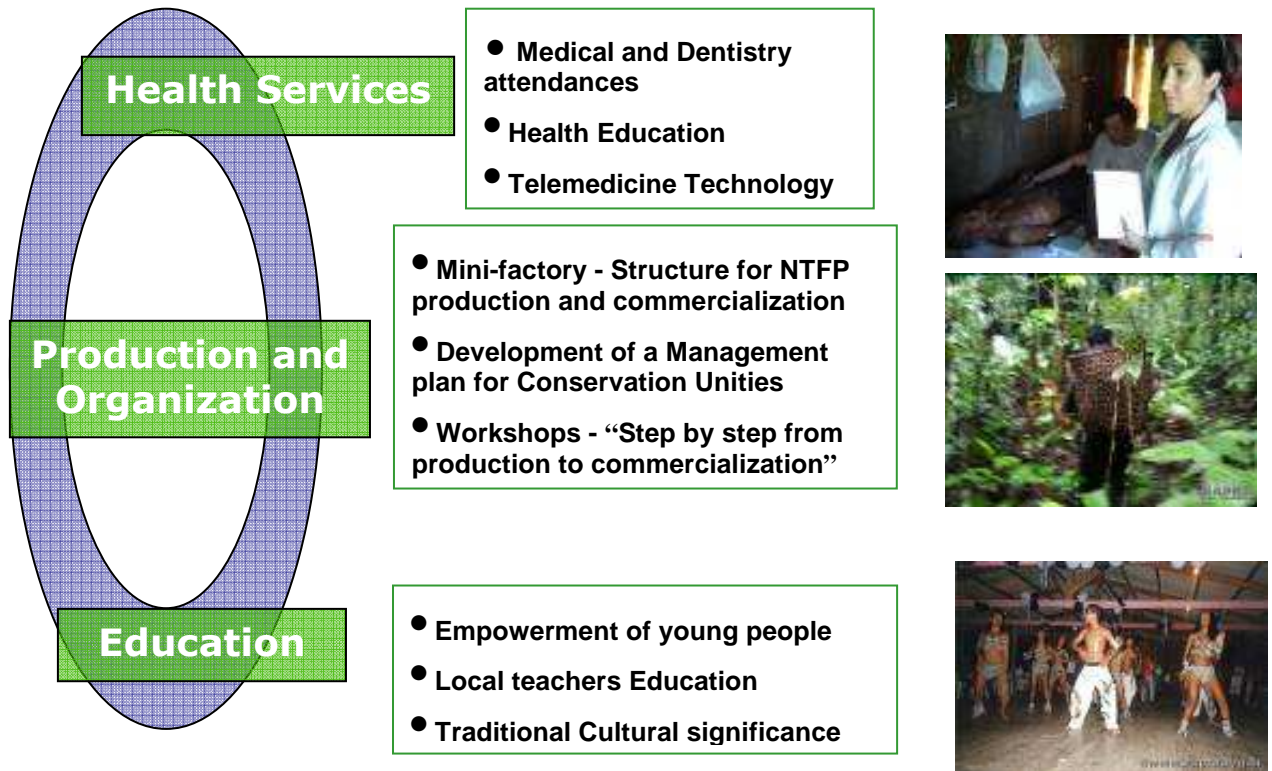


Fig. 2: NAPRA projects
Source: NAPRA (2006) [5]

To guarantee the success of the actions in the communities the NGO follows some basic Principles presented as follow:

- Multisector projects;
- Continuous dialogue with communities about their needs;
- Establishment of a long lasting relationship of trust with diverse stakeholders;
- Encouragement and valuation of traditional communities culture;
- Participatory setting of short and long term objectives;
- Increase social and Environmental awareness of Brazilian and International students.

In the “Production and Organization Area”, NAPRA works in partnership with Chico Mendes Institute, which is part of the environmental agency of the Brazilian Government responsible for the conservations Unities and the Global Engineering Team. These partnerships is facilitating the development of a Management Plan for the area along the Madeira river and the mini-factory project, which will be an important step of the development of the region.

A. PRODUCTION AND ORGANIZATION PROJECTS

I. GEOGRAPHIC SETTING AND PRODUCTION CONTEXT

To guarantee a good use of the Conservation Units created by the government, some sustainable means of income generations must be structured to oppose the non-sustainable ones (logging, monoculture, cattle raising). The uses of NTFPs are known in the literature as a main income. However, different constraints reduce the incomes generated by those products, becoming it a more complementary source for the families rather than a main source of income.



The NTFPs represents historically and recently a sustainable way of income for communities and it was pointed as a way to promote a sustainable management of the forest. In the end of 80's beginning of 90's the literature pointed NTFPs as an attractive possibility to add value to the forest without destroying it, and with that, promote the wealthy of the poor population [7, 8, 9]. Some posit that the potential profitability from one hectare of forest could exceed the profitability of the wood production in the same area. So, in that direction, NTFPs were seen as a solution for the development of isolated communities in the Amazon rain forest.

Some issues must be considered to the development of isolated areas. The list bellow presents some constraints to NTFPs commercialization gathered at the consulted literature:

- Land issues ;
- Low incomes by the relationships of dependency between the community and middlemen ;
- General lack of information about market conditions;
- Low or lacking value adding to collected products, which are usually sold with the same characteristics from the forest;
- Pressure and future decrease of resources depending on the production system.
- Dependence in the exploitation of only few products rather than the greater variety of NTFPs;
- Lack of skills, knowledge, organizational education, and credit necessary for market entry;

- Lack of infrastructure to transport products to market;
- Lack of financing;
- Constant changing demand and prices;

The strategy to overcome those constraints is a challenge for different organizations. The development of new markets, value adding processes, products diversification, supply chain development, communities' organization methods and sustainable development nets are some of the strategies studied by government, NGOs, enterprises and researchers. A multifaceted approach must be found between these organizations to triumph over the difficulties of development and preservation into isolated areas.

In order to change this reality NAPRA has developed the following activities:

II. MINI-FACTORY - STRUCTURE FOR NTFP PRODUCTION AND COMMERCIALIZATION;

The Mini-factory and the Commercialization of NTFP was launched in collaboration between communities, government, NGOs and world wide universities. These projects are been developed in the Low Madeira River communities within three conservation units and in their surroundings.

The main partner for this project nowadays is the GET - Global Engineering Team an innovative project development group, focused to develop technical, intercultural and personal competencies for master thesis students of partner universities. Students are engaged in real projects with industrial partners, reaching real engineering results, through teamwork. The first GET started in march 2005 with the partnership between the Technisch Universität Berlin, Universidade de São Paulo and Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte.

The Figure 3 shows all the steps presented in one specific GET project, considering the team integration, the team building, the project planning and working, the final presentation and evaluation and the final deliverables to the industrial partners.



Fig. 3: GET project
Source: GET (2006)

The first GET project was done in 2006, with the development of the Mini-factory concept. The implementation of some solutions was done in July's 2007 in parallel to a new GET project focused in commercialization of NTFPs. More details of both projects are at the paper "Empowering isolated communities from the Amazon Rain Forest through the Mini-Factory, a diverse concept of processing Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP)" presented in 12th October at the XII International Conference on Production Technology in Berlin, Germany.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPORT FOR THE COUNCIL FUNCTIONING FOR CONSERVATION UNITIES

The development of a Management plan support for the council functioning for Conservation Unities is a intense collaboration with the Brazilian Environmental Agency and NAPRA. This cooperation started in 2004 with the first phase of the management plan of Three Conservation Unities in the region. After this it was established the councils for these Conservation Unities in 2005 with the intense support of NAPRA's team, as a consultancy. In 2006 and 2007 other steps of the management plan was supported by NAPRA's team, as well as, the council meetings.

IV. WORKSHOPS - "STEP BY STEP FROM PRODUCTION TO COMMERCIALIZATION"

On the Workshops "Step by step from production to commercialization" the young people can learn and dialogue together with the elder people the best practices of production and commercialization of Non Timber Forest Products and some

agriculture products as well as manioc flower, water mellow and beans planted mainly, during the dry season.

B. HEALTH CARE PROJECTS

I. GEOGRAPHIC SETTING AND HEALTH CONTEXT



In terms of health care, since the 1970's, Brazil has implemented a public and universal health care system that is expected to fulfill the population health needs. Health services universal and integrated access is considered a constitutional right, provided by the government to all Brazilian citizens. This system has a decentralized management that considers local reality and needs and offers services through family health units at communities.

Managed by the municipalities, this system seems to increase the access for preventive and curative health care, particularly in less affluent communities. This is the case for Sao Carlos do Jamari, Santa Catarina, Nazare and Cunia, communities in the State of Rondonia and the geographic setting for this proposal. These small communities usually have few accesses to health care services and the presence of government policies is very limited due to the lack of strategies based on local reality and needs.

The population still suffers from tropical diseases such as Dengue and Malaria, and from the lack of basic structure in terms of water-supply, electricity and drain system, what compromises their quality of life.

Based on NAPRA's past experiences in those areas we have designed a comprehensive approach to develop health care projects for these four communities based on principles of health promotion. It is our understanding that the circumstances demand sustainable intervention and the implementation of any project has to be community-based and participatory. The engagement of the population in our projects, whether directly or through their leaders is crucial to this proposal.

For that, we have assembled three domains: child and adolescent; lay people in

general (adults); and health professionals. In spite of our efforts to work with this public, advocacy for public health policies implementation to fulfill their needs will be the core basis of our partnership with local government. We expect to be able to influence government agenda in this field.

We propose to conduct a 3-year project to:

- (a) develop a culturally-relevant intervention to promote health and prevent diseases among child, adolescents and adults;
- (b) promote capacity building and health education among health professionals and lay people;
- (c) provide communities with basic health assistance such as dentistry procedures and medical practice for a specific period of time each year;
- (d) establish a network to implement some of the already existent health policies (specially concerned to the social control of the health system, the defense of human rights and the prevention of domestic violence/abuse against children/adolescents and women).

All projects listed in this section will be detailed in the future (these projects will be available under request), according to the implementation period and the financial support obtained for this purpose. Each project will be designed to promote short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes which will be monitored throughout the period by an evaluation process. The projects are described below.

II. HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Specific Projects: (a) Children and Adolescents Meetings; (b) Engineering and Health; (c) Pharmacology of the Local Plants.

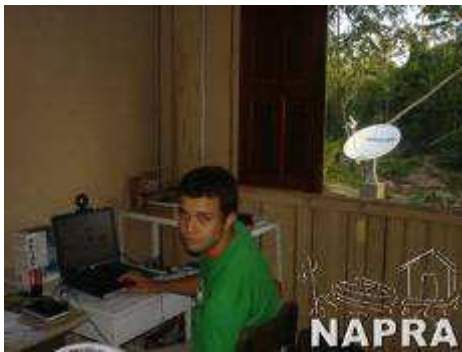
Priority Population: children; adolescents; adults.

Specific Objectives: to implement different activities in the community to promote health and to prevent diseases, considering their cultural habits and traditional knowledge.

Core Activities: we will work with children through entertainment activities and sports educating them on basic health care and self-protection. With adolescents we will create a network for sexual transmitted diseases control (especially HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis prevention which are increasing a lot among this public) and will develop some sport and cultural activities focusing on health care and promotion.

Children and adolescents' activities may be implemented at school as well as in different places in the community. With the adults we will organize a network to assess the needs and the resources of the community so that participants may elaborate a plan of action to overcome the lack of infrastructure in terms of water-supply and drain system; we will also educate them on basic health care through workshops and correlated activities basing on their cultural and traditional environment.

III. CAPACITY BUILDING AND HEALTH EDUCATION



Specific Projects: (a) Community Health Agent Education Program; (b) Health Promoters; (c) Telemedicine.

Priority Population: health professionals; lay people.

Specific Objectives: to build capacity with health professionals working in the family health units and with lay people so that they may disseminate information and promote health among the population.

Core Activities: we will organize workshops through which some health issues may be worked out. These issues will be identified with the help of the health professionals and the Municipal Health Secretariat and will compose a basic curriculum. Each year we will focus at least 5 themes. Besides the workshops we will provide the health professionals in the communities with a theoretical and technical manual written by experts in different areas. With the lay people we will organize a group of at least 5 persons in each community to prepare them to become Health Promoters and to influence new health behavior among their neighbors. As we have implemented the telemedicine resource in the past we will use this tool to educate the groups throughout the years. We expect that this may increase knowledge among participants and promote the quality of life in the communities as well.

IV. HEALTH ASSISTANCE

Specific Projects: (a) General Health and Dentistry Assistance; (b) Telemedicine; (c) Pharmacology of the Local Plants.

Priority Population: children; adolescents; adults.

Specific Objectives: to provide basic health care assistance to the population,

including dentistry procedures, medical practice, physical therapy, as well as clinical exam such as electrocardiogram.

Core Activities: every year a group of professionals and students will spend a month in the community to visit all the existent houses and assist the population with what it is necessary and possible at the moment. These visits will help the local system to gather information and compose a map of the reality in terms of health needs. This also may be useful to advocate on the behalf of the communities at the Municipal Health Secretariat. Dentistry professionals and students will allocate adequate resources to proceed with basic treatment. Besides, telemedicine strategy will allow sharing diagnosis and treatment prescriptions in real time with health professionals from different parts of Brazil.

V. ADVOCACY FOR HEALTH POLICY

Specific Projects: (a) Network for Social Control.

Priority Population: community leaders; government representatives; health professionals; lay people.

Specific Objectives: to establish a network to advocate for health policy elaboration and to control its implementation (promotion and empowerment of the “Social Control” of local health policy guaranteed by Brazilians laws) , including the defense of human rights and the prevention of domestic violence/abuse against children/adolescents and women.

Core Activities: this project will be developed through meetings and workshops with participants, who will be recruited in the community by the word-of-mouth. We expect to have a group of at least 5 persons. Participants will be asked to organize the network defining its mission, objectives and strategies to access the needs of the community and to include the priorities in the government agenda. Participants will be prepared to elaborate a plan of action to accomplish the network ultimate goals and to follow up the implementation of the policies in the community. The network will also elaborate a meeting schedule on a monthly basis so that members may discuss their experiences, report violence/abuse cases and create new strategies to overcome difficulties.

C. EDUCATION PROJECTS



with social justice and equity (Paulo Freire).

NAPRA's activities involving Educational Area are based upon the principles of *Popular Education* - knowledge theory that takes dialogue, autonomy, emancipation and social transformation as a background for all actions developed by the participants of learning process and those compromised

NAPRA's Educational Area has its roots in the following main projects: Improving Programs of Continuous Teacher's Formation; Developing Community Leaderships Programs; Supporting Health and Production activities; Valorizing Cultural and Traditional Values; Increasing Childhood and Youth Educational Programs.

I. IMPROVING PROGRAMS OF CONTINUOUS - TEACHER'S FORMATION

Searching to help teachers to face and find ways to solve distinct problems related to their professional quotidian as:

- Discipline;
- Learning difficulties;
- Special Education;
- Methodologies and didactic material;
- New technologies;
- Environmental concerns.

II. DEVELOPING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIPS PROGRAMS;

Looking after a increased community empowerment, some participatory workshops (e.g. "Step by step - from production to commercialization") are undertaken with:

- Community associations;
- Social movements;
- Community educators;
- Local Counselors;
- Environmental agents.

III. SUPPORTING HEALTH AND PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES;

The basis of NAPRA's work is a tripod of Education, Health and Sustainability.

All activities developed have this interdisciplinary focus and the Educational Area is the responsible for guarantee the understanding and the real participatory engagement of the riverside population in those processes.

IV. VALORIZING CULTURAL AND TRADITIONAL VALUES;

In this area NAPRA develops projects that attends to:

- Improve self-esteem and traditional cultural values;
- Help traditional people to maintain their way of life - fishing, hunting, foresting, as well as beliefs, desires, ancestral ways of perpetuate their values.
- Support cultural activities as music, theatre and performance groups;

V. INCREASING CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

NAPRA's Programs with children and teenagers frequently seeks to improve:

- Hygienic habits;
- Sports, Leisure and touristy activities;
- Environmental education;
- Human rights comprehension;
- Basis for the formation of Young community agents;



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