

Livelihoods Case Study

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: SKILLS TRAINING IN BRAZIL

COUNTRY: Brazil

THEMES: Young People; Women, Skills training

BACKGROUND

In the north-east of Brazil, data suggests that six out of ten women have no form of income and rely on government benefits. In the last ten years, 520,000 people, mostly youth, have moved away from the semi-arid rural areas because of the lack of work opportunities. In 2012, the Semia project was established, in partnership with Tearfund, Diaconia and the European Union, to try to create sustainable livelihoods through providing training courses, particularly focusing on women and young people.

THE PROJECT

Semia aims to use training and meetings to help promote sustainable livelihoods and market access, develop dialogue between civilians and government organisations, and help women, youth and family farmers gain access to institutional markets. Since 2012, Semia have run several training courses and workshops, such as:

- baking and bread making courses
- training on handling, use, marketing and certification of food
- training on food processing
- uses for and processing of fruits (eg drying, making jams etc)
- craft workshops
- food security workshops with government representatives
- capacity building in agriculture
- project management and production planning training
- training in forming cooperatives and associations
- meetings to promote the exchange skills and knowledge between beneficiaries
- meetings to discuss women's rights and laws
- meetings with government officials, EU partner organisations, agricultural institutes and unions etc

IMPACT

By 2014, the Semia projects will have invested \$3.5 million in projects to empower women and youth and provide sustainable livelihoods in the area. It is estimated that so far more than 1700 men, women and young people across eight municipalities have been impacted by the project. Training in producing foods such as baked goods and fruit processing, in addition to hygiene and certification training, has allowed women to make and sell their products to markets and restaurants. It was predicted that women entering the market could generate a monthly income of \$500. Farming training has encouraged participants to use organic fertilisers and avoid pesticides to produce organic products, which are healthier and produce more income. Through discussions on women's rights, participants have become more aware of their own right to improve their standard of living.

One beneficiary said: 'I was happy to know that what I've made was important, and was within the standards of cleanliness that are required. We also sell fruits and vegetables directly at the fair and to a restaurant.'

Visit www.diaconia.org.br for more information on the project, including testimonials and blog posts about events.