



PROJETO  
DOM HELDER  
CÂMARA

# DOM HELDER CÂMARA PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



PROJETO  
MONITORA

BRASÍLIA – DF  
AUGUST 2022



# Executive report

## Projeto Dom Hélder Câmara (PDHC II)

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Secretaria de Agricultura Familiar e Cooperativismo  
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANATER - National Agency for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension.

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ATER - Technical Assistance and Rural Extension

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CEGAFI - Family Agriculture Management and Innovation Center

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CETRA - Center for Labor Studies and Worker Assistance

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EMATER - Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Entity

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FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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FIDA - International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

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FPR - Rural Productive Funding Program

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IAPA - Access to Agrarian Policies Index

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IAPP - Access to Public Policies Index

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MAPA - Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply

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ML - Logical Framework (LFA)

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ONU - United Nations Organization (UN)

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PCT - Traditional Peoples and Communities

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PAB - Alimenta Brasil Program

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PDHC - Dom Helder Câmara Project

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PNAE - National School Feeding Program

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PROCASUR - Global organisation for rural knowledge management and rural innovation

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SAF - Secretary of Family Agriculture

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SEAD - Special Secretary of Family Agriculture and Agrarian Development

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SGA - Technical Assistance Management System

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TA - Learning Territories

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UnB - University of Brasília

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# INTRODUCTION

Hunger and poverty are conditions that have historically afflicted the Brazilian semi-arid region. Although the causes are diffuse, the historical absence of the State or its presence with insufficient public policies to reach the populations in greater social vulnerability and to promote adaptation and changes to the drought context is, without a doubt, one of the conditions that most hinders rural development and perpetuates inequalities in the region.

The notion of a model for living with the semi-arid region has been advocated as an emerging paradigm (CHACON, 2007), bringing the conception that it is possible to circumvent the challenges imposed by the climate and extract the best from these conditions for the promotion of more inclusive, healthy, and sustainable food systems.

Despite the effects of one of the greatest droughts<sup>1</sup> in recent history, family farming continues to be the main form of production and work in the countryside of the semi-arid region. Today, 37% of the family farmers in Brazil live in the region (Censo Agropecuário, IBGE, 2017), and most of them had never received technical assistance or accessed credit or productive development policies.

This report aims to organise and present, in a succinct way, the products and results achieved by the Dom Helder Câmara Project in its second phase (2014-2022), monitored and evaluated by the team from the Family Agriculture Management and Innovation Center (CEGAFI) linked to the University of Brasília, as well as to offer some lessons learned for future initiatives with similar characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup>The so-called Great Drought ravaged the Brazilian Northeast for five uninterrupted years, from 2012 to 2017, affecting to a greater or lesser degree all states in the region.

This is a study that, in face of the limitations imposed in times of economic crisis and the Covid-19 Pandemic, admits a critical, but at the same time hopeful and aware look at the fundamental role that the Brazilian State has in the promotion of public policies to fight poverty and hunger, the main objective of the Dom Helder Câmara Project (PDHC II).

The first section presents the milestones of PDHC II, the dimensions addressed and the assumptions that guided the creation of the Project. The second section highlights the most relevant numbers pointed out by the Impact Assessment conducted by CEGAFI, through the Monitora Project, while the third section brings an overview of the experiences and dimensions organised by Knowledge Management. Finally, the last section presents lessons and learnings that PDHC II leaves for public management and as a legacy for the Technical Assistance Policy.

In each of these sections it is possible to be directed to the generated experiences, videos, studies, and reports by simply clicking on the corresponding button.



Photo: Silvia Nonata da Silva

# SECTION 1

## THE DOM HELDER CÂMARA PROJECT

In Brazil, currently, 3,897,408 of the rural establishments are family farmers, and 1,446,842 of them are in the Brazilian Semi-arid, 80% of which did NOT receive any kind of technical assistance (IBGE, 2017), either from the government or private initiatives.

**Table 1** | Farmers (family and non-family) and technical assistance in Brazil and the Semi-Arid

	TOTAL OF FARMERS			FAMILY FARMING		
	TOTAL	RECEIVES	DOES NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL	RECEIVES	DOES NOT RECEIVE
<b>Brazil</b>	5.073.324	1.025.443 (20%)	4.047.881 (80%)	3.897.408	708.318 (18%)	3.189.090 (82%)
<b>Semi-arid</b>	1.835.535	164.473 (9%)	1.671.062 (91%)	1.446.842	119.083 (8%)	1.327.759 (92%)

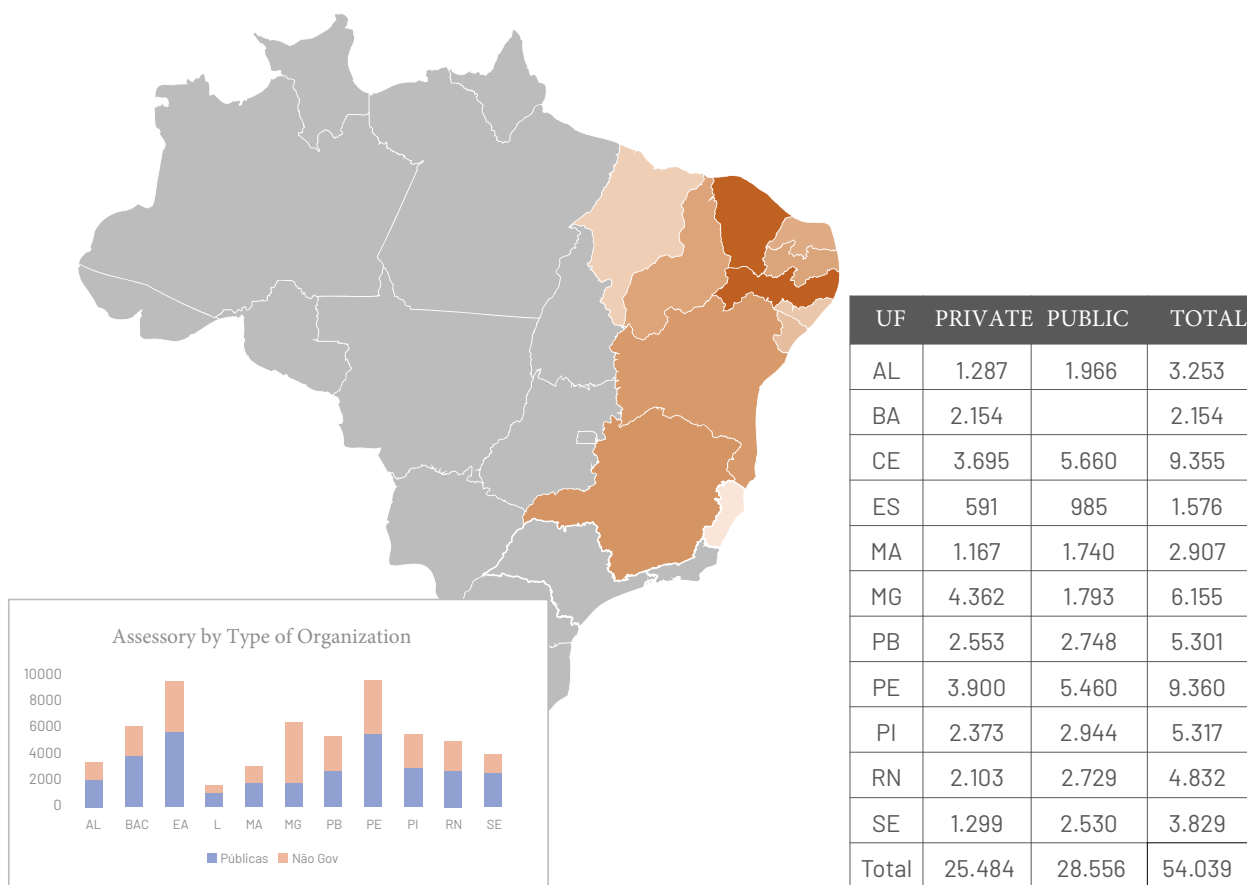
**Source:** IBGE - Censo Agropecuário, 2017

In light of this diagnosis, and associated with the fact that hunger<sup>2</sup> and rural poverty are mostly located in these families, the Dom Helder Câmara Project combines efforts of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ATER) with the offer of non-reimbursable resources, through the Rural Productive Funding Program (Fomento Produtivo Rural - FPR), to the most vulnerable families in the Brazilian semi-arid region, aiming at food security and the fight against poverty through productive diversification, technological innovation, increased income, greater access to markets and the concomitant access to public policies such as credit, technical assistance, public procurement policies, and social and welfare benefits.

<sup>2</sup> The most recent national data on food insecurity is alarming. There are currently more than 33 million people in a situation of severe food insecurity in Brazil, and quantitative food restriction occurs for 125.2 million people residing in Brazilian households (PENSSAN Network, 2022). The II National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic, carried out by the PENSSAN Network, finds that inequality of access to food is greater in rural households, with severe food insecurity (severe AI) at 18.6% above the national average - which is 15.5%. This inequality also manifests itself geographically, appearing most strongly in the North and Northeast regions (25.7% and 21% of severe AI, respectively). Family farming is strongly affected: hunger has reached 21.8% of family farmer/rural producer households in the country (Ibid.). The information about poverty in Brazil is equally alarming. Within one year (between 2020 and 2021), 11 million people fell into poverty and 6.3 million of these remained in extreme poverty, facing food shortages every day (IMDS, 2022). As with the food insecurity data, the incidence of poverty in rural areas is higher than that in urban areas (36.6% versus 20.1%, respectively). These dramatic data on the number of poor people in Brazil are concentrated in the North and Northeast regions (36.4% and 39.7%, respectively)(Ibid.).

PDHC II is the largest technical assistance and rural extension action ever undertaken by the Brazilian Government. The technical assistance actions of PDHC II reached a public of 54,048 families (considering a target of 60 thousand) and, in 56% of them, women were responsible for some productive activity. A total of 1,675 technicians were involved directly and indirectly, reaching a total of more than **225,00 PEOPLE**

The main line of action of PDHC II is the provision of technical assistance services through the National Agency for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension<sup>3</sup> (ANATER), which contracted 27 ATER organisations, 10 public and 17 private, through service provision contracts or partnership instruments, in the 10 Brazilian semi-arid states and in Espírito Santo. The following map shows the number of families assisted by PDHC II in its area of coverage. In the table at the left of the map, it is possible to see the distribution of public and private organisations in the states covered by the Project.



**Figura 1 |** Map of Family Production Units (UFPAs) assisted per Federation Unit

<sup>3</sup> As far as the provision of ATER services is concerned, they were carried out through a management contract signed between SEAD (today incorporated by MAPA) and ANATER, responsible for managing the contracting of services through Specific Contracting Instruments with Public Technical Assistance Companies, after the presentation and approval of the Work Plan and/or by entering into contracts, after launching the Public Call Notices.

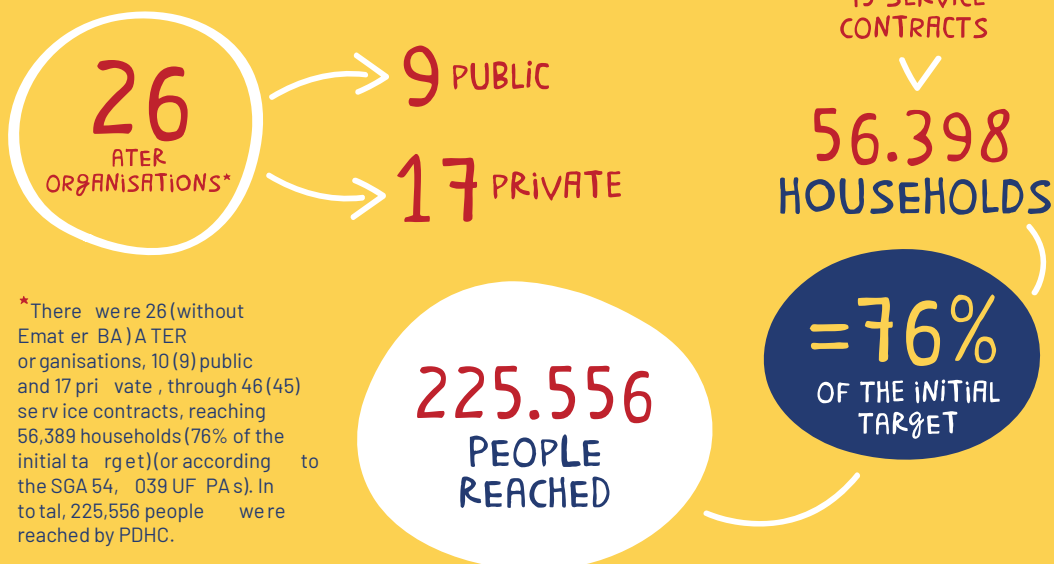


# GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTION STRUCTURE

The Dom Hélder Câmara Project is an action whose main executing entity is the Coordination of Support for the Structuring of Family Production, linked to the Department of Productive Structuring of the Secretary of Family Agriculture and Cooperativism (SAF), which is currently part of the structure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA). The Project began in 2001 and, in the first phase, covered eight territories of six states in the Northeast (Ceará, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, and Sergipe) (BRASIL, 2019). In its current phase (phase II), PDHC II operates in 11 states, 913<sup>4</sup> municipalities and approximately 54,000 family units.

## SECOND PHASE OF PDHC (2014-2023)

 ATTENDANCE  
913 MUNICÍPIOS | 11 STATES OF THE  
BRAZILIAN SEMI-ARID REGION



<sup>4</sup> During the execution of PDHC (phase II), the number was reduced to 835 municipalities, due to the rupture between the federal government and the public organisation of ATER in Bahia, leaving approximately 3,700 families out of the process.



The objective of DHCP II is to reduce rural poverty in the Brazilian semi-arid region. For this, the initiative proposed the reduction of gender, generational, racial and ethnic inequalities; in addition to promoting the coordination of public policies and/or the formulation of new public actions, always on the basis of the expansion of innovations.

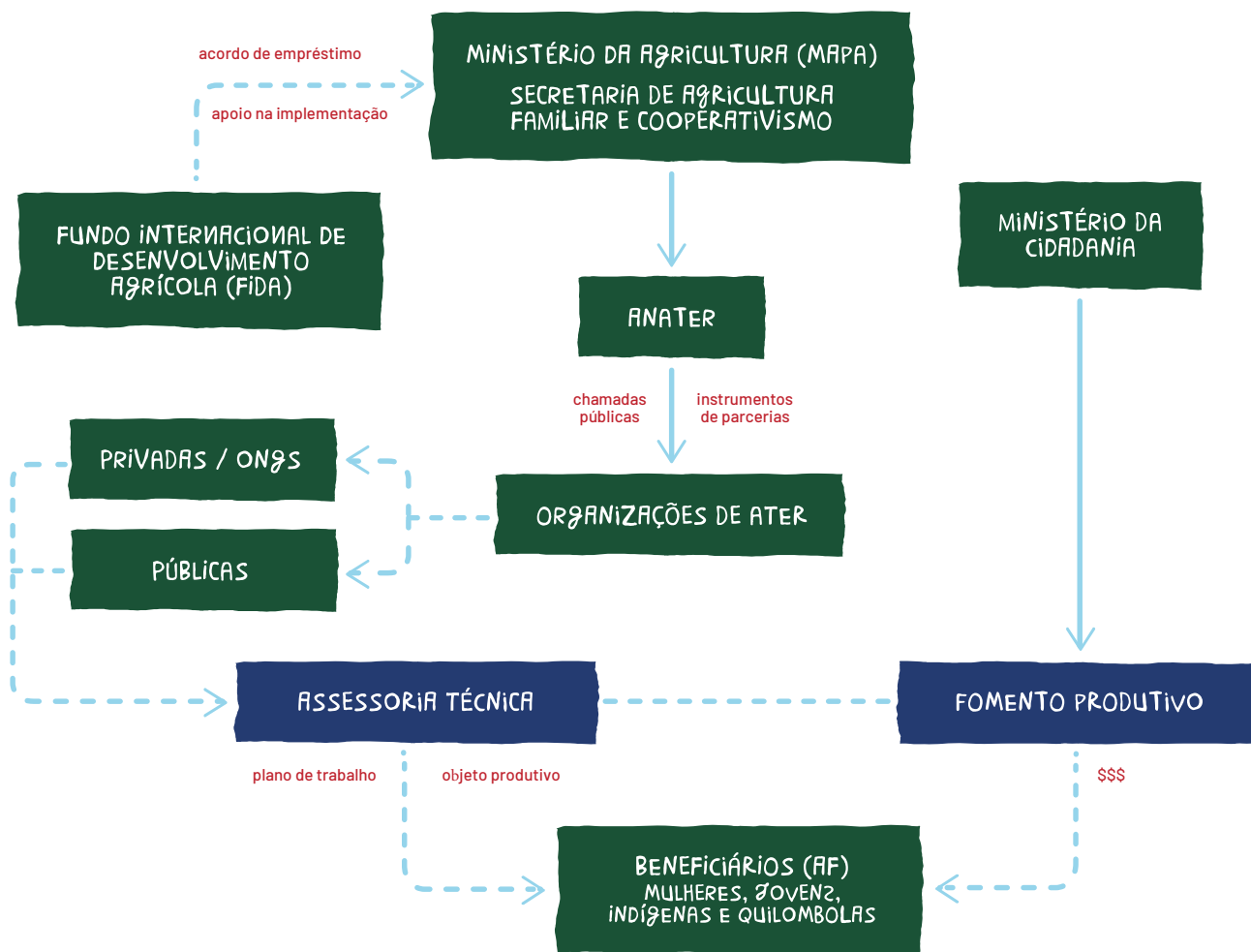
The Project had the funding and support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), an international financial institution and specialised agency of the United Nations (UN) which, together with state and federal governments, makes loan and grant agreements to support rural development and works in cooperation projects to overcome poverty in the Brazilian Northeast. Since it started collaborating with the Brazilian federal and state governments in the 1980s, IFAD has invested in rural development activities in the semi-arid region of the Northeast. In total, US\$125,300,000.00 have been invested, among financial sources from IFAD (US\$18,000,000.00) and the Brazilian Government (US\$42,000,000.00, as direct counterpart), indirect counterparts (US\$40,100,000.00) and beneficiaries' counterparts (US\$25,200,000.00).

Besides MAPA, PDHC II involved the National Agency for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ANATER), responsible for executing the contracts with the ATER entities that worked with the final beneficiaries.

The Ministry of Citizenship (MC), responsible for the Rural Productive Funding Policy, is also an integral part of this structure. The partnership with the MC was fundamental for the Project to reach the rural populations most vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity in the Brazilian semi-arid region. The excellent targeting of PDHC II is largely due to the use of the Unified Registry<sup>5</sup> as an effective tool for the selection of a significant portion of the beneficiaries. See more details in the Funding and ATER report.

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<sup>5</sup> The Unified Registry is a set of information on Brazilian families living in poverty and extreme poverty. This information is used by the federal government, states and municipalities to formulate and implement public policies capable of promoting improvements in the lives of these families.



**Figure 2 |** Governance Structure, Management and Execution of PDHC II

The articulation between the Ministry of Citizenship and the Dom Hélder Câmara Project took place at the origin of the constructions of the ANATER public calls, in the year of 2018. The Rural Productive Activities Funding Program<sup>6</sup> (FPR) is a strategy of the Brazilian government in the Brazil Without Extreme Poverty Plan, which, together with the technical assistance offered to family farmers in the Brazilian semiarid region, aims at rural productive inclusion, in the quest to overcome poverty and hunger. The criteria for the FPR are families who were in poverty or extreme poverty. The productive projects were designed as food security and surplus production strategies for commercialization and income generation, especially in the construction of productive infrastructures, such as hen houses and pigsties, and the acquisition of sheep, goats and even cattle.

<sup>6</sup> The Unified Registry (Cadastro Único - CadÚnico) is a registry that allows the government to know who the low-income families in Brazil are and how they live. Families can enrol in the Unified Registry if they: have a monthly income per person of up to half the minimum wage; have incomes above this level, but are linked to or waiting for some program or benefit that uses the Unified Registry in its grants. Source: <https://www.gov.br/pt-br/servicos/inscrever-se-no-cadastro-unico-para-programas-sociais-do-governo-federal>.

To execute the Project, public calls were designed and partnership instruments were signed so that private companies/non-governmental organisations and state public technical assistance entities would take on the field actions. The public entities enter into the agreements in the second half of 2017 and the entities approved in the Calls do so as of August 2018, initially generating a mismatch of approximately 6 months between the two groups.

PDHC II was executed between the years 2014 and 2022. However, only in 2018 did the actions directly reach family farmers in the Brazilian Semiarid, but already in 2019 all the instruments underwent revisions and reductions in budget amounts, goals and activities, due to Brazil's economic situation, impacting an important part of the initial objectives.

As this is an articulated set of initiatives operationalized through contracts signed by ANATER, whose headquarters are in Brasilia, in 2019 the Project Management Unit (PMU) is transferred from Recife-PE to the federal capital, thus concentrating all spheres of coordination, management and contracts. It is also important to note that between the years 2020 and 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic, an important part of the work was no longer carried out or was done remotely through message apps and cell phones.

Under PDHC II, the goal was to assist 17,777 families through the Rural Productive Funding program, involving the participation of public companies and private ATER organisations in all the federation units that make up the Brazilian semiarid region. To access the benefit, the rule requires the signing of a membership term and the agreement to execute an individual productive project, elaborated between technicians and beneficiaries of technical assistance.

In correspondence to the multidimensionality of ATER services, and with the objective of favouring the dialogue on public policies and promoting the overcoming of poverty and hunger, the Project was structured around three main components: **the amplification of innovations for sustainable development, the strengthening of organisational capacities, and the access to markets.**

The beneficiaries of PDHC II are family farmers, registered in the Unified Registry of the Federal Government, with special emphasis on serving women, youth and Traditional Peoples and Communities (PCTs). This specificity implies working with methodologies and multiple ATER instruments adapted to the different priority groups, their demands and capacities.



## COMPONENT 1

### Dialogue, integration of public policies and dissemination of innovative experiences

The objective of this component was to improve public policies and programs to reduce rural poverty and gender, generation, and ethnic inequalities in the semi-arid region, by strengthening the articulation in the implementation of these policies and programs, as well as to make improvements or adjustments, taking advantage of the innovative experiences of the Project that are considered successful. In this sense, some actions were carried out that simultaneously contribute to meeting the goals of the LFA and go beyond the activities carried out by ATER, as was the case with the Semear International Program and the Learning Territories experience. Together, the two initiatives had as their target audience women and youth from the semi-arid region, assisted by PDHC or in areas of common coverage, and highlight efforts to identify and disseminate results on innovative methodologies, build dialogues with rural development agents and managers, and also promote exchanges of these experiences to other regions.

At the centre of this strategy, is the understanding that emerged from the National Conference on Sustainable and Solidary Rural Development and contained in the bases of the National ATER Policy that the public ATER services (carried out by state and non-state entities) should be implemented through the use of **participatory methodologies**, and its agents should play an educational role, acting as animators and facilitators of sustainable rural development processes. At the same time, ATER actions **must privilege the endogenous potential of communities and territories, rescue and interact with the knowledge of family farmers and other people who live and work in the countryside under a family economy regime, and stimulate the sustainable use of local resources.**

Unlike conventional extensionist practice, structured to transfer technological packages, the new public ATER should act based on knowledge and analysis of agro-ecosystems and aquatic ecosystems, **adopting a holistic and integrative approach to development strategies**, as well as a systemic approach capable of prioritising the search for **equity and social inclusion**, and the adoption of technological bases that bring production processes closer to ecological dynamics. (BRASIL, 2004).

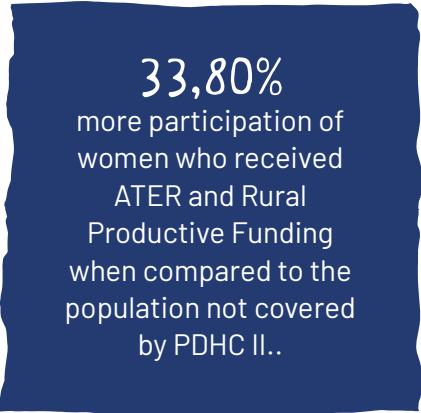
## COMPONENT 2

### Organisational Capacity Building

The objective of this component was to develop the capacities of rural communities and organisations of the rural population in the Project's areas of operation, aiming to increase access to public policies, the qualification of their demands and the strengthening of participation in the management of public policies with special attention to women, youth and traditional peoples and communities, seeking to reduce inequalities. In addition, the component had the goal of implementing activities to strengthen the management and operations capabilities of economic organisations of the beneficiary population and of governmental and non-governmental rural development agencies and institutions.

This component had two major ambitions: to develop the capacity for social mobilisation and strengthen participation so that access to public policies could become an integral part of the economic opportunities that PDHC II sought to promote. In this sense, there are not enough records of the action of ATER to allow us to understand, in fact, or measure how much of these advances are exclusive results of the Project, and this should not even be the objective at the end.

What has been reported is that there is a movement of organisation and access to public policies by these groups, especially women. The associativity index calculated by the Impact Assessment points to 41.12% more associativism of those assisted by ATER in PDHC II in comparison with the non assisted population. In turn, the index of women's participation calculated in the Impact Assessment of PDHC II results in 28.44% more participation of this public when compared to the population not assisted by PDHC II. If we look at the beneficiaries who, in addition to ATER, also received the FPR, this index rises to 33.80% in the participation of women and youth assisted in relation to the control population.



**33,80%**  
more participation of  
women who received  
ATER and Rural  
Productive Funding  
when compared to the  
population not covered  
by PDHC II..

PDHC II estimated that at least 13,500 families would have credit, but this target has already been surpassed, reaching 107% in December 2022<sup>8</sup>. However, so far, **access to public procurement programs (PAA (now PAB) and PNAE) has reached 45% and 4,918 families have benefited (out of an initial forecast of 10,800) from access to public procurement programs.** The explanation for this difficulty stems, among other factors, from the strong dismantling that these programs suffered and the difficulties arising from the Covid-19 pandemic that limited the movement of people and goods and impacted the agendas of municipalities, schools, and public agencies linked to the implementation of these policies and programs.

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<sup>8</sup> PDHC II is still in execution and there is a new call for ATER quilombola that will benefit 3,200 families. Therefore, the expectation is that the initial target will be substantially exceeded.

This number, when observed by the Impact Assessment, is disaggregated into two indicators: the Index of Access to Public Policies (IAPP) and the Index of Access to Agrarian Policies (IAPA).

The IAPP was 15.17% better among beneficiaries of PDHC II when compared to the control group, and, for the beneficiaries who also received the FPR, the index is 19.45% better, confirming that the association of ATER + FPR is an important condition for families to reach the other public policies.

### **COMPONENT 3**

## **Sustainable Productive Development and Market Access**

The main objective of this component was to promote a sustainable transformation of agricultural production in order to simultaneously improve food security and income generation. Improvements in production were to be based on the principles of sustainable development and coping with the semi-arid and drought.

In the guiding perspective of PDHC II, the methodologies applied should recognize local knowledge and the horizontal integration of technical and scientific knowledge. The Project also supported the implementation of units that served as reference for the productive processes, aiming to optimise and multiply the experiences considered successful.

In this component, technical assistance, through the management contract with ANATER, was the main instrument of PDHC II. This service referred to a set of integrated actions to technically assist family farmers and their organisations in the implementation of productive, economic, environmental and organisational strategies to combat poverty, to live with the semi-arid and drought and for rural development. The actions of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension were intended to provide support to the other components highlighted here.

Considering that the funding and support to access markets are relevant conditions for income generation, the following actions were foreseen: (i) qualify the management of the farmers' enterprises; (ii) advise the structuring of productive processes; (iii) advise and support the access to local markets (local fairs) and niche markets (fair and organic market); (iv) articulate and mobilise city halls to establish partnerships with family farming enterprises, with a view to enable access to the institutional market (PAA, PNAE); (v) articulate and mobilise local and regional retail networks to expand market opportunities.

In this sense, productive projects were prepared for all the beneficiary families, but those who received the Funding had, in addition to technical assistance, the financial resources to implement the respective project. Although it is necessary to consider the projects and their sustainability capabilities, since many of them are based on productive systems with dependence on external inputs - such as grains for feeding pigs and poultry - it is important

to highlight the results of 54.75% and 70.65%, respectively, in the increase in the number of heads of these animals for the beneficiaries of ATER and ATER associated with Funding when compared to control families who did not have the same resource for these investments.

In any case, **the Impact Assessment indicators show that the dimensions associated with income** (total agricultural and livestock income, agricultural and monetary income, agricultural and livestock income for self-consumption, and income derived from animal and vegetable production) **were all positively affected by the presence of ATER and Funding**, which demonstrates the importance of cash transfer programs to activate families' productive projects, as detailed in section 2.

Still, it is important to reinforce that there were innovations and technological adoption of processes or products in the families assisted.



# SECTION 2

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

In addition to measuring results, the Impact Assessment study provided data and evidence that allowed reflection on the approaches adopted by the Dom Helder Câmara Project and that also offered support for the decision-making process, in order to enhance the desired transformations. Furthermore, it makes it possible to identify factors that are fundamental to promote these transformations, others that do not contribute so directly, as well as limiting factors and factors that create obstacles.

The Impact Assessment of PDHC used a sample of 4,374 families, of which 1,764 were actual beneficiaries of the project, and 2,610 farmers who received no technical assistance were the control group. Through the Propensity Score Matching (PSM)<sup>9</sup> method, both groups were compared during the assessment of 28 indicators, which are thoroughly described and explored in the ***Impact Assessment*** document. A summary of these results is presented below.

### **Aumento da diversificação produtiva e da segurança alimentar e nutricional (SAN)**

Regarding the productive aspect, 31% of families reported some increase in production and 18% of them increased their agricultural production by 25% or more after receiving technical assistance from PDHC. Of the total number of families assisted, 99% adopted some input, technology or new practice and 23% reported an increase of more than 35% in assets (productive infrastructure, facilities, machinery, equipment).

The main lesson that PDHC II leaves as a legacy is the importance of synergies between initiatives. There was a 32.1% increase in production for self-consumption in families assisted with the combination of ATER and Funding, a result that translates the effects of assistance with the supply of resources for investment in new productive activities and, consequently, in greater productive diversity.

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<sup>9</sup> The PEP allows estimating the causal effects of a treatment after pairing the sample units of each group (in this case, the DHCP beneficiaries and the control group) using a set of covariates. The covariates used for the matching were: (i) the state in which the farm is located; (ii) the area of the farm; (iii) the number of family members involved in agricultural activities; (iv) whether the farm is composed only of the head or of a couple (head and spouse); and (v) whether technical assistance services were provided by public or private companies. For more information, access the complete Impact Evaluation study.

Food security is directly related to the access and physical availability of diversified food and the availability of financial and technical resources to support production. Productive diversification was present in 86% of the families, and 23% of them started a new income-generating activity, and 82% introduced some new technological practice, such as agro-ecological techniques, new crops, new management practices, and new forms of production.

In terms of nutrition, there was an 11.3% increase in the scale of dietary diversity of the families that received ATER and funding. Although it does not have the same scientific rigour as the Impact Assessment, according to the virtual assessment of results carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, 78% of the beneficiaries said they had improved their food consumption.





Some of these experiences that have had positive results have been deepened in qualitative studies, as is the case of Dona Rosimeire's family, a resident of the Sítio Veiga quilombo in Quixadá, Ceará.

See: ***Ficha Técnica Rosimeire***

## **Increase in women's empowerment**

Technical assistance, the organisation of fairs and commercialization spaces, and the articulation of collaborative networks have guaranteed women farmers a 37% increase in income from vegetable production, 21% from animal production, and 62% from animal byproducts. These numbers not only reflect an advance in food and financial security for families, but also contribute to the autonomy of women, who become subjects and protagonists of their own stories by no longer depending financially on their husbands, brothers, fathers, or uncles, and start to organise collectively and occupy new spaces in the market and in society.



The *Index of Women's Participation (iMu)*<sup>10</sup> showed a significant impact by showing that PDHC II increased the empowerment of women in beneficiary families by **28.4%** (about 75 points higher than the control group). The impact of the Project was even greater when compared to the control groups and the beneficiaries who received resources from the Rural Productive Funding. In these cases, while the beneficiaries with funding had an average of 353 points, the control group had an average of 264 points, showing an increase in women's empowerment of **33.8%** (about 89 points higher than the control group).

The systematised study on gender, technical assistance and food security presents in more detail how the participation of women was decisive in the strategy of PDHC II. See the following link:  
**[Gênero, Ater e Segurança Alimentar](#)**

<sup>10</sup> Indicates the percentage of participation of women in community actions and occupations exercised in various activities, such as farming, trade, public service, among others. The higher the value of iMu, the better the indication of women empowerment in the agricultural unit.

## Learning Territories and Youth Empowerment

In partnership with Procasur and Semear International, the Learning Territories strategy was designed to support knowledge management processes in which the family farmers themselves share their knowledge and are valued and remunerated for doing so. The strategy was to identify and encourage the development of local capacities for the associative management of the knowledge of producers, families, communities, and rural associations, thus promoting the scaling up of innovations by training young multipliers. Of the 5 Learning Territories present in Brazil, two are in the semi-arid region (Territory of Agreste and Territory of Central Sertão) and were coordinated in parallel and complementary to PDHC II.

This action provided an expressive progress towards incorporating young people, as shown in the Systematization Report of the Brazil Learning Territories. In the impact assessment, the increase in youth participation was measured by the youth empowerment variable. While PDHC II beneficiaries presented an average of 85 points, the control group presented an average of 70 points. Therefore, the project provided a **22.2** percent increase (about 16 points more than the control group) in youth empowerment in beneficiary families.

Also in this document there are more details on the experiences of the Learning Territories and the main results of this strategy, which was consolidated in partnership with IFAD, Projeto Semear, PDHC II, UnB, and executed by PROCASUR.

One experience of youth connected to the Learning Territories is the couple Claudemir and Charliane that can be seen in the following link. Check it out: [\*\*\*Ficha Técnica Charliane e Claudemir\*\*\*](#)

## Access to public policies and markets

One of the main action points of PDHC II, the access to public policies, consists in providing opportunities and helping families to access different policies, from issuing a personal document or a declaration of aptitude to PRONAF (DAP) to accessing institutional markets, through PAA and PNAE. All families benefited from at least one public policy, of which 20% accessed credit after PDHC and, of these, 43% reported an increase in production. The Rural Productive Funding, initially planned to assist 17,777 families, was granted in its two instalments to 81% of them. In turn, only 3% declared having access to public purchase programs for family agriculture such as the Food Acquisition Program (now the Alimenta Brasil Program) and the National School Feeding Program. Among the reasons for this low adherence, we can again highlight the dismantling and low budget that these initiatives have maintained in recent years.

## Increase in income

In a policy that aims to lift people out of poverty and extreme poverty, the income dimension is one of the indicators that best indicates its results. The Impact Assessment revealed an increase of 16.3% (equivalent to R\$724) in the total agricultural and livestock income of the beneficiaries, while the public that was also contemplated by the Rural Productive Funding showed an increase of 30.2% (about R\$1,189 more than the funding control group). In Monetary Agricultural Income, while the beneficiaries presented an annual average income of R\$2,218, the control group presented an annual average of R\$1,757, representing an increase of 26.2% for those who received ATER. In the group that also benefited from the FPR, the impact reached 48.3%.

The income from animal production had an equally significant impact, adding about R\$189.00 in the budget of the beneficiaries (20.1% higher than the control group). For those who received funding, the increase reached 61.5%. As for the vegetable production<sup>11</sup>, the Project provided an increase in the beneficiaries' income of 25.3% (about R\$65 more than the control group). For the beneficiaries of the funding, the increase was quite expressive: 89.5% (about R\$180 more than the promotion control group).

Dona Alcione, a resident of Quixadá, in Ceará, told her story of productive diversification, income increase, and above all, empowerment. Her experience with CETRA's assistance was registered and is available in the following link. Check it out: [\*\*\*Ficha Técnica Alcione\*\*\*](#)

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<sup>11</sup> For the calculation of the monetary income from the sales of crop production and the by-products of crop production (for example, the sale of rapadura, molasses, fruit jelly, and manioc flour), the revenues from these products throughout the year 2021 were considered.

## Rural Productive Funding Results

ATER activities can change for the better the lives of family farmers in the Brazilian semiarid region, as demonstrated here. However, when productive funding is associated with ATER activities, the improvement in the lives of family farmers is enhanced. For example, in almost all the comparative dimensions that considered income gains, beneficiaries who received Rural Productive Fundings showed greater differences in relation to the control group than when comparing all beneficiaries in relation to the control. The same result can also be observed for the number of pigs and poultry, food diversity, access to public and agrarian policies, women's empowerment, and the multidimensional poverty index. Therefore, the importance of associating ATER and productive funding in future actions should be highlighted.

The complete study on the impact of promotion on ATER activities can be accessed here: [\*\*Relatório Fomento\*\*](#)

**Chart 2** | Summary of the results of the Propensity Score Matching analysis for the income variables. B = beneficiary group (who received or did not receive the productive funding); BF = beneficiary group that received productive funding; C = control group. Cells filled in green indicate significantly higher values for the beneficiary group.

INCOME DIMENSIONS	GROUPS	EFFECT (%)
Total Agriculture and Livestock Income	C x B	16,33
	C x BF	30,23
Monetary Agricultural Income	C x B	26,22
	C x BF	48,29
Agricultural Income from Self Consumption	C x B	10,67
	C x BF	32,15
Animal Production	C x B	20,09
	C x BF	61,50
Derivatives of Animal Production	C x B	24,81
	C x BF	49,94
Vegetable Production	C x B	25,26
	C x BF	89,52
Derivatives of Vegetable Production	C x B	-12,98
	C x BF	-30,20

Non-agricultural activities	C x B	43,48
	C x BF	131,67
Total Annual Income	C x B	2,98
	C x BF	11,28
Annual Per Capita Income	C x B	2,98
	C x BF	13,59
<b>ANIMAL PRODUCTION (HEADS)</b>	<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>EFFECT (%)</b>
Pigs	C x B	28,02
	C x BF	54,75
Poultry	C x B	37,17
	C x BF	70,65
Goats	C x B	2,27
	C x BF	-7,76
Sheep	C x B	8,86
	C x BF	48,94
Cattle	C x B	-5,75
	C x BF	1,48
Horses, donkeys and mules	C x B	1,61
	C x BF	20,92
<b>VARIABLES / INDICES</b>	<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>EFFECT (%)</b>
*Severe insecurity	C x B	-1%
	C x BF	-2%
*Severe + Moderate Insecurity	C x B	0%
	C x BF	0%
Food Diversity	C x B	2,58
	C x BF	11,35
Ecological Index	C x B	1,18
	C x BF	1,53
Access to Public Policies Index	C x B	15,17
	C x BF	19,45



Access to Agrarian Policies Index	C x B	29,26
	C x BF	34,23
Associativity Index	C x B	41,12
	C x BF	36,41
Women's Participation Index	C x B	28,44
	C x BF	33,80
Youth Participation Index	C x B	22,23
	C x BF	18,39
Women and Youth Participation Index	C x B	27,13
	C x BF	30,69
Drought Exposure Index	C x B	2,30
	C x BF	4,58
Housing Index	C x B	-0,35
	C x BF	1,17
Multidimensional Poverty Index	C x B	-1,16
	C x BF	4,17



## SECTION 3

# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT – RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

In addition to technical assistance and the provision of non-reimbursable resources for structuring productive projects through rural funding, PDHC II supported efforts to systematise and register the good practices, lessons learned and experiences of the Project in order to improve the efficiency, credibility and effectiveness of rural development promoted by the Project and IFAD. These initiatives were contemplated in the Knowledge Management of the PDHC II, which carried out the systematisation of knowledge in the field with the participants of the Project experiences.

In this context, we sought to document and stimulate the sharing of good practices in various thematic areas, among which are the adaptation of agro-ecological transition technologies, living with the semi-arid region, participative approaches to ATER, targeting groups of women, young people, and traditional peoples and communities, strengthening productive organisation, access to markets, and non-agricultural production that generates employment and income.

All these initiatives aimed to improve the effectiveness of rural development, extract systematic and collective learning, influence evidence-based public policies, find innovative ways to combat poverty and hunger and promote social inclusion. Specifically, the PDHC II GC products contribute to demonstrate the results and impacts of the Project, strengthen the process of changing organisational and technological paradigms in the context of ATER, demonstrate the relevance of promoting productive incentives, and systematise and disseminate learnings and lessons learned specific to the Project. The set of good practices, learnings and experiences of the project were registered in order to facilitate their sharing and scaling up.

## Empowerment of women farmers

The Northeast is characterised not only for concentrating the largest portion of family farmers in Brazil (47%), but also for having the highest concentration of family farms run by women (24.3%), exceeding the national average of 19.7%. Among the public served by PDHC II, the Impact Assessment<sup>12</sup> revealed that in 38,155 of the 54,048 (70.6%) rural establishments, women were responsible for at least one productive activity. Thus, it is considered that one of the great successes of the project was to recognize the role of women and reduce gender inequalities by implementing technical assistance focused on serving women.

Gender inequalities in rural areas, the economic invisibility of women's contributions, their lack of access to decision-making, and the sexual division of labour have increasingly gained space on public policy agendas. Policies such as the Dom Helder Câmara Project are fundamental to ensure the empowerment and autonomy of women farmers and to reverse scenarios such as the one pointed out by FAO (2017), in which rural women were paid for only 14 hours of work per week (out of an overall workload of 42 hours), while men were paid in their almost full labour force (37 hours out of 42).

The results measured through interviews with women in the Agreste of Pernambuco and the Central Sertão of Ceará reveal significant changes in their productive systems and the expansion of opportunities to sell products in natura or prepared. The systematised experiences confirm the results of the Impact Assessment and illustrate the empowerment and autonomy they have gained from the project.

The interviewees reported how the three years of ATER provided by PDHC II in partnership with the [Centro Sabiá](#) and [CETRA](#) contributed significantly so that they, their families and the people who buy their products had regular access to healthy and diversified food, even in the midst of the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The advisory services provided by Sabiá and CETRA in the fields of both production and marketing were decisive for them to articulate their production beyond self-consumption and to participate in fairs, purchasing groups, and spaces for exchanging knowledge and seeds.

According to the testimonials, they initially believed that they would not have the courage to talk to other people and offer what they produced or prepared, and some of them could not even read or do maths, a limitation that was solved by relying on their teenage children. Now they talk, sell, offer, meet other people, exchange information, learn and teach, and are recognized and valued as farmers.

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<sup>12</sup> The evaluation of the impact of DHCP II was carried out by the Monitora Project - UnB. Information from farming families was obtained through two sampling rounds, the first (T0) in October, November and December 2018 and the second (T1) in January, February and March 2022. A significant sample of 4,374 families was evaluated and two well-established methods were used to assess 28 indicators: Propensity Score Matching (PSM), and Differences in Differences (DIFF-IN-DIFF). The size of the sample allowed measurements of both beneficiaries in general, and those who also received the productive promotion, always comparing the performance of farmers who did not receive the program (control group), with a margin of error of up to 4% more or less (MONITORA, 2022).

The study attributes the positive results to the combination of technical assistance, collaborative knowledge networks, and innovative interventions on productive processes, markets, and management practices, devised by PDHC II partner organisations, contributing to the productive inclusion of women in the communities assisted and to moving away from the poverty line. In the video produced with the women assisted by the Centro Sabiá it is possible to learn more about this action: **[VÍdeo Mulheres, Segurança Alimentar, Ater e Autonomia](#)**

The testimonies of the women assisted, including regarding the production and income earned from commercialization, provide evidence to affirm that they, in a short period of time, have learned to insert themselves in the markets and to recognize the importance of the central role that they themselves play in nutrition, food security, and the generation of income for their families.

## Food Security and Productive Diversification

Access to fairs and commercialization spaces, in addition to providing increases in income, also became a space for exchanges and potentiated the productive diversification of families. For Dona Alcione, the PDHC was fundamental to diversify her production: *"Before, I used to plant corn for my chickens and beans for us to eat. [...] It was after we started going to the fairs that I started planting diversities."*

Learn about the inspiring story of Dona Alcione, assisted by CETRA in Quixadá, Ceará: **[VÍdeo Dona Alcione](#)**

With the ATER services, the beneficiaries learned to work with other crops and today, on their properties, they cultivate bananas, oranges, passion fruit, cassava, yams, and several types of vegetables, have chickens, and guarantee, with this diversity of products, a healthy and adequate diet for their families.

In particular, when observing the work carried out by the Centro Sabiá with PDHC resources, from the standpoint of the dimensions that involve the notion of Food and Nutritional Security, it is possible to affirm that in these families the broad diversification of production favours the availability of food and exchange through local supply networks. Likewise, the guidelines to advance in agro-ecological transition processes contribute to the social and environmental sustainability of agrifood systems.

PDHC provided an increase in the food diversity scale of the beneficiaries by **2,6%** (about 0.15% higher than the control group)

What is evident is that the agroecological transition processes are not only about changing the ways of production. This transition implies reducing gender and generational differences.

## Rural Productive Funding

From the perspective that poverty and extreme poverty are multidimensional phenomena, the granting of the Rural Productive Funding Program (FPR), through a partnership with the Ministry of Citizenship, was part of the PDHC II strategies to combat hunger and poverty. The Program was established with the objectives of stimulating the generation of employment and income, promoting Food and Nutritional Security (SAN) and boosting the participation of beneficiaries in poverty and extreme poverty conditions in social, educational, technical and professional training, as well as promoting their participation in associations and cooperatives. 16,040 families were benefited (91% of the target of 17,700) with an investment of R\$2,400, non-reimbursable, passed on in two instalments, representing an investment of R\$38.5 million.

PDHC generated higher incomes for beneficiaries, favoured agricultural production, increased food diversity, increased access to public policies, strengthened inclusion in associations, and promoted the productive insertion of women and young people. However, when associated with funding, the results were even more promising. The Impact Assessment of PDHC II showed that the association of technical assistance with the FPR was an assertive and effective strategy for combating rural poverty, as demonstrated by most of the 28 indicators analysed.

This strategy had a direct impact on the lives of families like Dona Rosimeire and Dona Djanira who, with the resources received, were able to fulfil their dreams of having a structured chicken coop and pigsty in compliance with sanitary standards. With the productive structuring, they increase their earnings by reinvesting the resources and diversifying their production, with the accompaniment of technical assistance.

Dona Djanira, (See the record of this experience: ***Ficha Técnica Djanira***) resident of Monteirópolis, in the state of Alagoas, was advised by Emater of the state and, together with her husband, Mr.

Cícero and their children, was able, with the arrival of the Funding Program, to expand the facilities of a pig farm and ensure income for the whole family. The technician Dacy, who guided the work with the family reported that the difficulties started from the documentation to access the benefits, but that once this stage was overcome, the FPR with ATER were crucial

It can be affirmed that the productive development associated with technical assistance was able to ensure almost complete fulfillment of the three components of PDHC II. The assistance was responsible for increasing access to public policies (49%), disseminating innovations and ensuring productive diversification for beneficiaries.

for the family to have income from the sales of animals, which according to them, ensures the supply of other items in the family's food basket.

Some of the experiences with the Rural Productive Funding were registered in the following video: [Video Fomento](#)

## The experience of youth in Learning Territories

Learning Territories is a rural extension methodology with specific characteristics, whose application represents an alternative to conventional Technical Assistance. It is an effective instrument to face the challenges of the region and its inhabitants, notably drought, the desertification process, and the fight against endemic poverty, particularly when combined with specific public policies for the region and the incorporation of social technologies adapted to coexistence with the semi-arid region. From this point of view, the actions of Learning Territories articulated with ATER entities that share the same emphasis on valuing local knowledge and interaction among family farmers to improve the quality of life and combat poverty are especially effective.

Two principles of the poorly implemented National ATER Policy (Law 12.188/2010) are at the core of the Learning Territories methodology and directly related to Knowledge Management:

- 1) To establish a management mode capable of democratising decisions, contributing to the construction of citizenship, and facilitating the process of social control in the planning, monitoring, and assessment of activities, in such a way as to allow for the analysis and improvement in the progress of actions.
- 2) Permanent and continuous educational processes, from a dialectic, humanistic, and constructivist approach, aiming at the formation of competencies, changes in attitudes and procedures of the social actors, which strengthen the objectives of improving the quality of life and the promotion of sustainable rural development (BRASIL, 2004).

The Learning Territories (TA) program encourages the development of local capacities for the associative management of the knowledge of producers, families, communities, and rural associations, thus promoting the scaling up of innovations. This is a modality of TA developed by the PROCASUR Corporation (PSI and PROCASUR, 2020), a global organisation specialised in knowledge management for rural innovation. PROCASUR, through partnerships with governments, international cooperation institutions, rural organisations, and the private sector, harvests low-cost solutions based on the know-how of rural talents and the assets of their territories. By taking advantage of the economic, cultural, environmental and

social opportunities that these territories offer, more rural families, women and youth are empowered, adopt and scale solutions to generate inclusive and sustainable livelihoods.

To implement the pilot cases of TA in Brazil, Procasur worked in partnership with the Semear International Program (PSI) and Projeto Dom Helder Câmara (PDHC), both financed with funds from IFAD. In the partnership with Semear International, TAs were implemented in the states of Bahia, Piauí, and Paraíba, and with PDHC, TAs were implemented in the states of Ceará and Pernambuco. It is worth noting that PDHC fulfilled the function of systematising the experience, learning, and good practices of the Learning Territories implemented in Brazil.

Learning Territories promote the recognition of what are called "Local Talents" - identified as those people who hold valuable knowledge, usually practical, who stand out in their organisation or community for their way of doing things, their innovative knowledge, and their leadership in development initiatives that positively impact their own context (PROCASUR, 2019) - and in articulating these as public and private entities.

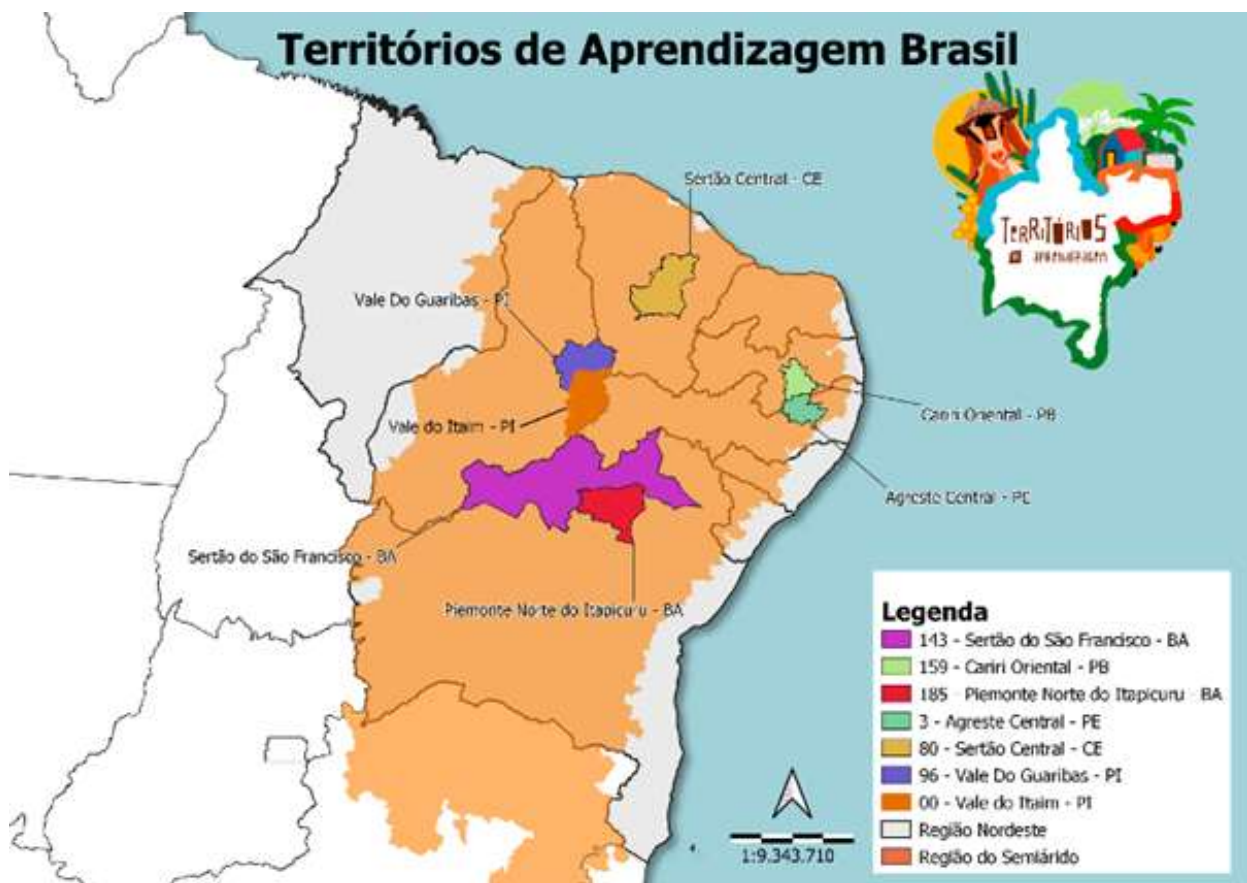


Figure 3 | Learning Territories in Brazil

The objectives of the strategy for TA in Brazil were:

- a) Implement, with the necessary adaptations, the learning territories model in five states (Piauí, Paraíba, Bahia, Pernambuco and Ceará) in alliance with IFAD operations in these states;
- b) Strengthen local capacities, especially among young men and women, to design, execute and manage the TA tool, identifying Local Talent and constituting themselves into knowledge companies.

During three years, PROCASUR and its partners, trained 22 rural youth to manage the knowledge enterprise "Learning Territories", providing them with tools that would allow them to characterise the knowledge assets of their territories, identify Talents, plan, manage financial resources, structure learning units, and develop communication actions.

The TAPI Learning Territory, which brings together the Vale de Itaim and Vale de Guaribas territories in Piauí, the TA Arandelas in Bahia with the support of the Pro-Semiárido Project, which brings together the Sertão do São Francisco and Piemonte Norte de Itapecuru territories, the Raízes Nativas Territory, located in the eastern Cariri region of Paraíba, the Agreste Territory, in the transition zone between the Zona da Mata and the Sertão in Pernambuco, and the Sertão Central Territory in Ceará, were created.

The last two (PE and CE) were supported by the Monitora Project and PDHC, and the lessons drawn from these experiences point to an extraordinary advance in the sense of incorporating rural youth and indicate the challenging element that was for them to learn in the practice of management of TAs, but they also rescue what it meant, both in the personal and professional dimensions, to be valued, that they believed in them and that their capacities were enhanced. This has allowed these young people today to be certain that they can, through teamwork, achieve the goals they set out to achieve.





**INSTITUCIONAL  
VÍDEO**



**IMPACT  
EVALUATION**



**GENDER, TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE  
AND FOOD SAFETY**



**TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE AND  
FOMENTATION**



**TECHNICAL FILE  
ALCIONE**



**TECHNICAL FILE  
CHALIANE E  
CLAUDENIR**



**TECHNICAL FILE  
DJANIRA**



**TECHNICAL FILE  
ROSIMEIRE**



**TECHNICAL FILE  
PREGUINHO**



**VÍDEO - WOMEN, FOOD  
SAFETY, TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE AND  
AUTONOMY**



**VÍDEO -  
DONA ALCIONE**



**VÍDEO - FOMENTATION**

# SECTION 4

## LEARNINGS AND TEACHINGS

In this section of the document, some lessons learned and lessons considered important in the execution of PDHC II are referred to and some of its strengths are presented. It is important to note that there are, of course, other views and records of the executing agency itself, the funders and academic studies that point to other dimensions and problems.

### **The combination of ATER and Productive Funding**

The data from the Impact Assessment shows that there is no significant difference in the food security of the families, even when the combination of ATER and Fundings is present, but undeniably, the main lesson that PDHC II leaves as a legacy is the importance of synergies between initiatives. There was a 32.1% increase in production for self-consumption in families served with the combination of ATER and Fundings.

The ATER service associated with the Rural Productive Funding was responsible for increases in income, productive diversity and the participation of women. The PDHC, when associated with the FPR, increased the participation of women by 33.8%. The main instrument used to provide the support was the productive project, prepared by the technicians in partnership with the family farmer, with the objective of promoting productive diversification, food diversity and increased income as a result of access to markets, such as fairs or direct sales in the community.

The premise adopted suggests that FPR and ATER, in association, strengthen the strategies of family farmers and promote, to some extent, rural productive inclusion. This articulation of ATER with non-refundable financial resources fills the gap of the extreme-poor public in relation to rural development and social assistance policies, which were solely and exclusively supported by welfare programs.

### **Economic Crisis and the COVID-19 Pandemic**

It is important that efforts be made to recognize the limitations, errors and constraints that are not reported here only as unfounded criticisms, but contextualised with the main adversities that PDHC II faced, among them the Covid-19 Pandemic, which for two years practically impeded the activity of technical assistance in the field, as well as the monitoring of activities by UnB and by the executor itself, MAPA and DEP/SAF. Of equal importance were also the changes that the economic crisis and budget restrictions imposed on the execution of PDHC II. In 2019, all the contracts and partnership instruments in force were revised downwards and a significant portion of the activities of the ATER companies were affected.

## **Governance, coordination and management of PDHC II**

The process of management and governance of PDHC II is not the object of detailed analysis in this report, since it would require an analytical framework different from that adopted by Projeto Monitora. The following lines are only notes, as lessons that could be drawn from participant observation during the period of the Monitora Project, emphasising that some spaces and activities linked to PDHC II were not part of the scope of the Decentralised Execution Term conducted by UnB.

Although the results of PDHC II can be seen, it is important to note that the coordination of the project during the period underwent changes and had a reduced team for its activities. During its execution, PDHC II was transferred to the Secretariat for Family Agriculture and Cooperativism (SAF), created on January 2, 2019, by Decree No. 9,667, as a result of the transfer of competencies from the Special Secretariat for Family Agriculture and Agrarian Development (SEAD), until then part of the Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic, to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA).

Initially, the Project Management Unit based in Pernambuco was transferred to Brasilia. One of the criticisms that the control organs pointed out to the project was the distance that initially existed between the Project Coordination in Brasília and the Project Management Unit (PMU) that was based in Recife since its first phase.

On the one hand, this change brought the management team closer to MAPA's strategic center, but on the other hand, it distanced it from the beneficiaries and the ATER teams, creating difficulties in monitoring activities and reducing the capacity for dialogue with the technical assistance agents, who practically only spoke to ANATER.

Although this Coordination has suffered with the set of changes and adjustments that PDHC II underwent, the governance model adopted was able to ensure that the main activities were maintained during the Pandemic and even with the economic adjustments that were imposed to the entities' contracts, the partnership with IFAD and the UnB team, the Directorate of Productive Structuring of the Secretariat of Family Agriculture was attentive to the main objectives and ensured the fulfilment of the main goals foreseen in the Project.

### **The role of ANATER**

Although not the subject of this report, ANATER's role in PDHC II should be analysed in detail. Broadly speaking, ANATER is responsible for coordinating ATER public policies at the federal level, seeking to improve the execution of services and the process of contracting entities that perform ATER by the Federal Government. Its objective is also to contribute to the qualification and execution of policies for the development of technical assistance and rural extension services for the rural public in Brazil.

Technical assistance is the main vector of access for family farmers to productive processes,

techniques, innovations, policies and credit instruments. It can be seen that before the DHCP, ATER did not reach the families, which means that they were excluded from all possibilities of inclusion and productive diversification. If this cycle changes, ATER will ultimately alter the phenomena of poverty, hunger and food insecurity, as shown by the results of the impact assessment of PDHC II.

However, ANATER itself underwent numerous changes in directorships and teams throughout PDHC II, keeping most of the efforts dedicated only to the management of contracts with companies, in a logic of contractual benchmarking, which although necessary, is not enough, especially given the importance of coordinated action with MAPA to meet operational demands and emerging strategic actions that required rapid dialogue with ATER entities.

In the exercise of the Public Calls and the established contracts some questions need to be deepened in order to improve the ATER Policy. The norms, contracts, provisions and guidelines of ANATER and its rules, coordinate, control and regulate the initiatives and entities of ATER? Do they lead to quality ATER? Do they facilitate contracting? Do they have transparent rules and procedures for the selection processes and then the execution processes by the entities?

These are concerns that deserve reflection and cannot be reduced to the simple exercise of contractual measurement and generation of diagnoses, platforms and technological systems. Although these instruments are fundamental for decision making, it is necessary to consider the qualitative analyses and learning processes that the ATER Policy advocates. The set of processes directed to the control of activities becomes an end, when they should be means in the pursuit of the major objectives of PDHC II and its dimensions.

An important point in this set of questions is the decision of plots and beneficiaries that are allocated between public and private ATER entities. What criteria are handled for these definitions? Which backgrounds are considered? There are, without a doubt, highly qualified entities and others that do not show conditions to perform the activities. However, there is a very high transaction cost for the rupture of the respective instruments and, consequently, countless beneficiaries are left by the wayside, without the proper assistance, either by withdrawal from the entity, delay in transfers, changes of technicians, deficiency in the use of technologies, and so many other variables that can affect the fulfilment of contractual relations.

The results of PDHC II, in relation to productive diversification and increase of agricultural incomes are positive, especially in the production of poultry and pigs. In an attempt to advance even further, it is suggested that farming families be advised to diversify into other productive arrangements, agricultural and non-agricultural, always under the principles of sustainability, rational use of scarce resources (such as water), transition to sustainable food systems, use of renewable energy, among others.

In this sense, the productive development actions should be accompanied by continuous technical assistance and rural extension services. It is not enough to assist in the elaboration

of the productive project to be financed with the funds from the Development. This action can trigger other productive activities on the property, whether for the market of fresh or minimally processed products, to improve the family's food security, or to undertake other types of economic activities, not necessarily agricultural.

ATER services should be contextualised and productive projects should reveal the characteristics and potentialities of rural territories. These projects can be designed in terms of scale, by groups of beneficiary families in articulation with the characteristics, challenges and potentialities of the territories and beneficiary families. It is expected that the productive projects, according to regions, territories, families and types of beneficiaries, will be differentiated.

It is suggested to design and implement a continuous plan for training and updating of ATER technical teams that has as its guiding principle the systemic approach to diagnose the problems, identify challenges and plan interventions in a way that correspond to each context and different types of family farming. Along the same lines, the certification of companies providing ATER services can also be a decentralised action, managed by regional bodies made up of ATER beneficiaries and groups of specialists (universities, researchers from research companies) and public agents, establishing lists of entities or organisations able to provide the service.

## **Focusing Strategy**

Lessons and learnings are also obtained from the results of the Project, in this sense, the main indicators have already been exposed, but it is important to reflect on the focalization and concomitant actions of ATER with the beneficiaries.

PDHC stood out for developing a proposal for permanent, multidimensional, differentiated Technical Assistance, conceived as a continuous and systemic action, focused on the demands, objectives and result areas of interest to beneficiary families, thus enabling access to public policies and programs for family farmers. The experience of the Dom Helder Câmara Project has shown that it is possible to make an important contribution by experimenting with new methodologies and production alternatives on a smaller scale that can become a reference for the formulation of public policies.

In the set of beneficiaries, PDHC II showed that focusing on women was an important step and that ensuring their access to policies and benefits such as the FPR needs to be maintained and expanded at the limit. In turn, to ensure that the indicators linked to young people are achieved, it is essential that other activities are provided for in the scope of ATER action, in this sense, the experience of the Learning Territories was able to show that it is necessary to contemplate new forms of involvement of this public beyond traditional agricultural activities.

It should be emphasised that the PDHC managed to reach the most vulnerable population, whose average area of productive units presents about 4.6 ha, the median area is 2 ha, about 40% do not possess the land title/ownership and about 75% of the heads of household do

not have complete primary education or even no education at all. In summary, the families assisted by PDHC can be characterised as follows: they have between 2 and 4 members (average of 3.4 people per family), ages between 30 and 59 years (heads and spouses with average age of 46 and 44 years, respectively) and the majority of families have two members active in agriculture and cattle-raising, being that such activities are developed by the couple (about 65% of the cases).

## Externalities

Other aspects that affect PDHC II, even if outside the domain of those involved, and that result less efficiency of ATER is that its instruments did not guarantee synergies with other initiatives, a fact that is explained in part by the accelerated set of dismantling of public policies that occurred since 2016, but that accelerated in the period 2018-2020. Several policies have been discontinued or "dehydrated" in the recent period, making ATER's activity much more difficult.

A recurrent complaint of the technicians and heads of ATER entities is that the beneficiaries lack many other necessities besides advisory services and productive and development projects, when available. For them, structuring programs related to water (cisterns and water reuse), electricity, access to markets and associative arrangements would enhance the effect of ATER, but they were left aside for many beneficiaries of PDHC II.

Technical assistance and rural extension as a public policy assumes the maximum expression of its complexity and scope in the PDHC II. It requires intra- and inter-governmental coordination, federal dialogues and cooperation with different institutions and organisations for its promotion, execution, monitoring, promotion, supervision and assessment.

It is not the objective of this study to make recommendations or even point out mistakes and successes, but to guarantee that the memory of the implementation process of PDHC phase II is registered and allows that the interested parties have access to the most important steps involved and how this set of activities reached the results expressed in the different studies mentioned here.

The main objective of PDHC II was to reduce rural poverty and inequalities in the Brazilian semiarid region. The first observation is that the program succeeded in serving poor or extremely poor families in this region, providing technical assistance and rural extension, and for a part of them, productive development.

The impact assessment shows that PDHC II achieved the intended objectives, generating higher incomes, agricultural production, food diversity, access to public and agricultural policies, greater inclusion in associations, as well as inserting women and partially young people in the productive, commercial and community activities of the family. In addition, it was concluded that the impact of the PDHC II was even more promising within the group of beneficiaries that received productive incentives.

It can be concluded from the Impact Assessment study that technical assistance has changed the lives of family farmers in the Brazilian semiarid region for the better. Additionally, when ATER is associated with productive development, the improvement in their lives is even more significant.

In turn, the findings of the interviews and qualitative studies indicate that there is room for improvement and refinement of the instruments between the parties, especially in the relationship between the PMU and ANATER and between the latter and the entities executing ATER contracts, moving forward in coordinated processes and with greater emphasis on local dynamics. In this sense, adaptation to climatic aspects and inclusive innovations with agro-ecological processes are fundamental to ensure the sustainability of results.

Other important contributions refer to the involvement of youth in non-agricultural activities, the empowerment of women, the coordination of policies, and the expansion of concomitant actions to strengthen the capacities of ATER agents, ensuring that beneficiaries and their strategies (of reproduction, income generation, or survival) are valued beyond the simple path of productive inclusion or access to markets, revealing other logics of development.



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