



PROJETO
DOM HELDER
CÂMARA

TECHNICAL FILE
FIELD EXPERIENCES

AREA: MARAVILHA (AL)



PROJETO
MONITORA



Technical file field experiences: area Maravilha (AL)

Projeto Dom Hélder Câmara (PDHC II)

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PREQUINHO DOES WONDERS IN THE SERTÃO OF ALAGOAS WITH THE SUPPORT OF EMATER AND PDHC II

The city is Maravilha, in the central sertão of Alagoas; the climate is the typical Caatinga semi-arid. It was there that we met Francisco de Assis da Silva. The name is a tribute to the patron saint of animals, and Francisco does justice to it, as we were welcomed by a black and white stray dog that guarded the lettuce beds.

Besides Francisco, another 10,283 inhabitants live in Maravilha (IBGE, 2010), and more than half of these people (54.9%) have incomes of up to half a minimum wage. There, family farming speaks loudly: it dictates the game in 84% of the 982 agricultural establishments in the city.



Despite his prestigious name, he really likes to be called Preguinho. The nickname, given to him in his childhood, at school, refers to his short stature. If height was not his strong suit, his math and reading skills were. He was always the first in his class.

His story is a long one, but he himself says that some things are best left behind. "I used to drink every day and my colleagues didn't believe in me at all." When the first Agroamigo (Pronaf operated by Banco do Nordeste) project appeared, he complied with everything the bank and technician recommended. With the profit, it was possible to buy the small area of one hectare. It was there that we learned a little

more about the partnership with Emater of Alagoas and the support of another Francisco (also “de Assis”), Chico from Emater, who assisted us during our visit. Preguinho had some prior knowledge of agro-ecological practices - a result of the initiative of Emater-AL and Sebrae with the Integrated and Sustainable Agro-ecological Production (PAIS) experiences -, but he only established himself as a farmer with the arrival of the Dom Helder Câmara Project.



The technician who works in Maravilha and assists 70 farmers praises the state PAA: *“It’s a program that can’t stop! It’s great! The farmer knows that he can produce and that he has a place to sell. There are 12 farmers in the municipality, who produce vegetables, eggs, poultry, and cakes.”* The program has served several families in need in the municipality, including during the covid-19 pandemic. PNAE is another program that works well, according to him. *“They only care about PAA and PNAE!”*, says Chico, praising the municipal public administration, always partnering with them in buying what is produced.



Created by Law 7.291, of December 1, 2011, the Innovation Institute for Sustainable Rural Development of Alagoas (or Emater/AL) is a special regime autarchy linked to the State Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Fishing and Aquaculture (Seagri).

Preguinho has been participating in PNAE for six years and considers public purchases fundamental to his activities. According to Chico, 80% of the farmer's income is obtained from sales in institutional markets.

The experience

"Preguinho is a unique farmer. At first he had to be convinced of some techniques, but then, with the training and experience visits in the region, he became an agro-ecological farmer. He is well oriented and is now an exemplary producer, but if the PDHC ends, I don't know what he will do", says the Emater Alagoas technician, Francisco de Assis Sampaio.

The farmer produces irrigated vegetables, honey from bees, and poultry for slaughter and laying. To keep his production always fresh and well cared for, he keeps a 52 thousand liter cistern - a kind of strategic reserve - and also buys water from the Companhia de Abastecimento de Alagoas (Casal), which administers water from the São Francisco River. The price is expensive, but it is needed. But what Preguinho is most proud of is beekeeping.



"I'VE BEEN A BEEKEEPER FOR 14 YEARS, THANKS TO A FORMER COUNCILMAN WHO ALLOWED ME TO TAKE A COURSE AND BUY SOME BOXES. WE GOT THE COURSE AND I BECAME EXCITED! PRACTICING IN THE WILD, WE CAPTURED THE SWARMS AND THEN FORMED A BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION. WE EVENTUALLY REACHED 30 MEMBERS. THIS IS MY PRODUCT, WITH THE PROPER LABEL AND DOCUMENTATION ALL SORTED OUT. I'M GOING TO DIE, BUT BEEKEEPING WILL REMAIN HERE IN THE TOWN. THE HONEY DOESN'T GO TO PNAE, BECAUSE PEOPLE STILL THINK THAT HONEY IS ONLY A REMEDY, BUT I'VE ALREADY TOLD EVERYONE THAT HONEY IS FOOD!"



What is it that attracts him so much? "The costs are low, the sale is guaranteed, the profit is good, and we are also protecting the planet. That's why I don't cut down, don't burn, and only clean up the land when I'm going to use it. The leftover materials help protect the soil."

"I used to sell at the fair, but with the Covid-19 Pandemic I had to do my own thing and started to deliver to customers' homes every two weeks. I make a list of what they want and deliver it to their homes. At the fair, not a lot of sales are "on credit"; when it comes to home delivery, there are more people who owe me."

LEARNINGS

Before the pandemic, Preguinho sold the full quota allowed by PAA and PNAE, as well as more than 15 thousand eggs, 500 chickens, 300 kg of honey, approximately 1000 lettuce plants and another 1000 bags of parsley, figures that indicate an income increase of about 300% after the arrival of PDHC II.

Preguinho's curious and experimental profile helps in the incorporation of new techniques and activities. In partnership with technical assistance, he acts as a mediator of solutions and opportunities for other family farmers in the region. Preguinho participates in activities promoted by Emater-AL and by the city hall, appears in journalistic articles, and gives life to the local association of producers.



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THE VIDEO
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KEYWORDS

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