Brazil



Organization: Centro Ecológico
Location: Southern Brazil (Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul states)
Solution: Stimulate açaí berry production through agroforestry systems to generate income for communities and protect the Atlantic Forest
Factsheet Period: First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (17 months); Second round of UNDP AFCIA funding (12 months)



Açaí fruits planted by the Centro Ecológico to support Indigenous and traditional communities - @Centro Ecológico

Smallholders and traditional communities in the Atlantic Forest are key to preserving the endangered palm juçara, which has been threatened by its unsustainable harvesting which traditionally involves cutting the tree to consume its centre. To protect this species, Centro Ecológico supports regenerative agriculture by assisting farmers to sustainably cultivate açaí through agroforestry practices. Almost 95 % of all the açaí consumed in the world comes from Brazil. This approach combines açaí production with forest management, benefiting Indigenous and traditional communities by enhancing food security and nutrition, focusing on households cultivating and harvesting the berries without cutting the tree.

Key achievements

- 6,000 kg of açaí commercialized to the institutional market and 6,200 kg of açaí commercialized to public schools
- 2,500 seedlings of native species planted
- 10,300 tons of carbon sequestered
- 364 households participating in açaí production
- 654 school students engaged in environmental education programmes
- 45 Mbya Guarani young people from seven territories trained in audiovisual communication
- By combining knowledge on audiovisuals, training on agroecological techniques and hands-on ecological restoration, the project has strengthened the resilience of Mbya Guarani communities, enabling them to sustain their cultural identity, ensure food security and reclaim the vitality of their landscapes

Adaptation benefits

- Resilient agroforestry systems that retain water and enhance biodiversity
- Traditional knowledge sharing on climate-resilient production methods

Innovation

- Develops research for açaí fruit production in the Atlantic Forest
- Includes açaí and bananas grown by local communities in school meals
- Creates an alternative source of income for local communities through the production and sale of açaí juçara





Social impact

- Improves food security and nutrition for Indigenous and traditional households
- Empowers women within the açaí production chain by giving them leadership roles throughout the process, from cultivation to sales
- Supports vulnerable Indigenous and “quilombola” groups by providing berries for schools

Replication potential

- The initiative effectively promotes resilient production systems by adapting agroforestry techniques to local contexts impacted by drought. It serves as a strong model, benefiting family farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and traditional populations.

Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA grant: US$235,000 (initial grant: $125,000; scaling grant: $110,000)

Investability	
Revenue per year	Income generated through project activities: on average, $2,000 per family per year $4/kg of açaí berries funds are primarily raised through grants (68%) and services rendered to government and private agencies (26%)
Sustaining criteria	Knowledge sharing among community promotes the long-term viability of the initiative Development of a sustainable market chain for açaí berries
Financial innovation	Initiative’s success has garnered government interest in establishing a minimum price for açaí juçara berries Increased family income from açaí sales encourages younger community members to participate, fostering long-term sustainability and income generation

ADAPTATION FUND Climate Innovation Accelerator

ADAPTATION FUND

To read their story, visit UNDP-AFCIA

To watch their video, click here

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