

APPRECIATION OF TRADITIONAL POPULATIONS

RECOGNITION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IS ALSO ONE OF THE MAIN CONCERNS OF LEGADO DAS ÁGUAS.

One of the phrases most often heard from those who visit the reserve is: "Legado das Águas isn't an island." True. The largest private Conservation Unit of Atlantic Rainforest which stretches along the banks of the Juquiá River, cannot be analyzed apart from its ample territory, or from its history built by those who already inhabited the region. This is the case of the traditional community of Ribeirão da Anta, located in the reserve for over 80 years.

"Approximately 20 people live there, at most. However, on weekends the population increases, since the children and grandchildren come to visit the elders who live there," says Maurilo Casemiro Filho, lawyer, social worker, and master in social services, hired by Legado das Águas to study the community.

According to Maurilo, the history of the community of Ribeirão da Anta began in the 1930s, when Gumercindo Alves left the city of Ibiúna and entered the forest to settle down next to a creek, which was frequently visited by the tapirs (anta, in Portuguese) to quench their thirst. "Afterwards, he brought his wife Mariana. The couple had nine children. Eight of them are still alive. In turn, these children had children and grandchildren", says Maurilo. Today, the family has approximately 150 descendents - most of whom live and work in Tapirai.

"One of the objectives of our work in the last two years has been to produce a historic survey and try to make the Legislative, the Department of Tourism, and the Tapirai City Authorities to recognize them

as a traditional community," explains Maurilo. It worked. Since 2015, on October 5, the Ribeirão da Anta Day is celebrated.

And better: throughout 2016, several advances were made. "One of them was the recovery of an area that allowed for residents of Ribeirão da Anta to regain access to water. The other was the renovation, in a partnership with the Tapirai City Authorities, of the former school building to rebuild the Ribeirão da Anta Traditions Center. Legado provided the materials and the city contributed with labor," added Maurilo. After March 2017, the center will be open to the public. With this, more people will have the opportunity to learn more about the history of the region and take home baskets, sieves and mats made by the talented hands of the population.



Eliza Maria de Jesus working with handicrafts, one of the attractions of Ribeirão da Anta



Occupation began in the 1930s. Currently, only the elders live in the community. In the picture, José Alves and wife, Odila Batista

TOURIST POTENTIAL

The community of Ribeirão da Anta coexists with Legado das Águas, and is not only the part of our area, but also of our history. We want to contribute to the respect and preservation of this culture for many centuries; its title as a Cultural Heritage confers them important rights. We are very happy for this achievement.

Frineia Rezende,
Manager of Reservas Votorantim

The work conducted with the community of Ribeirão da Anta is not a stand-alone initiative to value the local culture and allow for people to learn about the wealth of the region. Another initiative of Legado das Águas, in partnership with Instituto Votorantim, the program to support Public Administration aims to strengthen the tourist potential of the region, bringing together several attractions and consequently creating an integrated visitation circuit. "The region is suited for sustainable tourism. For this reason, it's instrumental to create a permanent coordination between them," explains Maurilo Casemiro.

Indeed. The region called Vale do Ribeira, where Legado das Águas is located, has many alternatives for visitors, such as dozens of waterfalls, rivers for water activities, zip lines, fishing, trekking, visits to caves and a rich production of handicrafts. There are many Quilombola communities and, on the coast, the region of Lagamar (saltwater lagoon), formed by an immense estuary, considered the largest continuous stretch of Atlantic Rainforest in Brazil. ■

INVESTMENT FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT TO THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF CITIES, BASIC EDUCATION, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ARE ALSO SOME OF THE CONCERNS OF LEGADO DAS ÁGUAS IN THE REGION.

Aside from the investments to turn Legado das Águas into a reference center for study and research associated with the Atlantic Rainforest, as seen in the previous pages, the reserve strives to make the region, especially the cities of Juquiá, Miracatu and Tapiraí, prosper, develop and grow. To this end, throughout 2016, several investments were made focusing on land development.

"Our work is grounded on three pillars: integrate Legado to the local community, promote economic activities geared toward the social and environmental development, and strengthen the supply of infrastructure and public services," explains Daniela Gerdenits, Social Responsibility Consultant for Legado das Águas. See below the main initiatives in this area.

SOME PRACTICAL RESULTS OF THE AGP

- Registration of the license plates of all city government vehicles in Tapiraí at Artesp in order to obtain exemption from toll charges. Savings of approximately BRL 15.000 per year;
- In Juquiá, reduction by 25% in the cost of meals at school cafeterias, per student, by reviewing the menu and reducing waste (diversifying the source of protein and favoring fruits of the season);
- In Tapiraí, Municipalization of the Rural Property Tax (ITR). Gains of approximately BRL 40.000 per year;

SUPPORT TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (AGP)

Since 2014, Legado das Águas has developed in Juquiá, Miracatu and Tapiraí the Support to Public Administration (AGP) program, resulting from the partnership between Instituto Votorantim and the National Social and Economic Development Bank (BNDES).

The program was divided into three phases: diagnostic, financial and fiscal balance, and territorial planning. In the first phase, administration status and financial and fiscal vision of city government, for each city, were evaluated. Then, an action plan was prepared to increase revenue and reduce expenses, as well as the development of funding projects. After that came the financial and fiscal balance phase, in which civil servants of the three municipalities were trained and monitored by a team from Instituto Águila to help in the implementation of the suggestions made in the first phase. In the land planning phase, a master plan was prepared for Tapiraí, while for Juquiá and Miracatu, a basic sanitation plan was developed.

"Our greatest drive is having a positive impact upon the population," says Frineia Rezende, Manager of Reservas Votorantim.

VOTORANTIM PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION (PVE)

In 2016, the program Votorantim Partnership for Education (PVE) was present in 17 cities, of 11 states in Brazil, including the city of Juquiá. Using the methodology of Playful Consultation, children and adolescents between 9 and 17 years of age were led to reflect on the question "What kind of school can we build together?" In addition to debating the future of education, debates were held concerning the importance of Solidarity initiatives and reuse of waste in revitalizing the school grounds.

“For a school with more respect, equality, quality education, accessibility, extracurricular activities, and participation of families in the school.”

Open letter "The School We Want", Juquiá, June/2016



Activity conducted by students of the public education network in Juquiá involved with the program Votorantim Partnership for Education.

NETWORKS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ReDes)

In yet another partnership with BNDES (which funded 50% of the projects), a program was created in Tapiraí and Juquiá to foster economic activities and promote sustainable rural development through the incentive of local production chains and strengthening of family agriculture.

Throughout 2016, the work was developed through training and technical supervision by the Vale do Ribeira Beekeepers Association (Apivale) and the Tapiraí Producers Association. In 2017, the program will continue through monitoring of these two groups.

EMPREENDE TAPIRAÍ

The purpose of this project is to promote among young adults in Tapiraí the entrepreneurial culture through training, experience and support to the implementation of business opportunities in economic segments of local or regional relevance. In 2016, a total of 30 people participated in the training courses. In 2017, three projects were selected to receive financial resources:

- Organic Banana Meal;
- Processed Vegetables;
- Ginger & Company. ■