



KNOW-HOW 3000

Experience AT A GLANCE

Resisting subjection – a quilombola community struggling for their rights

What is it about?

Quilombolas are descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves who escaped from plantations and founded new communities. Due to their rich and distinct cultural heritage, they are considered traditional communities, for which they are granted specific territorial and cultural rights. This experience is about how the community of Varzinha became a recognized quilombola community, which initiated the end of its subjection to the landowner.

Why an intervention?

The subjection of rural families to the landowner has its origins in colonial times, but still exists in some regions. In this system, families are forced to pass half of everything they produce to the landowner as form of payment for using the land. The community of Varzinha opposes this historical injustice and struggles for the recognition of their rights.

What does it change?

The community members recognize themselves as quilombolas, belonging to an ethnic group that struggles for common goals. By acknowledging the community as quilombo, the process of demarcating its territory could be initiated and the competence of dealing with the case passed on to federal courts, where landowners have less influence on the outcome of lawsuits.

How does it work?

- The experience is not merely about the struggle for the recognition of land rights and the demarcation of the territory occupied by the families, but also about defending and strengthening their collective identity which is linked to the fight for this land, as well as for their dignity and liberty. Based on this approach, a series of workshops, mobilizing and networking activities, interviews, talks and surveys have been realized.
- It is crucial that the methodology guarantees the participation of the families through a reflexive and critical dialogue. A participatory diagnosis allows to identify the main problems, obstacles and claims of the community.

Who are the beneficiaries?

- The families of the community of Varzinha
- Other quilombola communities of the region who face similar situations

Who could use that approach?

- Traditional communities in Brasil, especially quilombola communities
- Traditional communities elsewhere who live similar situations and contexts
- Organisations who work with these communities

Who is already using it?

CPT – Comissão Pastoral da Terra, Brazil

HORIZONT 3000

AUSTRIAN ORGANISATION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Sector: Human Rights – Civil Society

Period: 2010-2015

Organisation: CPT (Comissão Pastoral da Terra) Nordeste II

Further material: <http://www.cptne2.org.br/>

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