

Project:

Support for the consolidation of the Upper Juruá Extractive Reserve, Acre, Brazil.

Proposed by:

Associação dos Seringueiros e Agricultores da Reserva Extrativista do Alto Juruá
(ASAREAJ).

General objective:

- To enable the forest-dwellers of the Upper Juruá Extractive Reserve to consolidate a pioneering effort in community management of natural resources, in advance of large-scale development initiatives for the region.

Specific objectives:

- To enable the elected coordinators of ASAREAJ to intensify their contact with the scattered communities of the Extractive Reserve, involving all the families resident in the area in the process of discussion of the environmental, social, political and economic aspects of the consolidation of the Reserve.
- To establish a minimal office infrastructure in Cruzeiro do Sul capable of maintaining contact with other institutions (both governmental and non-governmental), handling the administration of the programmes under development (Health, Education, Cooperative, Research) and generally reducing the administrative demands on the coordinators of ASAREAJ, enabling them to spend more time with the communities in the forest than has so far been the case.
- To develop both the administrative capacity of ASAREAJ and the level of participation of the community in the Reserve's administration, in preparation for the start in 1994-5 of large-scale multilateral funding for development programmes in the area.
- To prepare for and hold the Assembly of the members of ASAREAJ, an essential step in consolidating the process of community management of the Reserve, with the election of the new coordinators of ASAREAJ and ample discussion of all the programmes currently planned or under way.

Background:

The Upper Juruá Extractive Reserve, the first such reserve to secure formal recognition in Brazil, is currently passing through a critical period. After an initial phase of intense activity, a shortage of funds and the economic crisis through which the region is passing have resulted in a loss of momentum for the movement. With the difficulties suffered by the Reserve's Cooperative and the penury to which the members of ASAREAJ have been reduced by the slump in rubber prices, the movement has no means of self-funding the process of extending community involvement in the Reserve's administration, as this involves extensive travel by the coordinators and their advisors to all the communities scattered over the 2,000 square mile area of the Reserve.

At the same time, a series of large-scale development initiatives for the region, funded from multilateral sources (World Bank and Interamerican Development Bank) and with Brazilian government participation (through Federal environment agency IBAMA) in their administration, are due to begin from the second quarter of 1994. These programmes, while offering vitally important opportunities for improving the situation

in the Extractive Reserve, bring a double risk: that the influx of cash involved will bring about social distortions and create tension within the community unless it is extensively discussed and sensitively handled, and that the funders and government project partners could allege that ASAREAJ lacks the administrative infrastructure and competence to execute the programme and thus remove direct forest-dweller participation from the implementation process, substituting technocratic control for self-management.

It is therefore essential that ASAREAJ is able both to improve its administrative infrastructure and to intensify its consciousness-raising and educational work among the population of the Reserve. This process will result in properly informed discussion of the options for the future at the Assembly of members of ASAREAJ planned for the last week of April 1994, with the establishment of decisions which truly represent the views of the community and the election of new coordinators (as the term in office of the current coordinators will be expiring at the time of the Assembly) whose platform genuinely has the support of the organisation's members. This will allow ASAREAJ and the communities it represents to face the risks and opportunities afforded by the new programmes from a very much stronger position. In addition, the holding of the Assembly is essential if the new statutes of ASAREAJ are to be ratified; in its absence, the Association is not legally entitled to participate in the administration of projects and its very legitimacy could be questioned by the alliance of landowners, loggers and river traders who have now launched a campaign to revoke the demarcation of the Reserve.

Reinforcement of ASAREAJ's administrative capacity and improvement of its grassroots penetration are also essential factors in securing the success of the projects already under way in the Reserve, as the following examples demonstrate:

- The **Research Project** (an investigation of the potential for forest-dweller self-management coordinated by the Universities of São Paulo and Campinas and funded by the MacArthur Foundation) has organised training courses in organisational techniques and discussions of the proposals for the Extractive Reserve for ASAREAJ coordinators and community leaders, but the capacity of these leaders to take the discussion to the communities is compromised by the shortage of funds for travel and meetings.
- The **Health Project** (funded by Health Unlimited) has made progress towards expanding the community's vision of health/disease beyond the traditional demand for more medicines, but the health workers require support from the community's political leaders if the message of health education activities is really to hit home, and without these leaders' participation community-based initiatives such as vegetable and medicinal plant gardens or latrine-digging programmes are slow to get off the ground.
- The **Environmental Education Project** (funded by IBAMA and executed by CEDI) aims to involve the community in discussion of the requirements for environmentally-sustainable development and their relationship with the Reserve's Utilisation Plan, but this will require that the community's leaders bring the content of the Plan (in effect, the Constitution of the Extractive Reserve) to the attention of the whole population.
- The **Cooperative** is currently undergoing an audit prior to receiving renewed funding, but unless the rules for its functioning are amply discussed with all the members of

ASAREAJ, the same difficulties previously experienced may recur. The attempt to create an alternative economic system, to replace the exploitation practiced by rubber barons and river traders, will only come to fruition if the population are able to perceive the Cooperative as a common enterprise with long-term benefits. In the past, the barons and traders have been able to undermine the movement by convincing forest-dwellers not to pay their debts with the co-op; this tactic led to cycles of de-capitalization of the cooperative which left the population with no choice but to turn back to their traditional exploiters in order to acquire basic goods no longer available in the co-op's warehouses.

Funding and support

This project is, therefore, intended to link and support the diverse initiatives already under way in the Extractive Reserve, as well as to lay the groundwork for future projects affecting the area. Conversely, it will receive both complementary funding from the other partner organisations of ASAREAJ and the contribution in kind of the Association's infrastructure and the work of the community leaders involved with the effort to take the discussion of the future of the region to the communities.

The Research Project is contributing as follows to the objectives presented in this proposal:

- Training for coordinators of the Association, community leaders, administrative personnel and co-op managers.
- Funding for a comprehensive audit of the Cooperative.
- Provision of a microcomputer and fax for the ASAREAJ office in Cruzeiro do Sul.
- Funding for the salary of an accountant for the office's administrative work.

The Health Project's contribution includes the following:

- Use of health team field trips (vaccination, supervision and mobile clinics) to encourage community participation and promote the programmes and objectives of ASAREAJ.
- Contribution to the transport infrastructure of the Reserve.
- Maintenance of the office in Cruzeiro do Sul (rent, telephone rent, electricity bills).

ASAREAJ itself offers the following contribution:

- The services (unremunerated) of its coordinators and members of its Grassroots Committees (*Comissões de Base*).
- The transport infrastructure (motorised canoes and riverboats) acquired through grants from the Brazilian National Economic and Social Development Bank (BNDES) and donations from the Gaia Foundation and other sources.
- The facilities of the Community Centre of Foz do Tejo, built thanks to a grant from the British Ambassador's Fund, for housing meetings and the Assembly.
- The communications network (two-way radios) acquired as a result of grants from the Gaia Foundation and the Environmental Defence Fund, for use in organising meetings and activity timetables.

The contribution requested through this project breaks down as follows:

1. Activities in the Extractive Reserve:

- Funding for a series of 24 **community meetings** to be held in the months of February, March and April, in which the coordinators of ASAREAJ will travel to every area of the Reserve to hold discussions with the Grassroots Committees and local residents. These meetings will:
 - i) increase the level of community awareness of the issues affecting the Extractive Reserve and perspectives for its sustainable self-management;
 - ii) provide an opportunity for the communities to present suggestions for ASAREAJ and for the current and forthcoming projects in the Reserve, which will be discussed and decided on at the Assembly;
 - iii) allow ASAREAJ to bring its register of members up to date, and
 - iv) include the election of the delegates from each area who will participate in the working groups on specific themes which will take place during the first phase of the Assembly.

- Funding for the **Assembly of ASAREAJ**, to be held at Foz do Tejo in the last week of April 1994, which will:
 - i) establish priorities and objectives for the programmes funded by the World Bank and Interamerican Development Bank, due to begin from the second quarter of 1994.
 - ii) review the progress of the projects currently under way in the Reserve and make suggestions for future incorporation to these projects.
 - iii) approve the new statutes of the Association in fulfilment of legal requirements.
 - iv) elect the new coordinators of ASAREAJ.

2. Activities in Cruzeiro do Sul:

- Complementary funding for the **ASAREAJ office**, whose work includes:
 - i) day-to-day administration and accounting for existing projects;
 - ii) coordinating routine contacts with governmental and non-governmental bodies and partners (National Council of Rubbertappers, IBAMA, Gaia, Health Unlimited, etc.);
 - iii) guaranteeing efficient organisation of the work schedules of coordinators of ASAREAJ when required to come into Cruzeiro do Sul or travel elsewhere as a result of political or bureaucratic commitments (meetings of National Council of Rubbertappers, signing of agreements with other agencies, etc.);
 - iv) preparation of administrative personnel and infrastructure to enable ASAREAJ to meet the requirements for participation in the management of the large-scale programmes due to go into effect from the second quarter of 1994;
 - v) communication with the coordinators of ASAREAJ in the Reserve via two-way radio and with the population as a whole via broadcast radio messages.

- Funding to cover the **expenses of coordinators** of ASAREAJ required to leave the forest and come into town as a result of political or bureaucratic commitments.

Period covered:

February to April 1994

Following this period, ongoing expenses will be covered by the Pre-Investment Funds of the Extractive Reserves component of the World Bank / EC-funded Pilot Programme for Brazil's Tropical Forests.

Budget:

24 Community Meetings: \$ 2,700

Breakdown per meeting:

Food for meeting \$40

Fuel for coordinators' travel to meeting \$20

Other expenses:

Maintenance of canoes and motors \$300

Coordinators' food and expenses (3 months) \$960

General Assembly of ASAREAJ \$3,500

Food \$1,800

Transport of ASAREAJ members \$1,350

Printing and stationery \$250

Documentation \$100

Office expenses in Cruzeiro do Sul \$2,280

Salary of secretary / office manager (3 months) \$1,200

Salary of cleaner / nightwatchman (3 months) \$330

Additional communication expenses (3 months) \$600

Stationery, etc. (3 months) \$150

Travel / living expenses for coordinators in town \$900

(30 days @ \$10 per day x 3 coordinators)

Overall Total \$9,380