

## **Project Update: May 2007**

We dedicated most of the first part of your grant to keep the Environmental Police "alive".

We worked hard since we arrived in 2004 to have an Environmental Police base here in the island. After the main bombers Fifiu and his wife were arrested, in April 2006 we did have the inauguration of that base nice ceremony involving all authorities, military and civilian.

For political reasons, shortly after, the Head Officer T Colonel Sergio Natividade was transferred to another region and Major Claudecy took his place. Within one month all officers were asking for transferences they left the force most of the people we use to work with (officers) moved away. Something wrong was going on. The base at the island was slowly being weakened and we found out that this Major was not at all willing to keep this Environmental Police force strong actually he was boycotting the whole work of the force. Go figure.

Note, the Environmental Police depends directly of the local Governor who, until last October was a big business man connected to all major tourism businesses in Bahia and facing huge problems with his connection with shrimp aquaculture all over the coast of Bahia (Conservation International and other NGOs involved in this 'battle' near Caravelas and the Abrolhos Archipelago threatened to have 1800 acres of mangrove destroyed to the shrimp business).

We spent most of 2006 'feeding' the Environmental Police to be able to come and help us, keeping the bomber away. Our main contact with them is Tenente Brandão, the only officer who 'survived' the 'exodus'. Through him we helped with fuel, meals, GPS, boat engine repair, jeep tyres, and even gas to cook at their base there all this 'undercover'. We knew this would have to be a transition period.

The presidential elections arrived in October and with Lula president the Bahia Governor was elected his friend Jaques Wager is now the governor and his 'military right arm' has now been appointed : T Colonel Sergio Natividade, which means we will finally have the right people working at the right place. We know that after Carnival a new commander for COPPA will be appointed (Colonel Carvalho Mendes a former COPPA commander 'eco-friendly man'). So, now the situation will change a bit.

We are part of the CONSEP, which means Conselho de Segurança Publica, which is a board of citizens representing the people and in direct contact with the Police and authorities, to help keep the community protected from crime and environmental aggressions, develop culture and tourism and the well-being of the this community.

Last meeting we had, we suggested to have an extra base of the Environmental Police here in Cacha-Pregos. The former base is 40 kms away, at the other extreme of the island, in Itaparica. This base will be situated at the old Police module at the main square....which will be used for both environmental surveillance as well as environmental information for locals and visitors.

The main benefit of their permanent presence here will obviously be the inhibition of environmental crimes to happen. Simultaneously, we will have the children of this community directly involved with their work for us the main positive aspect of this change.

Schools will be visited by the policemen, and their base (with open doors) will be visited by the children, who will learn why the good example is still the best education.

Due to the Governor change, we also had a change of the local Military commander, which is the main police force here (Polícia Militar, PM). We were invited to the ceremony of the new commander, Major Gomes Filho with whom we already talked about our main problems here and a meeting is set after Carnival together with the CONSEP members and COPPA's Tenente Brandão. For us these are times of changes, good changes we foresee positive times ahead.

The bomber are back here, they brought more people to the house of Fifiu's wife, (who are both under probation). They want to keep on bombing though they want to keep on ruling this place...and now they are connected with the drug people but they know 'something is going on 'they know we are moving around and they feel they are not safe. This impunity has been going on because they always knew that someone within the police force would let them know and help them. We found out who these policemen were they've been moved away.

For the police it would be better to ban them than to arrest them but we know if they are banned from here they will be bombing somewhere else that's all they want to do easy quick profit and most people fear them.

The problem with their arrest in prison is that they could stay there for 5/6 years but when they leave they won't be better human beings not with the kind of prisons we have here positive labour in prisons is still not a reality here. But this being their first arrest, will keep them away from other crimes, because the next time it won't be their first conviction. Note Fifiu has both hands missing and his son-in-law lost 7 fingers two months ago.

For us these 6 months have been very much positive we're moving ahead. But we know we can go faster now.

The breakdown of expenses we had to keep our work going on were: Rate used 1£=R\$4, 10

For us:

• a new computer ASUS 80GB Intel Celeron 3.2	R\$1260,00	£306,00
• a digital camera Sony cyber-shot	R\$620,00	£150,00
• a set of Motorola walkie-talkies	R\$ 300,00	£72,00
• a pair of binoculars Olympus Magelan EXWP	R\$370,00	£90,00
• telephone calls including internet	R\$1028,00	£251,00
• Gasoline fuel car/boat	R\$ 832,00	£202,00
• Oil 2stroke for the boat	R\$ 64,00	£15,00
• Ferry-boat	R\$640,00	£155,00

For the Environmental Police:

• 15HP boat engine repair	R\$380,00	£92,00
• 46lt gasoline and 2stroke oil	R\$940,00	£229,00
• 2 tyres for the jeep	R\$560,00	£136,00
• 82lt diesel	R\$1640,00	£401,00
• meal vouchers for 3 months	R\$480,00/month	
	R\$1440,00	£352,00
	Total	£2451,00

We still need:

• a Garmin GPS , we gave ours to the Environmental Police	R\$535,00	£131,00
• a filming camera....a small one to go 'undercover	R\$1200,00	£300,00
• a small boat with an electric engine, aluminium boat 3,5mt	R\$2350,00	£570,00
• Electric engine Rhyno	R\$980,00	£239,00
• Fuel/ferry boat to Salvador , meetings	R\$2.000,00	£490,00

We will help with the new Environmental Police module here in Cacha-Pregos:

• Paint job, decoration and fuel for the first period	R\$ 4200,00	£1000,00
	Total	£2730,00

We'll use two solar panels we have to recharge the batteries for the electric engine. Will need a projector to be used in the village main square with positive environment documentaries and films as of "Cinema Paradiso" (we're trying to get a used one an Italian couple could provide it for us) if not, we'll look for a new one.

We will not lose this chance of having the new base here of the Environmental Police, we know they will be 'tight' in the beginning, we believe with the outcome of their work they can be self-sufficient soon.



