

**Report on the Livelihood Survey in Mutuca**  
**Period: 20- 23 July 2004**  
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In the period of 20 to 23 July 2004, a socio-economic survey through the questionnaire previously utilized to collect quantitative data in Campo Alegre, Roçadinho, Rosário and Mimoso village as well as the collection of qualitative data through key-informants and in-depth interviews was carried out in Mutuca. The questionnaire was applied by five individuals from Rosário and Campo Alegre (three men and two women) and the collection of qualitative data was undertaken by SD team members (Adélia and Liliane). The questionnaire data is being entered and analyzed by a specialist contracted by the Project and is not concluded yet. Thus, the analysis is not going to be presented at this report. The result of the qualitative data collection, however, is what constitutes this report. It is expected that the analysis of the questionnaire will be finalized in August.

## **1. Background Information on Mutuca**

According to the 2000 Brazilian Census, Mutuca district has a population of 2.720 individuals. Mutuca occupies a large area and cross cuts the municipalities of Pesqueira, Belo Jardim and Jataúba. The Mutuca village, however, is found in the municipality of Pesqueira and the number of residents presented above stands only for the area found in that municipality. The communities which constitute that district are: *Lagoa do Félix, Pintada, Fundão, São Francisco, Boa Vista, Angola, Riacho Fundo and Campo Alegre*. There is a Valley called Mimoso found in the Capibaribe River Basin. This Valley cuts across the municipalities of Jataúba and Belo Jardim. The following communities are found in that valley: *Mimoso Seco* (municipality of Jataúba), *Cafundó* (municipality of Belo Jardim), and *João Vermelho* (municipality of Jataúba). Due to the fact that the well survey covered those communities, some of the questionnaires were undertaken there.

The class structure is characterized by a large differentiation in terms of socio-economic and political status in Mutuca. The wealthier are a few and besides owning land and animals (mostly cattle), they usually own businesses in the village. Social life is very dynamic and there is a social club owned by a local businessman in the village. The owner of the social club belongs to a local elite family to which the former Pesqueira mayor also belongs. In regards to the local political milieu, there is a city councilman and he as well as another Mutuca resident are running for councilmen's election this year. The club holds several shows and on sundays, many gather at the swimming pool. The wealthiest individual owns a local supermarket, a small cheese factory and a great amount of land as well as cattle. Dairy farming is an important economic activity, it is even higher in importance than agriculture. Irrigation is not very important and only a few engage in this

activity. Women, particularly the poorest, engage in lace making and men engage in jelly making (*doce*). According to local health agents, the Federal Government Programmes such as, Henger Zero, *Bolsa Escola*, and several others do not necessarily reach and benefit the population in most need. This is especially the case because of political reasons and also because the poorest of the poor are not visible, not informed about those benefits and sometimes do not have the required documentation. The retirement pension benefit, however, seems to reach most of the elderly.

There are several small garment factories, which provide employment for both local women and men. Since these factories produce according to demand, the labourers are not hired on a permanent, but on a daily basis. Thus, they usually work three to four days a week. The wage is R\$7.00 (seven reais) a day. It is more profitable for women to work on those small factories than to engage in lace making as usually a woman can only earn up to R\$20.00 (twenty reais) a week making lace in their spare time every day and evening. The production of these factories is taken to Santa Cruz do Capibaribe, a city located 80 km away from Mutuca, which is a centre for the commercialization of clothes. A few of these small factories' owners have steady clients and produce for them in other states, including Bahia. According to the owners of these factories, they started engaging in this activity due to the uncertainty in agriculture and to the expenses involved in raising animals. So, it can be seen as a mitigation measure towards the drought. These factories are not legalized neither is the commercialization of the products so, they operate on an informal basis. They are small businesses and none of the owners rely on loans to manage them. They usually buy second hand equipments and operate their businesses on a small-scale. According to the owners, they have no interest to expand their businesses neither to rely on loans as they do not think it is useful to depend on them. It is interesting to note that most of the population cultivates agricultural crops, even those whose primary activity is not agriculture.



A garment factory in Mutuca

The transportation of water to the village houses is another economic activity in which men engage due to the high unemployment rate. This is the case because there are only around 180 houses that benefit from piped water, despite the fact that there is a COMPESA (The Pernambuco Company for Water and Sanitation) Station in Mutuca. Mutuca residents have serious problems in regards to water, including health problems, especially due to the poor quality of the water available.

## 2. Water Situation

There are several sources of water in Mutuca including small dams, cisterns, dug wells and deep wells. However, the two major sources of water in Mutuca village are a deep well (50 meters deep) and a dug well. They are both communitarian and were constructed by the government. Despite the fact that there are approximately 180 houses with access to piped water in the village, neither the local schools nor the health centre benefit from this service. Those who benefit from piped water, pay a fixed amount of R\$6.00 (six reais) a month. In case this is not paid regularly, the Company tries to work out the debt with the clients by dividing it in smaller payments or the service is cut off.

According to the population, the water from the deep well is of better quality than that from the dug well because it is clearer. The water provided by COMPESA through the pipeline is of poor quality and comes from the Genipapo reservoir, which is 8 km. away from the village. The population cannot drink it despite the fact that it is treated, it is used mostly for household tasks. The Mutuca COMPESA reservoir (tank) has the capacity to store 110 thousand liters. A local COMPESA worker informed that for each 240 liters, it is applied 600 grams of a substance referred to as *hipocal* (made with chlorine). The municipal government built a *chafariz*, where village residents can get drinking water from the deep well on a daily basis. The water is free of charge, however, the transportation is paid for. Thus, the poorest are responsible to transport their own water and, in those cases, usually women and children do that.



A mother and son transporting water home

In order to avoid waste and overuse by some, there is a limit regarding the amount of water each person can get every day, however, this is quite flexible and some get more water than others, especially those who transport water as a source of income. Each person can collect a maximum of 200 liters of water a day from the deep well through the *chafariz*. This is mostly used for drinking. The men who transport the water to the houses, sell a container of 20 liters of water from the dug well for R1.00 (one real) and charge R2.00 (two reais) for the same amount of water from the deep well. An average sized family (about five individuals) usually consume 20 liters of water in one to two days. Those who engage in the transportation of water work throughout the year. During the rainy season, a man earns from R\$5.00 (five reais) to R\$6.00 (six reais) a day and during the dry season, he can make up to R\$10.00 (ten reais) or R\$20.00 a day. These sources usually do not dry up, even in the dry season. Although that is the case, long queues are formed to collect water. Water trucks, thus, only come to Mutuca in very critical periods.



Men collecting water to be transported at the Chafariz

According to engineers who work with Suzana on another project, the quality of the water from both wells is very poor. Both the dug and the deep well are located very close to each other and there is a contaminated small reservoir located near the wells thus, the wells water becomes contaminated. This is especially the case in the rainy season.



Men collecting water from the local polluted dug well

During the 2003 drought, the two wells found in Mutuca provided up to 400 thousand liters of water a day to the population. The engineers also informed that in 2002, UFPE civil engineer students undertook a census in Mutuca village collecting data about sanitation and besides the collection of that data, they developed a village map. I have spoken to Suzana about it and she said that I could have access to the material.

There are twelve health agents in Mutuca village. Some of them work in the rural communities. As health agents in general, they have a lot of knowledge about the life and health of each of the community members. They informed that the majority of the population is in great need and that the resources are not enough to fulfill the needs of everyone. As an example of that, they mentioned that each health agent receives, from the government, only 15 bottles of 50 ml of “*hipoclorito*”, which is used only in the treatment of drinking water. For every 20 liters of water, there should be utilized a table spoon of “*hipoclorito*”. Due to the scarcity of the product, very few households have access to it.

Sanitation is another problem present in Mutuca and in most of the village streets, there is an open sewage in front of the houses. As a result of that, there have been several cases of hepatitis. Other common illnesses that affect the population are diarrhea, respiratory infection, high blood pressure, children dehydration, and viruses (flu and colds).

Mutuca benefits from the Governmental Programme PSF – Family Health Programme and the health team is composed of a physician, a dentist, a nurse and twelve health agents. Despite benefiting from that Programme, there is no ambulance in Mutuca and thus, the population have to rely on favours of the local politicians when there is a need to go to the Hospital in Pesqueira or have to pay R\$40.00 (forty reais) for the transportation to that city. Furthermore, there is often a shortage of medications at the Health Centre.

The local teachers and health agents appear to be very active and there is a theatre group formed by health agents and local students. They perform in a variety of occasions, including during the environmental week in June and are willing to support the Workshops. There is also a duet of *repentistas* (singers who improvise folk songs if given a theme), who are willing to collaborate with us as well.

### 3. The Survey

As it has been informed previously, the questionnaire was undertaken by young men and women from Campo Alegre and Rosário who had already been trained. The team stayed in Mutuca and this enabled the work to be done more efficiently and quicker. The monitoring was done by SD team members. Besides the collection of data among Mutuca village residents, some of whom are *assentados* in Campo Alegre primarily from the *assentamento* of Angola Nova, data was also collected in *Mimoso Seco*, *Cafundó* and *João Vermelho* in order to cover the sample utilized in the well survey. The sample was comprised of thirty women and thirty men. Qualitative data was collected by SD team members in order to complement the questionnaire data.





One of the interviewers applying a questionnaire