

Advocacy case studies

RAISING AWARENESS OF BASIC RIGHTS IN BRAZIL

COUNTRY:	Brazil
THEME:	Environment and climate change; food security; human rights; livelihoods
ADVOCACY APPROACHES:	Community mobilisation; educating community members; government officials: meeting with; using human rights

In north-east Brazil, Tearfund partner Diaconia has been carrying out a project helping people to advocate for their right to sufficient food and water, as well as for women's rights. They have also been providing small-scale farmers with technical advice on agro-ecology, helping them to farm in more environmentally sustainable ways.

Staff at Diaconia have trained leaders, women and youth to take an active part in negotiating public policies, helping them to join councils and forums in order to advocate for the rights of their communities. Through this project, poor families have gained better access to water and food, resulting in improved health standards, especially for children and the elderly. The beneficiaries have thanked God for the opportunity to learn that water and food are universal rights that should not be denied to anyone, as well as rejoicing in the chance to learn how to ensure their rights to these basic necessities are met.

Maria Pinheiro, president of a Community Association in Rio Grande do Norte, considers relevant participation in meetings such as the Food Acquisition Program to be crucial, as it enables farming families to market their production with governments. 'These meetings are very important to the community because they clarify and show that indeed we do have rights – it's just knowing how to find them,' she said. 'Here, people are very discredited in many things; it was after Diaconia came to the community that much improved, yet we still have much to fight for.'