

## *“I talked with my husband ...and my kids supported me”:* Learning from the past to build the future.

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From 1998 to 2007 we worked with *Scorpion Tree (ST)*, a coastal community in Yucatan, Mexico, using Participative Action Research (PAR) to design and construct palafittes for families living in areas subject to flooding. In 2010, we initiated similar activities in *Wild Maguey (WM)*, another Yucatecan community.

Facilitators of *ST*, which are members of the community, learned PAR methodology and use it to solve everyday problems, are aware of PAR, facilitate information flow between group and community and share experiences and knowledge with their families, neighbors, friends, and other members of community, a process which we call multiplier effect (ME) of PAI.

ME represent propagation of PAR methodology in phases: 1) facilitators adopt PAR, 2) transmit this knowledge to other people, and, 3) these people also adopt and employ the methodology.

Each facilitator spreads the methodology in social settings such as family gatherings and with the neighborhood by talking about activities of PAR, creating a local interest in such activities, and generates discussion regarding problems which are analyzed and solved.

Candy and Saraí, facilitators in *ST*, currently are companions and attend visits to *WM*. Companions, which are not part of the locality, train facilitators, monitor the process of adoption of PAR methodology and provide community with needed information.

Forming part of a family implies commitments, for which each member performs actions, which shape family dynamics, and to change these pre-established patterns, it is necessary to reach agreements and make modifications. Before joining the group as companions, Candy and Saraí spoke to their husbands, children, brothers and parents about the reasons and advantages of forming part of the group.

Both Candy and Saraí were supported by their family and friends and this has allowed them to make changes in their life in order to devote the necessary time to this new activity twice a week, including nine hours of travel to participate in meetings at *WM*, take six buses, reshape their gender roles, delegate activities to their children, have other adults and grandparents be responsible for care and supervision of their children, and modify their schedules for cooking, washing and ironing.

Candy and Saraí efficiently transmit their experiences and knowledge to facilitators in *WM*, with whom they share characteristics: living in a coastal community, being periodically exposed to hurricanes, and inhabiting houses, which are susceptible to flooding. They are spokesmen of PAR group in *ST*, and provide information about the organized work they have conducted to build palafittes and the application of PAR methodology.

We have evidence that facilitators in *WM*, which are wives of fishermen and housekeepers, ranging from 15 to 56 years of age, share information and experiences coming from reunions with their families and neighbors. This situation may represent the initial start of ME in *WM*.

The participation of Candy and Saraí motivates Mariana, a facilitator in *WM*, to start similar activities they have been conducting. This chain of communication, which is a part of *ME*, may contribute to the construction of the future of other families.