

A Many-sided Munificence

A seminar discussed how the SSF Guidelines can help improve the management of a fish species in the Amazon rainforest territory

The fisheries in Brazil's state of Amazonas range from a multiplicity of fishing practices to a diversity of conflicts and realities. How indigenous fishers of varying ethnicities see their sector is not very well known. This emerged in fine detail in a seminar on indigenous fisheries in Amazonas and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of

do Indio (FUNAI), the official Brazilian indigenist organ.

According to research conducted in 2016, the community-based management of the pirarucu has brought several social, economic and cultural benefits, such as local income generation, valorization of indigenous cultures, growing 'pride' in the community and the strengthening of indigenous villages. The authors of the study concluded that the management of the pirarucu is a rare window of opportunity that can harmonize the goals of sustainable management of natural resources with the reduction of poverty. The previous stock of the pirarucu increased by 427 per cent in the managed areas of the Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve, according to the Mamiraua Institute for Sustainable Development.

"The management of the pirarucu is an example of citizenship," said Ana Claudia Torres, fishery coordinator of the Mamiraua Institute, in an interview during the March 2019 seminar. "It started small, with just 42 fishermen who believed it was possible to work with a resource that was in a state of scarcity and to have this resource in abundance again by reexploring it through a sustainable perspective. When I see this sort of management being more adopted every day as a model that aggregates other values such as health, education and basic rights of the population, this reinforces even more the idea that management is an example of citizenship. Management has power; it's just one aspect of the whole, but through it we can discuss other things."

Relationships

Reports presented at the seminar showed how the renewed system

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Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines); it was held on March 27-28, 2019. Participants spoke about conflicts, demands and opportunities in their territories. The subject that drew the maximum interest was the fishing management of the pirarucu species (*Arapaima gigas*, also known as the Amazon codfish). Its flesh has a soft flavour and it is as big as a codfish. It grows fast; a specimen can reach a weight of up to 250 kg and up to three metres in length.

The pirarucu's community-based management began in 1999 in the region of Tefe, in the middle of the Solimoes river, with the riverine communities. The Mamiraua Institute for Sustainable Development provided the technical support. Since then, the indigenous communities of the Deni, Paumari, Kokama, Tikuna and Kambeba ethnicities have developed their own management strategies, with the support of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Operação Amazonia Nativa (OPAN) and Fundacao Nacional

*This article is by ICSF Member **Ana Paula Rainho** (rainho.anap@gmail.com) and **Lorena França** (alorenafranca@gmail.com), both PhD students in anthropology at the Santa Catarina Federal University (UFSC), Brazil; **Beatriz Mesquita** (mesquitabia@hotmail.com), also an ICSF Member and a SSF researcher in the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation, Recife-PE, Brazil; and **Dafne Spolti** (dafne@amazonianativa.org.br), a journalist at Operação Amazônia Nativa, Brazil*



The 'Seminar on Indigenous Fisheries in Amazonas and Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries' was held on 27 and 28 March 2019, in Manaus. The event was attended by 25 indigenous fishermen from 16 ethnic groups

of management of the pirarucu transformed relationships within the territory, allowing the community to exercise control over its lands, lakes, rivers and the fishing resources. This happened through the implementation of a system of vigilance, monitoring and care of these indigenous lands, rivers and lakes. The system also prevents the invasion of illegal fishermen and loggers into their lands. In the words of Rose from the Bare ethnic group: "Management makes possible guaranteeing our territory, especially when our lands have not yet been demarcated." Many indigenous communities do not have their lands demarcated; the new management of the pirarucu can strengthen the struggle for tenure rights.

The changes have also brought benefits to indigenous women, bringing up and promoting gender discussions. Women are present at all stages of fisheries management, from development and decision making, to monitoring and surveillance of the territory. To further encourage women's participation in the management of the pirarucu, the Mamiraua Institute has initiated the Edna Alencar Prize:

It rewards management projects involving incentives, recognition and the effective participation of women in their activities. During the seminar, Dione of the Apurina ethnic group said: "Management changes women's lives."

The seminar revealed how the pirarucu's management puts the SSF Guidelines into practice by meeting all the objectives: Improving the socio-economic status of indigenous fishers, securing the sustainability of the pirarucu fishery, and contributing to artisanal fisheries food security and to an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future. In the words of the Bare leader Sandra Gomes: "The indigenous peoples were already implementing the SSF Guidelines but because we were not aware of them, we did not know that we were doing that all along."

Institutional level

In this regard, the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in Brazil does not necessarily need to be done exclusively through laws at an institutional level. How many practices performed by indigenous communities can have parallels with the premises of the SSF

Guidelines? This can be found out through the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest through an approach of indigenous communities; this will help better understand their demands, their practices and their struggles. This will make it possible to learn other practices that will help push the SSF Guidelines into action, all the while respecting the different cultures and their traditional practices in the process. As a result, the community governance processes should permeate formal instances until these get institutionalized as legislation.

Starting at the local level, the SSF Guidelines help dealing with a great challenge: the extension of the Brazilian territory. The Brazilian Amazon rainforest territory extends over 5 million sq km, covering eight states. In Brazil, fishery policies are implemented at the federal level and are applied in all regions of the country, each with its own peculiarities. The problem is that implementation exclusively at the federal level makes it difficult to fathom and incorporate the realities of ethnic diversity in the vast expanse of the Brazilian territory. It isn't that there is no need for policies at the federal level; rather what's needed is a broader perception of the local level. The local level also enables decision making on a community basis and encourages the decentralization of power.

The implementation of the SSF Guidelines can also give visibility to the practices of the indigenous communities, like the pirarucu fishery management. Despite the positive results brought about by the management of the pirarucu, there is not enough investment from the federal and state governments in some of the Amazonian lakes. The lack of funds is another challenge facing the country in implementing fishery management policies and the SSF Guidelines. However, increased visibility of indigenous practices on a larger scale during the implementation of the SSF Guidelines will make it possible to allocate resources to these practices.

Recommendations

The SSF Guidelines could also strengthen the struggle of tenure rights

that several indigenous communities are facing at this very moment. According to the SSF Guidelines, small-scale fishing communities need secure tenure rights over the resources that form the basis of their social and cultural well being. The defence of tenure rights is an urgent demand of the indigenous communities. This call in the SSF Guidelines opens a great window of opportunity for indigenous communities in the struggle for their basic rights that are often denied in Brazil. The authors of a book titled *The Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines: Global Implementation* mention that the SSF Guidelines are an important moral support for the causes of indigenous peoples in securing sustainable fisheries, especially when their tenure rights are under siege.

The indigenous participants at the seminar noticed this opportunity and showed great interest in the SSF Guidelines. As a concluding recommendation, they proposed more seminars to inform other indigenous communities about the SSF Guidelines, so as to strengthen the dialogue. This is a great opportunity because it is the indigenous people who need to be the main beneficiaries of the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in the Brazilian Amazon and their participation is fundamental for the process to be successful. 3

For more

Seminar on Indigenous Fisheries in the state of Amazonas and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines), which was held on 27 and 28 March 2019

<https://igsf.icsf.net/en/page/1082-Brazil.html>

Brazil: Kickoff Time

<https://igsf.icsf.net/en/samudra/article/EN/81-4392-Kickoff-Time.html>

Operação Amazônia Nativa (OPAN)

<https://amazonianativa.org.br/>

Indigenous Fisheries in Amazon

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGFxr2ly_Wc