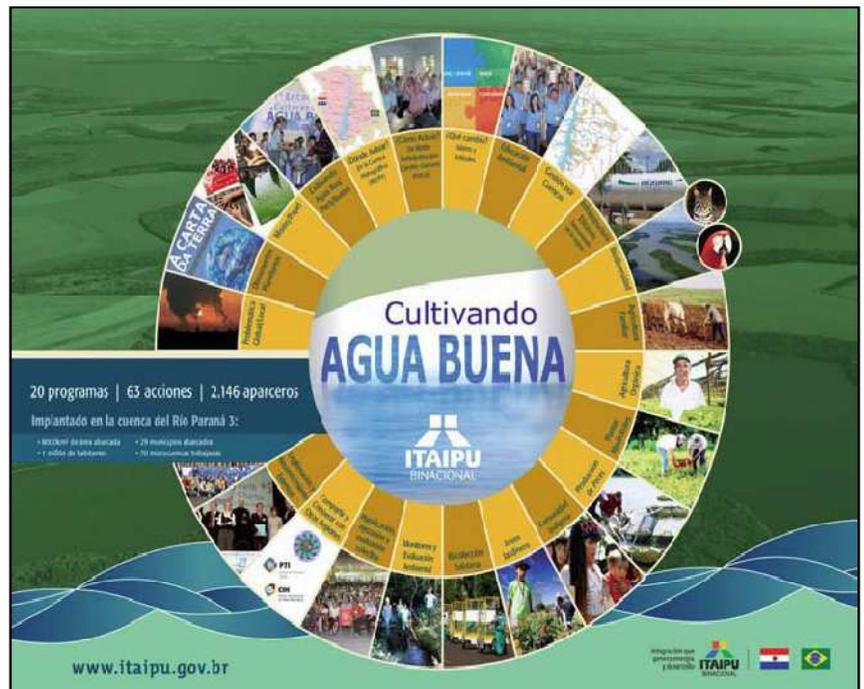


Cultivando Agua Buena: Towards a responsible water management with care for the people and nature.

2010

Itaipú Binacional is the world's largest hydroelectric dam, located in the border of Brazil and Paraguay. Its construction and operations is a result of intense diplomatic processes between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina.

As any hydroelectric project, Itaipú has produced important environmental impacts. Conscious of this, the project managers have incorporated the notions of social and environmental responsibility in their mission, with a special focus on the preservation of their most important resource: water.



It is in this context that the program called *Cultivando Agua Buena* (Cultivating Good Water) started. Its main objective is the preservation of water, soil and life. So far they have developed **20 programs and 63 projects** on environmental sustainability in 29 municipalities within the dam area of influence, in the Parana River Basin.

Cultivando Agua Buena believes in the importance of community participation and multistakeholder processes to enhance a shared responsible environmental management of the local natural resources. That is why they involve local partners in each of its actions. There are 2146 associated institutions, such as universities, governmental organizations and NGOs.

The program has found in the Earth Charter a very convenient ethical framework to plan its actions on the ground, in specific those related to

environmental education. It has been used as a working tool as well with different social actors, such as:

- *Farmers and inhabitants of the micro river basins* that are in a process of recovering their local natural environment. With them, different workshops and other experiential learning processes have been organized. During these activities, participants are getting acquainted and have started to adopt the Earth Charter principles in their daily lives.

- *Educators*, with whom a continuous capacity building process has been implemented. This process



include sensitization workshops, research projects on the Earth Charter principles, and three conferences with theologian Leonardo Boff, with more than 3000 participants. In addition, a new edition of the Earth Charter for children booklet is going to be published, to be used by local educators. It will include relevant local topics and will be distributed to all 135 000 students in the

Paraná Basin 3 area.

- *Regional leaders representing all social sectors* such as: indigenous groups, collectors of recyclables, environmental educators, public managers, farmers, fishermen, quilombolas and others. Workshops with these leaders have been organized with the objective to stimulate a sense of belonging to and respect for the place they live, their cultural diversity and a deeper sense of solidarity among the villages and the larger community of life.

Methodological aspects:

As mentioned before, a successful watershed management has to be done in a participatory way, that is why Itaipú Binacional have been organizing activities with different local social actors. A methodology that has proven to be effective for them to bring participants together is the so called Future

Workshops, where they concretize the principles of the Earth Charter. These are the methodological steps followed in these workshops:

1. *Wailing Wall* –the community identifies its environmental situation, acknowledges and reports in detail the problems that need to be solved.

2. *Tree of Hope* –the community realizes that they have dreams, and those include a better environment and a better world, for them and for the future generations.

3. *The Way Forward* –The community defines concrete actions necessary for their environmental sustainability, and takes responsibility for their implementation.

4. *Water Agreement* –A solemn and joyful celebration to launch the *Water Agreement Charter*. This Charter not only shows the results of the Future Workshop but also engages the communities with the implementation of the agreed actions.



In total, **86 Future Workshops** have been organized in Paraná Basin 3 area so far. There have been **65 special EC workshops for the educators**, with around 3000 participants. Other **7 special workshops** for leaders had 210 participants.

Thousands of people have received materials and information about the Earth Charter, such as brochures, booklets, posters, videos and a special newspaper called "Cultivando Água Boa".

These actions have influenced and will continue to influence more than 250,000 people living in the area of Paraná Basin 3 to develop a more systemic and compassionate way to frame their environmental situation.

For more information visit Itaipu Binacional website in English:
<http://www.itaipu.gov.br/index.php?q=en/node/1>