

## ***Cooperativa Grande Sertão, a sweet Brazilian native fruit***

Generating social-economic benefits by nature conservation

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The Systematization of *Cooperativa Grande Sertão* best practice represents a great learning chance for those interested in social-environmental economic enterprises. Grande Sertão is one of the main experiences in the world making use of native collected fruits, in a scale which involves about two thousand families, spread in a 128,000 km<sup>2</sup> region called Norte de Minas (in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais).

The work was carried out in between 2006/2007, when meetings, interviews and field visits took place. The Cooperative leaders were very pleased on being one of the experiences chosen by GDF to be systematized. They claim that it will increase the visibility of Grande Sertão and its work to many parts of the globe, therefore helping to engage support and sell its products.

“The Systematization is important for us, as it’s a document – our experience systematized – for our own use, and also because it work as to open dialog channels with possible partners around the world”, said Aparecido Alves de Souza, one of Grande Sertão’s Directors.

The Systematization process itself was also helpful to the Directors of Grande Sertão, technicians and producers themselves, as they could reflect on their work, their history and their future while being interviewed or gathered in workshops. “We’re involved in so much work that sometimes it’s important to stop for these reflection moments”, said José Leles Neto, Grande Sertão’s General Director .

In fact, the work of Grande Sertão is really tough, due to the great number of producers involved, the large and heterogeneous area embraced and also the volume of products dealt with – about a thousand tons of fruits were delivered to the Cooperative up to 2007. This is precisely what makes a difference in Grande Sertão’s experience – and that’s why it’s worth getting to know it deeply.