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# Knowledge network to promote the use and valorization of wild plants along Paraguay River in the Brazilian Pantanal

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## Abstract

Many countries have developed programs to include local people in the team of decision about uses of the natural resources and conservation of biodiversity related to food security. Nonetheless, this interaction with local human communities is still a challenge because there is no adequate and recommended methodology on how can we proceed to perform this task. We present outcomes from a program about wild food plants developed in traditional and non-traditional human communities along Paraguay River in the Brazilian Pantanal, South America. The program was conceived to stimulate the uses and conservation of wild food plants with economic potential to improve the incomes of these communities.

The work is conducted by a team with experience in biology of plants, ethnobotany, education and food technology. The program is developed with funds from the Brazilian Ministry of Education and has partnered with non-governmental organizations and local governments of the municipalities involved. The idea is to operate as a network connection of research, education and technology, with emphasis on knowledge about the wild food plants.

The strategy includes: 1) cookery workshops (to youth and adult) in local communities to encourage the development of recipes with use of native fruits to improve incomes; 2) training on good food handling practices and nutritional value of fruits; 3) discussion about the importance of biodiversity conservation; 4) harvesting of wild fruits involving community members and our staff; 5) distribution, without costs for the communities, of labels for developed products and books with recipes and information on nutritional value of the species written by the staff.

As a result, neglected species such as *Pouteria glomerata*, *Attalea phalerata*, *Oryza glumaepatula* and *Oryza latifolia* are becoming part of the used and commercialized species by the communities. The activities have demanded new researches, such as post-harvest techniques, ecology and ethnobotany of the target species. The program promotes the interaction of scientific and popular knowledge where each side gives and receives some feedback.

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\*Speaker