



**COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN SANTO AMARO DO
MARANHÃO: results of technical products origins in the actions of university
extension as training workshops, field visits and consultancies, with an emphasis
on the fishermen's route¹**

***O TURISMO DE BASE COMUNITÁRIA EM SANTO AMARO DO
MARANHÃO: resultados de produtos técnicos originados nas ações de
extensão universitária como oficinas de capacitação, visitas de campo e
consultorias, com ênfase na rota dos pescadores***

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1 Introduction

Tourism can be construed as an instrument of new ways of capitalist production of space (HARVEY, 2005) and development, from the perspective of the formation of local innovation and social capital. This tool adapts itself to the model of Local Productive Arrangements (LPA) prompted by Lastres and Cassiolato (2003) which can be understood as territorial agglomerations of economic, politics and social agents, which are interconnected.

Acted accordingly to Thomazi (2006), a tourism cluster is constituted as a range of attractions that gather in a particular geographic space in which there's the unification of efforts to propel the products and market services. In the frame of these diversified organized activities in local socioproductive arrangements, tourism tends to dialogue with what gives substance to

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the social capital and uses information technologies and communication so as to promote its products and services in a consumer social network.

Thus, it is understood the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a socioproductive and innovative local arrangement (SAMPAIO; HENRÍQUEZ; MANSUR, 2011) which allies touristic products and services with the objective of creating the capacity of endogenous innovation and the local development. The aforementioned authors keep affirming that this tourism agglomerate develops shared responsibility drills – local innovation, social technology, social capital and network – for the purpose of generating and creating jobs and incomes. In addition to insufflate the collective sense of social and environmental responsibility and produce techniques, methodologies and skills that can be applied again for the technological use of information and communication.

Likewise, it is highlighted that the CBT is also a business role model centered on the consolidated collective of social capital. Note that this community entrepreneurial paradigm is incubated through networks defined by the interested parts of social actors. In fact, from this perspective, the role of the Universities is extremely important to the collective construction of the social learning related to the CBT incubation. Giampiccoli, Saayman and Jungmohan (2015) point that the institutional environment of the Universities is favorable to the consolidation of ideas, of the production of actions and the transfer of knowledge. Accordingly, the path to extension praxis is perceived, on which the CBT is founded, since the process happens from the inside to the outside of the university elitist knowledge. Therefore, communities empowered by and to the CBT through the community-university partnership – disrupts with the colonialist production of endogenous development, late and excluding.

2 Metodology

The methodological structure followed a qualitative approach, assisted by bibliographic and documentary research, action research and participant observation, when workshops formatted from participatory instruments from data collection and collaborative construction of the concept of CBT were applied, appropriate to the local reality. From technical visits, it was possible to map out the Fishermen's Route, to observe the viability of its implementation, in addition to holding internal seminars with the UFMA team of researchers and students. That was in order to monitor the stages of the tourism product formatting process, taking into account the dialogues with the participating community members and with the elaboration of reports with the flowchart and viability report of the route.

3 Strategies for the strengthening of tourism in the communities of Santo Amaro do Maranhão

According to this perspective, it is presented the extension project with interface on the research which is entitled as “Community-Based Tourism and local development: strategies and challenges for the county of Santo Amaro of Maranhão”, in the region of Lençóis Maranhenses National Park (PNLM), Brazil, which has been conducted since the year of 2018 with the completion forecast in December of 2021. This project is based on providing opportunities the interactive relation between extension and research to lead the collective construction of a particular tourism model that promotes the territory as a referential icon of



CBT in the state of Maranhão and that bring the University to this reality experienced and researched reality.

Such project, according to Araújo and Gomes (2017) is constituted as an institutional partnership between the Universidade Federal do Maranhão (UFMA) [Federal University of Maranhão] – sponsoring institution – the Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA) [Federal University of Pará], the Universidade Anhembi-Morumbi (UAM) [Anhembi-Morumbi University], through its Post-Graduation in Hospitality Program, and the Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Maranhão (IFMA) [Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Maranhão]. And it counts with the effective participation of professors and students of these institutions. It has the financial support of the FAPEMA and even gets the support of Santo Amaro do Maranhão City Hall, in the matter of transportation logistics and the local articulations. This is, therefore, the institutional legal framework of the project.

So proceeding, it used a participatory methodology, when the following actions were obtained along the years of 2018 and 2019: five integrative seminars with the professors and students (scholarship students and volunteers), four field visits to the communities of Travosa, Betânia, Espigão and the county main office, and meetings with the community members. In addition, nine workshops were conducted in Travosa and Betânia, with the themes: business modeling for ecotourism and CBT, cooperation among small touristic enterprises, associations focused on CBT and best practices of CBT in the state of Pará. Therefore, these subjects were widely debated with community members.

Likewise, simultaneously to the workshops, 13 individual consultancies were conducted, which resulted in feedback with recommendations on regional gastronomy, network & entertainment. Such actions took place in the home of community-entrepreneurs and aspirants. The project's mark was also launched, and the CBT kit was delivered – 13 books-box, 13 visitor registration book and the design seal-sticker. There were also two speeches: one with local touristic trade and the other with professors and directors of schools from the Santo Amaro do Maranhão municipal schools, with a view to presenting the activities carried out in the project beyond the search for partnerships.

Therefore, from what was practiced, it resulted on the involvement of around 60 community members, who were effectively involved in the activities. It is also important to say that the results of the project in progress were presented, in scientific events, in addition to a publication of similar content. Another fact to mention, is that meetings were held with the intention of finding institutional and commercial partnerships with the managers of Maranhão State Secretariat of Tourism (SETUR-MA) and with the agency/operator of local tourism, when the opportunity to present a pre-portfolio with two routes – fishermen and rural communities and their respective products.

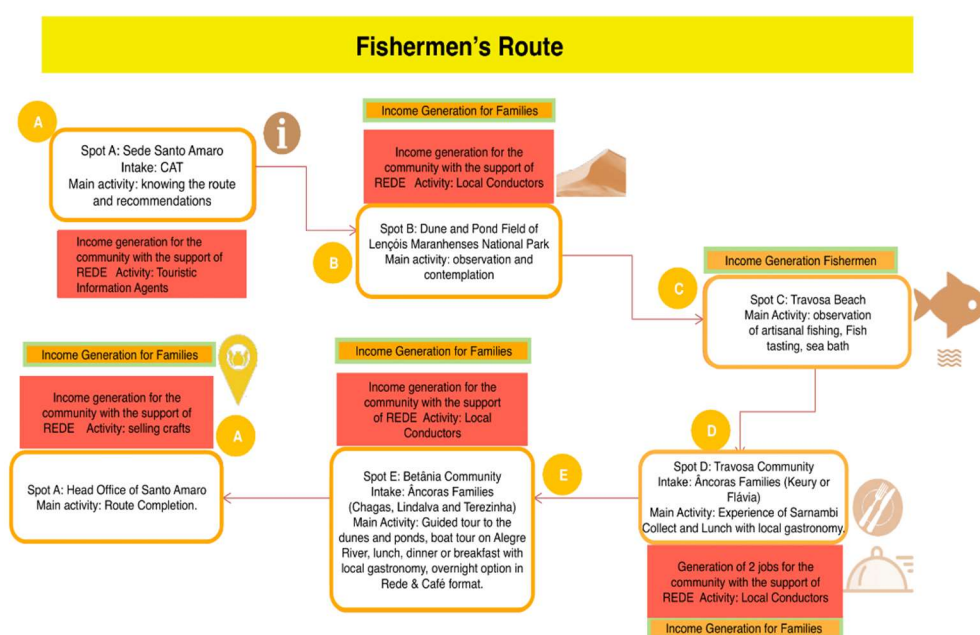
In the sector of this project, it is necessary to say that in the year 2019, another extension project started, named “Consolidation of the Santo Amaro Community-Based Tourism Network: strengthening community entrepreneurs in the Lençóis Maranhenses Region”, also financed by FAPEMA. Therefore, there are two extension projects in the same county.

Thus, it has been noticed that the referred project, which is at the heart of the formation of social capital, is of fundamental importance to strengthen the local protagonism both of the communities that already had their ventures, prior to the project, and of the

community members that showed interests in having their own business. All of this can enable to the appearance of a more inclusive tourism in association to the local production, strengthened by existing subsistence activities in the territory, such as, for example, family farming and animal husbandry.

Based on this understanding and the actions taken during the project, it presents the following route, expressed by a figure1, which was a remarkable result of an entire process of understanding the transit of information that occurs on highways and between communities. This flow, in summary, is a schematic representation of the entire process to create a mapping of what needs to be understood.

Figure 1 – Fishermen's Route



Authorship: Production of the authors (2020)

Maia and Baptista (2011) mark that the routes are the most commonly used praxis on tourism, specifically in the cultural aspect. However, it can be seen in a natural environment. The authors outline the idea of tourist itineraries based on the articulation between accessibility, mobility and resource management, in order to optimize the time spent by visitors for the purposes of social leisure practices. In this direction, the variables space and time are crucial to make the tourist routes. In this regard, the fishermen's route was designed with the objective of valuing the artisanal fishing culture and providing the visitor with a different experience compared to the other tourist products offered in the Lençóis Maranhenses region, considering the role of Travosa and Betânia.

In a descriptive way, the route is configured from the following sequence:

- a) reception at the Tourist Assistance Center (CAT) which the main activity is the visitor to get to know the route and obtain recommendations about the route from the tourist information agents, according to the established flow and demand, enabling the generation of up to two direct jobs;



- b) from a traction vehicle, a part of the route is traveled between the main office of the county and the PNLM dune field with the possibility of fauna observation, environmental interpretation of the occurrence of dunes and lagoons, as well as contemplation of the unique landscape of the region;
- c) to continue with, a path is traveled through the dune field to Travosa beach with the opportunity to learn about artisanal fishing techniques, in addition to tasting fish and seafood on site, in contact with fishermen in the main ranches established by the route;
- d) after this experience, the visitor travels a straight-line path until reaching the community of Travosa, with the opportunity to experience the scavenger hunt (*Donax hanleyanus*) with the local seafood group. Then, a regional lunch is offered with gastronomic elements from the community itself;
- e) afterwards, a path is traveled between the dune field to the community of Betânia, with the opportunity to visit lagoons and take a boat trip in Rio Alegre with local drivers, in addition to offering a service in Rede & Café modality in three establishments. Thus, the visitor is offered an overnight stay and regional breakfast.
- f) at the end, leave Betânia and return to the headquarters of Santo Amaro, after an overnight stop to discover the local handicrafts at the Handicraft Center at the main office.

With the Fishermen's Route, it is possible to offer the visitor a tourism with sustainable bases, valuing the local populations and that promotes conservation and environmental awareness, in addition to encouraging new community entrepreneurs to ally themselves with the idea of a CBT, bringing alternatives and possibilities to increase the tourism offer of the Lençóis Maranhenses Pole.

4 Conclusion

It is concluded, therefore, that the University can play a very important social role with regard to the way of thinking strategically about tourism at the local level, given its complexity. Furthermore, despite what has already been achieved in terms of structuring the CBT in those communities, it is necessary to continue the extension work in order to improve it - since this defined project will be a reference for other communities in Santo Amaro do Maranhão, who need a new look at tourism. Therefore, the challenges are established for other articulations and services that are developed in a territory.

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