



Araruna, the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2015

**P.A.R.E. – Prevenção, Ajuda e Reabilitação de usuários de Entorpecentes (= prevention, assistance and rehabilitation of users of drugs and narcotics)**

The history of this project goes back to a chance encounter between the doctors Alexander Fink<sup>1</sup> and Alexandre Sampaio<sup>2</sup> at the University of Harvard. Consequently, they decided to conduct a comprehensive intervention in order to protect children and teenagers from consuming licit as well as illicit drugs in Brazil.

Currently, our nation is suffering from an increasing number of children and adolescents who ever earlier get in touch with drugs, either through a direct participation in drug trafficking or other criminal activities, such as thefts to provide money for purchasing drugs and thus satisfying their own addiction. Unfortunately, this is part of the sad daily reality faced by many Brazilian families. The majority does usually not know how to avert or reverse such situations, and therefore has already given up hope for a speedy recovery. You might frequently encounter teachers in Araruna and several other cities located in the federal state of Paraíba who talk about various issues associated with drug consuming teenagers. These include, for example, the sale of marijuana and other drugs both in the classrooms and in the schoolyard. Some citizens complain regularly about being robbed by visibly changed adolescents.



Against this background, the project P.A.R.E. was developed – Prevenção, Ajuda e Reabilitação de usuários de Entorpecentes (= prevention, assistance and rehabilitation of users of drugs and narcotics). It is meant to be a hopeful intervention for children and young people who (still) do not take any drugs. Inspired by an US drug prevention course called Teen Safe, Alexander Fink and Alexandre Sampaio developed the P.A.R.E. program, whose concept specifically targets adolescents who are not yet drug consumers. In terms on its content, P.A.R.E. adapts to local circumstances, uses a simple, clearly understandable language and is based, among

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1 Alexander Sascha Fink – Doctor of Psychiatry, coordinator of Brazilian social projects and founder of AFINK  
2 Alexandre Sampaio – Psychologist in the Psychiatric Hospital of Messejana, doctor of psychiatry at the UECE



other, on the illustration of exemplary families who have already been confronted with corresponding problems that they have successfully solved in the end.

Dom Lucena, bishop of the diocese Guarabira, is one of the most influential supporters of the P.A.R.E. project. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May (regional holiday of St. Mary), he opened wide spaces for publishing our program in the context of a church service hold in Araruna, where about 7,000 present pilgrims were registered. The announcement was excellently supported by the use of posters, signs, flags, banners and children's lectures. In addition, we were also represented on many other events, including another church service hold on May 17 in the sanctuary of the city Frei Damião in Guarabira, and attended by about 5,000 people. Furthermore, we have recently established important partnerships with the local governments of the cities Araruna, Tacima, Riachão, Cacimba de Dentro and Dona Inês. These are all located in the interior of Paraíba state and not only utterly destitute, but also extremely plagued by drug problems.



By strengthening our partnerships, we are enabled to carry out a serie of measures which are aimed at the training of all teachers in the municipal education network of those cities. This, in turn, is realized on the basis of presentations, lectures and concrete examples in the form of short films that are presented by Dr. Alexandre Sampaio himself and revised by Dr. Alexander Fink. These short films do mainly deal with problems that are



associated with the drug use of children and adolescents. The contents, based on the findings of scientific studies, are very comprehensively and purposefully designed. They are supposed to be applied to students aged between 11 and 16 years at the schools of our partner municipalities. Currently, several different actions are being performed at the same time, including: The application of the P.A.R.E. course content to the students in the public schools of our partner cities, spreading reflecting theme contributions via local broadcasters and news blogs as well as other anti-drug measures by integrating the entire civilian population and authorities (including judges, public prosecutors, students, teachers, representatives of local councils, politicians, priests, police officers and business owners). All these actions take place within a week, which is set by every community in accordance to the respective school calendar, and that we call „anti-drug week“.

Dr. Alexandre Sampaio and the occupational therapist Ana Feitosa<sup>3</sup> came from the more than 700 km distanced federal state of Ceará to inspect the teachers' training personally, that was realized in morning and afternoon sessions on June 1 and 2 in Araruna, Riachão and Tacima. Senhor Carlos Eduardo<sup>4</sup>, the main coordinator of the P.A.R.E. Program in Brazil, as well as the co-coordinators Maria Valdênia Félix<sup>5</sup> and Eduarda Caroline<sup>6</sup>, afforded consistently great support to our cause. Overall, the „anti-drug week“ was recorded as a complete success, as the widest possible public could be reached.

On the morning of June 1, we realized two other major events in Araruna, namely the official introduction of the P.A.R.E. program in our Brazilian partner organization and the training of several teachers in the local cultural center. This was a proof of a clearly recognizable identification of all participating actors with P.A.R.E.. For instance, various authorities and famous representatives commented on the significant importance of the project, especially with regard to local conditions. Among the actors were the Vice Mayor of Tacima, Senhor Bilac Soares, the Deputy Mayor of Riachão, Senhora da Luz, the Councillor of Araruna, Senhora Lourdinha Odon, the representative of the military police, Lieutenant Rodrigues, the representative of the local entrepreneurship, Senhor Carlos Henrique as well as the representative of the Federal Ministry for Social Development, Senhora Edna Teodósio. In total, 45 regional authorities and reporters were present. Some of them were even invited to interviews in local radio stations, TV studios and Internet blogs.

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3 Ana Nery Feitosa – Occupational therapist and educator in the medical residence of Fortaleza/CE

4 Carlos Eduardo Silva Morais – Master graduate in IT at the UFPB

5 Maria Valdênia Félix dos Santos – Teacher and historian

6 Eduarda Caroline da Silva Morais – Graduate in Renewable Energy Science at the UFPB



The teachers answered positively to the training seminars, composed into morning and afternoon units, by an exceedingly effective willingness to participate in the course contents. This was also due to the presence of the secretary for municipal education, Senhor Mário Dantas, who commented very motivated and happily on our recently founded partnership.



Another major mobilization took place on June 2, when we successfully concluded the training of more teachers in our partner towns Tacima (morning and afternoon seminars) and Riachão (morning seminars). On the subsequent day, the co-coordinators Valdênia Félix and Eduarda Caroline gave an interview to the program „P.R.O.E.R.D. at home“. P.R.O.E.R.D. is a similarly important drug prevention program, which is



under the management of the military police, with whom we cooperate closely. In the radio interview Valdênia and Eduarda informed the local population also extensively about the P.A.R.E. program and called all available cities to pick up our basic idea and implement our concept in the best possible way.

According to our estimations, P.A.R.E. reached in its initial phase the following numbers (only with regard to Araruna, Riachão and Tacima):

- 293 teachers
- 3,700 students
- 17 schools

Assessment of the reached public			
	Araruna	Tacima	Riachão
Number of teachers	230	28	35
Number of students	3,200	310	190
Number of schools	12	3	2

#### Action Calendar in Araruna, Riachão and Tacima:

- Riachão – the course was applied at the schools on June 10 and 11, progressive drug prevention programs were continued until the 12<sup>th</sup> of June
- Tacima – here the seminar was realized on June 15 and 16, with continuation of the program's content until the afternoon of June 17
- Araruna – the determined days were June 15 and 16, too. The course was further carried up into the morning of June 17

In addition to these three communities, the P.A.R.E. concept will also be implemented in the following eight other municipalities: Areia, Bananeiras, Cacimba de Dentro, Dona Inês, Mari, Sapé, Solânea and Remígio. Accordingly, a total of 11 cities shall be promoted this year in the federal state of Paraíba.