

Women entrepreneurs in Brazil recycle used cooking oil to produce artisanal soap, generating income for their vulnerable islander community

UF IFAS
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TCD Tropical Conservation & Development Program

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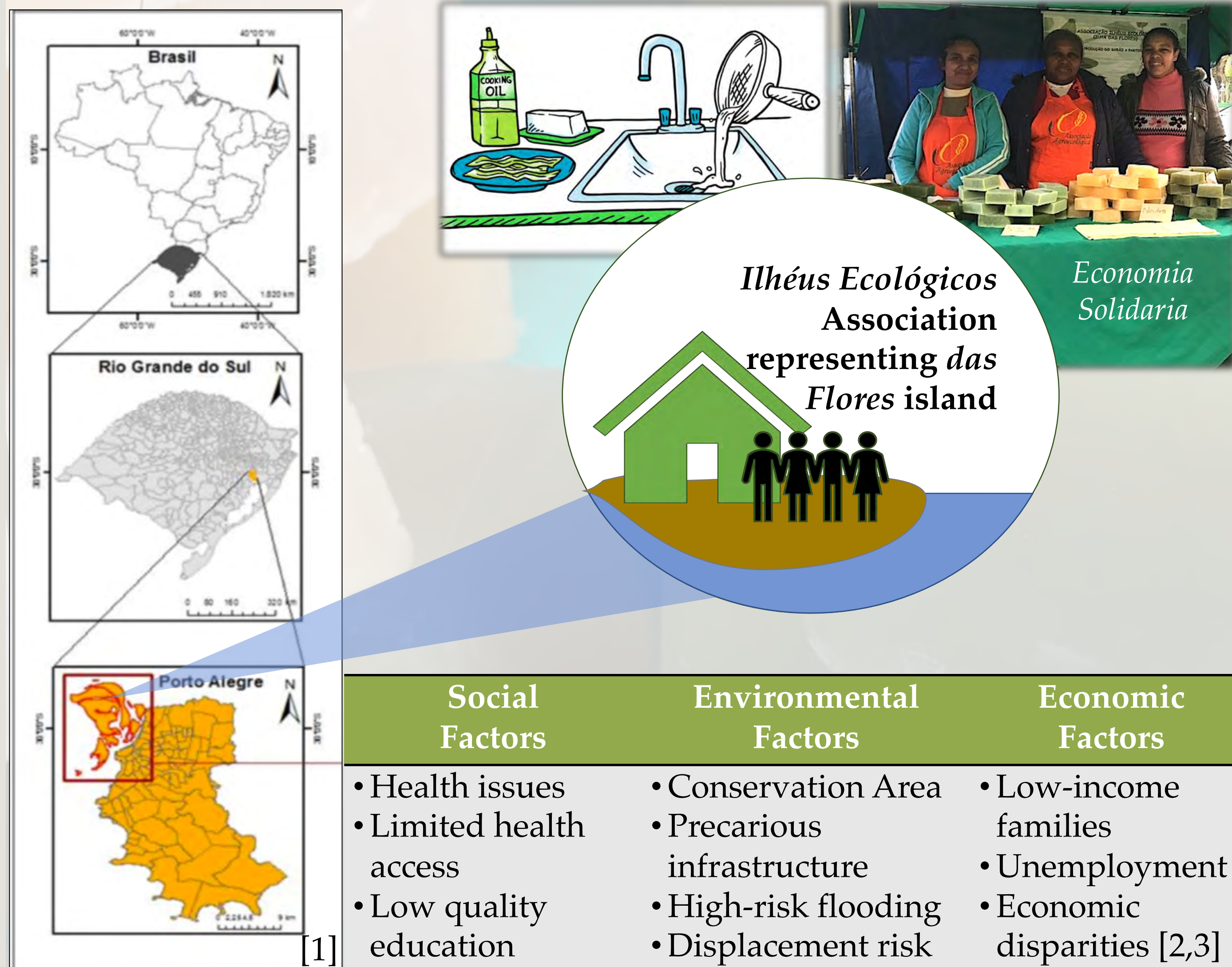
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Context



Objective & Methods

General Objective:

Contribute to the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of the association by supporting the artisanal soap production, as it continues generating income for the vulnerable families in Ilha das Flores.

Methods

Deliverables

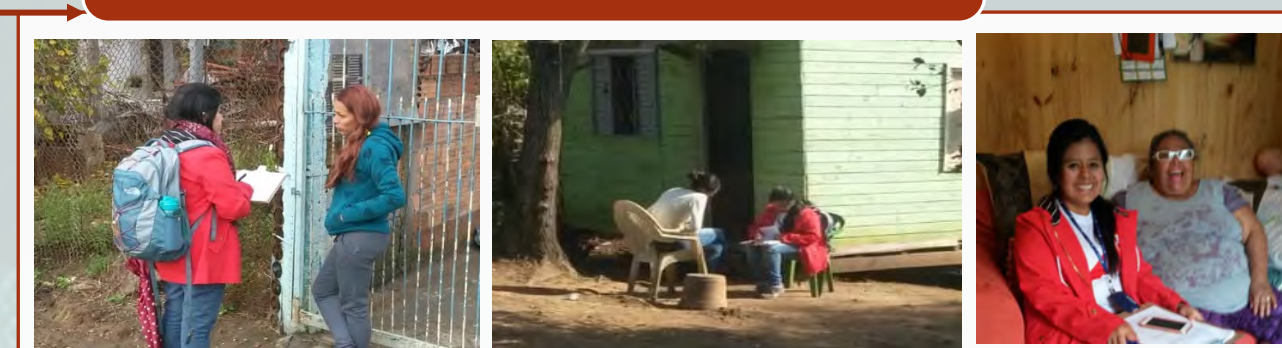
- Literature review
- Semi-structured interviews in the community: 36 (SO1*)

- Participant observation during the soap production
- Photos and documentation of soap production

- Interviews: 5, and informal conversation with associates
- Participant Action Research activities: 3 (SO3*)

- Interviews of customers: 50
- Online research
- Visits to organic fairs: 8 (SO2*)

Community Diagnosis



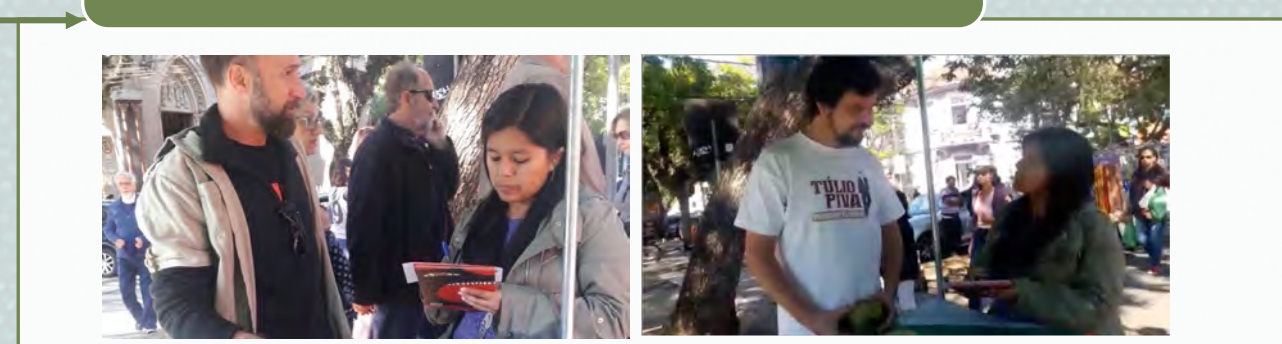
Soap Production Manual



Internal Organization



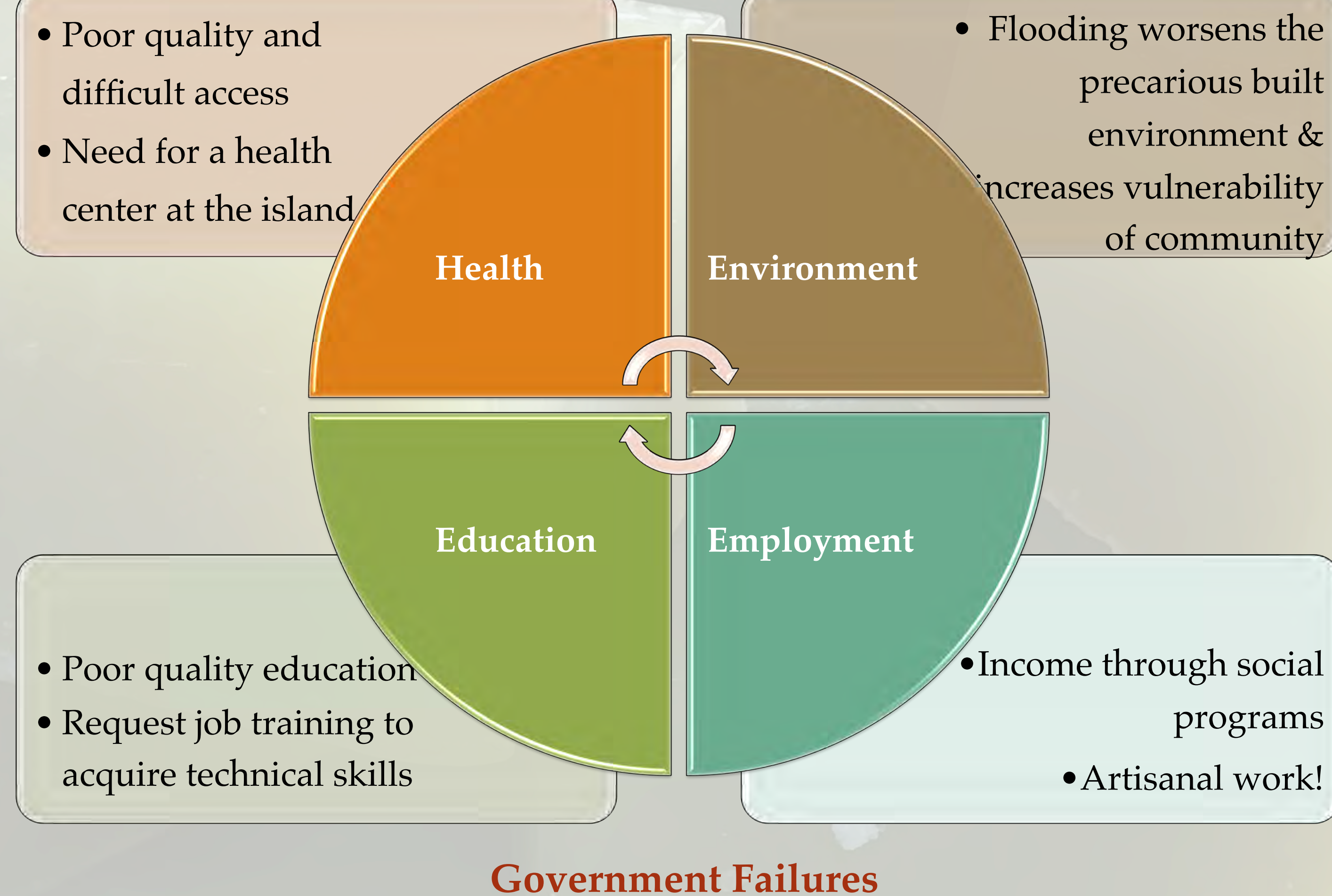
Market Study



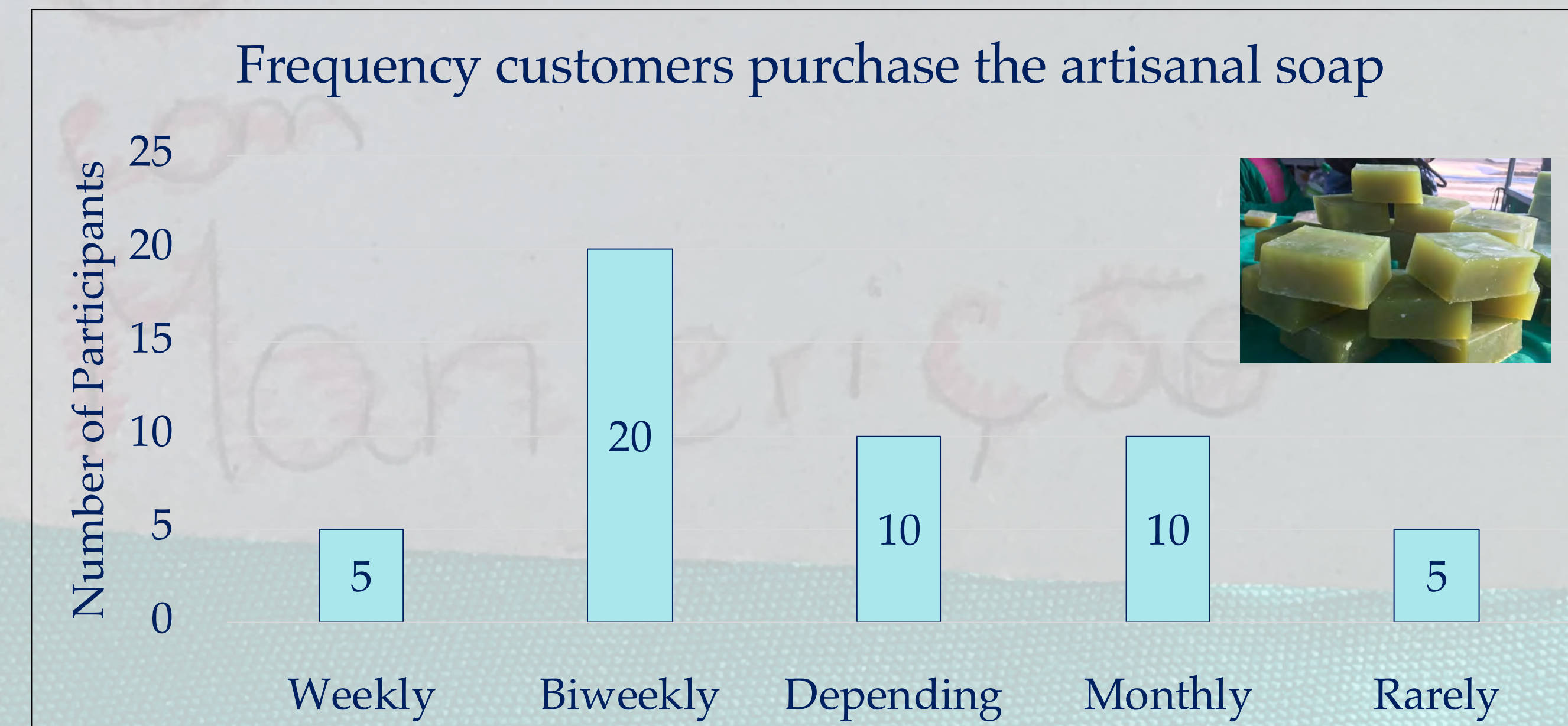
Analysis & Results

Grounded Theory and Excel functions

I. Community Diagnosis



II. Market Study



III. Ecological Soap Group (ESG)

Responsibility	"I go [even] when I am sick, I go [to organic fair] with a headache, with body ache. I drink tea and go"
Mission	"What we want is to make people aware of not pouring cooking oil on the ground or in the water"
Opportunities	"We are ready! We want changes in order to grow and sell more [soap]"
Strengths	"We have good sales... Used cooking oil is recycled"
Environmental Education	"She was pouring the oil on the ground... and I told her not to do it because she was polluting the environment"

Conclusions

- Economic growth in Brazil has created economic disparities affecting low-income families whose basic needs are not satisfied, are constantly experiencing environmental risk, and lacking resources to overcome government failures.
- Social entrepreneurship enable vulnerable communities to strive in their precarious lifestyle and increase their capacity building.
- Porto Alegre culture provides the ESG with ample opportunities for expanding its soap sale outlets, and increasing their income.
- Weak policies have been detrimentally affecting the livelihoods of islanders. The community feels the absence of the government and trust little in its willingness to help but they demand it as a matter of pure respect.

Recommendations

- ✓ Action Plan: Government should work along with local organizations to address and solve islanders' most basic needs (i.e.: access to adequate health care in the island community because it directly affects their education and job opportunities), and to increase the capacity building of the community through provision of courses (technical skills or artisanal work). Bottom-up approach
- ✓ To continue fostering the partnership between the Ilhéus Ecológicos Association and Unisinos university for future interventions on the island.
- ✓ Further research in health and nutrition, in community capacity building and new Brazilian government laws and programs is highly encouraged.

References

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*Specific Objective (SO)