Building Community Outreach Through Participatory Action in Brazil
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Introduction
Brazil has dramatically increased its production of soybeans over the past decade. Increasingly this production is causing environmental concerns among rural communities. At the same time, many small dairy farmers (less than 50 hectares) are being pushed out of agriculture. In the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, 25% of farmers have been classified as limited resources farmers. These two factors have lead to numerous social and environmental problems in communities where this transformation of agriculture is taking place.

Purpose of Poster
The purpose of the poster is to share learning experiences gained while conducting a community-based Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) within Jatei, Brazil. The objectives are to: 1) Explain the steps used to conduct the community-based PRA, and 2) Describe the potential educational impact for educators in Brazil.

Major Points or Information to Be Shared
Jatei community members came to the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UEMS) to seek possible solutions for a major environmental concern in their community. The community was concerned about the pollution of the Ivinhema River. As soybeans replace pasture land many Jatei local people voiced concerns about the environmental impact. After considering several alternatives, the university developed a community-based PRA training program. The facilitators worked with the community members to develop a strategy to conduct a grassroots needs assessment to help determine problems. High school teachers, IDATERRA (extension agents), and college students from biology, geography and law worked together with community members to try to resolve water resource problems.

Conclusions
In conducting the PRA, the community determined that environmental problems were associated with the soil management and landscape topography in the area. The people identified poor erosion control as the major concern. They decided that more trees needed to be planted and terraces should be built to control erosion. The community came together and concluded that they need to develop a policy for land use in the surrounding river basin. They also realized that some of the problems could be resolved if surrounding counties worked together. During the nominal group process, the Jatei community and surrounding counties concluded that they all needed to work together to protect the river.

Educational Importance
This was the first time that people from a variety of disciplines met and discussed real community problems. This was also the first time that UEMS provided outreach to the community. While this is common in United States and many places in the world, in Brazil this was a unique practice. In the past local people reached out to government. However, this time without resources in hand the Jatei community and surrounding counties decided to come together because through the PRA, they saw how they could develop a community-based solution that could solve the problem.