

This case study is one of several produced by the **CLARA** network to coincide with the publication of the IPCC Special Report on Land. We're showcasing **CLARA** member climate solutions which demonstrate the **rights-based, low-emission development pathways** needed for reducing emissions while **promoting livelihoods** and **ecosystem integrity**.

From forest to desert and back again

Ecosystem restoration and economic revitalisation through a community initiative in Portugal

Organisations and individuals involved

Luzlinar Association, Portugal

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Location

Feital, Portugal



DARIA ANDREVA

IN FEITAL, Portugal, near the Serra da Estrela Natural Park, trees are mainly appreciated for the fruit they provide. But the reality is that they could change the very land people stand on.

Feital was once a forested area but is increasingly becoming a desert. Because trees offer shade, however, planting them can turn a burned area into a green one. This is what the Feital community and Luzlinar Association's Projecto Bosques is trying to do.

Project Bosques is working with communities to promote and restore native forests and biodiversity. In 2019 alone, 8,000 trees have been planted by local people. On planting days, more than 250 people can participate. Projecto Bosques will hopefully also lead to three native wood shelters and a nursery offering native trees to residents.

Luzlinar Association oversees 60 hectares of land, six hectares of which were given to them in exchange for a sculpture by Luzlinar's founder and artist, Maria Lino. For the past 25 years, Maria has been inviting artists to explore the surroundings.

Such work is a vital part of communicating the importance of nature conservation.

University researcher and Pro Silva representative in Portugal, João Paulo Fidalgo Carvalho, is working with the Association to focus on high-quality oak timber at a time when cheap but lower quality timber from tree plantations is dominant. He has shown that forests can be economically viable whilst still being sustainable and delivering ecological and social benefits.

Field trials were also installed in the area to value natural forest ecosystems according to their ability to prevent fire. Native oaks and broadleaves are promoted because of their resistance and resilience to forest fires.

There is hope in the air in Feital, but as long as big paper companies that exploit eucalyptus plantations continue to exert political pressure on municipalities and the government, it will be hard to expand close-to-nature forestry models to other Portuguese regions.

Testimony

João Paulo Fidalgo Carvalho, Projecto Bosques

“Preserving the soil and the forest microclimate is essential. Reconciling economy and ecology results in multifunctional and sustainable silviculture.”

Pedro Januário, Projecto Bosques

“We must change our way of working with trees, to maintain and protect forests.”

‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action

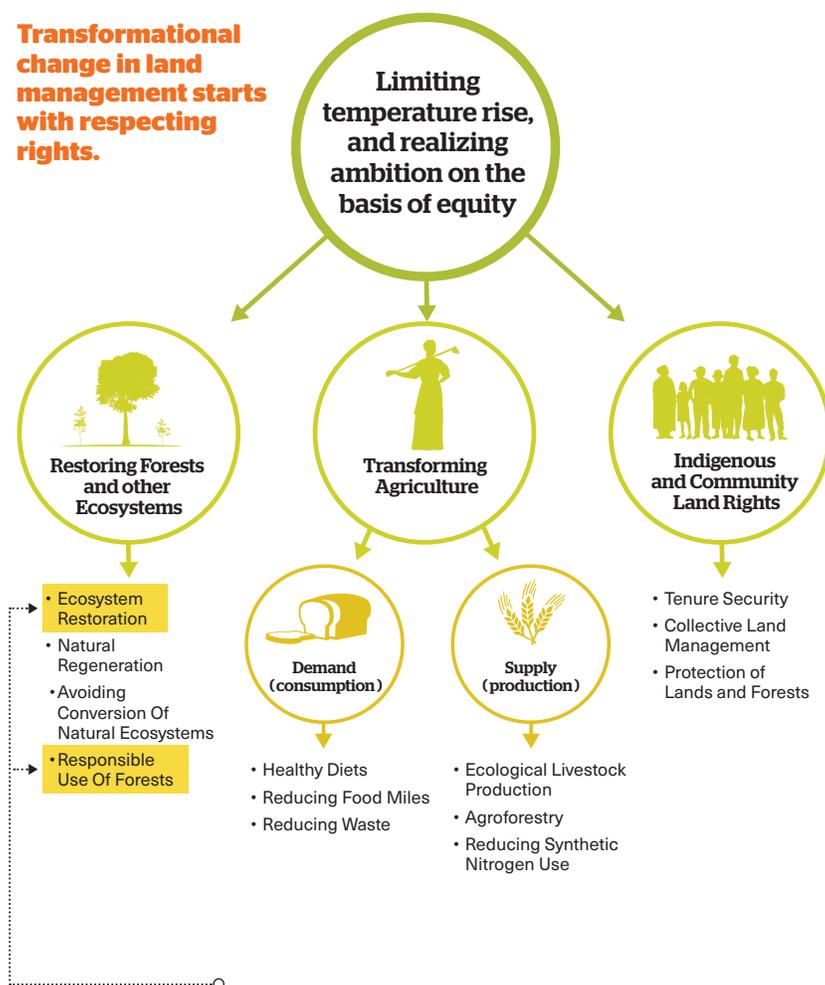
Last year, CLARA published the report ‘Missing Pathways’, identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



This example follows ‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action by...

demonstrating an alternative and more sustainable way to manage a forest, by maintaining native biodiversity and benefiting the local community. If it wasn't for the Association, this region could have become like many others in Portugal where the landscape has been turned into eucalyptus plantations that are responsible for substantial soil degradation and increasing forest fires. Pedro Januário, member of the Association and an architect, believes that this kind of project can be expanded and spread to other regions, linking with other, similar projects.

Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.



Projecto Bosques is enacting transformational change through community-led ecosystem restoration and responsible use of forests.

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