



ORANGO PARQUE HOTEL

Learn more about our development cooperation projects.

Linked to the Sustainable Development Goals





OUR MOTIVATION

She gave up everything she owned: cattle, food and drink for the army in exchange for peace for her people. **And she got it.**

She also carried out a number of reforms to improve women's rights and end slavery. Today she's remembered throughout the country as its most beloved queen.

To better understand what we do here, we should start by talking about **Queen Okinka Pampa**. Throughout the more than ten years we've been working with the Bijagó community, we've been noting down the various tales, legends and anecdotes told to us by the locals, elders and *baloberas* (priestesses).

Okinka Pampa's destiny was to be Queen of the Bijagó society, on the very islands where we're based. It was her courage, non-violent nature and commitment to protect her people that made her successful in peace negotiations with the Portuguese. The Kingdom of Portugal was advancing on the west coast of Africa: the mainland of Guinea Bissau had already been conquered and the islands, a few hours from the capital, were the ideal place to expand its ports and prosper.

The Portuguese gradually took over the islands, forcing the locals to give up their land and enslaving them. It was Queen Okinka Pampa, who had initially doubted her ability to lead before she took up office, who was able to stand up to the injustices of her people and negotiate on their behalf with the Portuguese leaders.



The example provided by Okinka Pampa, her willingness to take care of her community, to preserve her beliefs, her culture and her people, is what inspires us to continue this project started by her over a hundred years ago.

During this time, we've dedicated ourselves to helping the local people reclaim their traditional dances, to recreate the typical costumes and relearn old trades such as carpentry. We're supporting this work because we want these traditions to last and be shared with others. We've seen how globalisation can reach even remote islands such as these, and this is only natural. Young people leave for the mainland and other countries in search of new opportunities. We want to help them develop an interest in their cultural identity and, if they leave the islands, to be strengthened by it.



We have secured funding to implement a large number of microprojects from different organisations and people who have heard about our work.

But we still have a lot more to do





We carry out microprojects for development cooperation. Find out all about them!

On 25 September 2015, world leaders adopted a set of global goals to eradicate poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. These are known as the **SDG (Sustainable Development Goals)**, drawn up by the United Nations.

Everyone has to play their part in order to achieve these goals: governments, the private sector, the public **and people like you**. We started out some time ago now but we're still committed to achieving them. [READ MORE ABOUT OUR PROJECTS.](#)

Conservation of threatened species and their habitats

Support for ecotourism development

Primary education

Health

Water supply

Food security

Help us do a lot more!



ELECTRIC HERDERS

Our project to install electric herding devices corresponds to Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

This is, without a doubt, the **project where we've had the greatest success**. This region is one of the few where you can see the majestic **saltwater hippopotamus**. An endangered species, it's revered as a sacred animal, is the emblem of the Orango National Park and appears on many of the Bijagós Islands' handicrafts.

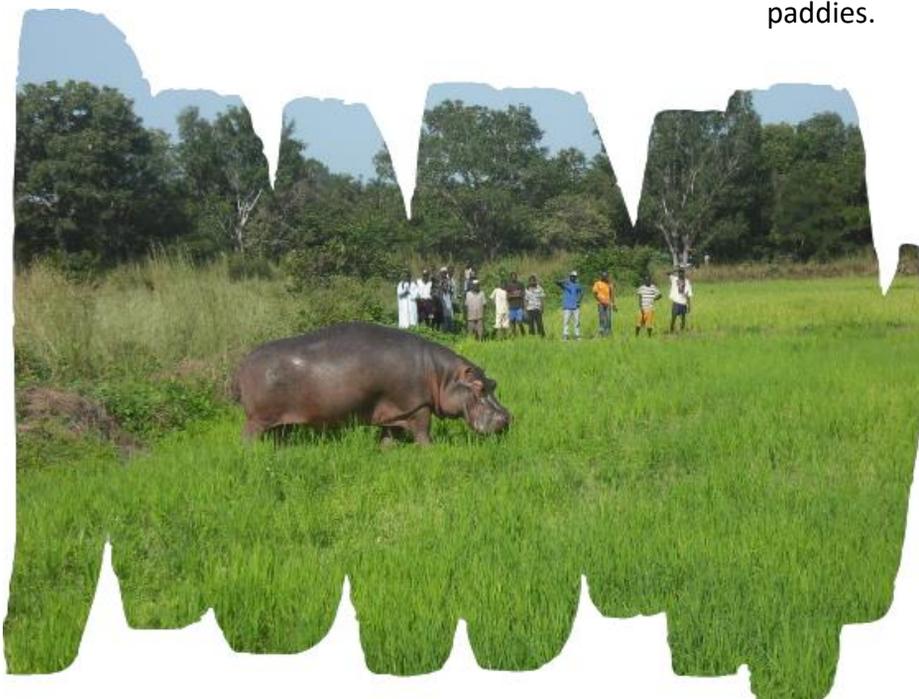
The number of people living in the Park has grown and, as a result, they've converted more land for crops, bringing them in close proximity to the hippopotamuses. It should not be forgotten that this animal is a herbivore and eats about 60 kilos of fresh grass a day. Bolanhas, a traditional floodplain rice crop of the Bijagó people, is a real delicacy for this species.

When we arrived at the Park and talked to the people, the first thing they told us was that they needed help because the hippopotamuses were devouring their rice paddies.

Apart from destroying and eating the plants, they also posed a danger for the families who lived in the fields to cultivate and look after them.

First we tried an infrared-activated loudspeaker to scare off the animals at night, playing different sounds, sirens, voices, barks... but it had little effect on the hippos. Next we tried a gas-powered cannon that was activated by the farmers themselves and made a loud noise, but it wasn't very effective either, firstly because the hippos got used to it but also because it disturbed the families living in the fields while they were trying to sleep. Finally, we came across a simple, effective and sustainable solution: a solar-powered electric herder.

The control panel can operate all night powered by just a small solar battery, protecting the rice crop with a low-voltage electrified wire. Without harming the ecosystem or its inhabitants, we've managed to resolve this food supply problem for the Bijagó people. The hippos now remain in their own area looking for other tasty grasses to eat, without invading the rice paddies.



The rice harvest has doubled in size, producing enough for consumption and also as a reserve.



ETICOGA INFIRMARY

Our health centre project corresponds to Goal 3: Ensure healthy living and promote well-being for all at all ages

When we arrived in Orango, the second thing the population asked us for was health support. The Eticoga infirmary needed urgent reforms. But we didn't just rebuild it; we also sought out qualified nurses who could look after this community. Since then, our hotel and association has been responsible for meeting the nurses' salaries, helping to improve the quality of life in the village of Eticoga and other nearby villages while supporting local, sustainable development.

We also carry out medical missions here, including various surgery campaigns such as ophthalmology, among others.

But we wanted to do more because we realised just how precarious the small infirmaries are on the islands of Orango National Park. Moreover, some villages were over 20 kilometres from the nearest centre, making primary care for children and adults difficult. So we decided to secure funding and renovate the infirmaries in other villages, such as Acagume and Ambuduco, with the added advantage that, as one of our ecotourism routes passes through Ambuduco, we can easily monitor its use and state of conservation.





PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ETICOGA

Our primary school project corresponds to Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



In 2009, the people from the village of Eticoga pointed out the need to build a new childcare centre. In the photo below, you can see the old childcare centre on the left and the new one under construction on the right.

The "Netos Pampa" daycare centre teaches primary education to 65 children in morning and afternoon shifts, with voluntary teachers.

The construction of the centre was made possible by a donation from the Spanish NGO "Aldea Solidaria" after some of its members stayed at the Orango Parque Hotel, and the initiative was implemented by the CBD-Habitat Foundation.





BUILDING WELLS

Our well construction project corresponds to Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

In some of the villages on the island of Orango, wells are simple, open-air holes dug into the ground without protection.

As part of our collaboration, wells have been built and restored in several villages, such as **Eticoga**, **Amupa** and **Madina**, to help provide the people with better access to water and also meet basic sanitary requirements.



STUDY OF THE AFRICAN MANATEE FOR ITS CONSERVATION

Our project to study the African manatee corresponds to Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

We mustn't forget that our Foundation was originally set up to help conserve biodiversity and that we're always very much involved in projects related to endangered species and their habitats.

The African manatee remains a mystery to researchers. It inhabits the seas off the West African coast and is difficult to study. However, fishermen from the island of Orango have seen them on several occasions, tamely accompanying their boats. That's why we decided to collaborate and carry out a project that would help to provide more data on this species and improve future research.



As a point of interest, the manatee is **the only herbivorous marine mammal, hence its popular name of "sea cow"**. Although they are similar to seals and walruses in appearance, they're actually much more closely related to elephants. Manatees belong to the Sirenia order, a name which comes, in fact, from the ancient Greek word "siren", although the animal doesn't resemble this mythological being at all.

The African manatee never leaves the water, not even to give birth. It has slow, heavy movements and that's why, for a long time, it was easy prey for hunters and both its skin and meat were prized. Perhaps manatees now tend to keep away from man because they have learned their lesson.

Manatees are a sacred animal for the Bijagó people and hunting is forbidden. Thanks to the animist culture of the islands' inhabitants, conservation of the African manatee has been quite successful. After all, these "sea cows" had been swimming peacefully around the islands long before any people inhabited them.

CONSTRUCTION OF WALKWAYS

15 LIFE
ON LAND



Our project to look after the ecosystem, with elevated constructions, corresponds to Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Ecosystems inevitably deteriorate when people arrive. Our footprint is difficult to erase and the only thing we can do is look for solutions to reduce it, or find ways to impact the natural environment as little as possible.

Even a limited number of people in an area such as Orango Natural Park can cause minor damage and erosion to the ecosystem, causing the flora to disappear and the fauna to seek new locations far from their natural habitat.

We therefore wanted to preserve the mangroves we often pass through. So we sought funding and were able to build elevated walkways, made with local wood. As a result, apart from helping to conserve the biodiversity of the area by reducing our footprint, we have also made it easier for locals to reach their fishing boats.



PRESERVING BIJAGÓ CULTURE

Our centuries-old cultures and languages are disappearing in the wake of globalisation. When we arrived on the Bijagós Islands we soon became aware of the incredible richness of the traditions, crafts and celebrations preserved by the inhabitants despite the relentless progress of modernisation. Preserving this culture has also become one of our top priorities.

We have therefore carried out several projects to help preserve these traditions and have managed to arouse great interest among our international visitors, which also helps young Bijagó people to appreciate their own culture and therefore ensure its survival.



Over the past few years we've carried out various projects, including: **the recovery of the traditional Bijagó carnival, the implementation of local craft workshops (ceramics and woodwork) and support for local drama and dance groups.**



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Eseta! Many thanks!

