

## **FROM EXPLOITERS TO PROTECTORS OF OYSTERS**

### Description:

An oyster fishing cooperative dignifies the lives of the inhabitants of Mandira, in Sao Paulo, making them prosperous professional fishermen.

### Synopsis:

Brazil has one of the largest mangrove ecosystems on the planet, located along the entire south-eastern coast of Sao Paulo State. UNESCO has decreed this area a [world heritage site] [patrimony of the world] and a biosphere reserve. The complex of estuary and lagoon of Iguape-Cananea covers roughly two thousand five hundred square kilometers and mangroves make up ten percent of this area. Its productivity is calculated at about twenty tons of food per hectare.

Very severe and much-welcomed laws were passed in Sao Paulo in 1970 to protect this world patrimony restricting traditional activities such as small scale fishing, hunting, the collecting of oysters, crabs, and mussels, and limiting subsistence agriculture in Mandira, a humble town situated some twenty kilometers from Cananea and surrounded by mangroves and mountains. As a result, communal fishing associations were created locally that attracted funding to the community and gave new hope to the residents who can now maintain themselves and, at the same time, carry out their commercial activities through fishing and the sustainable exploitation of the marine fauna.