

Serra do Mar

# The Colors of Urbanity

Lorette Coen

Projeto Com Com

**ipsis**

gráfica e editora

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Aerial photo of Itutinga-Pilões Community, 2009



The Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program and the Mosaic System for the Atlantic Rainforest, an initiative of the state government of São Paulo in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), involving the secretariats of Housing and the Environment, is an innovative project of environmental restoration and environmental conservation, social inclusion, and the prevention of tragedies.

The largest preserved area of the Atlantic Rainforest is in the state of São Paulo, in the territories of the Serra do Mar State Park and its three mosaics: Paranapiacaba, Jureia-Itatins, and Jacupiranga. 332,000 hectares, in 24 São Paulo municipalities, which help to regulate the climate, improve the quality of water supply, and provide shelter to mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and half of the bird species from the biome.

The program started in 2007, and its partnership with IDB was signed in 2010. Since then, its actions have become increasingly relevant. The Atlantic Rainforest is one of the richest regions of the planet in biodiversity and also one of the most threatened, since only 7% of its vegetation is well preserved. The effective protection of the biodiversity of the Serra do Mar State Park and its surrounds represents a significant gain in the maintenance of an environmental heritage of global importance. Moreover, the preservation of its water sources will have a direct impact on the capacity and quality of the water supply in a large part of the metropolitan regions of São Paulo, Baixada Santista, Vale do Paraíba, and the North Coast, where around 57% of the state population live.

The program has four principal objectives: the reduction of the impact of populations living in areas of preservation, as well as the improvement of their living condition, the protection of conservation units, and the strengthening of the monitoring of these areas.

At present, around 5,000 families who lived in areas of risk or environmental preservation have already been provided with housing and urbanization works, with all the infrastructure and real opportunities for progress of all their members. Living in newly structured communities, the families have also started to benefit from professional training programs. In total, during its two phases, the program will deal with, either through removals and resettlements or urbanization works, approximately 14,000 families.

This is one of the great conquests of what is the greatest socio-environmental recovery program carried out at the initiative of the São Paulo state government.

**Geraldo Alckmin**

São Paulo State Governor



Beginning of construction of Anchieta Highway, at the Serra-Baixada Santista Section, n/d



The Brazilian Atlantic rainforest is considered one of the richest areas in diversity on the planet and is also one of the most threatened biomes, with only 7% of the native forest remaining in the country. Its ecosystem is vital for the region, whether for the supply of drinkable water or as protection against landslides in Serra do Mar.

In the region of Cubatão, the history of the occupation of preserved areas by more than 10,000 families in recent decades compromised the conditions of environmental preservation of the region and also the quality of life of these residents.

Considering these difficulties and adversities not only in environmental terms, but also social, it was necessary to produce an approach which would involve different sectors, counting on the active participation of the public authorities and civil society. This integration between the state and community was reflected during the development of a methodology of the social assistance work which, anchored on socio-communitarian dynamics, allowed the better design of urbanistic-physical intervention, with the offer of 15 diversified typologies of housing, between houses and apartments. This process resulted in the voluntary transfer of 4085 families to new housing, while another 1898 remained in areas in the process of consolidation and regularization.

One of the principal challenges of the Program was dealing with the characteristics and complexity of the territory, considering the history of the families in the region, their different needs and anxieties in relation to new areas to be urbanized and the new neighborhoods. From this perspective, projects and actions to stimulate social organization, community valorization, and consequently citizenship were developed. The program offered training courses to dozens of communitarian agents who became agents of the socio-environmental restoration of Serra do Mar, as well as accompanying the families before, during, and after the change, making the resettlement options suitable to each profile.

Under the auspices of the strengthening of communitarian ties, numerous social projects were carried out, in an integrated and continuous manner throughout the intervention, such as *Ateliê Arte nas Cotas*, with cultural practices from the appropriation of the new space, especially in urban art interventions in public spaces and on the facades

of houses, thereby creating a new aesthetic for the neighborhood; the Solidary Economy and Local Development Group, a cooperative which aims to train local productive groups by increasing technical skills; *Projeto Com Com*, which created radio and television programs with content produced by the communities themselves, and later *Projeto Cota-Viva*, aimed at the conservation and restoration of ecosystems through the formation of environmental agents, raising environmental awareness, and opportunities for work and income.

Moreover, with the support of actions strengthening environmental administration and the Environmental Police, the body responsible for monitoring the removed areas, it can be observed that the native forest has returned to its space, showing the importance of the integration of projects in distinct areas through single planning carried out by multi-sectorial teams.

With the success obtained in the project, its activities crossed the borders of Cubatão and are now being implemented throughout the area of influence of Atlantic Rainforest in São Paulo, extending through the Serra do Mar State Park, from the north to the south of the state, through the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program and the Mosaic System for the Atlantic Rainforest.

In analyzing the project and its results, the importance of a multi-sectoral approach to obtain satisfactory results is evident. It is necessary to go beyond the environmental focus and involve various sectors and collaboration among multiple governmental entities and local communities.

This collaboration and the disposition for the innovation of administrators, employees, and communities has to be constant, because only in this way will be it possible to guarantee in the long term full care for the families and the areas protected by the program.

**Hugo Flórez Timorán**

Representative of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Brazil



Ortophoto of Cubatão municipality, 2010

Innovation and dedication to surpassing challenges were the marks of the work carried out to implement the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program by the São Paulo state government through the intermediation of the Secretariats of Housing (SH) and the Environment (SMA). Implementing this initiative was only possible because it had audacious targets since its beginning: giving dignified housing conditions to the 22,000 people who occupied areas of irregular settlements, including areas of risk, and protecting 1240 hectares of Atlantic Rainforest.

Not by chance, this is the largest action of this type funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IBD). The financial institution lent US\$ 162 million dollars – which represented 35% of the total investment – for a counterpart of the state government and other partners, including the federal government, of US\$308 million – equivalent to 65% of the project cost.

For the work to be successful, an operational methodology was established whose core was the sharing of decisions with the communities affected by the Program. Families living in these areas were identified – based on their location, socio-economic characteristics, etc., – to assist the intervention plan in the region.

Moreover, there was strong investment in the establishment of ties of trust, essential for the success of the Program. Debated and clarified were the general criteria, urbanization projects, the development of works, and removal criteria.

This process strengthened the ties between the communities and encouraged popular participation and economic development, with the training of community urbanization agents, professional training courses, and social projects, such as: *Ateliê Arte nas Cotas*, *Projeto Com Com*, the Solidary Economy and Local Development Group (NESDEL), and *Cota Viva* for environmental education.

The integration between all involved allowed exemplary reforestation and water source protection actions to be carried out. All the interventions created conditions for sustainable development in the region, since the care and protection of the remnants of Atlantic Rainforest in the São Paulo are essential for the legacy we will leave to future generations.

Irregular occupations in areas susceptible to serious events, such as landslides, were thus suppressed, and many lives saved.

The result of this work is a case of housing policy in which the provision of housing with quality was balanced with the prevention of risks of environmental catastrophes and the restoration of environmental protection areas.

**Rodrigo Garcia**

São Paulo State Housing Policy



Aerial photo of Cota 200, 2012



The Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program gave us the opportunity to develop ambitious urbanization and environmental risk mitigation projects. The situation we found was of dwellings in the middle of the Atlantic Rainforest, in places with high risks of landslides.

The state government's action plan was defined on technical reports carried out by the São Paulo Institute of Technological Research (IPT), which identified and classified the areas of risk. Considering the boundaries of the Serra do Mar State Park (PESM) areas where families could remain, the necessary construction works for this, areas where removals were essential, and environmental preservation actions were all defined.

New neighborhoods were constructed for the residents who left PESH and areas of geological risk. Residencial Rubens Lara in Cubatão is the best example of this. It was the first neighborhood of social interest totally designed on the basis of sustainable construction principles and with innovation in terms of urban design. With 1840 properties, the project included the implementation of high quality collective equipment and space for commerce.

One of the highlights of the program refers to housing constructed for resettlement, which contains significant innovations. The residences were produced with material and processes recognized by the CDHU QualiHab Program, with a high ceiling - 2.6 meters - and prepared for the circulation of disabled persons, with solar heating for water for showers, individual measurement of water in vertical condominiums, lighting and the circulation of natural air, and wall tiles to the ceiling in the kitchen and bathroom.

The locations where families were able to remain are being urbanized and have received retention walls, water networks, sewage - with the implementation of a treatment station - and drainage. New roads are being opened, as well as the recovery and implementation of alleys and stairways.

Another highlight of the Program is related to the Technical Social Assistance Work carried out. The CDHU team brought to the Program the expertise developed in other projects.

The strong partnership with the community had a central role together with the efforts of the São Paulo state government, dedicated to reverting the serious situation in Serra do Mar and giving dignified housing conditions to the population involved, also creating a favorable environment for the sustainable development of the region.

**Marcos Penido**

President of the Housing and Urban Development Company (CDHU)



Aerial photo of Água Fria, 2013

Serra do Mar

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Support



Realization





Aerial photo of Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood, 2013

# Table of Contents

<b>Preface</b> Viviane Frost	<b>29</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The author and the book</li><li>■ Acknowledgements</li><li>■ What is CDHU?</li><li>■ Acronyms Used</li></ul>			
<b>Serra do Mar The Colors of Urbanity</b> Lorette Coen			
<b>1</b> <b>Where the state and lives cross</b>	<b>43</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Poem «Serra do Mar» Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos</li></ul>			
<b>2</b> <b>What is the project?</b>	<b>63</b>		
<b>3</b> <b>Children of the Highway</b>	<b>81</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The story of Álvaro Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos</li></ul>			
<b>4</b> <b>Cubatão, the promised land</b>	<b>101</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The story of Walkyria Walkyria Marques de Paula</li><li>■ The story of Adelina and Luci Adelina Mikolajaw and Lucineide Pereira de Souza Nascimento</li></ul>			
<b>5</b> <b>The social as a tool</b>	<b>125</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Poem «Remoção» Carlos Guilherme Campos Costa</li><li>■ The story of Bel Isabel Frontana Caldas</li></ul>			
		<b>6</b> <b>Collective Intelligence</b>	<b>145</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The story of Viviane Viviane Frost</li></ul>	
		<b>7</b> <b>The Living Community</b>	<b>165</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Poem «Third Age» Noêmia Bispo de Souza</li><li>■ The story of Jera Jeronimo Vilhena</li></ul>	
		<b>8</b> <b>The <i>vila</i> of all colors</b>	<b>185</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The story of Fefa and Inês Fernanda Saguas Tresas and Inês Prado</li></ul>	
		<b>9</b> <b>Hopes popping up</b>	<b>205</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ «Cota 200» Anthen Régio Alves</li></ul>	
		<b>10</b> <b>Appendices</b>	<b>225</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program and the Atlantic Rainforest Mosaic</li><li>■ References</li><li>■ Institutional and Technical Credits</li></ul>	





Technical team and multipliers on the day of the visit of Prince Harry, 2014



Presentation of course certificate for the scrub clearance course, partnership between CDHU and Ecovias, 2015

## Preface

### Viviane Frost

Architect - CDHU  
Superintendente de Ações  
de Recuperação Urbana

The publication of this book has a singular significance. In a country with many favelas, where the urban question causes heated debates, little is discussed about the social side of housing – and also little is proposed. In technical meetings and in research and discussion spaces about the issue, this aspect of public interventions is regarded with reticence in relation to results and content, despite the recognized efforts involved, especially in the field.

Borrowing the vocabulary of architecture, we permanently question what is the *Social Project* for housing, in the sense of the drafting, intention, design, affirmation, and construction of the future. What is actually the aim of the work, the principal task?

Beforehand, a central discussion has to be addressed, albeit, one that is difficult to deal with: the profile of those who work with the social aspect of housing. We have sought to gather technical staff from different backgrounds (sociologists, geographers, social workers, historians, architects, psychologists, environmental managers, art-educators, and social communicators, amongst others), aligned with the concept of *professionals from the city*, from CNPq, which has the merit of summarizing the complex integration demanded by this type of intervention. Without harming the complementarity of knowledge, but in order to deal with the approach that we intend to and will be described in this book, it is necessary *not only* for social specialists – but also them – to be protagonists in the debate of the urban question, the right to the city and to housing policy.

From the more immediate point of view, it is fundamental that socio-technical workers have a vision of the set of actions, and also, albeit in an unequal manner and depending on the affinities of each professional, understand the environmental, legal, landholding, urbanistic, and architectural interfaces of the intervention. Only in the possession of these tools can those working with the social acquire the perception of different dimensions of the territory (physical, economic, symbolic, and the socio-political).

The vulnerable territory, constituted as an urban fabric over which is also shaped a social fabric, is seen here as a starting point, both because of its intrinsic relationship with belonging and participation, memory and identity, and absences, as well as their historic conquests – such as being the condition of the scenario where multi-sectoral public policies should be integrated and made concrete.

Actually, the experience presented here consists of the valorization and investment of work in the social area in the territories of origin as a form of offering the possibility of the consolidation of sustainable territories under the auspices of the intervention as a whole, including aspects related to resettlement. It is worth stating, that for the success of the intervention, knowledge of real living conditions, socio-territorial networks of relations, and references of memory are necessary for the success of the intervention. In our understanding, the perception of a new community identity will only be successful if it uses as a foundation the existing identity, even though transformation occurs through synergies with the state.

One of the most important aspects in this approach is perhaps the construction of collective expectations for the new neighborhood (whether it is an urbanized favela or a new housing estate) in contrast with the individualizing approach of the 'beneficiary'. The devaluation of the historic community and the feeling of the loss of identity lead to the absence of references to value the new dwelling and the new neighborhood, which allows for private interests to be imposed on questions of common interest.

The methodology adopted, centered on implementing concrete spaces for the strengthening of citizenship and the sustainable development of territory, is based on transversal strategies and socio-educational principles which permeate all the actions of the socio-technical work, from making agreements with the community about urbanization projects and the criteria for removal and resettlement, to social projects aimed at stimulating socio-community organization and local development. The various foci and social actions are intrinsically linked, not only because they are carried out in parallel to each other, but principally because they are interdependent and complement each other.

In this way, in the *Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program* the selection of expanded and sector based representation, named *Community Urbanization Agents*, with 211 newly chosen representatives, occurred during the presentation process and the debate about the intervention project in 41 meetings held block by block, which counted on the participation of 1800 people. The process for training these agents, which ran over four months and was arranged so that it was a privileged space for making agreements about local development, was organized in modules which dealt with: Urbanization and community protagonism; Memory, citizenship, and social communication; Democracy and citizenship; Socio-environmental transformation, sustainable local development, and communitarian autonomy. This process of intense interaction among the residents of the different settlements, and between these and the technical teams and guests, resulted in the creation of the Urbanization Operational Group, and the embryonic groups of artistic urban intervention, community communication, solidary economy, and environmental education.

A network of local actors was created who legitimately and effectively represented their neighborhoods, allowing greater 'capillarity' in community organization and strengthening its developments, which is conventionally called *Geography of Representation*. The community organization process anchored on the Community Urbanization Agents group had a fundamental role for the community to occupy the place of the subject of intervention, and not the object of social actions.

It is important to register that, while on the one hand the urban intervention project transformed the urban and social fabric of the territory, on the other, the effective and constant participation of the community in debates with the entire technical team – from the Social, Projects, and Construction Works areas – improved and enriched the project, resulting in the actual resignification of urban spaces. The Urbanization Operational Group (NOU) occupied a central space in this process, and not by chance, until July 2016, 532 activities had been carried out between meetings and collective inspections.

To support this dynamic, we adopted as part of the tools of the social aspect a strong on-site presence, on a continual daily basis, through the Technical Support Offices (EATs) in each of the neighborhoods and workshops and ateliers for social projects, resulting in 11 institutionalized spaces for working in the social area. We believe that, as well as offering a permanent space for dialogue between the state and the community, the existence of institutional spaces in the field contributes to structuring the Project, giving credibility and perception of permanence and the continuity of actions, as well as integrating teams and providing better working conditions.

The figure of the agreement, central in this conception, implies recognizing the existence of conflict between the parties as an irrefutable fact, at least in the intervention. In other words, consensus is not started with, to the contrary, the difference between the actors – community and state –, their interests and postures, is clearly recognized. The state is presented with its legal task of restoring areas in the state park and the removal of areas of risk; residents see their homes, their assets, and their way of life threatened. Residents and their representatives cited numerous unfulfilled promises, a long history of abandonment, and the failures of private initiatives. In turn, the state found itself faced by gigantic and contradictory challenges. What was actually agreed was the implementation of the intervention step by step, based on a commitment to transparency, permanent consultations and co-responsibility. In other words, the partnership between the community and the state is something in continuous construction, demanding permanent engagement by both parties, innovation on the part of the technical team, and the support of public administration.

This scenario, of persistently adopted credibility and relations based on mutual respect between residents and technical staff, is what allowed inertias, obstacles, and resistance to be confronted, and interests to be contradicted; accepting frustrated expectations and feelings of loss and mourning, always working to reconcile the scales of the individual, groups, and the community. The uninterrupted work of the social team in the field has to be acknowledged, whose competence and resilience allowed an amazing approximately 5000 removals and resettlements to be carried out, without mishaps. It can be perceived that one of the principal challenges overcome was to reference the conflicts in joint decisions, basing the actions of the Program on the condition of the collective victory resulting from the exercise of democracy and participation.

To a great extent this success was due to the engagement of the community. As well as the clear vocation of this valiant community for communitarian organization, we believe that the result was strengthened by the proposal for participation in different formats and scales. In this way, both the individual assistance given to each family and the meetings with the expanded group of Community Urbanization Agents are seen as aspects of the same social project for encouraging community organization and participation. Similarly, it is interesting to highlight that the social projects are also incorporated as protagonists in the social organization structures of the Program, understood as alternative forms of participation.

The coexistence of different scales of participation favors organicity, contemplates different resident profiles, meets a wider range of necessities, and encourages changes in the relations of power – in this sense, stimulating socio-community organization does not necessarily signify constructing leader-led relations, reproducing the verticalization of traditional social structures, but rather favors the emergence of a *culture of systematic participation* and, especially, a more solidary format of organization and co-existence.

The social projects of Community Communication – Com Com, Arte nas Cotas, and the Atelier –, are unequivocal testimonies both of the possibility of art and culture being vehicles of the mitigation of social segregation and also as being agents of urbanization.

The Environmental Education project – Cota Viva – assumed leadership in the preservation of the squares built during the urbanization works and also encouraged the emergence of a consciousness of preservation and the active care of these spaces by neighboring residents. In relation to the possibilities of the generation of income and work, the Solidary Economy and Local Development Group – Nesdel –, created within the training in solidary economy and business offered by PJ Mais – an educational project from the Secretariat of the Environment and long term partner – has firmly marched towards autonomy. Here it is

important to clarify that the focus of the socio-technical work in housing, in its dimension of local development, is the strengthening of community organization as the means of instrumentalizing the population for the conquest of sector policies, including those belonging to the world of work. It would be pretentious and uncalled for here to deposit in these initiatives the expectations of the real fight against poverty. Nevertheless, we sought to act in order to air the membranes of sociospatial segregation, to the extent it allows the physical integration of settlements and the connection of residents in networks – structures of opportunities, information, and material and immaterial resources.

Finally, the recent Community Based Tourism project strengthens the connections of communities with the transformed space and announces a concrete perspective for sustainability of intervention – after we leave the field. This is a real challenge.

I would like to immensely thank Lorette Coen, whose capacity for reflection and enchantment is tempered with extreme astuteness and permeability, as the fluid text below shows. This meeting makes this book an inestimable project.

The number of people who have supported, worked shoulder to shoulder, and shown solidarity – and to whom we owe the success of the social aspect of the Program – is of such an order that it is not possible to name all of them without committing mistakes. Nevertheless, I must thank the commitment and engagement of the entire social team in the field, including here all the social projects.

In the person of the engineer Humberto Schmidt, almost a ‘social engineer’, Superintendent of the Construction Works of the Program and Coordinator of the Implementation Unit of the Program (UEP), and the engineer Marcos Arruda, I would like to thank the entire technical (projects and works) team.

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The work carried out in the *bairros-cota* is part of a long trajectory of the entire Superintendency team, that I have had the privilege of leading in a solid partnership for various years with Walkyria Marques de Paula and Valéria Sanches. I cannot miss the opportunity of celebrating and openly thanking each day I spend alongside their most valiant working companions that anyone can have.



Night Photo of Cota 200, 2015

## The author and the book

**Lorette Coen**, has degrees in letters and philosophy from Lausanne (Switzerland) and Paris VIII universities, has worked as an essayist, journalist, curator of exhibitions, and director of cultural projects. She has published various studies and books about architecture, urbanism, landscape architecture, art, and design, and also has participated in various international juries.

*The Colors of Urbanity* was born out of her meeting with Viviane Frost and the visit to the Cubatão *bairros-cota* in the middle of their transformation.

There she discovered the systematic and ambitious work of a team of state agents with residents living in precarious conditions, in areas of risk, in the middle of the Atlantic Rainforest in the *Serra do Mar*. Invented in this micro-world were the methods of an urbanism which was open to the profound anxieties of people, concerned with education, local development and the generation of income, and relying on creativity and culture. An urbanism which drew its effectiveness and legitimacy from attentive and patient work in the social area. Respectful.

The *bairros-cota* are located alongside the old trail used to open the territory, now the route of exports, the principal wealth of the country's economy. Coming together there were the striking problems which have agitated contemporary Brazil: environmental preservation, the housing deficit, deindustrialization, unemployment, profound social inequality.

Well, anyone passing by the Cubatão *bairros-cota* would see at night a small light...



Waterfall on Imigrantes Highway maintenance road, 2016

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The author would like to warmly thank the people who accepted to be interviewed – Noêmia Bispo de Souza, Maria José de Araujo Silva, and Antonio Pedro Ferreira de Araujo – and the teams who so gracefully welcomed us in Ateliê Artes nas Cotas and NESDEL.



Aerial photo of Rubens Lara Housing Estate, 2012

## What is CDHU?

The Housing and Urban Development Company of the State of São Paulo (*Companhia de Desenvolvimento Habitacional e Urbano do Estado de São Paulo* – CDHU), a state government company linked to the Secretariat of Housing, is the largest agent responsible for popular housing in Brazil. Its purpose is to implement housing programs in São Paulo state, exclusively for the low-income population – it works with families who earn between one and ten monthly minimum wages.

As well as producing housing, the CDHU also intervenes in the urban development of cities, according to the directive of the Secretariat of Housing.

The company now known as CDHU was founded in 1949 and has had several names: CECAP, CODESPAULO, and CDH. It received its current name in 1989.

The history of the intervention of São Paulo state government in popular housing effectively began in 1967, when the State Popular Housing Company (*Companhia Estadual de Casas Populares* – CECAP) started the production of housing for the low-income population. From then on thousands of housing units have been sold in almost every city and town in the state, a number which rises every month.

## Acronyms Used

<b>BID</b>	Inter-American Development Bank (Banco Interamericano de Desenvolvimento)
<b>CDHU</b>	Housing and Urban Development Company of the State of São Paulo ( <i>Companhia de Desenvolvimento Habitacional e Urbano</i> )
<b>IPT</b>	Institute of Technological Research ( <i>Instituto de Pesquisas Tecnológicas</i> )
<b>NESDEL</b>	Solidary Economy and Local Development Group ( <i>Núcleo de Economia Solidária e Desenvolvimento Local</i> )
<b>NOU</b>	Urbanization Operational Group ( <i>Núcleo Operacional de Urbanização</i> )
<b>PRRU</b>	Urban Renewal and Resettlement Plan ( <i>Plano de Reassentamento e Recuperação urbana</i> )
<b>SARU</b>	Superintendency of Urban Renewal Actions ( <i>Superintendência de Ações de Recuperação urbana</i> )
<b>SEBRAE</b>	Brazilian Support Service for Small and Mid-Sized Companies ( <i>Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas</i> )
<b>UNESP</b>	Júlio de Mesquita Filho Paulista State University ( <i>Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho”</i> )
<b>USP</b>	University of São Paulo ( <i>Universidade de São Paulo</i> )



# 1

## Where the state and lives cross

*Produced here is an urbanity which speaks the language of the residents.*

The invisible people who live and work alongside us are numerous. Who notices them? Who takes the trouble to pay attention to the parallel world of the peripheral neighborhoods, of the *favelas*? Sometimes, a reporter with good will or an anthropologist looks at certain settlements, certain cases. For the rest of the population, they are people on welfare or ignored.

Suddenly, the poor appear in the strong light of day. In the *bairros-cota* of Cubatão, the needy and disadvantaged showed vitality and creative force decorating their homes, participating in the transformation of their *favelas* into *vilas*. Furthermore, they take responsibility for information about subjects of interest to them. Instead of being designed in specialized offices, an urbanity is revealed and achieved that speaks the language of the residents. In the long and frequently painful history of removals and resettlements, of which this notable fact is part, this is a novelty; this requires documentation.

This affirmation, this new visibility of the residents did not emerge out of nowhere. It came from the action of São Paulo state in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (*Banco Interamericano de Desenvolvimento* - BID) which deserves to be highlighted, due to its exceptionality. Not that it is perfect in all its aspects. It is part of a long process, with its successes and failures. Above all, it results from multiple factors: committed teams, inventive and collaborative individuals, the capacity to open space for a small socio-urban laboratory within a very large public administration, whose vocation is to construct the city.

The time has come - for architects, urbanists, and those working in the social area, but above all for the use of everyone - to take full advantage of the experience, it and all its dimensions in a critical manner. Focusing on people, the principal tool of urban production and environmental restoration, collecting testimonies, presenting portraits of protagonists from each side: those who intervened in the name of the state, those who knew how to listen and dialogue, those who took a step forwards in the conquest of an authentic citizenship. And this is exactly the ambition of the book.

## A discretely experimental project

In this Brazil tormented by the housing question, celebrating the colors of urbanity might seem strange. Is it a fairy tale? For tourism? Political propaganda? Or all of this at the same time? Is it not a little ironic or provocative to focus on a state project – even a successful one – of restricted size when compared to the extensive peripheries or the ‘subnormal agglomerations’ which are constantly expanding, perhaps even geometrically?

In considering the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program, the micro-cosmos of Cubatão’s *bairros-cota*, the residential units constructed for those living in houses in areas of risk, we are not succumbing to an exaggerated optimism. Describing the urbanization project implemented there, we do not delude ourselves – or even try to do so – by valuing achievements in favor, for example, of certain policies, certain politicians.

Without disguising the limits, nor exaggerating the impact of this project, we are interested in showing its discretely experimental nature. From the continuous invention of appropriate collective responses to difficult or hard situations, perhaps a method of urbanization is being born that it is important to identify. Our ambition is to try to reveal it. Or more modestly, to describe an effective attitude to the urban question, what it has in terms of specificity, innovativeness, and what can possibly be transposed.



Discussion of Project between Technical team and residents, 2013

In relation to Brazilian urban development there exist numerous and valuable research and publications, of an academic type, supported by numbers, statistics, which range from minutely examined cases to the wider, more broad ranging vision. Technical studies also which are very useful for proposing analyses with practical purposes. Our proposal is different. A particular point of view is assumed.

We are at a delicate point: the intersection between the intervention of the state and the lives, needs, and aspirations of people. On the one hand: plans, numbers, targets, budgets, and timetables. On the other: a live substance, individuals, families, and destinies. Advances are made on a fragile soil, in the strict sense and in the figurative, that of the empirical, the intuitive, the non-formulated... Here the unpredictable, the irreducible, reigns. Therefore, the sensitive, the narrative is our foundation.

Here, we will tell stories of the past and present. We will give a voice to the protagonists, we will trace profiles of people, of communities. We will listen to state agents performing their missions, moved by emotions and convictions. And importantly: we will explain how, in the Cubatão *bairros-cota*, they found interlocutors and space to develop experiences and thus little by little to forge a methodology. We will talk of the implementation of projects and the initiatives that emerged there, from which were born the colors of urbanity.



Urban-artistic intervention workshop, 2010

## A summary of Brazil

The curious, the interested, this is the choice of a specialist in urbanism, architecture, and landscaping, habitually researching in developed regions, to describe and comment on the work carried out by the state in the municipality of Cubatão, in partnership with BID. Attracted by the experimental nature of the intervention, by its humane and even philosophical dimension, this journalist and essayist is convinced that out of small laboratories decisive changes can emerge. I believe that separated lands favor the sprouting of future times, and this is what we need to be attentive to.

Perhaps, in a Brazil always tempted by insularity, a certain retreat, a different discourse and perspective have their utilities. Perhaps the choice of this writer wants to signify that, despite the specificities, the urban question has a global nature. And that the local can contribute to the global and vice-versa.

However, nowadays discussing the urbanization of peripheral neighborhoods, the *favelas*, is like dealing with a powder keg; any mistake can cause an explosion. Actually, this explosion has already happened and continues in the form of the ever more frequent social movements, always more organized, almost habitual. Detonations can be heard every day.

This proves the need to divulge the experience of the urbanization project in the Cubatão *bairros-cota*. Since it involves a summary of Brazil, a revelation of its great good and great evil. Above all in a gloomy context, it opens up encouraging prospects.



Group of students visiting Cota neighborhoods, 2013











Lagoa Azul Waterfall on Pedras River, near Cota 95/100, 2013

## Serra do mar

**Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos**

February 2004

Published in the book *A grande barreira da Serra do Mar: da trilha dos Tupiniquins à Rodovia dos Imigrantes*. São Paulo: O Nome da Rosa Ed., 2004.

Imposing and stunning escarpment  
Of solid hard rocks  
It is a mystery, it is a sphinx  
It is a Goddess imposing  
Fear, amazement, and greed

With your flanks, you frighten me  
With your water, you invite me  
With your green, you fascinate me  
With your clay, you intimidate me

Your sensual lap  
Your velvety skin  
Are they the beckoning of a lover  
Or the enticement of a trap?

Maybe that is your whim,  
For fearing the human orgy  
Deny yourself as a place of arrival  
Already transformed into an odyssey  
A mere crossing.





# 2

## What is the project?

*Environmental and human development are interdependent and each is a condition of the other.*

With the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program and the Mosaic System for the Atlantic Rainforest, the state of São Paulo has launched a project of national importance, the largest of its type in Brazil, whose cost is greater than one billion reais. Ironically, it arose of the breach of environmental law by the state and the municipal government of Cubatão. In September 2009, the state government was condemned in court to preserve and restore the ecosystems of the Serra do Mar State Park, created in 1977, removing all the irregular dwellings that had been tolerated until then from within the park. Moreover, the Risk Plan drafted in 2007 by the Institute of Technological Research (IPT) had shown the land subject to landslides, where removals had to be carried out to guarantee the safety of residents. These two documents – the Socio-Environmental Program and the Risk Plan – formed the foundations of the enterprise.

Flying over the area around Cubatão is enough to understand the extreme fragility of the Atlantic Rainforest, reduced to a narrow strip here. Once its continuity was interrupted, the death knell of the forest would be sounded. More than 7500 families lived there, forming settlements on the coastline along the Anchieta Highway – Cota 95/100, Cota 200, Cota 400, and Cota 500 – and on the foot of the mountain alongside the Cubatão River – Pinheiro do Miranda, Água Fria, and Pilões –, to which was added the small Sítio dos Queirozes. Since the number of irregular dwellings was rapidly increasing, these groups would fatally interlink, thereby forming a *favela* of great proportions. It was necessary to stop this occurring.

The Secretariat of Housing and the Housing and Urban Development Company of São Paulo State (CDHU), both under the charge of the same person at this time, Lair Krähenbühl, assessed the urgency of the situation. Having to protect the Atlantic Rainforest, they had to face this evidence: the interdependence between environmental and human development conditioned one on the other.

The resulting consequences imposed various measures, to be implemented at top speed, starting with the construction of large numbers of new housing units for the families removed. In addition, the improvement and urbanization of degraded zones outside of areas of risk, the implementation of infrastructure and the provision



Presentation of course certificate for the Photography Workshop, in the Com Com Project, 2016

of public services to the communities whose lives would radically change. Due to its geographic, environmental, and social dimensions, the number of houses necessary, and because the removals were to be carried out simultaneously, the Program became a highly complex operation. It was necessary to navigate between the urgency constantly demanded and the obligatory long term view imposed by the amplitude, encountering abundant unforeseen events and numerous difficulties along the way.

On this scale and despite the special care, the intervention of the state would inevitably cause conflict. The originality here is that this conflict became a conscious and assumed part of the project. The factor of conflict was considered, studied, and integrated in the application of the Program and in dealing with the persons involved. In the implementation of the housing programs and urban development, the state agents - CDHU staff - were specially trained and made aware how to act in the pre- and post-occupation phases. They were prepared for the work of prevention and the pacific resolution of crises. However, they had to adapt to collective actions activities within groups. This demanded from them a considerable personal investment.

Since it was indispensable, the social project built into the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program expanded to such a point that it became the principal tool. The CDHU teams, and not just those responsible for urban restoration activities, started to develop work that had a social objective, or at least systematically included the psycho-social dimension in their reflections. Alongside urbanization and environmental restoration, action with communities, a prior condition for any successful intervention, acquired an importance unknown in similar

*A method was invented here which to an extent proved successful.*



Cota 200, 2011

projects. It mobilized numerous people, accumulated experiences, invented practices and dynamics, created channels of communication and participation, and invited new and unexpected actors to the land of urban recovery.

A small social and urban laboratory was established in the Cubatão *bairros-cota* whose experiences - successes, weaknesses, and learning - are worth noting and analyzing. A method was invented here which to an extent proved successful. It has to be asked: is this a unique case, favored by the circumstances? Situations of poverty and risk are found by the thousands in our country. Can this method be generalized, in other words, can it be transposed to other places?

The fact is that the action carried out in the *bairros-cota* and its results calls for reflection on more than the case itself: essentially, what is urbanization? Dealing with a *favela*, what is more interesting: to remove it or to transform it? To remove even its memory or to recognize the social and cultural value of this human endeavor? In this case, does it not deserve restoring and valuing as much as the environment in which it is part? In other words: what is the project that is pushed forwards? For whom, in the name of which society, and with which values?





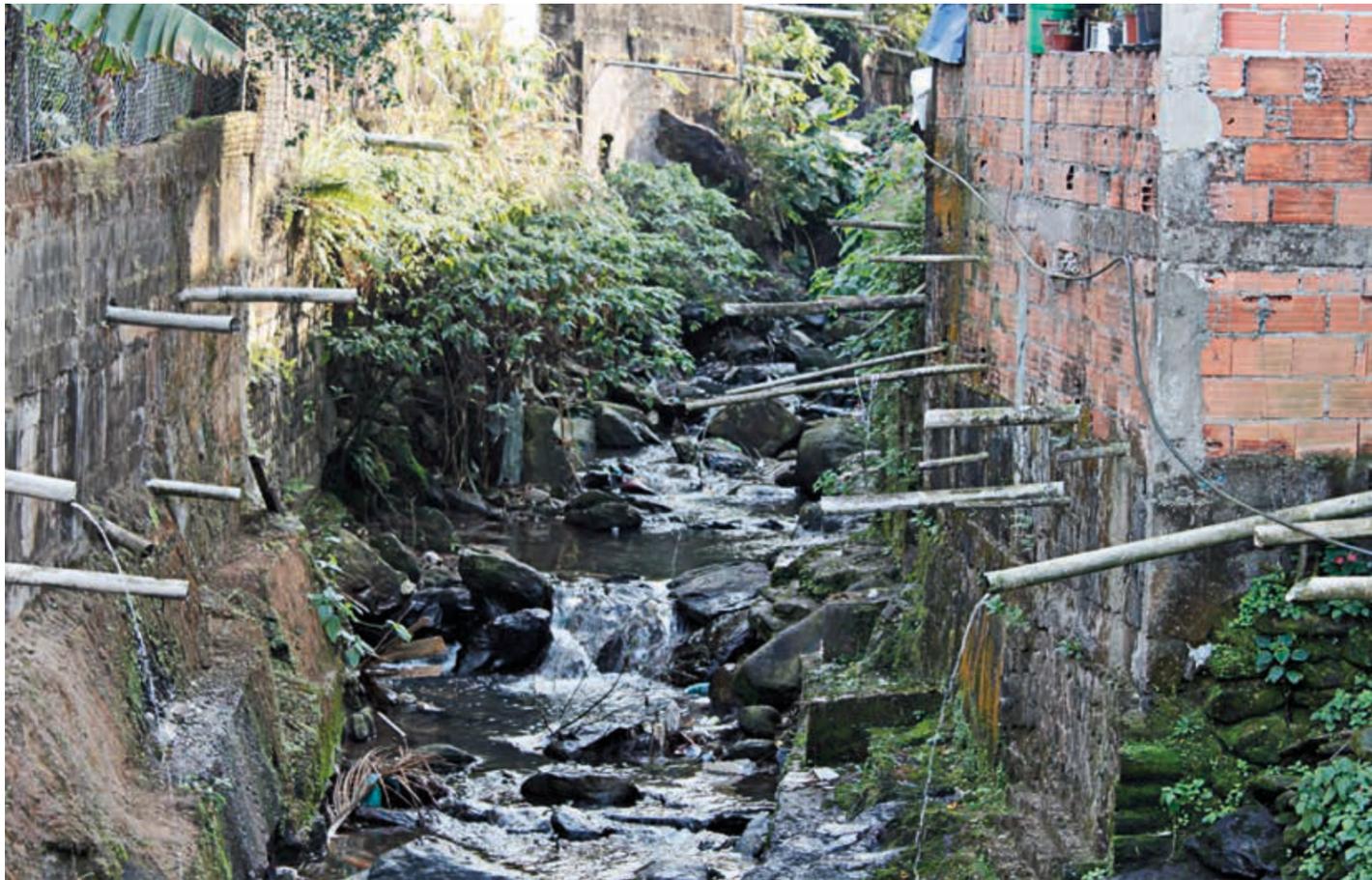
*Action with communities is a prior condition for any successful intervention.*



Demolished buildings in Água Fria neighborhood, 2013



Children in Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood, 2014



Sewage released directly into a stream, Fabril neighborhood, 2013



Flooding in Água Fria neighborhood, 2013



Building in Água Fria neighborhood, 2013



Grotto in Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood, 2011



Building in Cota 200, 2012

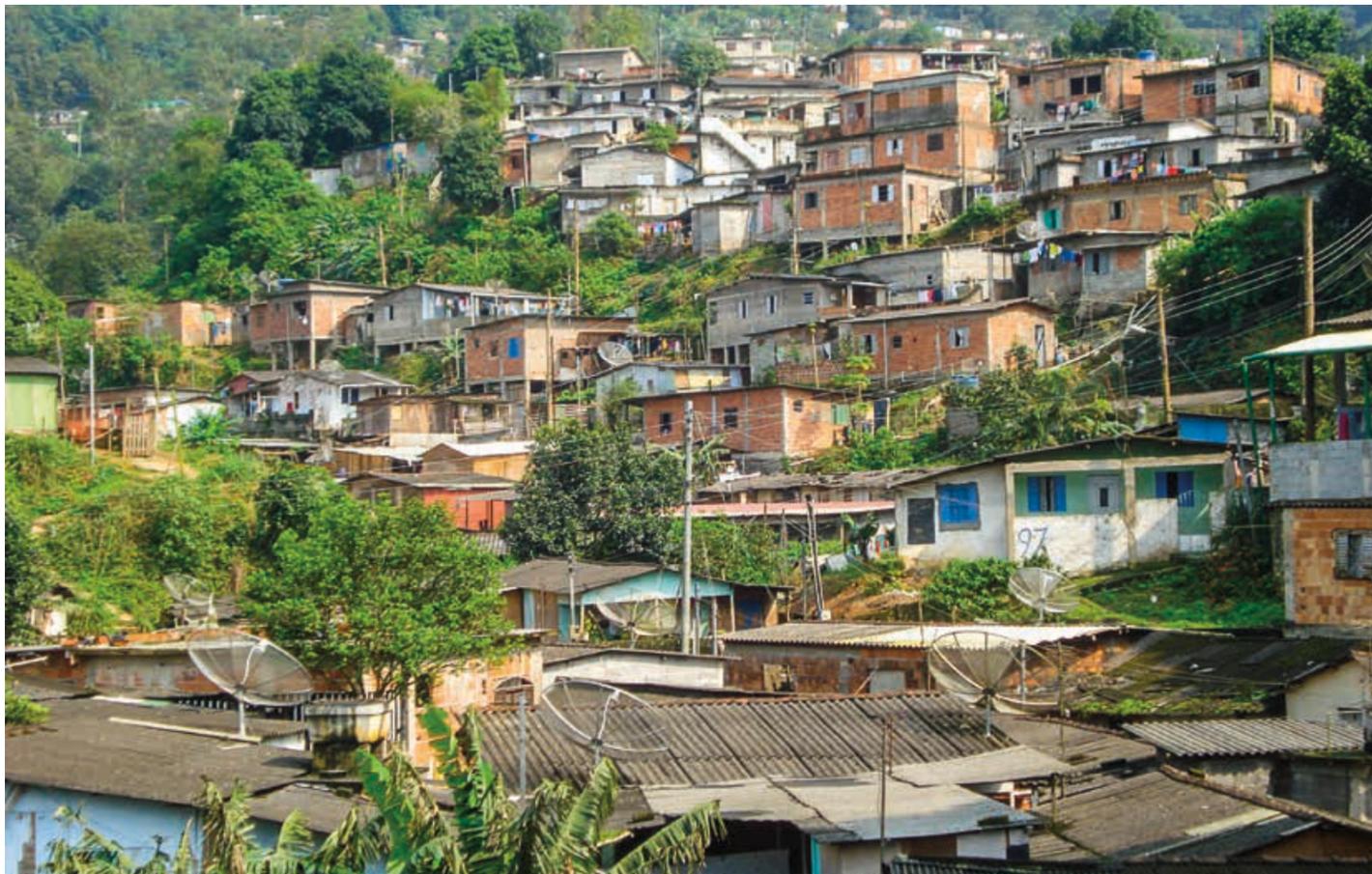


Photo of Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood, 2007



Building in Cota 200, 2009





Demolished building, 2013



Building damaged by flooding of Cubatão River, 2013



Demolished building, 2013



Building damaged by flooding of Cubatão River, 2013



Stella Maris Bilemjian, an architect, in a Project discussion meeting, 2012



Humberto Schmidt, an engineer, in a meeting of the Urbanization Operational Group Urbanization Operational Group - NOU, 2015



Meeting of Community Urbanization Agents, 2013



Meeting of the Urbanization Operational Group - NOU, 2012

# 3

## Children of the Highway

Despite the deforestation caused by road construction and informal occupations, despite the frequent landslides from the always unstable mountain slopes, despite the predominant neglect and carelessness towards the environment, the vigor of the Serra do Mar forest is such that at first sight it gives the impression of untouched nature. For the children that we were, it represented the paradigm of the virgin forest. However, to the contrary of what the dense vegetation coverage seems to indicate, the mountain which separates the narrow coastal plan from the Paulista plateau has always been occupied, since before the colonial period.

### Residents, communities, and *bairros-cota*

Last century residential settlements were formed there, the so-called *bairros-cota* of the municipality of Cubatão: Cota 500, Cota 400, Cota 200, Cota 95/100. These topographic measures, which indicate altitude in relation to sea level, came to designate the campsites of workers allocated to these areas by the Department of Highways (DER), in the 1940s, to construct the Anchieta highway. After the opening of the highway in 1953, many remained to carry out maintenance or to find employment elsewhere on the road system. They founded families, formed communities to which they were then strongly linked and which came to be identified through these names which were never changed.

Joining the migrant workers, most of whom were from the Northeast, in large numbers were workers attracted by the industrial complex of Cubatão, which was in full development, and important underground works in the Henry Borden hydroelectric plant whose external pipes marked the mountain landscape in a spectacular manner. Finally, there arrived another large wave of workers called to construct Imigrantes highway. With wages that were not compatible with the price of land and rent in Cubatão, they built their dwellings in the *bairros-cota* or along the banks of the Cubatão and Pilões, in areas of mangrove swamp. Created there were the neighborhoods of Pinheiro do Miranda, Água Fria, Pilões, and Sítio dos Queirozes.

*Dealing with a favela, what is more interesting: to remove it or to transform it?*

## Roads



**Benedito Calixto** [Itanhaém, SP, 1853 – São Paulo, SP, 1927]  
*Landscape* (from the *Forest* series), 1910-1920. Oil on canvas, 45,5 x 70,5 cm  
 Collection of Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand

Built in peripheral zones of the city of Cubatão, lacking infrastructure and the most elementary public services, marginalized by the lack of collective transport, residents of the *bairros-cota*, since they were poor, were labelled as *favelados* – residents of *favelas*. Nevertheless, they felt at home, despite the precarious conditions. They raised their children, developed their communities and their own way of life for three or even four generations.

Until 2007, when after preliminary studies, the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program was announced. Overnight the occupations, caused by DER or by construction companies and tolerated for more than 60 years, became irregular. The workers of yesterday and their children came to be considered as invaders of land. Actually, since 1977, upon the creation of the Serra do Mar State Park, an Atlantic Rainforest reserve, the communities had been inside the preservation area.

Many residents lived in poor quality buildings, hanging on to mountain slopes in areas of risk, vulnerable to various degrees to the frequent landslides. The first measure taken was the ‘freezing’ of the entire space: no more construction, no admitting of new residents; only some essential repairs were permitted – such as roofs. Due to the large number of inhabitants and their descendants, this first intervention was perceived and experienced like an earthquake.

*Do what – and how – with the precarious settlements of the poor? How can they produce cities?*



Anchieta Highway, in a postcard from the time of its construction: devastation in the mountains, n/d

Life in the *bairros-cota* had begun with the highway, considered at the time of construction as the supreme advance in the development in the state, to which the old people were proud of having made a contribution. Now another form of advance was evicting them. Progress in knowledge and the multidisciplinary approach, widely practiced these days, allows environmental laws and a quite efficient preservation policy to be formed, of which the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program is part. This was committed to overcoming the paradox which opposes human welfare and the protection of nature. It raises the enormous housing question, which goes beyond the *bairros-cota*, and permeates Brazilian reality from top down: do what – and how – with the precarious settlements of the poor? How can they produce cities?

From the belvedere of Cota 200, the principal *bairro-cota* being urbanized in Cubatão, there can be seen the elegant crisscrossing of the flyovers rising and falling from Imigrantes Highway, the most impotent of the routes which connect São Paulo and the ‘Baixada Santista’ through Serra do Mar. Not far away, Anchieta Highway, another accomplishment of Brazilian civil engineering, though an older one, rises and falls, hugging the slopes describing sharp arabesques. These monumental works added to the grandeur of the surrounding forest to compose a landscape with impressive beauty.

For approximately 12,000 years the mountain range was crossed by men who hunted and gathered food there, opening numerous trails. During the millennium which preceded the arrival of the Portuguese, they practiced shifting cultivation. In the first century and a half of conquest and settlement, kilometers of these trails, maintained by those living in native villages for their exchanges, were used for transport on foot and served for every type of traffic, including Indian slaves. Some of them probably correspond to current roads.

Of these old roads, the best know is the Tupiniquin Trail – a simple beaten earth trail – replaced after 1560 by the Padre José Road, the work of the new arrivals, a little wider though instable, opened to serve the growing traffic between the coast and the plateau, between the estuary where the port of Santos would be built and São Paulo do Piratininga. The New Cubatão Road, used by men and mules between 1770 and 1790, lost out to the first paved route, the Lorena Causeway. This represented progress since, traced out by the Portuguese engineers along the crest of a spur, like the old trails, it avoided great interferences with slopes, thereby preserving the terrain from greater landslides. Long lasting, it played an important economic role, facilitating the transport of sugar by troops of mules



Section of the Mountains, Anchieta Highway, around 1960

during the first half of the nineteenth century. Remnants of these routes are studied by archeologists and historians, some of which can still be visited, such as part of the Lorena Causeway.

Later, while wagons followed the not very safe Maioridade Road, São Paulo welcomed the train which after 1867 radically brought to an end the immense obstacle to development represented by the 800 meters of steep slopes of Serra do Mar. Although the railway was long and decisive for the Paulista economy, allowing the outflow of coffee, the train was finally defeated by the automobile. For this the *Caminho do Mar* (the sea road) was constructed, also known as the Old Santos Road, with its zig-zags still kept alive in contemporary memory. Intensively used until the opening of the highways, it declined afterwards. Between 1992 and 2004 it was closed, being opened after being reformed to eco-tourism. It was succeeded by Anchieta Highway (1953), which profoundly cuts across the mountain slopes. Like the branch of Imigrantes Highway (1976) that ascends the mountains, it was built in a manner that is inadequate for this part of the mountains, causing disastrous environment consequences.



Workers at the time of the construction of the highway, n/d

## Live organism

Talking about the challenge which Serra do Mar has presented to builders and engineers since the beginning of colonization to the present day, and which has been successively attempted to be overcome, the geologist Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos states: "We have to know with what we are interfering with, what we are poking. The mountains have to be considered as a live organism which has history and rules. Landslides are part of the life of Serra do Mar, its way of being, of evolving, of becoming."

In a clarifying book, *A grande barreira da Serra do Mar*, he explains in detail the phenomenon of landslides linked to the actual characteristics of these mountains, to the nature of the soil, the water, the climate and the vegetation, and shows how interactions determine mass movements. The geology of engineering teaches that any human action interferes with material in movement, in other words, with geological processes. It is important to know how these occur to prevent them. Any interference made without the indispensable understanding of complex interaction can only breach delicate balances, built up over the course of time, frequently producing catastrophes of great proportions.

To the contrary of the natives who have a profound intimate experience of the mountains, the Portuguese occupants behaved like conquerors, according to Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos, which the history of the paths across Serra do Mar illustrates perfectly. With the notable exception of Lorena Causeway, the successive road interventions, from the sixteenth century onwards, broke the fragile balance of the mountainsides, causing continuous landslides. Building numerous overpasses, opening tunnels, the engineers of the twentieth century attacked the mountains in a thousand manners. They made the construction of railways and roads a dangerous epic. A very high cost was paid in terms of lives destroyed and constant repairs. The mountains only benefited from better care when the descending branch of Imigrantes (2002) was built, with positive results in terms of stability and environmental impact. Currently being drafted is the project for a new Imigrantes...

Nowadays the Anchieta-Imigrantes System is used intensely by thousands of cars and trucks carrying goods, carrying out a function of vital importance for the Brazilian economy. It links São Paulo, the area of greatest population and industrial concentration, to Santos, the most important port complex of South America. A large proportion of the production of the country passes through it, going towards international markets. In 2013, the goods carried along it to the port reached a level of US\$122.5 billion, which corresponds



Lorena Causeway, 2007

to 25.4% of Brazilian commerce. The performance of the regional economy – the companies in the Cubatão petrochemical and steel complex, and the tourist and Summer activities of the Baixada Santista – depend entirely on roads.

Residents of Serra do Mar – around 7500 families in 2009 – and the travelers who circulate at full speed along the highways live in worlds which ignore each other. Sometimes they meet by chance. Taking advantage of traffic jams, girls appear selling coconut sweets or biscuits, boys offering crabs hanging from a pole, corn, sodas: children of the *bairros-cota*. The state promised them security and better perspectives, resettling 70% of these families in housing units built for this purpose in Cubatão, urbanizing and improving part of their neighborhoods for the rest. But the obstacles are not small. Facing and overcoming them demands from the teams engaged in this arduous task unusual social and psychological sensitivity and, above all, flexibility and imagination.



Aerial view of Caminho do Mar, n/d





Professor Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos, 2011



Professor Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos, 2010

## The story of Álvaro

### Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos Geologist

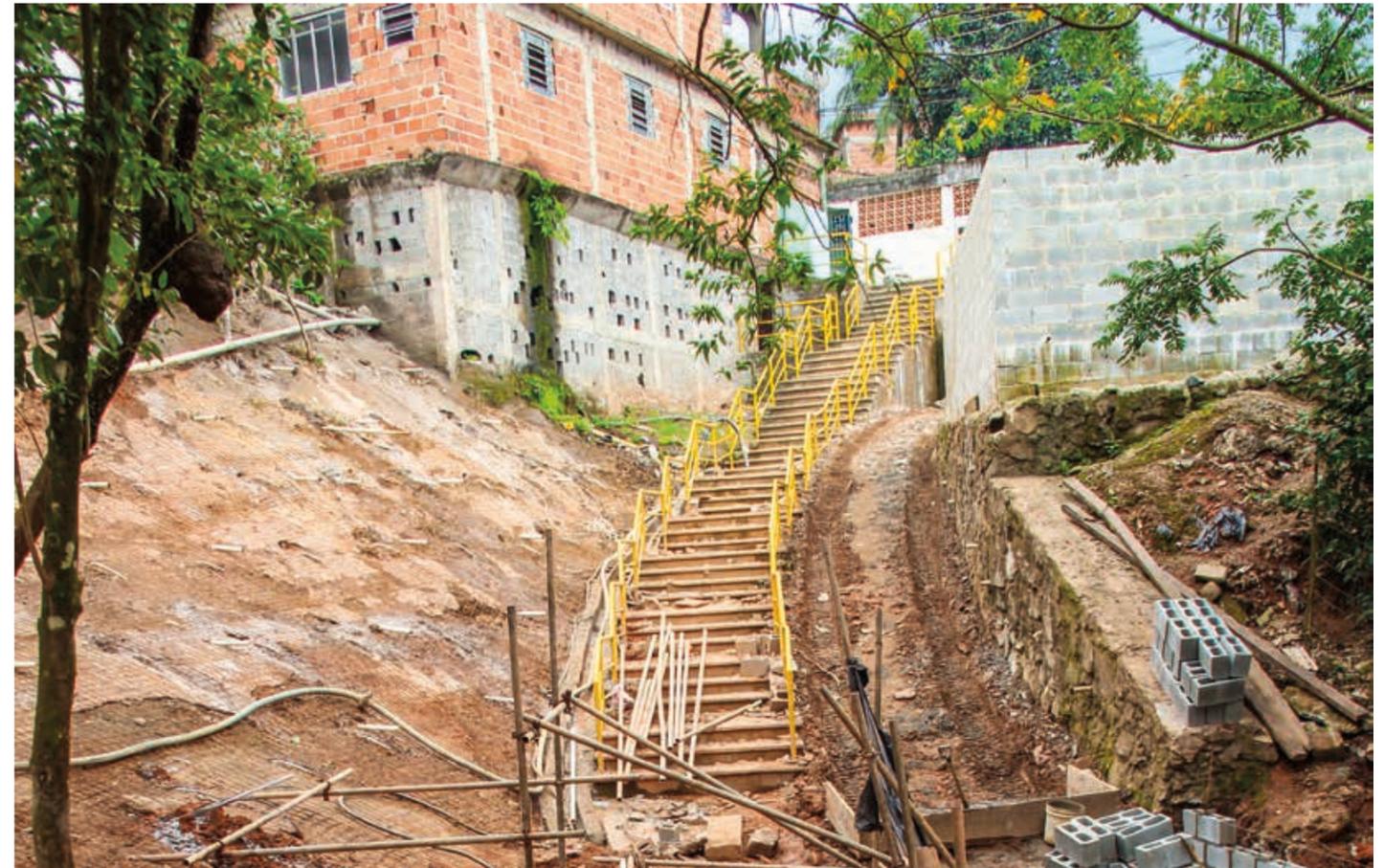
No one knows Serra do Mar as profoundly as Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos, who has dedicated a large part of his professional life to the *Great Barrier*. “She presented herself to me and I presented myself to her,” says the geologist. After graduating from the University of São Paulo, he was soon afterwards hired by the Institute of Technological Research (IPT), carried out preliminary studies on the building works on the Imigrantes Highway, as well as coordinating the first Geotechnical Map of the Santos and São Vicente hills. Since then, he has never stopped increasing his understanding of the mountain range which he considers a live organism. He developed an intimate coexistence with the Serra do Mar and also with those who live there. A sensitive erudite about engineering geology, he has published various books and numerous articles about this unstable and complex territory.

Called as a consultant by CDHU, he acted in the mapping of risks and participated in the preparation of a plan of priorities for the Urban Improvement and Resettlement Plan (PRRU). He knew how to convince a population that was quite suspicious about the reality of the risks of landslide and helped with conflict resolution. Favorable to the methods used by the Superintendency of Urban Renewal Actions (SARU) – modest interventions always with the participation of the population –, he observed how to gradually gain the support of residents. He made denunciations of the frequent clashes between the various interests and the philosophy of the project. He ended up leaving it, but considers that social programs continue to be the strong point of the project: “When the CDHU withdraws, the population of the *bairros-cota* will be the best guardian of the survival of the social conquests.”





Urbanization work, Cota 200, n/d



Contention work in Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood, 2013



Contention work in Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood, 2013



Urbanization works in Cota 200, 2012



Aerial photo of the highway, 2013



Imigrantes Highway, 2012



Imigrantes Highway, 2013



# 4

## Cubatão, the promised land

*Landslides are part of life in Serra do Mar, its way of being, of evolving, of becoming.*

Going downhill, in direction of the city of Cubatão, between the mountain and the rock wall, densely covered in vegetation. After going round and round and round, you have a curious sensation of not having arrived anywhere. Suddenly tall buildings appear, five stories or more, built on pillars, aligned in a rigorously orthogonal manner. Constructions with a solid appearance, with façades covers with pleasantly colored tiles, in pastel tones – blues, greens, pink, and light grey –, revealing a particular care. Something else than can be noted, from the photovoltaic plates piled on roofs, is a clear concern with sustainability. These buildings, built between 2009 and 2012, form the Rubens Lara housing estate, which covers an area of 197,500 m<sup>2</sup> expropriated by the state government from land close to the connection between the Anchieta and Imigrantes highways.

Is it a district of Cubatão? Not yet. Yes, residents can be seen in the apartments and cars parked in the spaces between the pillars, but at the bottom of the buildings collective activity seems reduced and street life scarce. Service, shops, tidy public spaces, everything which gives soul and movement, are still to come. The São Paulo government handed over what was most urgent: apartments in buildings, houses with two floors and houses on top of each other to provide families with homes, thereby fulfilling one of the targets of the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program and the Atlantic Rainforest Mosaic System, its great project.

Housed in these buildings are people from the areas of risk and environmental protection, removed from the *bairros-cota* of Serra do Mar and progressively transferred to units constructed in Jardim Casqueiro by the Housing and Urban Development Company (CDHU). Others are in the old Bolsão 7 and Bolsão 9, now re-baptized as Vila Harmonia and Parque dos Sonhos... Among the old houses in the *bairros-cota* and the new ones, the journey was not very long: a little more than five kilometers in a straight line – around 10 kilometers by road – separate Cota 200 and the Rubens Lara estate, but the change has a radical character. From precarious *vilas* hanging on mountainsides, the residents have moved on to geometric allotments, with asphalted streets, built over a mangrove swamp.

Between these two worlds, the one before and the one now, the road passes and separates.

**Benedito Calixto**  
[Itanhaém, SP, 1853 – São Paulo, SP, 1927]  
*Gospel in the Jungle*, 1893  
Oil on canvas, 59 x 70,4 cm  
Collection of Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil  
Purchased by the State Government of São Paulo, 1954



## Uncertain growth

The escarpment of the mountains and the extensive areas of mangrove swamp, as well as the industrial use of the soil explain the uncertain urbanism of the city of Cubatão and the difficulty of opening new neighborhoods. Constructed between the foothills of the mountains and Santos Bay on swampy land intersected by numerous rivers and canals, the first village was historically formed from the points of transshipment of men and cargo coming from the coast, before the climb towards the plateau or descending towards the sea. Only in the nineteenth century would Porto Geral be transformed into an urban settlement, after the completion in 1827 of the Cubatão landfill, a colossal venture with 13 kilometers of landfill and four bridges. The difficulties were immense. In an erudite essay about “The incredible odyssey of the construction of Cubatão Landfill,” the geologist Álvaro Rodrigues dos Santos describes the enormous technical and financial obstacles faced, “since the landfill, in the technology of the time, implied baskets filled with stone and earth transported on the heads of slaves in the most dangerous and unhealthy physical and environmental conditions in the mangrove swamps of the Baixada.”

Although the construction of this road over soft soil marked an advance for Brazilian engineering at the time, it also provoked an economic recession, since Cubatão lost its port and customs functions. A decline that was accentuated by the implementation of the Santos-Jundiaí railway in 1867. Growing bananas became the principal resource, to which was added, to a lesser extent, the extraction of stone and sand. Development took off again in the twentieth century with the progressive installation of industries, starting with the Henry Borden Hydro-Electric Plant, whose first unit was opened in 1927. Between the 1920s and 1950s, large-scale industries set up there – tanners, chemical factories –, the most important of which was Companhia Santista de Papel, which began to produce in 1932. Known as Companhia Fabril de Cubatão, it set up a worker *vila* alongside and had a determinant role in the attraction of workers and in the development of the urban core of Cubatão.

Propelled by the industrialization efforts of the Vargas and Kubitschek administrations, following the attraction of foreign investors other plants emerged in a movement which accelerated in the 1950s and 1960s. With the creation of Petrobras in 1953, the Presidente Bernardes de Cubatão refinery was built (1955), linked by pipelines with a maritime terminal in São Sebastião, the port of Santos, and Greater São Paulo through the slopes of Serra do Mar.

The presence of the refinery stimulated the appearance of various oil derivative industries, such as Companhia Brasileira de Estireno,

*Between the world of before and the world now, the road passes and separates.*

Union Carbide do Brasil, or Petrobras Química (Petroquisa). The process was accentuated in 1963, when Companhia Siderúrgica Paulista (Cosipa) began to operate, continuing until the 1970s. Cubatão thus became one of the largest industrial centers in Latin America, containing 23 industries in January 2015. This accelerated development, accompanied by the construction of roads, determined a strong growth of population attracted by employment opportunities. Until the present day it conditions the nature of the human settlements there.

## The flow of migrants

Who are they and where do the residents of the city of Cubatão come from? In 1940, the demographic data showed 4683 rural inhabitants, coming from Baixada Santista and neighboring regions, against 1887 urban ones. The initial immigration of workers, to a large extent *nordestinos*, i.e., people from the northeast of Brazil, corresponded to the beginnings of industrialization, with the construction of the hydroelectric plant and Anchieta Highway, which opened in

**Benedito Calixto** [Itanhaém, SP, 1853 – São Paulo, SP, 1927]  
*View of Cubatão, 1826, 1922*  
Oil on canvas, 81 x 120 cm  
Collection Museu Paulista of USP





Beginning of use of Anchieta Highway, in the Serra-Baixada Santista section, n/d



Beginning of use of Anchieta Highway, in the Serra-Baixada Santista section, n/d

*Proposals of a technical nature and material improvements are not enough. Other imperatives exist.*

1947. Shortly afterwards, Cubatão won its political separation from Santos in a plebiscite and became an officially emancipated municipality in 1949. Its population began to grow in a significant manner in the middle of the 1950 with the construction of the Presidente Bernardes refinery, the chemical and petrochemical plants, Cosipa steel plant, and the fertilizer plants. Between 1950 and 1980, it witnessed an explosive flow of migrants in search of work in its construction works and plants; it is calculated that 54,000 people came from regions of great poverty, mostly from the Northeast, but also to a lesser extent Minas Gerais. A large part of them had neither a school nor professional education. The urban growth of Cubatão is due to these migrants, and the city now has more than 126,000 inhabitants.

An unstructured city, it developed without any planning about how the land should be occupied, especially in the peripheral neighborhoods that are very scattered due to the lack of appropriate lands. Numerous irregular occupations took place on lands that were either worth very little or were public; *favelas* were set up alongside roads and the railway, on escarpments and in mangrove swamps. This movement began at the beginning of the twentieth century alongside Piaçaguera highway, and continued with the construction and maintenance works for Anchieta Highway. Between 1938 and 1947, colonies of civil construction workers were established. During the 1970s and 1980s these spread along the road which climbed through Serra do Mar, frequently in zones of risk, forming the *bairros-cota*: Cota 95/100, Cota 200, Cota 400, and Cota 500. Other urban settlements were constructed close to the industrial plants and on stilts over the mangrove swamps. All with precarious or absent infrastructure and without basic sanitation.

Obviously, this had an influence on the health of the poor and unprotected population who lived there. A phenomenon worsened by the environmental conditions which these people were submitted to due to the intermixing of residential areas, industrial zones, the roads with intensive traffic, and the strong emission of toxic gases. Catastrophe followed catastrophe; one of the most serious was the fire in Vila Socó *favela* in 1984, which caused a never clarified number of deaths and had repercussions around the world. Shortly afterwards the disaster of Vila Parisi was revealed – illness and deaths of newborn babies due to anencephaly linked to misery and pollution – caused an international clamor. The authorities had to act. In a joint effort between state government, municipal government, and industries, Cubatão managed to control 98% of the pollutants in the air and received from the United Nations the title of ‘City Symbol of Environmental Restoration’ in 1992, the year of the Earth Summit about the environment and development in Rio de Janeiro (Eco-92). Even today, however, it is hard to correct its old infamy.

## Access to property

It was the urgency of the environmental danger that caused the state government to launch the Serra do Mar Environmental Restoration Program and the Atlantic Rainforest Mosaic System, but the choice of the *bairros-cota* of Cubatão as the focus of its action represented, for the approximately 22,000 people involved, the opportunity to leave precarious homes. The state government developed an energetic popular housing project like nothing that had ever been seen before in this municipality. Around 5000 houses in areas of geological risk or environmental protection were removed and their residents resettled in other places. Moreover, 1898 constructions in terrain that was suitable to live in received the basic services necessary, moreover they are being urbanized and their landholding situations regularized.

The Rubens Lara and Bolsões 7 and 9 housing estates were thus constructed under the responsibility of CDHU. To complete these projects housing units were also built in other municipalities, and units were acquired by CDHU in Baixada Santista, in coastal cities, the metropolitan region of São Paulo, and even in Cotia. Various mechanisms were used, such as the guarantee of credit for purchasing houses in specific period, and an exchange system among families subject to removal, but who wanted to stay in the *bairros-cota*. The most important were the mechanisms of access to property, allowing poor families from the *bairros-cota* achieve the previously accessible dream of having their own house.

## Suspicion and resistance

Thought of in response to the need to house a large number of people, the governmental project nevertheless had to confront the socio-cultural reality, the simple human requirements that urbanistic plans, no matter how careful they are, are incapable of meeting. Prepared with numbers and volumes, materialized with machines, bricks, and concrete, primordial needs of a non-quantitative need were not considered. What is most vital for the old migrants, from marginalized families who for three generations lived in isolation in the *bairros-cota* marooned in the Serra do Mar? Solidarity among families and neighbors and community life represented the essential condition of survival for those who until then had never received even minimal support from any public body.

Therefore, changing the precariousness to which by force of destiny they were accustomed to another form of insecurity – dependency

on governmental decisions – represented for many a distressing perspective. Resistance to removals – obligatory due to court decisions – demonstrated the strength of the suspicion of the authorities and was proportional to the fear of changing the known for the unknown, the society of origin for an anonymous world. More deeply, abandoning the old home – even if were in an unhealthy shack – was equivalent to wiping their own memory, to cancelling their history, with the final risk of undoing themselves.

Heralds of the state, charged with implementing an imposition, the collaborators of CDHU who worked in the *bairros-cota* and the new housing units, had to face problems of an anthropological, psychological, and even philosophical nature, against which proposals of a technical nature and material improvements were not enough. There were other imperatives, demands that did not appear in books on urbanism.



Workers constructing the Highway, n/d



## The story of Walkyria

### Walkyria Marques de Paula

Social worker

With a degree in social work, Walkyria Marques de Paula has worked with projects with *favela* communities since 1990. When she was a child, she observed the life of the residents up close because the school she went to was beside a *favela* near the race track, Vila da Paz. When still young she participated in a company project concerned with improving the life of a needy community. She achieved a profound, intimate, knowledge of this world, which allowed her comprehension and lucidity. From this experience, she took the inspiration to write short stories, *cordel* poems, and the *stand-up* comedy she presents.

“The *favela* is *nordestina*. I am *Paulista*. But there is no way: there, they always recognized me as one of them because of my appearance.”

When she was working for the municipal government, she had to watch operations “without any mercy,” removals under threat so building work could be carried out, without any compensation, rehousing in distant places, lacking any services. She met people in conditions of extreme poverty, dealt with drug dealers, faced violence, went through strong frustrations. Her three years in the Cingapura Project<sup>1</sup> were a period of extreme stress.

In CDHU, Walkyria participated in the Pantanal Project, “a granary of learning.” But it was in Serra do Mar that she found the most stimulating project. As manager of Urban Renewal Actions, she demanded from herself and the team total commitment.

“We have moved from forced and excluding rehousing to a process which respects residents and takes into account the reality of families. We work with transparency, we define criteria. We do not limit ourselves to offering housing and urbanization, we ask for participation; we train community agents, we offer workshops, courses; we start community communication, we organize festive activities, educational trips; we encourage ways of earning revenue. We awaken the responsibility and the creativity of the community. It was a revolution.”

<sup>1</sup> Housing program implemented by the Municipality of São Paulo, beginning in 1993, which provided the construction of buildings for part of the families living in favelas.



Adelina Mikolajaw, 2015



Lucineide Pereira de Souza Nascimento, 2016

## The story of Adelina and Luci

### Adelina Mikolajaw

Social worker

### Lucineide Pereira de Souza Nascimento

Social worker

With degrees in social work and plenty of experience, Lucineide Pereira de Souza Nascimento and Adelina Mikolajaw have participated in the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration program since its very beginning. In the tough mission of removing and resettling residents, the two field coordinators developed different practices, such as working in multidisciplinary teams or working with new methods which they contributed to define and consolidate. Now they both agree: “This project has transformed us.” “It changed me as a professional and as a person,” says Luci.

She continues: “I found here a specific population, families of workers established in the *bairros-cota* of Cubatão since the roads were built and with a strong awareness of belonging to their communities. The dialogue with the residents was difficult and critical, especially at the beginning. Little by little, and thanks to the community agents we trained, we managed to create effective participation which became ever more interesting. This was how, together, we built a methodology.”

When she joined the project in 2010, Adelina had some experience in the housing area which she passed on to the team. She took charge of field planning: “The pressure was strong due to the large number of families to be worked with and due to the resistance of those who did not want to leave their houses, even if they were precarious. During the times of heavy rain, we went through times of anguish, of high risk for residents in certain areas. But the work was evolving and getting better. We were learning with the team and with the population.”

The process required patience and neutrality, but also sensitivity. It was rich and gratifying. Now Luci and Adelina feel proud of having participated in a project with such a social scope. Not just because of the environmental side, but also because of the benefits it brought to the population of the *bairros-cota*. An exemplary and multiplying project whose reproduction – they believe – could be very broad.





Cubatão Petrochemical Complex, 2016



Cubatão Petrochemical Complex, 2011



Cubatão Petrochemical Complex, 2011







Recreation area of Rubens Lara housing estate, 2013



Opening of Rubens Lara housing estate, 2011



Rubens Lara housing estate, 2011



Bolsão IX housing estate, 2011



# 5

## The social as a tool

The announcement to the residents – a vulnerable population, fragilized by poverty and by precariousness – of the measures decided by the state in relation to the Serra do Mar Program immediately caused a climate of tension. Entire areas were to be emptied and houses demolished due to the risk of landslides and for reasons of environmental preservation. A large part of the families, many settled in the so-called *bairros-cota* for more than 60 years, were to be removed.

One of the first steps of the public authorities was to pronounce the ‘freezing’ of invasions of Serra do Mar. A base of the environmental police was established there to prevent the entrance of building materials into the area, except for those necessary for the obligatory maintenance of the houses.

Many saw these measures as traumatic.

### Land of confrontation

The state’s actions were received with suspicion. Owners of a long history of unfulfilled promises and expectations, the children and grandchildren of those who had built Anchieta Highway were used to listening to the authorities with a deeply enrooted suspicion. Workers with fixed contracts in the industrial areas, temporary workers here or there, and laborers from construction sites, all subject to conjunctural or seasonal oscillations or the instability of employment, had a strong traditional of fighting for their demands. Therefore, the first reaction was of resistance.

The restlessness created worsened the divergences between state and municipal authorities affiliated to rival political parties. The municipal government constantly lamented ‘the lack of transparency and misinformation’, criticizing the action of the state in the *bairros-cota* which ‘has left the residents very concerned about their future’. This fed the sometimes explicit sometimes latent hostility which permeated relations between local and state authorities.

Actually, the government had its responsibility for population growth in the *bairros-cota*, since it had tolerated them for such a long time. Local politicians as well. After all, they had often encouraged the occupations giving construction material in exchange for votes, thereby increasing the size of their voters. In the use of the removal and resettlement program, communities were converted into a terrain of conflict between contradictory logics: public authorities, specialists, residents, construction companies, and political parties, all moved by their own opposing interests.

## Construction works and social projects

It was necessary to deal with all these entanglements to prevent obstacles to the Urban Renewal and Resettlement Plan (PRRU). The broad process of communication and community participation stipulated in the plan became a measure of extreme importance. The document showed the total interweaving of social and environmental factors. The need to treat them jointly appeared as an indispensable condition for government action. Also highlighted in the plan was the relevance of encouraging, in an integrated manner, environmental, social, urban, and cultural sustainability. The participatory method chosen for its administrative and conflict resolution mechanism was explained in detail. Social projects were recognized as the principal tool for environmental protection and urban renewal in the *bairros-cota* and the new housing estates in Cubatão.

These principles and the processes defined undoubtedly weighed in the decision of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to fund the program at an exceptionally high level – 35% of the total budget of the project –, with the governmental part being invested almost entirely in housing. PRRU formed the base of the cooperation agreement between IDB and the Secretariats of Housing and the Environment.

Social projects gained new a statute, no longer submitted to the construction works, but inseparable from them. Previously subordinated to the CDHU Superintendency of Special Projects, it came to be the responsibility of the Superintendency of Urban Renewal Actions (SARU) directed by the architect Viviane Frost. The Superintendency and its technical staff had strong experience in urban renewal acquired in Greater São Paulo – in Pimentas in Guarulhos, in Jardim Santo André, and in the immense Pantanal Project (in União da Vila Nova, in the West Zone), amongst others. Prepared for critical situations, they did not underestimate the difficulty of the task, nor its complexity and amplitude. They relied on respect for people, on time – acting without precipitation – and on method.

*This involves encouraging in an integrated manner, environmental, social, urbanistic, and cultural sustainability.*

## Participatory method

Numerous explanations, discussions workshops, and assemblies were involved. It was necessary to inform and provide guidance to families, to try to alleviate the disturbances, find adequate solutions for each one. Channels of dialogue were established with the population. Spaces for dealing with them were opened: a central office and various Technical Support Offices where families could go for clarifications, make demands, complaints, or appeals. The technical staff kept in permanent contact with the residents through mobilizations in the area, consultations in houses and by telephone, and domiciliary visits. Meetings were made to choose the housing units, to prepare for the changes, and to accompany the removals.

Between December 2009 and August 2016, 89,740 family social assistance and field mobilizations were realized, seeking to help the families in the removal area who needed to be resettled. It was also necessary to deal with the exchanges of residence for families which had to be removed but who wanted to stay in the *bairros-cota*, an operation which required around 480 inspections. Numerous complex cases emerged which required particular treatment. For example: families which separated or which established themselves outside the area during the ongoing process, changes of property ownership, transformations of residences, or modification of their use.

Above all, a key point of the method conceived by SARU was the 41 program presentation meetings organized to elect territorial representatives for the community with the objective guaranteeing balanced representation for all the areas to be urbanized. Any resident could be a candidate. These meetings were held between December 2009 to February 2010, during which 211 community agents were appointed who became the linked between the population and CDHU.

## Constructing citizenship

A training course was offered to these agents, prepared by SARU, given from April to December 2010, and concluded with a graduation ceremony. The workshops and modules dealt with themes such as city, memory, citizenship, the environment and preservation, pacific resolution of conflict, community, combatting violence, collective construction, sustainable local development, and other important topics. Thus, alongside the leaders already present in the different areas and without any intention of replacing them, a network of multipliers and co-responsible people was formed tasked with informing and involving the community in the decision-making process.

This work was not limited to providing knowledge and raising consciousness among community agents; it had the purpose of carrying out concrete actions, aimed at consolidating the autonomy of collectivities in their own administration of information and communication, creating professional skills, income generation, and the strengthening of the local economy.

Undoubtedly, it involved winning over the acceptance of the population to the project. But not only this. The community agent, pivot and vector of the strategy of SARU, also had to be capable of bringing to it the wishes and the proposals of their people so that they could act jointly, thereby translating into action the essential idea which leads the actions of CDHU in urban renewal areas: the construction of urbanity also includes social inclusion. And for this, it is also necessary to prepare and produce citizenship.

## The face of the state

“The state has to show its face,” states Viviane Frost, summarizing with force the originality of the social projects methodology created by CDHU in relation to housing. While social workers from other institutions operate dealing with hierarchies and treating each case individually, the technical staff from the social area of CDHU works inside the community on a daily basis, in constant dialogue with it, without ever replacing it. These professionals from the city are part of pluri-disciplinary teams which act in relation to programs, and when possible, in an integrated manner with the urbanist project teams. In other words, they are present, committed to the construction of urbanity, as well as the workers in the urbanization works.



Training of Community Agents, 2010



Meeting of Urbanization Operational Group, 2015



Demolished building, 2013

## Removal

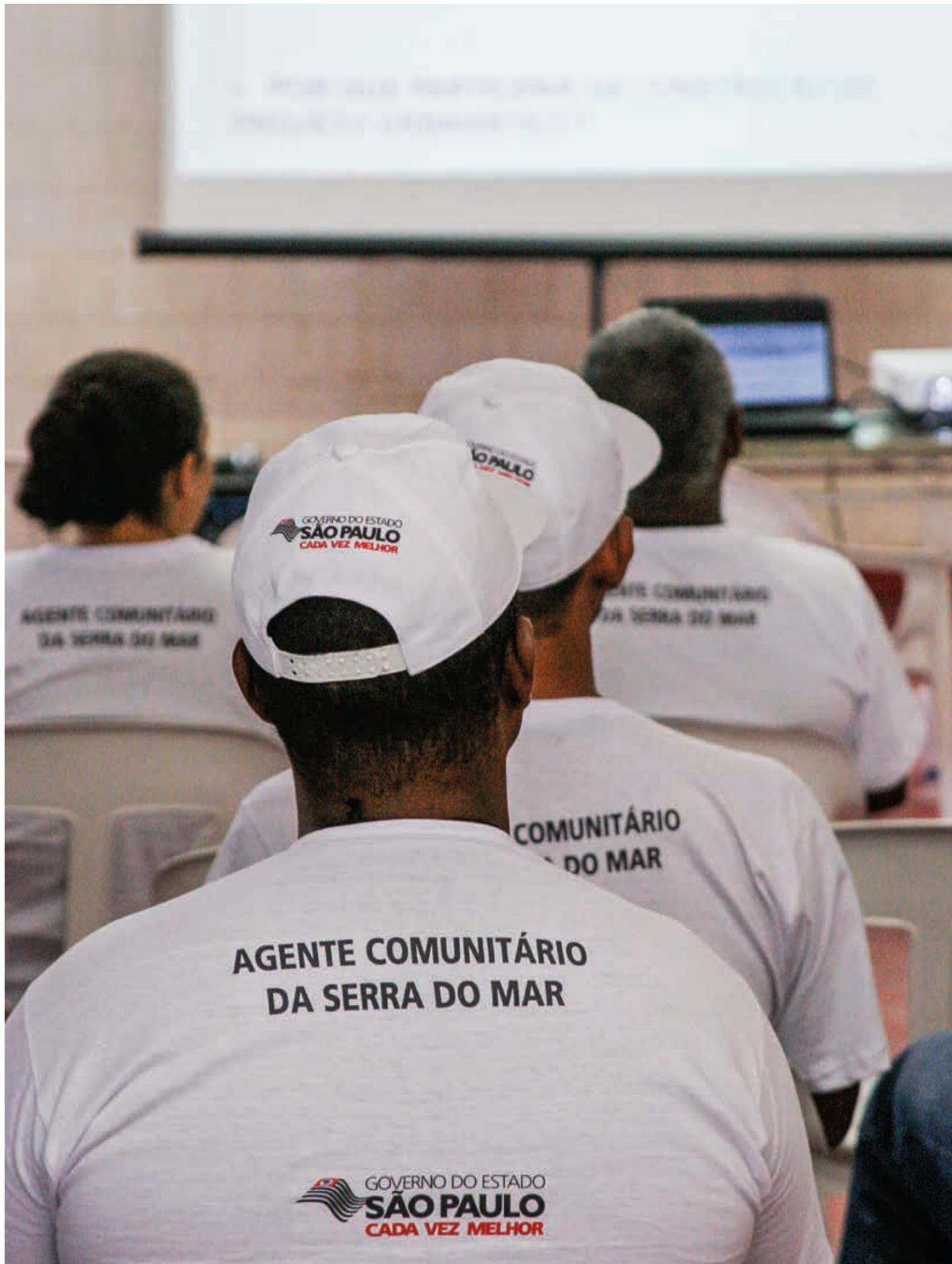
**Carlos Guilherme Campos Costa**

Published in *Morro vivo!*  
*Viva o Morro!*, no.1, 2011

I am from here. I was born here, I was raised here.  
Here was my childhood, my school, I raised a family.  
Suddenly someone very strong wants to take me away,  
take me away from my place, my people,  
People who are part of my story,  
who have participated in my dreams.  
People who share my pain, commemorate my love,  
and toast my victory.  
They want to take me away.  
They talk of removal, but actually they did not listen to my heart.  
I do not want to live in an apartment.  
I want to live in freedom, the same freedom I feel blocked.  
I want to see the forest, the birds, the mountains.  
I do not want luxury, buildings, asphalt,  
I only want to stay in my place, listen to the birds,  
to the dogs barking, and wake up in the morning and go to work,  
praying for the time to return.  
My shack is so small,  
My hope so large  
And in this almost black, brown body,  
Lives an old man who only believes in children.

**Carlos Guilherme Campos Costa,**

67 years of age, retired, was chosen as a community agent. He was involved in the defense of residents, accompanied the entire process of removals, helped resolve conflicts and find solutions. He explains: "I used poetry to talk about our problems." Having worked on the radio in the past, he became one of the founders and idealizers of the Com Com project. He participated in all the social projects. He accepted his own removal 'by personal choice,' and now lives happily in the Rubens Lara estate.



Training of Community Agents, 2010



Opening of Housing Unit, 2010



Scheduled Individual Assistance, 2012



Isabel Frontana in a workshop in the solidary economy training course, 2011



Isabel Frontana in a meeting with Community Agents, 2011

## The story of Bel

### Isabel Frontana Caldas

Historian

The title of her master's thesis, *Children and adolescents on the streets of São Paulo* (published in book form by Loyola in 1999), defended in the University of São Paulo, indicates Isabel Frontana Caldas' orientations and options. In essence she came to know the world of *favelas* when she was very young, worked in support groups for the cooperative building of houses, and helped prepare the Statute of Children and Adolescents. She joined CDHU a first time, tried to implement a social project in a high-risk *favela*, but her sensation was of impotence and the experience failed. Afterwards she studied participatory budgets.

She returned to CDHU after being invited by the Superintendent of Urban Renewal Actions, Viviane Frost. There she found space for this proposal for participatory urbanism. She tested the method in Jardim Pantanal, where the CDHU team trained popular representatives, despite the at times violent resistance of the self-chosen leaders.

"We made a huge leap in terms of quality in Serra do Mar. It was our differential."

In Bel's words:

"We arrived there after two years of continual conflicts. The residents rejected the removals and the resettlements, seen as being imposed. Our 41 presentation meetings took place in a tense atmosphere and under police protection. We manage to elect representatives of the population, the community agents. We offered training. The project specialists had to collaborate with the community agents in the Operational Urbanization Group. A method was thus prepared to adhere to the removals. We used the experience of the artist Mônica Nador in Ateliê Arte nas Cotas. We invited the community to produce its own information, which gave light to the Com Com project. What was most difficult was to set up the Local Development and Solidary Economy Group, which demanded an enormous training process. We created a culture of participation to improve the debate and strengthen residents in the dialogue with their public interlocutors, beginning with CDHU."





Residents in a meeting with the Urbanization Operational Group, 2012



Residents in a meeting with the Urbanization Operational Group, 2015



Residents in a meeting with the Urbanization Operational Group, 2015



Residents in a meeting with the Urbanization Operational Group, 2016



Community Based Tourism training course, 2015



Training of Community Urbanization Agents, 2010



Meeting of the Urbanization Operational Group, 2012



Residents of Cota 400, 2011



Moving from Cota 200, 2012



Moving from Cota 400, 2011



Visit to the Rubens Lara Housing Estate, 2009

# 6

## Collective intelligence

In September 2015, the Secretariat of the Environment of São Paulo State reported that: “as of the present, more than five thousand families who lived on mountain sides in areas of risk or environmental preservation, have been assisted by the implementation of urbanization projects in Serra do Mar.” He added: “Underway, amongst other actions, is the environmental restoration of 45 hectares in the areas from where people have been removed.”

Between eliminating all and any type of human installations within the Serra do Mar State Park and tolerating unchecked occupations, dangerous both for people and for the ecosystem, the government chose the moderate, reasonable solution: urbanization when possible, negotiated removal with resettlement, when indispensable.

### Removal of Settlements

In Cota 200 and Pinheiro do Miranda the government made efforts to maintain families, but in other areas of geotechnical and geological risk it was necessary to proceed with an arduous removal process. Cota 500, hard to access, located on km 45 of the ascending branch of Anchieta Highway, had a few residents who took on the responsibility of maintaining the water tank which supplied part of the population in the lower *cotas*. On Cota 400, at km 47/48 between the ascending and descending branches of the same highway, around 230 buildings were counted. These areas were at a very high risk both due to traffic, related to the nearby road, as well as geological and environmental factors. Their residents were removed and resettled after strong resistance. Even today the remembrance of the very symbolic moment of the demolition of the school awakens sadness and anger. Now the forest is growing there, progressively covering ruins which could not be removed, due to the instability of the soil.

Cota 95/100, on km 52/53 of the ascending branch of Anchieta, three kilometers from the center of Cubatão, had more than a thousand buildings along the highway. Its urbanization was considered and studied, but afterwards abandoned, since the area was considered by specialists to be extremely vulnerable. It was thus included in the settlements to be eradicated. The Água Fria neighborhood, on the right bank of the Pilões river, where around 1500 people lived precariously,

*The greater  
the variety of  
approaches,  
the better  
the chances  
of weaving  
together a solid  
collectivity.*

facing constant floods in periods of rain, is to be replaced in the future by the Cubatão botanical gardens, planted exclusively with Atlantic rainforest species.

In addition, a smaller settlement, with approximately 170 buildings, Sítio dos Queirozes, on the side of Padre Manoel da Nóbrega road, was covered by the environmental preservation program. Unhealthy and lacking any facilities, it was also to be removed.

## Ongoing Urbanizations

In Cota 200, a Cubatão neighborhood on km 50 of the ascending branch of Via Anchieta, the São Paulo government acted efficiently. It had determined that around 1400 buildings located on land subject to landslides, as shown in the Plan of Risks drawn up by the Institute of Technological Research (IPT), were to be emptied and their residents removed. Currently around 750 families remain, one third of the population before the implementation of the program. A systematic urbanization has been carried out by the government. Previously marooned in the forest, the residents now receive all the basic facilities.

Under the command of CDHU, construction companies chosen in a bidding process consolidated areas of possible geological fragility and built contention walls. The road network was profoundly changed, steps were widened and alleys transformed into asphalted streets, allowing vehicles to pass. Open air sewers were replaced by sewage and drainage structures. Water and electricity supply, previously irregular and precarious, was normalized. To better guarantee environmental protection, a perimeter road was built beyond which any building was rigorously forbidden. This delimited the preservation zone of the Serra do Mar State Park.

Public spaces were created, in particular the Cota 200 belvedere, which became a tourist attraction. From it the vast panorama of the Baixada and the beautiful contrast between nature and human works could be seen: in the background the mountains, the water surface of the mangrove swamps; in the center the enormous pillars of the flyovers of the Imigrantes Highway and the dance of the highways as they crossed each other in a broad curve, above the Pilões river valley.

The improvements progressed little by little in Pinheiro do Miranda, located between kilometers 52 and 53 of the descending branch of Anchieta Highway, close to the neighborhood of Fabril, and around three kilometers from the center of Cubatão. An ambitious urbanization plan was drafted for this area, presented to the

community and widely debated. The works commenced and the most urgent was done: the demolition of buildings in areas of risk – 1100 out of a total of 2400 –, in particular those built on the steep slopes of the Grotão mountainsides.

## Urban laboratory

For the CDHU teams which intervened in the dual process of removals and resettlements, the *bairros-cota* were shown to be a vast urban laboratory. The fundamental question raised was: “how to move from *favela* to town?” Did references exist? Did models? Which to apply and why? Often they advanced in the dark, without having traced out any path; however, they collected ample material to reflect on what makes a ‘community,’ what makes a ‘city.’

To fulfill these tasks, they did not mobilize armies of technical staff. To the contrary, resources were always limited; this was compensated by the unrestricted investment of committed professionals. SARU counted on its own employees and outsourced advisors who together formed integrated and committed team. In turn, they sought strength in the multiplying capacity of the community agents.

Working on the project in one form or another and in different moments or phases, were engineers and environmentalists, architects and urbanists, geologists and geographers, historians and social scientists, social workers and educators, as well as other specialists. Filmmakers, visual and other types of artists also played an important role. The merits of teams and pluri-disciplinary action was thus experimented with. Since in the socio-technical work conceived as a support and stimulation for emancipation and not as assistance, the professionals from the city presented a plural profile. It was found that, the greater the variety of approaches, the better the chances of weaving together a solid collectivity. In other words, a group of people capable of understanding and defending their rights and eventually defining their future.

This was the responsibility assumed by the socio-technical staff of CDHU. The social context found in the *bairros-cota* required creativity and initiative. People there had been forced by extreme poverty to live in areas of risks, subject to endemic unemployment, isolated by difficulties of access and by the insufficiency or absence of public transport. Sick residents lacking any care. Or drug addicts, subordinated to the drug traffickers who sometimes represented the only close source of income and who offered social protection and security.

*The government chose the moderate, reasonable solution: urbanization when possible, negotiated removal with resettlement, when indispensable.*

Suddenly the public authorities appeared, promised a better quality of life – infrastructure or new houses in another place. However, more immediately they inflicted wounds and trauma such as the division of families and separation between neighbors, those who would have to move and those who would stay. The affliction was profound. The feeling of injustice as well, since the inhabitants, for the most part having lived in the *bairros-cota* for three generations, did not feel like invaders at all.

What was involved was giving support to family and social reorganization. And, above all, offering perspectives. The socio-cultural work integrated in the urban renewal plan which accompanied the state intervention aimed to please and strengthen these fragile communities at the moment when they were about to come undone, starting with the postulate repeated by Viviane Frost, according to which ‘intelligence is collective.’



Building before the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building after the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2012



Building after the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



## The story of Viviane

### Viviane Frost

Architect

As a student and from the beginning of her professional life, Viviane Frost was always interested in popular housing and the social dimension of urbanism. She joined the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo (FAUUSP) at the time of political reopening, when the amnestied professors returned to teach. It was also when the urban question began to be discussed again.

“I understood early that if you do not construct a city, you get nowhere.”

Working with the resolution of the problem of favelas she counterpoised this to the model which removed the identity of those living there. Little by little, she realized that it was necessary to take the reality into account, i.e., the context. She changed her position, raising certain questions: how can the technical exercise be generous? How can spaces be constructed with identity? And above all: how to introduce social aspects in the housing question?

References were lacking. Among the professionals of the city there were no technical staff from the social area dealing with the communities. It became necessary to invent this new profile. She fought to impose this idea, became the Superintendent of Urban Renewal Actions (SARU) in CDHU and managed to create a socio-technical team. Facing her now were the challenges and work in long-term urban renewal projects in Greater São Paulo, Serra do Mar, and the coastline of São Paulo.



Building before the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building before the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building after the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building after the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building before the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building before the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building after the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Building after the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



Wall before the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2012



The Belvedere Square, Cota 200 before the urbanistic intervention, 2011



Wall after the artistic intervention of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015



The Belvedere Square, Cota 200 after the urbanistic intervention, 2016







# The Living Community

*There is no sustainable urbanization without popular participation and without local development.*

While in the *bairros-cota* the urbanists from the social area began to work alongside the urbanists from the project, it is worth noting that this did not result from a consensus. It happened after a long process in which there were many conflicts. Gradually the practice was strengthened and became systematized.

“There is no sustainable urbanization without popular participation or local development,” says the historian Isabel Frontana Caldas, who was the coordinator of the CDHU Social Project Support Group. However, how could a space for dialogue be opened in areas where the state was always absent and where previously constituted leaders dominated – often supported by religion (above all evangelical) or crime (principally drug traffic)? The coordinator, owner of a wide-ranging participatory experience, responded: through training and improvement. Moreover, this process only works if it is a two-way road. While the socio-technical staff learn by getting to know the life and culture of residents – mostly *nordestinos* – the latter constructed themselves as the conscious interlocutors of public authority.

## The community as protagonist

The proposal of the SARU team was to invest in culture as a vehicle of organization and urbanization. The courses taught to community agents about themes chosen by them were taken very seriously. It was found that there existed in the *bairros-cota* a real demand for training. During the course phase, a dialogue was started between the teachers, the socio-technical staff, and residents, out of which was born, in a very pragmatic manner, the social project carried out with the population.

The work about memory carried out in one of the modules of the courses had great success and was important in strengthening the feeling of belonging. With theater, photography, films, and documents, the trajectory of the migrants from the *sertão* in the northeast, the transformation of Cubatão, the construction of roads, and the emergence of the *bairros-cota* were remembered. The residents, filmed in ‘cabins of memory’, told stories about their families and their own lives.



## Re-establishing the conditions of use for public spaces, opening new ones, is serving urbanity.

Born out of the workshop on community participation in the urbanization process was the Urbanization Operational Group (NOU). Community agents who became part of NOU joined the construction technicians and the socio-technical staff to monitor the urbanization works step by step. They collaborated in the establishment of removal and resettlement criteria. They discussed the urbanization project in great detail with the professionals involved, presenting the criticism and demands of residents, suggestions, proposals for intervention, thereby helping to construct the executive project.

For example, of great use was the field study about public spaces carried out by community agents with residents. Walkyria Marques de Paula, manager of Urban Renewal Actions in CDHU and an attentive witness to life in the *bairros-cota*, notes: "These spaces – meeting places, places of sociability and leisure – are missed enormously when they are abandoned by the inhabitants because they have been taken over by 'traffic.' Reestablishing the conditions of use for public spaces, opening new ones, aids urbanity."

Isabel Frontana Caldas, the coordinator, adds: "The sustainability of the urbanized neighborhood is only achieved to the extent that participatory and educational spaces are guaranteed, in which there is established a permanent dialogue between the population, the technical areas, and the other representatives of the public authorities. The community thus becomes a protagonist in this process, and participates in proposals and definitions about the intervention and produces information and art."

## Com Com Project

The idea of the Com Com project – a shortened form of Community Communication Group –, among the most fertile and active projects carried out by CDHU in the *bairros-cota*, germinated during the course about information. This course awoke an intense interest among community agents. Enthusiasm increased still further when they foresaw the possibility of transforming themselves into producers of journalistic reports, radio programs, and video about subjects related to their own lives and the urbanization of the *bairros-cota*. They learned how to feed blogs and social networks on the internet. With the support of CDHU and the help of the IDB, they set up workshops about text messages, photography, video-reporting, and editing. With this they found a way of conducting local communication and interacting with all the Serra do Mar communities. Com Com took off and rapidly became essential as an educational and vocational proposal, as a center of information and creation, as a link between community agents and the other groups, and above all as a social catalyzer.

The Com Com project was set up in a small modest building in a recently urbanized street in Pinheiro do Miranda. On the ground floor was a living room, kitchen, and reception room; climbing up irregular stairs the studios could be found: a room for recording radio programs, a room for filming, a room for interviews and every type of journalistic work. Computers, video and sound equipment... All very simple, but it had what was necessary for every type of journalistic work and to animate the nets. People of all ages concentrated and working. Adolescents wanted to study various disciplines, and adults, some already retired, wanted to acquire social communication skills. The Com Com project is open to all. The only conditions are commitment, constancy, efficiency. Amateurism is forbidden.

Undoubtedly the success of the project is due to the enthusiasm and effort of the entire managerial and educational team. But it corresponds in the first place to the imaginative generosity and the tireless perseverance of Jeronimo Vilhena, the general coordinator, a specialist and executive of Com Com, inseparable from the team formed around him. Residents were trained who afterwards joined with them to develop the project. The proposal and motto of Com Com is: "Alternative media is needed! And here in the Com Com Project, it is possible! You have space to talk about the community and to deal with themes left aside by the mainstream media."

## Mestre Expedito

An important role was played by the resident and community agent Expedito Silva, 68 years old in 2016, one of the idealizers and founders of Com Com: "When Jerão invited me to participate in Com Com, I knew nothing, I understood nothing. I was afraid I would not be able to adapt." Expedito is from the countryside, and is not one to give classes: "I came from Rio Grande do Norte at the age of 23. I have lived in Cubatão for more than 40 years and always worked in industry. I have suffered pollution, floods; I can count on the fingers of one hand the colleagues still alive. I did the three courses of the Com Com Project (radio, TV, and newspaper). Little by little I assumed responsibilities, talking with my *companheiros*, encouraging students, organizing the place. I helped in Visão radio, collaborated in the Community in Action TV programs, produced for TV Unisantos and TV Polo. I always did heavy work, I had become a resentful person. Com Com changed my life a lot."

Respected and given the title of *mestre*, Expedito Silva is currently responsible for Espaço Com Com and is a monitor of the 'Kid Reporters.' He evaluates the usefulness of the project as follows:



Mr. Expedito da Silva, member of Com Com Project, resident of Fabril neighborhood, 2012

“The community needed to know what was occurring here and how. With programs about the neighborhood on TV, the radio, and in the newspaper, we managed to accompany events and even follow what happened in the municipal council. This gave us more confidence. It helped us demand what we did not have. The community space and the small square were conquests of the residents. We demanded a market garden, gymnastic apparatus. We can provide information about the progress of works, about the changes in the neighborhood, about the projects. Thanks to our medias and networks, we announce the social and educational events, we provide platforms for activities and exchanges among people. We thus open the doors of our world.”

According to the coordinator Jeronimo Vilhena, “Seu Expedito is our barometer. He helps to measure the temperature of the residents in relation to the construction companies who carry out the building works, in relation to CDHU, or among themselves.” As time has passed the respective roles have evolved. “Now,” says Jeronimo Vilhena, “people we have trained are teaching the new participants. And they charge for this, which is fair.” The merit of Com Com is not only to open perspectives for people, whatever their level and age, but to stimulate training aimed at professions of the future.

## A breath of contemporaneity

Residents, previously peripheral and isolated, have become informed citizens, with the possibility of personal expression and social intervention. The youth, no longer condemned to be manual laborers or unemployed, have shown themselves capable of accessing professions such as radio work, film makers, journalists, announcers, information technology specialists, or photographers. To support this teaching, the Superintendency of Urban Renewal Actions (SARU) has established partnerships with Solidary Economy NGOS. Instituto Voz (iVoz) was contracted, whose members are collectively organized artistic and cultural producers and independent educators. iVoz was charged with preparing a methodology and applying it.

Who are Jeronimo Vilhena and his companions? Young people from the *hip hop* movement and the art of the periphery, those who go to poetry *saraus*, writers of ‘*feijão com arroz*’ films, graffiti artists, DJs, or *beat boxers*. And at the same time: social scientists, communicators, familiar with the internet, contact networks, and the new modes of speaking and doing. They brought opening and liberty to the *bairros-cota* together with a breadth of contemporaneity. Gambling on this spirit, Viviane Frost and the Urban Renewal Actions team obeyed their correct intuition and for this reason got it right.

You just have to look at the multi-colored newspaper from the *bairros-cota*, *Morro Vivo! Viva o Morro!*, either in its print or virtual version to feel the enormous and communicative vitality, and the joy of the residents producing their own information. The newspaper describes itself as follows: “It is produced by and for the community. It deals with questions of interest to the *bairros-cota* and more specifically about the socio-environmental re-urbanization and renewal process in Serra do Mar. The memory of the neighborhood has been recovered, registering the life histories of residents and historic events. All the production is done by the community and its distribution as well. They have thus become journalists and newspaper sellers!”

The facilitators of Com Com – a good mixture of skills in arts and education, communication and journalism, graphic design and music – chose the reports with the residents who are also the writers. In *Morro Vivo! Viva o Morro!* news of all types can be found: preparations and the lyrics of the samba written from this year’s *Carnaval*; music classes in the *Tocando em Frente* project in the Rubens Lara housing estate; stories about the past; environmental legislation; vaccination dates and places, advice about the prevention of diseases such as dengue or leprosy; public health alerts about rat poisoning; information about the regularization of land holding; creation of a local currency, issued by Mangue Bank and linked to recycling; a course in eco-tourism; drawings, joke, recipes. Many, many portraits of residents. And much, much poetry.

*Residents, previously peripheral and isolated, became informed citizens, with the possibility of personal expression and social intervention.*



Dona Noêmia recording the *Community in Action* program, 2012



Dona Noêmia, resident of Bolsão IX, 2012

## Poem «Third Age»

**Noêmia Bispo de Souza**

Poem broadcast on *Rádio Voz do Morro*  
on 6 January 2014

The kid was born and grew up barefoot,  
Stepping on thorns.  
Now, very old he lives suffering in the world  
Without love and with care.  
Many of them born in a golden crib,  
Now live caught in a joke,  
Of suffering so much in the world  
That they surrender to cachaça.  
The third age needs everyone to gather together  
To forget the past,  
And smile again.  
Death is near.  
Let us sing, smile, and be real.  
Life in the past is something that will not return.  
I am in the third age,  
I will smile, sing, eat, and fill my belly,  
Forget everything in life, except the life of a child.  
Flowers were born, grew, formed roots.  
I am passing through everything, collecting everything I did.  
The rest of my life I want to live without crying,  
Smile, sing, talk with everyone until death calls me.  
The third age is fire...[laughs] the third age is fire...  
Thank you.

**Noêmia Bispo de Souza**

A *cordelista*, came from Bahia and lived in Pinheiro do Miranda. Now aged 67, she dreamed of visiting São Paulo, but she says "the cost of getting there is very expensive." She had 18 children, of whom 12 are still alive. Many are married and live in Bolsão 9. Her first husband died on the footbridge over the road. Noêmia married again seven years ago. She tells her philosophy of life in poems she recites on the Com Com project radio.



Jeronimo in a Photography Workshop, 2016



Graduation ceremony, Com Com Project, 2013

## The story of Jera

### Jeronimo Vilhena

A filmmaker, social scientist, and cultural producer

As a director of photography and film, Jeronimo Vilhena was – and continues to be – an active protagonist in the exuberant artistic scene which has flourished in the Paulista periphery since the 2000s. He began in Jabaquara, where starting with ‘street hip hop’ he began to create networks of contacts, create animation workshops, linking people and projects. Inspired by new forms of speaking and producing, he experimented on the internet and on Facebook. He accompanies the Cooperifa poetry *saraus* (a type of recital) and also the information democratization movements such as *Fora do Eixo*, *CasaDigital*, and others. He also became interested in the methodology developed by the educator Tião Rocha.

With Agner Simões Rebouças he set up Graffiti com Pipoca, a collective for artistic expression, offering free workshops to the community. He opened the Jeronimo Filmes production company with André Gustavo de Castro Matos to develop personal or collective projects. In addition, he participated in Jardim Miriam Arte Clube (JAMAC), founded by Mônica Nador, and collaborated for the first time with CDHU in 2008, filming the documentary *Paredes Pinturas*, the work of the artist with residents in Jardim Santo André. He continued this when CDHU brought the same experience to the walls of a recycling community in Jardim Pantanal, in the East Zone of São Paulo.

Thanks to this ‘cloud of experiences,’ he acquired a particular competence, shared with his colleagues and partners, which is resumed in the expression ‘bring people together.’ He used this when working in the Voice Institute. He was invited to give classes to community agents in the *bairros-cota*. With the intention of integrating the various social projects launched by CDHU and the desire to create ties within the community, the Com Com Project was created, whose team of communicators trained popular educators, who in turn are training the next wave.

Adding digital literacy and communication to art and social networks, a new social methodology was created in Com Com, intuitive, flexible, differentiated, which gradually led to emancipation.



Recording of the Voz do Morro Program, 2012



Children after the showing of the film in 3D, 2015



Children capturing images for the video workshop, 2013



Com Com team interviewing the specialist in community education Sérgio Gomes, 2013



Distribution of the newspaper Morro Vivo! Viva o Morro!, 2012



Newspaper production workshop, 2013



Residents reading the newspaper Morro Vivo! Viva o Morro! in Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood, 2011



Newspaper production workshop, 2013



Poster for the 5th Tourism and Gastronomy Cultural Fair of the Cota Neighborhoods, 2016



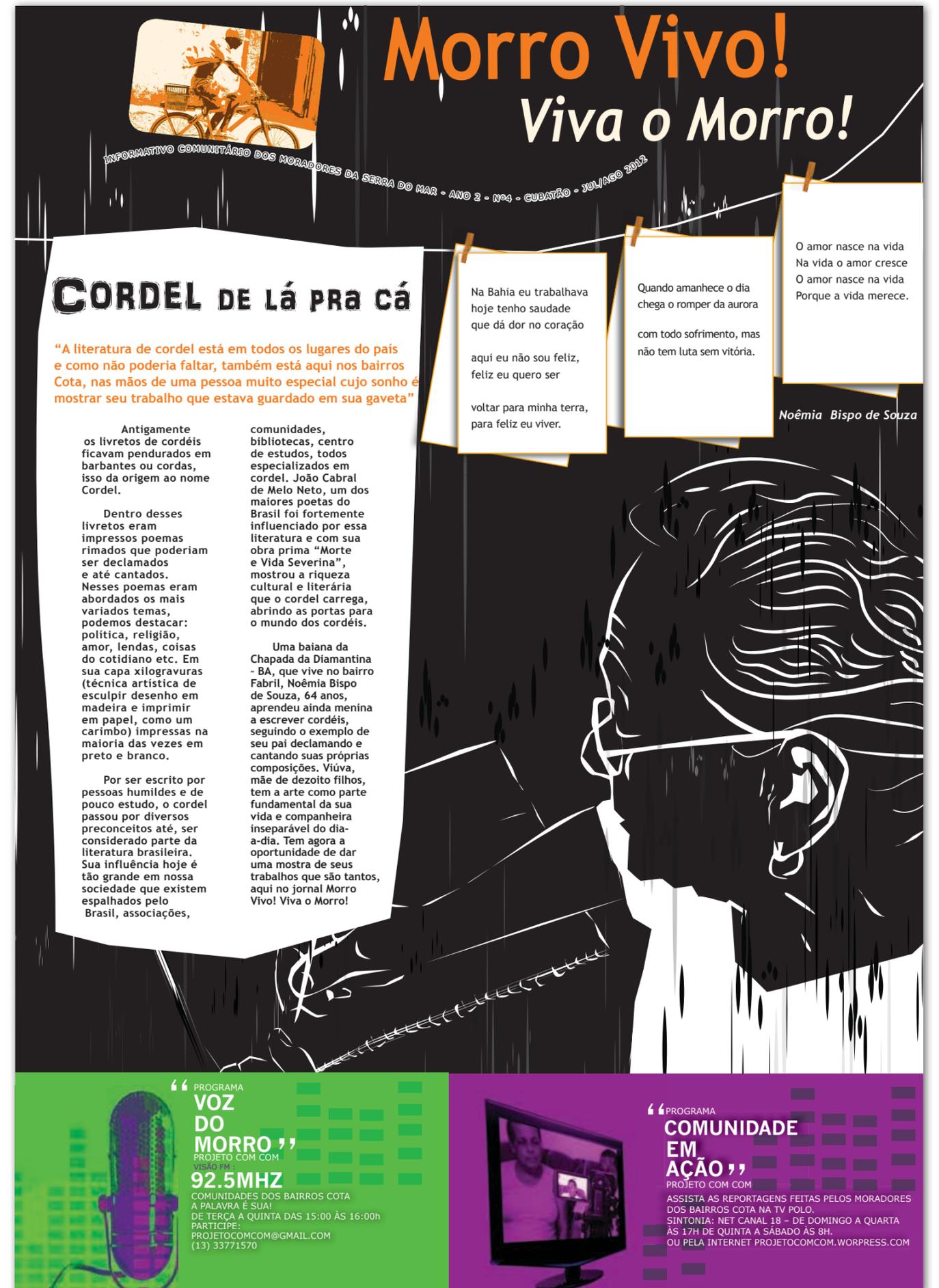
Poster for Com Com Workshops, 2014



178 Invitation to the Sustainable Coffee Break produced by the Com Com Team, 2016



Invitation to the Sustainable Coffee Break produced by the Com Com Team, 2016



Morro Vivo! Viva o Morro! newspaper, 2012



Poster for the 2nd Tourism and Gastronomy Cultural Fair of the Cota Neighborhoods, 2012



Poster for the Video-Reporting Workshop, 2012



Poster for the 3rd Tourism and Gastronomy Cultural Fair of the Cota Neighborhoods, 2013



Poster for the Arraial in Cota 200, 2012



Poster for the Photography and Environment Course, 2016





## The *vila* of all colors

*This is Cota 200, where each house exhibits itself, dashingly adorned by the inhabitants themselves.*

A car enters the mountain range going round and round. The windy roads cuts through such a dense forest that, despite the short distance from São Paulo, it gives the sensation of returning to the beginnings of the world. Numerous histories come to mind of travelers who could not find the way back and who lost themselves forever in the depths of the forest. Appearances deceive. In this area of environmental preservation there continue to live many people.

Going around a curve, the green is interrupted. Unveiled on the side of the road is a set of simple houses, though covered with exuberant tones shining in the sun. The contrast with the sad uniform of the precarious hovels constructed on the steep slopes of Serra do Mar is strong. The surprise as well. Suddenly an extraordinary vision is imposed of a *vila* in all its colors. This is Cota 200, where each house exhibits itself, dashingly adorned by the inhabitants themselves.

Nothing strange that there stop here, where there reside some of the most disadvantaged people from the municipality, growing numbers of visitors, attracted by the unusual sparkling of a settlement considered until very recently as a *favela* in the middle of Serra do Mar. Now it has practically lost all traits of a *favela*, even though the community remains poor and does not have less unemployed, rather to the contrary. Between 2010 and today a metamorphosis occurred. Cota 200 lost two thirds of its residents – those whose houses, constructed on unstable land, were under risk from landslides. But it was urbanized. Those who could stay received basic facilities, they gained in terms of health and comfort; their houses were consolidated.

But this was not enough. It has already been seen in numerous similar interventions in which even though the essential needs were met, the *favela* was still not transformed into a community. People also need restoration; the social fabric needs to be transformed. How? The superintendent Viviane Frost, architect and urbanist raises these question, coming not from theory but from field work: What is the face of an urbanized *favela* in Brazil? What is being done by architect and technical staff? What project of a city is being defended? And this other question: If the state can help people in many ways to reestablish themselves, what is the role in this process of the community, in its own construction?

The other correct intuition of Viviane Frost and her team – along with community communication with a very contemporary spirit – was to seek practical responses to the questions which made the *bairros-cota* a housing laboratory.

## Walls in need of color

In Cota Vivane implemented an experience already tried in other places, but here on a greater scale and with a firm intention of continuity. Ateliê Arte nas Cotas was inspired by Mônica Nador, an internationally recognized fine artist, whose works were a type of social activism. In Jardim Miriam, a peripheral neighborhood in the South Zone of São Paulo where she lives, she created the Jardim Miriam Arte Clube (JAMAC), where she holds workshops. She has taught residents various techniques, such as creating patterns on fabrics or serial painting using paper masks with simple motifs chosen by them, demonstrating the creative potential of anyone.

Fed by the imagination of participants, the work was based on the daily life of the community and was converted into an ongoing collective work. Through joy, vitality, and sincerity, the transformative power of art is highlighted as a way of winning self-esteem and dignity and a tool for social transformation.

Mônica Nador stimulated the training of various artist members of JAMAC, propagating this form of action. “I realized that a lot of paint was used within the museum while there were many walls needing



Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2014

color out there,” she once said. This joke, actually a very serious one, perfectly resumed the purpose of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, open around five years ago in a large building on Rua do Alojamento, in Fabril, Cubatão. Around 750 houses supplied with water, light, and sanitation, and which were definitely staying in Cota 200, also needed color and offered their walls. A large part of them have already been painted, and the aim is that in the coming years, they will all be painted, as well as all commercial buildings.

## Ateliê Arte nas Cotas

The Atelier serves as a space for space for teaching and working, an exhibition hall, and also as a place of sale for the works and objects produced. It is frequently used for meetings and for presenting to the ever-increasing visitors. Festivities in the *bairros-cota* are organized there. Established as part of the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program, it was immediately accepted by the community. Its function is defined as follows: “Encourage through CDHU an exchange between artistic knowledge and practices with the population of the Cubatão *bairros-cota*. Create experiences and debates about the arts; re-signify the use of public spaces; contribute to improve the quality of life in communities and instigate a critical perspective of artistic production through the notion of community belonging for the population in general.”

The chosen coordinators, Fernanda Saguas Tresas, an artist and art-education who had worked with Mônica Nador, and Inês Prado, a designer



Products of Ateliê Arte nas Cotas, 2015

specialized in mosaics, ceramics, print patterned cloth, and product development, received the mission of progressively inducing the residents to associate to transform their homes and neighborhoods. The two artists taught wall painting with the stencil method – the application of paint with rolls or sprays to fill in the stencil patterns on the wall – and the technique of mosaics to decorate public spaces.

It is the coordinators who chose the houses to be painted and ask the consent of the residents and their preferences. All the students participate in the process, from the design phase to the painting of houses and community squares with lively and attractive colors. They also produce pieces with motifs inspired by the flora of the forest: t-shirts, cushions, floor cloths, and note pads. The products are afterwards sold on site or in craftwork fairs in Cubatão and São Paulo. The income reverts to the project.

In the atelier, always open to the residents, a continuous and active social life has emerged. Maria José de Araujo Silva spends a lot of time there, when she is not working in Zenon Cleantes de Moura School, which is on the same street. She was born in the neighborhood. The essential part of her life occurred between Imigrantes and Anchieta, within the perimeter of Pinheiro do Miranda, Fabril, and Agua Fria. When she was young she survived some difficult periods thanks to the abundance of banana trees in the region; she also suffered from the terrible flooding of the Pilões River. Married and with her daughter already raised, she went to see what was going on in Artes nas Cotas. “The art-educator Moema trained me and I now paint. I have decorated large spaces within the school.” Maria José works as a multiplier, in charge of the sale of the products in the atelier’s small shop and receiving visitors. She has sought to improve her life by doing various training courses offered by CDHU.



Multiplier students from the Arte nas Cotas Project, 2012

## Training and creating income

Urban and socio-economic renewal also involves the strengthening of the local economy and the generation of work and income. A group was formed to think about and map out the potentials of the *bairros-cota*. The Urban Renewal Action teams established a partnership with the National Service of Industrial Apprenticeship (SENAI) to provide rapid education in professions such as welders, bricklayers, as well as others from the area of civil construction, where there could exist a demand for workers in the ongoing building works in the *bairros-cota*.

Walking through the recently asphalted steep roads of Cota 200, you come across a place where women in aprons worked in shifts, using caps to hold back their hair. These are the *cocadeiras* (coconut product sellers) who once lived precariously from their sales on the corners of Cubatão and the side of the road. Now they produce sweets prepared and conditioned in accordance with the rules of art. Depending on the demand, they also supply ready lunches to building workers. They became trained chefs thanks to the courses of the Women’s Consulate Institute of Whirlpool Latin America. A partnership with the Brazilian Support Service for Micro and Small Companies (SEBRAE) helped to create and equip the laboratory-kitchen.

The implementation of this project was complex and took a lot of work, since the candidates not only had to learn professional and industrial cooking, but also to acquire notions of community participation and organization. The Solidary Economy and Local Development Group (NESDEL) has until now mobilized 21 women who are divided into two groups: the Entrepreneurs of Serra do Mar who work with experimental cooking supplying events and fairs (receptions, coffee-breaks, brunches, lunches, etc.) and the *Fabricadeiras*, trained in craftwork.

*If the state can help people in many ways to reestablish themselves, what is the role in this process of the community, in its own construction?*



Members of Nesdel producing in the experimental kitchen, 2013

45 women received their Solidary Economy training certificates. Working with NESDEL, Com Com, Ateliê Artes nas Cotas, or in Cota Viva – the most recent social project –, each student in the courses funded by CDHU receives their certification in a ceremony which has become important and very gratifying for those who have either never been to school, or only attended for a short period.

## Cota Viva

The native peoples, established in Serra do Mar for more than 5000 years, had an intimate knowledge of the nature in which they felt they participated and with which, as hunters and gatherers, they knew how to cohabit – unlike the inhabitants of the *bairros-cota* who lived alienated to their surroundings and did not know how to take advantage of the forest, nor how to preserve it. A large part of them were descendants of migrants from the northeast, from another ecosystem, so they did not inherit or receive any environmental education.

The Cota Viva Project was launched in 2013 by CDHU to fill this gap and to develop environmental skills among residents, starting with children and adolescents. Its objective is to teach sustainability values and to prepare them to help in the restoration and conservation of Serra do Mar and the ecosystems involved. It aims to reforest degraded areas, stimulate practical and educational actions about the environment, and work in the revegetation of the Atlantic rainforest.

It also includes a vocational dimension. A nursery-school, to be constructed in Cota 200, will host a set of actions aimed at training community environmental agents. After a four-month course in theory and practice, the participants inscribed in the project will receive a certificate and will be qualified to work, for example, in the reforestation involved in the Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program and the Atlantic Rainforest Mosaic System, once 80 hectares of degraded areas are cleared. Furthermore, it will also be involved in the establishment of the future Cubatão Botanical Garden, in Água Fria.

## Sustainable Tourism

Thanks to the Com Com Project, the various social programs were monitored step by step and systematically documented. Above all, it was the colored houses of Cota 200 which contributed to give visibility and fame to the work carried out in the *bairros-cota*.

Television reports showed the *favela* which had become a picturesque neighborhood where one could never be expected – in a municipality where, a few years before, it had a terrible reputation in relation to the environmental question. The solutions found in relation to the occupations in areas of risk and the originality of the method applied there were explained; the amplitude of the project carried out inside the Serra do Mar State Park was emphasized. This had a repercussion.

Visitors began to arrive, ever more numerous. Urbanists, architects, and professionals from the city came first. Cota 200 became the modest shop window from the urban experimentation of CDHU. The peak of success was the visit of an English prince. The very mediatic Prince Harry, grandson of Queen Elizabeth, planted trees, sampled a dish made from bananas by the NESDEL cooks and visited Ateliê Artes nas Cortas. Such a noble guest left the population totally euphoric. His passage, widely reported in the British newspaper, made Cota 200 famous throughout the United Kingdom.

Tourists of various types appeared. Lovers of the tours organized in Serra do Mar put Cota 200 on the route of their excursions. Between 2015 and 2016, around 900 public and private school students visited the neighborhood; they were made aware about the importance of region with its own important history. The social team not only encouraged and favored this interest, but perceived how much it could benefit local development.

The singular geographic position of the *bairros-cota*, the rich history of the territory and singular ongoing experience called the attention of Professor Davis Gruber Sansolo, from the Institute of Biosciences, Paulista Coast Campus (IB/CLP), 'Júlio de Mesquita Filho' Paulista State University (UNESP), in São Vicente. He found in Cubatão an exemplary case for his research concerned with tourism with a community base used as a lever for social development. The practices of the Urban Renewal Team corresponded to his reflections on the parallels between policies for protecting nature and tourist development.

In a joint initiative with the CDHU socio-technical team and the specialists from UNESP, a post-urbanization social project was commenced focusing on community tourism, and based on three areas: ecology, history, and socio-environmental, benefiting the residents of these areas and the Serra do Mar State Park (Itutinga-Pilões Group). One further step towards the consolidation of the ventures that started in the *bairros-cota*.







Fernanda Saguas, 2015



Inês Prado, 2012

## The story of Fefa and Inês

### Fernanda Saguas Tresas

Artist and art educator

### Inês Prado

artist, designer, and art educator

Both have degrees in the visual arts from the Faculty of Fine Arts of FAAP. Fernanda Saguas Tresas was always interested in art education and worked with communities, while Inês Prado always dedicated herself to the solidary and creative economy. For this reason, they answered CDHU's request to carry out an artistic intervention in the *bairros-cota*, leading the population to participate in the transformation of their own settlements.

First, they set up small sporadic workshops in the street, afterwards inviting residents to visit a small warehouse, always working with demonstrations. Finally, they invited people to visit the atelier and offered courses to community agents. With this they gradually won the trust of residents. They expanded the functioning of the atelier progressively, wanting to make it a space that was always open to anyone interested in working in art. A large number of people passed through there. "We managed to get results from everyone," Fefa and Inês comment, satisfied. A group of assiduous participants was formed and Ateliê Artes nas Cotas began to develop vocational activities, offering paid services – part of the money covering the expenses and the other part shared.

It was the two artists who chose the houses of Cota 200 to be painted, obeying the criteria of visibility and prioritizing public spaces, after a discussion with those in charge of the building works and the community agents in the Urbanization Operational Group.

The enthusiasm of the residents grew as the number of painted houses increased. For Fernanda and Inês, this urbanization work where art and residents are included gains incomparable importance from its social role, the consolidation of the group now called the Art in the Cotas Group. Furthermore, "because painting walls and houses does not only serve to make them beautiful, it has to be offered to everyone."



Juçara palm shoots produced in the Cota Viva Project, 2015



Environmental agents in a Community Based Tourism visiting day, 2015



Environmental agent carrying out maintenance in the building site, 2015



Nesdel experimental kitchen, 2015



Members of Nesdel at an event, 2012



Members of Nesdel at the Cultural Fair, 2012



Ernani Pilla, Janine Ferretti and Annette Kilmer - IDB team visiting the Cota neighborhoods, 2012



Professor Davis Gruber Sansolo in the 1st Community Based Tourism Workshop, 2015



Jonathan Renshaw, IDB Social Specialist, visiting the Cota neighborhoods, 2011



Prince Harry of England visiting the Cota neighborhoods, 2014

## Hopes popping up

*Sooner or later, there is a clash with the politics of the city as it is practiced in Brazil, a country with a strong habit of little or no urbanism.*

The work carried out by the CDHU socio-technical team in Cota 200 and in Pinheiro do Miranda aimed to consolidate existing urban settlements, in the figurative and direct sense: unstable soil, fragile people.

Another team offered equivalent support for the residents of the new housing estates, Rubens Lara, Bolsões 7 and 9, and others scattered around the Baixada Santista where the residents removed from the *bairros-cota* would be progressively housed. The principal and most arduous effort was to win the adhesion of families. All the reports of resettlements included histories of trauma, loss, and resistance.

Confronting situations of conflict, overcoming suspicion in relation to the public authorities, explaining, convincing, resolving individual cases in a balanced manner, this is the daily work of Walkyria Marques de Paula. What helps in this is her long professional practice in the world of *favelas*. However, the manager of Urban Renewal Actions remembers, “the days of strong rain and the past anguish thinking about the risk of the collapse of houses and the people living there in the *morro*.”

An old resident of Cota 200, the pensioner Carlos Guilherme Campos Costa admits: “we were aware of the risk, but it did not seem so strong.” As a community agent, now living in Rubens Lara, he dedicated himself to providing information and intermediating the dialogue between project technical staff, socio-technical workers, and residents. “We fought, we managed to change certain things and obtain others. It was a great experience of human knowledge.” To expose the problems of the community, he broadcasts his poems on Com Com.

Now in Rubens Lara, he believes almost everyone feels happy. A certain type of calm has returned, both in the *bairros-cota* and the new estates. If the change represented an alteration of habits, of social relations, a real advance was conquered in terms of security, comfort, regularization, access to their own houses – and the urbanization of the subsistent settlements. New perspectives were opened.



## The two manners of producing the city

Viviane Frost's question – what face will the urbanized *favela* have? – finds answers here which correspond to two ways of producing the city. One starting from existence, the other building the new.

In Cota 200 the choice was to conserve the area as it had been made by history, without freezing it in its past, but increasing its quality. The social fabric was reinforced so that the community could achieve its emancipation and come to transform themselves afterwards through their own dynamic. Illustrative of this option is the Arte nas Cotas project, source of pride, collective self-esteem, and visual pleasure.

The new housing estates responded to a different – rational and quantitative – logic which was generalized in Post-War Europe due to the urgency of reconstruction and the need to rapidly house the numerous poor families and the large mass of immigrants. To absorb these populations, large-scale housing estates were constructed one after the other, obeying rigorously orthogonal neighborhood plans. In these buildings for the poor, built on the peripheries of city, there lived people disfavored in terms of transport, services, and culture. Slums were generally eliminated, but urban and social integration were forgotten.

The insufficiencies in this type of urbanism, harmful for the development of both cities and citizenship, have already been described in numerous critical studies. Considered as outdated, it continued to be applied on a large-scale in Brazil – despite being segregational and discriminatory – under the justification of urgency. While Bolsões 7 and 9 significantly conformed to this model, the Rubens Lara estate, located in Jardim Casqueiro neighborhood and whose 1840 housing units are totally occupied, followed another pattern.

*Two ways of producing the city: one starting from the existence, the other building the new.*

The quality of this estate, carefully thought out and designed by the São Paulo architect Adriana Levisky, won international recognition: it was awarded the 2012 Greenvana Greenbest prize and the Sustainable Social Housing Initiative (Sushi) from the United Nations Program for the Environment, for producing healthy housing of social interest for the low-income population. Happy to participate in this housing estate in the vast Serra do Mar recovery Program, the architect fully associated herself with the methodology prepared by the CDHU team – linking urbanism and social projects – and considers the solutions adopted to be very suitable. “It is very rare,” she says, “to find such ambition in projects of this amplitude. I feel proud: I gambled on a project solution in favor of citizenship. The dialogue that I maintain with residents confirms that I was correct.”

Adriana Levisky explains an effort was made to integrate concepts of urbanism in the projects, imagine the diversity of the neighborhood, introduce variety in the façades and colors, establish connections between buildings and public spaces, insert differentials and interactions, tracing out the route of the road, and also thinking about the access and crossing. Not everything was achieved. “We had designed some buildings for mixed use. The Secretariat did not accept this, alleging judicial and administrative motives. The part of the architect was implemented, but in terms of urbanism and public facilities, there is still a lot to do.”

## Questions

Sooner or later, there is a clash with the politics of the city as it is practiced in Brazil, a country with a strong habit of little or no urbanism. Where the idea of the immediate finds its excuse in the reality of social urgency. Where there prevails the interest of construction companies and politicians, where projects lack continuity due to the lack of funds or the stability of command.

“How to start a city?” This question, asked by Jeronimo Vilhena, the principal communicator of the Com Com project, was the title of the film made in 2014, about the work of CDHU’s Superintendency of Urban Renewal Actions (SARU). It shows the company’s social projects, supporting each other to offer the residents of the *bairros-cota* a renewed proposal of life, the weaving of a social fabric susceptible to being consolidated little by little – but which can be torn, depending on circumstances. This will depend in the first place on the improvement or worsening of the employment and economic situation for families, the dynamism of local initiatives, and the support which the state will continue to provide after it withdraws from the territory.

Some other questions remain. The first is related to environmental preservation, the remaining 7% of the Atlantic Rainforest still intact which the Serra do Mar Restoration Program is trying to save. Who will occupy the transition between the urban zone and the preservation zone? Environmental consciousness, the ultimate ambition, depends on the recovery of the population itself, the target of the social projects. Will it be possible to maintain and ensure a positive evolution in times of a weakened economy and public authorities? In an environment disturbed by the crisis of the petrochemical complex and by the increase in demission, how to avoid the reemergence of *favelas*? Or, to the contrary, will the *bairros-cota* be emptied, despite all the efforts made, as those who lived there go to search for employment in other parts of the country?

*The social programs supporting each other to weave a social fabric susceptible to being consolidated little by little – but which can be torn, depending on circumstances.*

\*

Like volcanoes erupt and let the bowels of the earth appear, Brazil is undergoing profound turmoil, revealing much of its old evils, never seriously considered or treated. The first amongst them, which creates dissatisfaction among millions, is the lack of housing for the poor. Illness is chronic, medicines are always late and insufficient.

In this very disturbing scenario, why tell the story of small human groups marooned for various generations in the Atlantic Rainforest in Serra do Mar? Is their case exemplary? Can it be used for other analogous situations? Evaluation still seems difficult.

However, Brazil is still the country of a thousand and one experiments. Of numerous imaginative and courageous attempts in the fields of politics, the economy, the arts, the environment, and the social. Hopes pop up everywhere in the country, often without being fulfilled. However, little by little, a very rich cultural alternative is formed which – who knows – future times can take advantage of. What the Cubatão *bairros-cota* has taught us increases this abundant heritage of practical knowledge. Since it is humble and concrete it will multiply.



Ateliê Arte nas Cotas graduation ceremony at the 1st Cultural, Artistic, and Gastronomic Fair of the Cota Neighborhoods, 2011



## Cota 200 Anthem

### Régio Alves

Composer

Arrangement by

Maestro Alexandre Felipe Gomes, 2004

I see the stars reflecting in the sky and the full moon brightening the immensity.  
Our dream was to live in a place of great peace, charity, and devotion. From here you can see the sun rise in the green sea and the landscape creates new inspiration.

Cota 200, my beloved, you are my life, the cradle of my life.  
I will love you forever, you are my shooting star, my sky, my heat.

Airlines, railways, and highways from the north to the south crossing Serra do Mar,  
The birds decorating nature, how much beauty we have to contemplate!  
The air is pure and the climate is relevant; the murmur of the waterfall is not far.

Cota 200, my beloved, you are my life, the cradle of my life.  
I will love you forever, you are my shooting star, my sky, my heat.

Hail the slopes and the green valleys, whose preservation is always important.  
The rain falls and the wind blows strong, our luck depends on faith and prayer.  
If by chance life ends here, wherever I go I will carry my gratitude with me.

[2x]

Cota 200, my beloved, you are my life, the cradle of my life.  
I will love you forever, you are my shooting star, my sky, my heat.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGzOIR5-U4>





Students visiting Cota 200, 2013



Students visiting Cota 400, 2013



Residents receiving students in a visit to Cota 400, 2013



Residents receiving students in a visit at the amphitheater of Cota 200, 2013





Children in a seed planting activity in the Cota Viva Project, 2014



Members of the Com Com Project, 2013



Shoot from the Cota Viva Project, 2016



Exhibition of a film in Cota 200, 2012



Arte nas Cotas Project Team carrying out an intervention, 2012



Exhibition of a film in Água Fria neighborhood, 2011



Zabelê groups in a presentation in the 1st Cultural, Artistic, and Gastronomic Fair of the Cota Neighborhoods, 2011



# Appendices

## The Serra do Mar Socio-Environmental Restoration Program and the Atlantic Rainforest Mosaic System

### Aim

Encourage the conservation, sustainable use, and socio-environmental restoration of important conservation units for the Atlantic Rainforest biome in the state of São Paulo, as well as creating social and ecological benefits such as the protection of mangrove swamps in the Baixada Santista and the protection of biodiversity.

### Scope/ Area of Operation

The Serra do Mar State Park (PESM) alone possesses 332,000 hectares in 24 Paulista municipalities, which contribute to the regulation of the climate, encourages the quality of water supply and shelters the mammals, amphibians, and reptiles and half of the bird species from the biome. It also covers the Jureia-Itatins Mosaic which possesses 110,800 hectares, covering two preserved masses of Atlantic Rainforest and a large coastal plain. In the maritime area, the Program works with the Mosaic of Protected Island and Marine Areas of the Paulista Coastline, with a total area of 1.2 million hectares in 15 municipalities, composed of three APAs (Areas of Marine Environmental Protection), five state parks, and two Areas of Relevant Ecological Interest.

### Implantation of the Program

The Program is divided into three components: 1. Protection of Conservation Units; 2. Social Investments in the Serra do Mar State Park (PESM); 3. Inspection of Conservation Units. The Forestry Foundation implements components 1 and 3, while CDHU works with the implementation of component 2.

The Forestry Foundation has already carried out 11 infrastructural projects in PESH and three in the Mosaic of Protected Island and Marine Areas, provided 10 vessels, 81 vehicles, three tractors, two motorbikes, and one airplane for use in the Conservation Areas looked

after, as well as for the Environmental Police. Also of importance was the holding of the Training Course for Conservation Unit Administrators, the PESM Trail and Attractions System Project, the PESM Environmental Quality Monitoring System, the Conservation Unit Administration Manual, the Executive Projects, with the AQUA Certification for the work of the Environmental Police, covering the bases of the 1st and 3rd battalions of the Environmental Police, and the Center of Command Training for Environmental Policing, amongst others.

Underway at present is the Forestry Management Plan to eradicate exotic species from PESM, the environmental restoration of 45 hectares of clear areas, the Management Plan for APA Ilha Comprida, five construction works in the Jureia-Itatins Mosaic, the management and construction work in the headquarters of the 1st Battalion of the Environmental Police, the Environmental Police Training Centre, both in the Municipality of São Paulo, the PESM/ Caraguatatuba Group in Intermediary Road, the demolition of buildings and floors in the *bairros-cota* and Água Fria in PESM/ Itutinga-Pilões Group, the work adapting the perennization of the Despraiado Road in the Jureia-Itatins Mosaic, the contracting of the conclusion of the Management Plan of the Jureia-Itatins Mosaic, the completion of the preparation of the Management Plans for three Marine APAs and two ARIEs from the Mosaic of Protected Islands and Marine Areas, the contracting of executive projects for construction works in the RDS of Despraiado and Barra do Una, for the base of E. Ec. Jureia-Itatins, as well as the base for P. E. Prelado, supply for the aircraft and the refurbishment of the PIER of P. E. Ilha Anchieta, as well as various other contracts related to the operationalization of Conservation Units and the Environmental Police.

By December 2016 CDHU had removed 4727 families and handed over 4085 housing units, with 3594 constructed in Cubatão, and 464 in other municipalities, as well as 27 letters of credit; 642 families have provisional housing assistance, while 1898 families benefitted from urbanization works in the Cota 200 and Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhoods.

In the North and South sectors, the construction works were started on 166 housing units in São Sebastião, 116 in Pedro de Toledo, 376 in Ubatuba, and 360 in São Vicente. Contracts were signed on 7 July 2014 for 500 housing units in São Vicente dos Condomínios, Penedo,

and Primavera. Currently being drafted are the Regulations for the contracting of 668 housing units in Cubatão (K) and 216 in Cubatão (B).

Also underway is the diagnosis of multi-disciplinary projects for the implementation of housing and urbanization programs for precarious settlements, and contracts for the socio-technical work and social monitoring of the Program.

### Contracted Value

The value of the loan with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is US \$162.4 million, of which US \$100.5 is for Housing and US \$61.9 million for the Environment. The value committed by way of counterpart from São Paulo state is US \$307.7 million, representing 65.4% of the total value of the Program of US \$470.1 million.

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Aerial photo of the Grotão, in the Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood before the intervention, 2009  
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Aerial photo of the Cota 200 before the intervention, 2009. Image © 2016 Digital Globe



Aerial photo of the Grotão, in the Pinheiro do Miranda neighborhood after the removal, 2016  
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