

A BRAZIL OF

Rights

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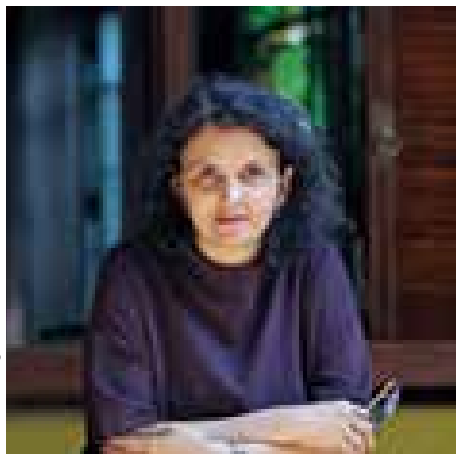
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2007 - 2016 | 10 YEARS

by Ana Valéria Araújo

A MATURE AND STRONG FOUNDATION THAT IS READY TO MOVE FORWARD

Ernesto Rodrigues/Fundo Brasil



When Brazil Human Rights Fund was conceived, the idea was to address two key issues for human rights in the country. The first was to protect the rights of victims of institutionalized violence and discrimination, and the second, which in part stems from the first, was the fact that Brazilian society was unaware of the importance of human rights organizations in Brazil and hardly ever supported them.

Throughout the past ten years, the founding motives of the Brazil Fund have proven to be visionary, as we continuously support groups and organizations at the forefront of human rights issues, such as women's rights, the fight against racism, police violence and youth rights, which are presently guiding the political debates in Brazil. We have empowered those who have little or no access to other sources of funds. We have been there when nobody else has.

Brazil Fund has always been guided by the need to act on the causes rather than to minimize the consequences of inequality in the country. That was important, because we are one of the few organizations that is able to mobilize funds to support issues that challenge the status

quo and divide opinions, and because of that have limited access to funds.

The image that symbolizes the first decade of Brazil Fund is the impressive breakthrough of this organization that started small and, 10 years later, has become consolidated. This means not only enormous progress regarding the quality of the work provided, but also a substantial increase in the capacity to fund human rights organizations in the field. We have awarded over R\$ 12 million in grants to some 300 on-the-ground groups.

It is also worth mentioning that we were able to consistently expand our budget - a progressive increase with no setbacks. Since the beginning, we have experienced a sustainable development, which has always been a priority concern for our foundation.

Today, Brazil Fund is nearly seven times larger than when it started. For an organization that needs to raise almost all funds to make grants as well as to cover its own operations, the progress in these ten years has been amazing and dignifying.

Our original purpose was to fund grassroots groups and small human rights organizations through annual calls. Having

done so, it was possible to extend the work to launch other lines of action such as specific calls and letters of invitation. Through this strategic expansion, we went deep into relevant human rights issues without ever forgetting our roots - the annual call for proposals - and our ability to reach all regions of the country and the greatest diversity of groups and causes.

Training processes were available to grantees and have been improving with growing experience every year. Today, training workshops are able to guide and inform crosscutting themes and invite groups dedicated to different causes to reflect together upon common agendas and strategies. We have gone beyond the financial support initially planned, since our work creates spaces of interaction and political discussion. We also seek to ensure the necessary technical training for grantees.

In this sense, we have incorporated a strategic look at communication as one of our axes to strengthen the human rights movement. This translates into grants made in this area, promotion of workshops, debates and seminars. At the same time, we have made a large effort to shed light on the initiatives we support.

I see Brazil Fund as a body that has fully developed since birth. We started small and we are now a fully formed, intelligent being, bold enough to challenge and review its own concepts and strong enough to move on.

It should be emphasized that this mature energy, which will be key in the coming years, is a result of accumulated experience. In this respect, we were greatly supported by a governing body that guided Brazil Fund's growth and was truly responsible for bearing on and perpetuating its way of thinking.

Little by little, we have woven a web of highly qualified professionals that has expanded and is now solid. This invigorates and renews us, enabling Brazil

Fund to look forward.

The partners who have supported our activities over the years and contributed to the development of our work and our capacity to impact the field are also part of this web.

I can't refrain from saying that in these ten years we have also faced problems. And they were not few. However, the main one, which still challenges us, concerns the mobilization of funds in our country. This involves the necessary awareness of the population of the importance of human rights causes. The scenario is full of drawbacks and the work requires creativity and persistence.

Ahead of us is the great challenge of ensuring financial stability and raising local funds to strengthen the groups and human rights organizations, allowing them to resist and survive in a context of setbacks and dismantling of political and social structures.

The magazine "A Brazil of Rights" celebrates our 10th anniversary and tells the stories of some of the grants made by Brazil Fund to support actors who help the promotion of human rights across different themes throughout the country.

We chose one story for each of the ten years of annual calls we have launched. Although the stories could not represent all grants awarded by the Fund, our efforts were focused on showing the great regional diversity and the different themes covered by our work. Renowned journalists linked to human rights issues were invited to write stories based on their own reading of the projects and on the universe of rights organizations and their causes.

So often invisible, the actors funded by Brazil Fund have an unimaginable ability to transform the situations of rights violation around them. They need to come out and be heard. Our job is also to reveal these people and place them under the spotlights.

Brazil Fund gives visibility to those people who make a difference in the lives of all. This is the reason we were born ten years ago and it explains why we have grown so much and will keep on growing.

Unfortunately, today, the context in Brazil is alarming, with increased backlashes involving human rights protection groups, including the use of tactics aimed at disqualifying these agents and criminalizing them. Not to mention the threats of violence and death.

It is increasingly essential to support small and medium civil society groups, so that they are able to resist and keep on struggling, and stand by those who are under threat in this field ensuring that the achievements made so far are not diminished.

An organization such as Brazil Human Rights Fund is essential to help ensure the role of civil society in our country in the struggle for human rights.

We need everyone together in this journey.

Ana Valéria Araújo
Executive Director

INTERVIEW

Jorge Eduardo Durão



Romy Santos/Fundo Brasil

THE NEXT 10 YEARS

Jorge Eduardo Durão is a lawyer and has a post-graduate degree in social anthropology. He is the president of Brazil Human Rights Fund, and a key person in the articulation of non-governmental organizations and the struggle for rights in Brazil. To mark Brazil Fund’s 10th anniversary we interviewed him on contemporary and ongoing issues, since we are now living in times – both locally and outside Brazil – of democratic erosion and human rights push backs. This is why we asked Jorge Eduardo about his perception of the present situation and future perspectives for Brazil Fund and the whole field of human rights, from this moment on.

What is your analysis of the current human rights situation in Brazil?

With regard to human rights, the national situation is marked by threats and setbacks. There have been setbacks from the institutional point of view with the dismantling of human rights policies that began even before the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff. The growing criminalization of social movements and the increased repression of popular demonstrations are symptoms of the expansion of a state of exception that has long been in force for the working classes subjected to a daily routine of police violence, black youth extermination, inequality and racism. Bill 241/55 aims to repeal rights enshrined in

THE POLITICAL CRISIS, WITH THE EMERGENCE OF FAR-RIGHT DEMONSTRATIONS, MADE CLEAR THE EXISTENCE OF A BROAD SOCIAL CONSTITUENCY IN FAVOR OF A CONSERVATIVE AGENDA.

the 1988 Constitution. The political crisis in progress, with the emergence of far-right demonstrations (such as the recent invasion of the National Congress), has made clear the existence of a broad social constituency in favor of the conservative agenda that has gained momentum in Congress.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAZIL FUND IS LINKED TO THE FACT THAT THE CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPRESSION IS ROOTED IN BRAZILIAN SOCIETY

What is your impression on the international scenario regarding human rights?

Internationally, the daily and brutal violations of human rights – by states, businesses and fundamentalist movements – tend to grow exponentially with the advance of the extreme right in the United States and Europe. The support from important sectors of the population in rich countries to the inhumane and racist treatment given to migrants and refugees contributed to the trivialization of human rights suppression against most of the world’s population. We must not forget that this turn to the

right in those sectors of the population is linked to the insecurity and loss of rights to which they themselves are subjected, as victims of austerity policies.

In this context, what is the importance of Brazil Human Rights Fund?

In Brazil, even within the democratic field, there are few organizations that identify themselves as human rights organizations, and among those, very few are committed to advocacy work to advance priority human rights issues (often issues that almost nobody funds), and there are many groups and/or organizations with little or no access to funding. Up to 2016, Brazil Human Rights Fund has awarded more than R\$12 million in grants to over 300 human rights groups and organizations. In my point of view, the importance of Brazil Fund is directly related to the fact that the culture of human rights suppression is largely rooted in the social fabric of Brazilian society, which was formed from the evil foundations of slavery and racism.

In your opinion, why is a strong civil society important to a democratic country?

Even though Brazil Fund already systematically supports initiatives to confront institutional violence, we are aware that effective impacts on public policies aimed at protecting and promoting rights shall only happen when a broad mobilization of society around human rights exists. The human rights cause will only be successful through the strengthening of a broad range of civil society organizations capable of indicating a new intellectual and moral direction to Brazilian society.

Do you believe that Brazil Fund may have a specific role from 2017 on?

In this adverse scenario for human rights that I have pictured, Brazil Fund will face new challenges that add to its permanent acting commitment. I mean the need to provide special support to human rights defenders that are at risk. Brazil Fund will have to increase its ability to respond in real time to emergencies arising from the critical situation expanding in the country, as well as the ability to help reduce the impacts caused by the dismantling of institutional human rights mechanisms.

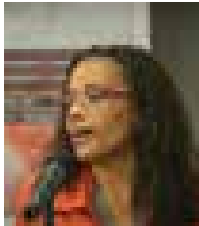
THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSE WILL ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL WITH THE STRENGTHENING OF A BROAD RANGE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

PRODUCERS



Andrea Dip
She is a reporter and works for *Pública*. She has written about human rights since 2001, when she started working for Caros Amigos magazine. She produced the first investigative article in comic format in Brazil. Andrea has received five awards, among them the Tim Lopes Award for Investigative Journalism and the Mulher Imprensa Trophy.

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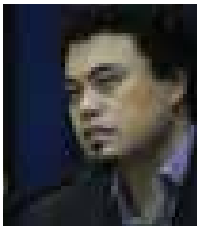
Flávia Oliveira
She is a journalist graduated from Federal Fluminense University (UFF) and an expert in economics and social indicators. She writes a column in the Society section of the newspaper O Globo. Flavia is a commentator on economic issues at "Estúdio i", a TV news show on GloboNews.

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Djamila Ribeiro
She is a researcher in the Political Philosophy field. She is Assistant Secretary at the Human Rights and Citizenship Secretariat of São Paulo. She writes for the electronic version of Carta Capital magazine. She is one of the main references in the feminist black movement in Brazil.

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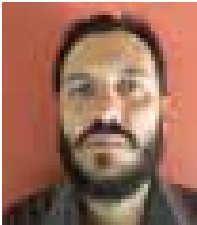
Leonardo Sakamoto
He is a journalist, professor and has a Ph. D in Political Science. He directs the NGO Reporter Brazil, founded in 2001 by journalists, social scientists and educators in order to foster reflection on the violation of the rights of people and workers in Brazil. He is also a board member of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

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Bruno Paes Manso
He worked in the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* and is one of the founders of Ponte Journalism. He is a graduate student at the USP Center for the Study of Violence. He is the author of "Man X - A report on the soul of murderers in São Paulo" (2005) and "Homicide in São Paulo - An examination on trends from 1960 to 2010" (2016).

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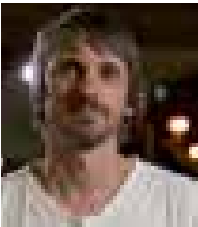
Spensy Pimentel
He is an anthropologist and journalist. Currently, he is a professor at the Federal University of Southern Bahia. As a researcher and journalist, he has followed the situation of the Guarani-Kaiowa indigenous tribe for over 15 years.

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Ronaldo Bressane
Writer and journalist, he has published "Sandiliche" (Cosac Naify) and "Mnemomáquina" (Black Demon), among other works. He has written for Trip, seLect and Alfa magazines and presently works for some of the main media in the country. He also teaches fiction and non-fiction workshops. His website is called Impostor at "ronaldobressane.com".

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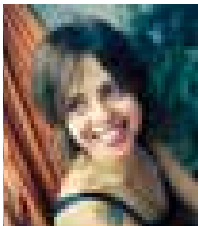
Fred Melo Paiva
He was managing editor of *Trip* and *Tpm* magazine, editor of the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, executive editor of Brasil Econômico and reporter for magazines such as *Veja*, *Playboy* and *Isto É*. He is a writer and collaborates with some of the leading newspapers and magazines in Brazil.

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Lucas Ferraz
He is a journalist and started his career at the newspaper *O Cometa Itabirano*. He has worked for the website *Congresso em Foco*, in Minas Gerais and in Brasília. He was a reporter and foreign correspondent of the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo. Currently, he collaborates with Agência Pública and with the newspaper *Valor Econômico*. His work has been published in Piauí and The Clinic (Chile) magazines.

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Karla Monteiro
She has a degree in journalism from PUC-MG, worked in several media such as *Veja*, *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Globo*. She writes for magazines such as *Piauí*, *Trip* and *Serafina*. She is the author of the books "Karmatopia: a trip to India" and "Under Pressure: The war routine of a Brazilian doctor." Currently, she is working on the biography of journalist Samuel Wainer.

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More than 5 million children in Brazil live without their father's name on their birth certificate

2007 | SINGLE MOTHERS ASSOCIATION OF PERNAMBUCO - APEMAS

by Andrea Dip

SHE HAS A HAPPY FAMILY

IN PERNAMBUCO, A GROUP OF SINGLE MOTHERS DECIDED TO NOT ONLY TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN, BUT OF EACH OTHER. THEY HELPED THE FORMULATION OF MORE RIGHTS FOR ALL MOTHERS IN BRAZIL.

It was shortly after her child's birth that Marli's companion disappeared. Or rather, abandoned her with their baby, her first child. Marli da Silva was 30 years old. And the man did not even formally register the child as his own. To support the family of two, Marli says she did "all that a mother could do to ensure her own survival and her son's": she sold chocolate in the streets, door to door cosmetic sales, she washed clothes and worked in a bar. Marli found out not only that it is difficult to pay the bills and raise a child by herself, but also that, as a single mother, she was not alone.

According to IBGE (Brazilian Institute

THE WORK SERVED AS A REFERENCE AND HELPED THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUSTICE TO SET UP A NEW MODEL ACROSS THE COUNTRY. TODAY, IN BRAZIL, THE FORMAL PROCESS OF LATE RECOGNITION OF PATERNITY IS FREE.

of Geography and Statistics), in 2010, 38.7% of the 57.3 million registered households were headed by women; and according to the Secretariat of Women Policies (SPM), in over 42% of these homes women lived with their children without a husband or partner.

But Marli did not need IBGE's data to

fight for her rights and for the rights of all mothers who were in similar conditions. In 1991, she founded the Pernambuco Association of Single Mothers (Apemas).

"I started looking for women who were in the same situation as I was, who had been abandoned by their companions and were experiencing difficulties,

so that we could help each other," she recalls. "At first, they were too embarrassed to participate, because they thought they would suffer further prejudice, since a single mother is someone who has been abandoned. Even their families usually abandon them. But I insisted and tried to identify what we had in common besides raising children by ourselves. I found that

ACCORDING TO OUR NUMBERS, AFTER 25 YEARS, APEMAS, WAS ABLE TO SOLVE OVER 50,000 CASES. "BRAZIL FUND WAS ESSENTIAL TO OUR HISTORY. WE WOULD NOT HAVE MADE SO MUCH PROGRESS WITHOUT THIS SUPPORT."

most of our children had no father's family name on their birth certificates."

Once again, the figures reflect Marli's perception. According to the School Census of 2011, 5.5 million Brazilian children don't carry their father's family name on their birth certificate, which is the equivalent to about 10% of all children.

In the beginning, Apemas promoted debates at the Municipal Council and Legislative Assembly to discuss something as fundamental as formal recognition of paternity, calling the public ministry and women's associations to discuss how difficult, bureaucratic, costly and time consuming the recognition of paternity process could be. "Most men did not want to acknowledge paternity and told women to take DNA testing. Which, at that time, could not be done through the public health system and was very expensive when done in private clinics. I began to demand solutions to this problem from public institutions, to expose this issue, really," says Marli.

The association made an agreement with the Justice Court to get free DNA testing for a limited number of women

and then fought for the state government to be responsible for these expenses. "Today, this is part of Pernambuco's public policy," she celebrates. Still, late recognition of paternity was slow and costly. In court, the proceedings could take 10 years and when fathers decided to voluntarily register their children at the notary's office, it was an expensive pro-

cess. Because of that, in 2006, Apemas launched a campaign in partnership with Justice System institutions for voluntary, free and less bureaucratic recognition of paternity in three municipalities of Pernambuco. In five days, 1,700 children had their paternity formally recognized.

In 2007, the campaign "Seja um pai legal" (a double entendre meaning both "Be a cool dad" and "Be a legal dad") was held during 12 days throughout the state and was able to formally acknowledge paternity in 5000 birth certificates. The campaign continued for a few years.

"After much fighting, the gratuity was officially introduced in late recognition of paternity here in Pernambuco and our work became a reference to the National Council of Justice (CNJ) to introduce this model across the country. Today, in Brazil, the formal process of late recognition of paternity is free. It was a great victory. According to our numbers, Apemas, after 25 years was able to solve over 50,000 cases."

Today, Marli is in the 2nd year of law school and is preparing a new recognition of paternity campaign in penitentiaries,

called "Maternity beyond Walls," which aims to reach at least a thousand children and strengthen the links between detainees and their families.

"Brazil Human Rights Fund was essential to our history; we would not have advanced so much without its support and we wouldn't have been able to spread the gratuity for late recognition of paternity to the whole country. We have signed a new partnership to hold this campaign, with such an important agenda, in penal institutions. We are very thankful to Brazil Fund," she adds.



Apemas was first supported during the early work performed by Brazil Fund in 2007 through the project, "He is my Father - Paternity, recognize this right." The organization was also supported in 2011 through the project, "Paternity, everybody's right" and now, in 2016, during Brazil Fund's 10th anniversary, with the project, "Maternity Beyond Walls, women and the search for affective and family bonds". On three occasions, the association's proposals were selected through the Fund's annual call for proposals.

Quando falamos de direitos humanos no Brasil,



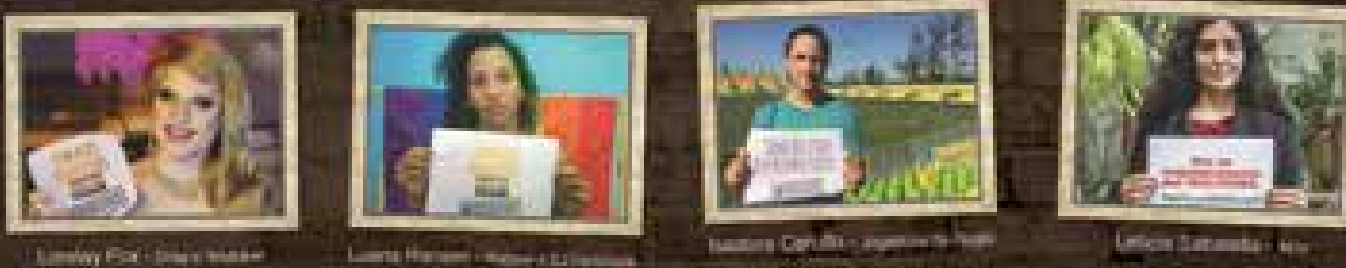
Não Tá Tranquilo Não Tá Favorável

Vivemos um momento em que forças conservadoras promovem a perda de direitos e retrocessos. O resultado é uma forte frustração. Para superar isso, quem sofre com a violência, a homofobia e o machismo deve fortalecer sua voz!

O apoio de todas e todos é fundamental!

Com a sua participação conseguimos apoiar ideias transformadoras e lideranças coletivas. Está na hora de construir o diálogo entre a geração que conquistou direitos e segue lutando e a geração que quer preservá-los e alcançar novos avanços.

VEJA QUEM JÁ ESTÁ PARTICIPANDO.



FAÇA PARTE DO MOVIMENTO. ACESSE: naotatranquilonaotafavoravel.org





The latest edition of the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security recorded 58,467 intentional violent deaths in the country

2008 | FEJUNES - BLACK YOUTH STATE
FORUM OF ESPÍRITO SANTO.

by Flávia Oliveira

EXTERMINATION
OF BLACK
YOUTH,
THE MOST URGENT AGENDA

TO REPORT EXTERMINATION IS TO SHAKE UP THE SOCIAL STRUCTURES THAT ARE IN PLACE. THE NATURALIZATION/TRIVIALIZING OF THE BODIES OF THOUSANDS OF BLACK YOUTH WAS A PHENOMENON THAT HAS NOT FACED MUCH OPPOSITION.

In the list of crises that Brazil needs to face, none is greater or more serious than the epidemic of youth homicide. The latest edition of the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security recorded 58,467 intentional violent deaths in the country. More than half of the victims (54%) were between 15 and 24 years old. Eighty-six murders of boys and young men happen every day; three out of four of them have black or brown skin. No recession

or political instability exceeds the urgent character of this agenda. The support provided by Brazil Fund to the fight against the murder of young people in Brazil is not recent. In the 2008 annual call for proposals, one of the organizations awarded was the Black Youth Forum of the State of Espírito Santo (Fejunes), which proposed a set of actions against racism. That year, the state recorded 1,982 homicides and robberies,

according to the 2009 edition of the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security. Espírito Santo was among the eight federal states with the largest absolute number of murders; the homicide rate reached 56.7 deaths per hundred thousand inhabitants, the second largest in the country. In 2015, the total number of victims of these two crimes had dropped to 1,428; the homicide rate (36.7/100,000) became the 11th in the country.

In the first year Fejunes received funding from Brazil Fund, it focused its activities around raising awareness. It organized a campaign to call attention to the high number of homicides of young people and generally mobilized youth, civil society and authorities in the state. It also produced a booklet and a video called “One more,” which won an award at the Visões Periféricas Festival, in Rio de Janeiro.

However, the initiative faced resistance. “The State Campaign against the Extermination of Black Youth wanted to work on an extremely sensitive agenda. To report extermination is to shake up the social structures that are in place. The naturalization/trivializing of the bodies of thousands of black youth was a phenomenon that was not really opposed until

from Brazil Fund in two other annual calls for proposals. In 2009, in addition to urban violence and the homicides resulting from police intervention, the project joined the debate on early pregnancy and abortion, problems that affect predominantly black girls and young women in Espírito Santo, as well as in the rest of the country.

Other civil society organizations joined the Forum, such as the Association of Mothers and Family of Victims of Violence, Olho da Rua Experimental Communications Group, the National Human Rights Movement and the Black Capixaba Movement.

Fejunes was selected once again in the 2014 call for proposals. Among the activities, a seminar on Black Youth

CIVIL SOCIETY NEEDS TO INCREASE MOBILIZATION TO RAISE AUTHORITIES’ AWARENESS, SO THAT PUBLIC POLICIES TO FIGHT EXTERMINATION, THE MUCH-DESIRED PACT FOR LIFE, ARE DEVELOPED.

then,” reported Fejunes in its 2008 final activities report.

The lack of empathy with the large-scale murder of black youth existed in the past and continues today. Last November 20, the National Day of Black Consciousness, Brazil Fund used social media to draw attention to worsening numbers through a short film, just a minute and a half long. Between 2002 and 2011, the total number of homicides of white young men dropped 40%, while the number regarding black young men increased 24%. A young black man is twice more likely to be murdered than a white one. “We must confront racism, overcome fear and change the statistics,” as stated in the video.

Fejunes received financial support

Extermination and Access to Justice was organized, as well as courses and workshops and a new edition of the booklet, “Racism: I’m out,” along with a march to protest against the homicides. Two more organizations joined the cause: the Women’s Forum of Espírito Santo and the Capixaba Youth Observatory.

The affiliation of social movement organizations to Fejunes proves that mobilization, although insufficient, is growing. The road to overcoming the very serious problem of violent death of young people is long and bumpy. Civil society needs to increase mobilization to raise authorities’ awareness, so that public policies to fight extermination, the much-desired pact for life, are developed. Fejunes’ consistent action has a lot to teach on the subject.



Youth is at the forefront of the fight against violations
Marking a historic moment regarding the action carried out by young people, Brazil Fund is currently supporting fifteen projects focusing on the fight against violence carried out by youth. The support was granted through the call for proposals, “Fighting together against the violence that kills youth in Brazil.”

The foundation’s partner organizations working on this issue come from ten Brazilian states, as regional diversity was one of the criteria used in the selection.

The support to this cause shows that Brazil Fund believes it is essential to provide grounds for young people to become the main actors in the fight against the violence that affects them.





NEGRA

Inspired by the state of Paraíba flag, the artwork shows the strength of black women

**2009 | BAMIDELE - BLACK WOMEN'S
ORGANIZATION IN PARAÍBA**

by Djamila Ribeiro

THE STRENGTH AND RE-EXISTENCE OF BLACK WOMEN

**FIGHTING AGAINST THE NATURALIZATION OF RACIST AND SEXIST VIOLENCE,
A GROUP OF WOMEN IN PARAÍBA BECAME PROMINENT FOR DEALING
WITH THE ISSUE OF RACE AND GENDER IN AN EXTRICABLE WAY.**

Brazil was the last country to abolish slavery and has the world's largest black population after Nigeria. Such a long enslavement period, coupled with the ineffectiveness in planning inclusion processes in the post-abolition period and during the country's industrialization process, has put this population on the sidelines, setting racism as a structural problem that denies rights to the black population in general and black women in particular, due to the combination of prejudice and machismo.

We live in a country where every 23 minutes a young black man is murdered and in which the murder of black women has increased by almost 55% in the last 10 years. The State has failed to grant rights

**BAMIDELE RE-WRITES AND CREATES HISTORY BY
REFUSING IMPOSITIONS AND BY SEEKING NEW
WAYS FOR YOUNG BLACK WOMEN TO EXIST.**

to this population, which remains invisible and apart from the general positions of power. The myth of racial democracy in Brazil, for a long time, caused people and institutions to deny the existence of racism. This denial is a form of perpetuation.

With so many violations, bringing about race and gender as central issues has become something fundamental for any serious debate in Brazil, and

also to plan policies and actions against inequality.

In this sense, the project proposed by Bamidele - Women Organization in Paraíba shows the importance of treating the issues of race and gender as inextricable. Addressing these two oppressions, as taught by black feminists, must be done in an intersectional way, since they combine and intermingle.



Black women participate in a march against racism

Marcelo Casal Jr.-Agência Brasil

The fact that the organization also works with quilombo-descendant and rural communities, thus decentralizing its actions, demonstrates the group's commitment to territoriality and to think-

Promoting the strengthening of the two causes and perceiving them as interlinked brings new alliances to the projects and a larger network to fight racism and its consequences.

BY WORKING WITH MAROON COMMUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS, THE ORGANIZATION DECENTRALIZES ITS ACTIONS AND SHOWS ITS COMMITMENT TO TERRITORIALITY

ing from a more plural and inclusive logic. Raising awareness of young people on the oppressions they suffer is an essential task for a profound change.

Fighting the naturalization of racist and sexist violence creates agents who, after realizing the situation imposed on them by structured oppressions, become

people who seek collective emancipatory solutions and means to monitor and demand key policies for groups who suffer human rights violations.

Black women have historically produced and created ways not only to resist, but also to re-exist.

Bamidele moves on rewriting and building this history by refusing impositions and seeking new ways for young black women to exist.

Because what is wanted is not only to exist, but also to exist with dignity. And the role of black women, the most vulnerable group, is key for society, to allow the construction of a more sophisticated analysis and to build a world that is truly new, where there is no hierarchy of oppression.



Marcelo Casal Jr.-Agência Brasil

Bamidele's project supported by Brazil Fund in 2009, "Strengthening anti-racist struggle in Paraiba", focused on raising awareness of the social movement's leadership, the feminist movement's leadership and of other groups of civil society, in order to build alliances to fight for policies that guarantee human rights for men, women, children, adolescents and young blacks and promote racial equality.

The organization's mission is to contribute to the elimination of racism and sexism and to promote discussions and actions to strengthen the identity and self-esteem especially of black women.

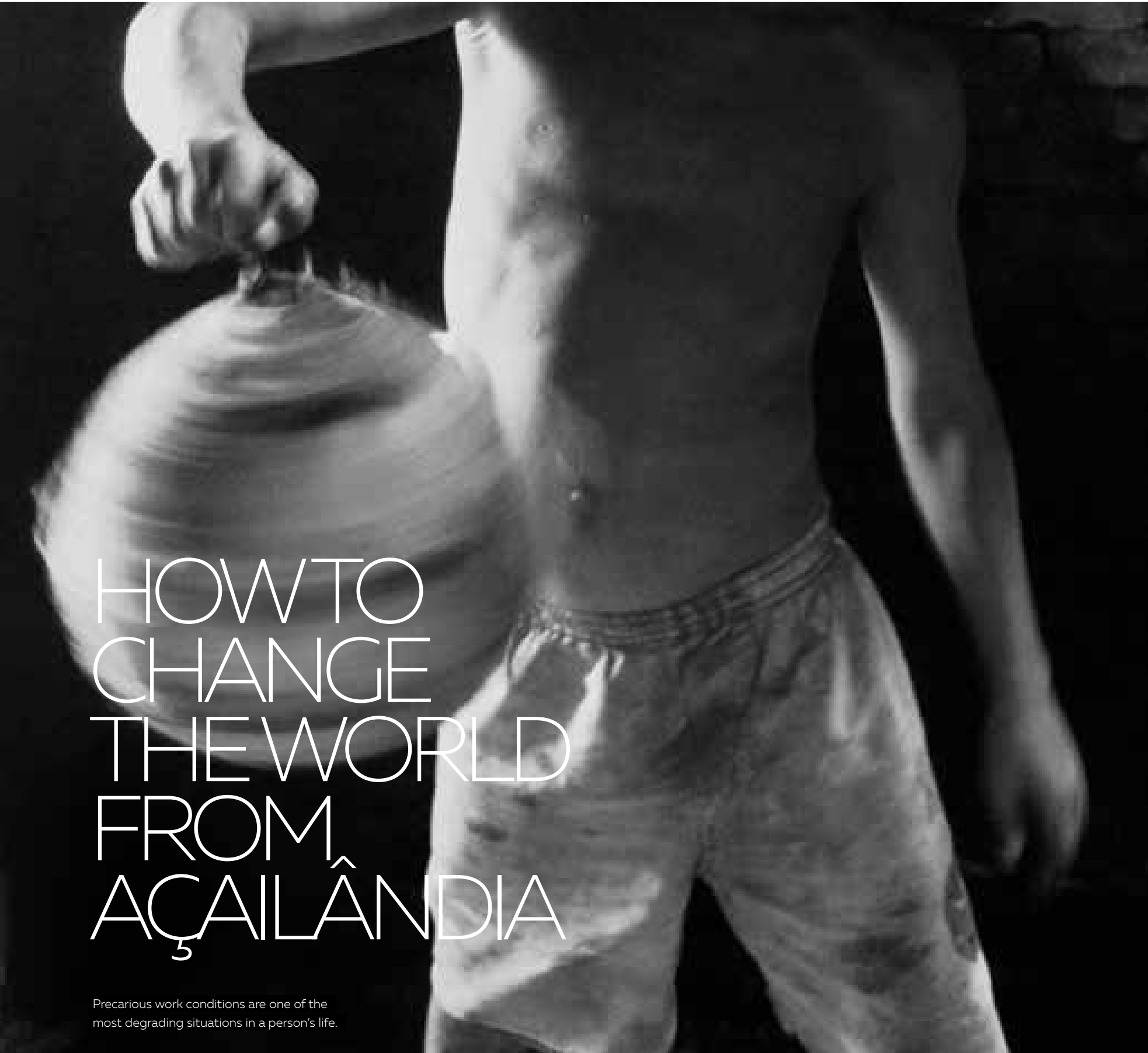
The group creates and implements strategies to fight mechanisms of production and reproduction of racism and of ethnic-racial, gender and sexual discrimination; it

monitors public policies, conducts educational activities, organizes health fairs and promotes the political strengthening of actions with black and maroon women.

Formed by black feminists and founded in 2001, Bamidele has a history of struggle against the invisibility of black population and the denial of racism, all of which arise from a slavery, patriarchal and sexist tradition in the Paraiba society.

At the moment, the organization works for the implementation of Law 10.639 / 03, mandating the teaching of African-Brazilian and African history and culture in schools.

For the group, this is an important tool to fight racism. Bamidele was also supported by the Fund in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2016.



HOW TO CHANGE THE WORLD FROM AÇAILÂNDIA

Precarious work conditions are one of the most degrading situations in a person's life.

Sandro José da Silva

2010 | CARMEN BASCARÁN CENTER FOR THE DEFENSE OF LIFE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

by Leonardo Sakamoto

THE FIGHT AGAINST CONTEMPORARY SLAVERY IN A SMALL TOWN IN MARANHÃO HELPED TRANSFORM THE STATE, IN THE EASTERN AMAZON REGION - AND ENGAGED AÇAILÂNDIA IN THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND DECENT WORK.

An old lady welcomed me to her humble house in the outskirts of Açailândia, a city 560 kilometers away from the capital São Luís, in the west of Maranhão state. She told me her son's story, who had been murdered at the behest of a farmer, who had enslaved him.

I asked her if she expected justice. Resigned, she shook her head. What she really wanted was the right to bury her son's body, which was never sent to her. As well as a death certificate, so that her grandson, who came into the world amid his father's abduction, could have a father, even if only on a piece of paper. Perhaps a pension to provide for the boy, who was later abandoned by his mother.

At the end, when she shook my hand and said goodbye, she looked at me and asked me if I thought her grandson's life would be better than her son's was.

I gulped. After following slave labor stories for over 15 years, I answered her question in the best way I could: with a silent smile. Presently, we are facing difficult times, heading towards the extermination of labor laws, the imposition of a pension reform that will penalize workers and the decommissioning of education and health through constitutional

limitations to increasing public investment and the enacting of laws that hinder the fight against slave labor.

Meanwhile, four other people followed attentively our conversation. Just from hearing the old woman telling this story over the years, they could certainly tell the story themselves, with the same accuracy. Thus, they helped remind her

something you find every day. However, I can't find a fair enough way to describe what it means to stand by someone and join this person's fight for justice, putting your own life at risk.

So, it is not an overstatement to say that, from the small Açailândia, the CARMEN BASCARÁN CENTER FOR THE DEFENSE OF LIFE AND HUMAN

THE CDVDH BECAME THE MAIN SOURCE OF SLAVE LABOR COMPLAINTS IN MARANHÃO, WHICH CAUSED THE GOVERNMENT TO START PERIODICALLY INSPECTING THE AREA.

of parts of the story that time had buried. And by their facial expressions, it was easy to see that they felt just like in the first time they heard the story.

We always say that, in our hyper-connected world mediated by the cold screens of computers and smartphones, empathy is a rare product. To listen to someone and be able to wear their shoes, to understand this person, is not

RIGHTS has helped transform not only Maranhão, but the entire eastern Amazon in its two decades since it was created. Whether it is through the fight against contemporary slavery, development of youth leadership through art, community mobilization for rights or by offering free legal services - which, in this region, represents the difference between dignity and being forgotten, the

Sandro José da Silva



center performs miracles, every day. Despite not believing in miracles and being very reluctant in using such a word, miracle is a definition that fits perfectly here. I first encountered the organization in 2004, when we started a partnership to support a project to prevent contemporary slave labor through education. At the time, Carmen, a passionate Spanish woman with a heart the size of the world, who is one of the founders of the CDVDH greeted us, introduced the team and made a million plans. Plans that, in the end, were small compared to the hundreds of teachers and community leaders we trained together, ever since. At the time, the center was already a reference to the local community, who often came to it before going to the government, the police or the courts when they had a problem. Not because the center was paternalistic in any way, which was never the case, but because they cared. More than that, they knew how to make

who had managed to escape earlier and had knocked on the Center's doors. Few things can be as degrading as working in a precarious charcoal plant – working under extremely high temperatures, both coming from the oven and from the Amazon weather, being covered in soot, relying on scarce food and water, and not having decent housing. Some people leave right away, indebted to the labor contractor. Others stay there for months, without receiving any payment. And there are those who can not leave the workplace for some other reason. Complaints of slave work directed to the CDVDH made headlines in major media outlets inside and outside the country. After all, some people feel uncomfortable when they learn that the car they are driving was produced through a system that turns workers into disposable production objects, thousands of kilometers away. Moreover, the protectionist lobby from other countries sensed the possibility of blocking Brazilian products by using the breach of fundamental rights – which, unfortunately, was true– as a justification. This also led to actions that engaged the productive sector. Today, the incidence of this type of crime has been reduced considerably in the region. The merit often conferred on the government, private sector or civil society organizations of national relevance, actually belongs to the patience and courage of the CDVDH. They are the ones who helped organize the workers to try to break the cycle of poverty that leads to slavery, by making them aware of their rights, but also by promoting the generation of employment and income, with ecological and sustainable coal plants or the production of educational toys. The CDVDH also follows these workers after they have been rescued, filing lawsuits for the payment of individual moral damage. Sometimes it also intermediates in communication with employers, so

that labor rights are paid in other cases of exploitation. They are also the ones who repeatedly face death threats from charcoal producers, loggers and cattle farmers, dissatisfied with the claims of slavery and exploitation. That, on the one hand, brought dignity to the people who were being held captive and, on the other, caused great harm to those who used unfair competition and social dumping to run their businesses. One day Carmen called us and said that young people linked to the CDVDH were producing a theater play to tell the story of Father Josimo Tavares – a martyr of the struggle for agrarian reform in the region killed by ranchers in 1986. They wanted help to tour with the play all over Brazil. Of course, I found the request deliriously megalomaniacal, but coming from where it came, I didn't argue. I remember that crowded bus arriving in São Paulo to present in public theaters – that were no less crowded – in 2005. I remember the stories I heard of the presentations held in other Brazilian cities, large and small. You may think this is no big deal. However, imagine these young people, born in the outskirts of town in the countryside of Maranhão, who, very early on, learned that their role was secondary in the great theater of life, realizing that they can act in a totally different story than the one their families, politicians and businessmen wrote for them. That they can be applauded by thousands of people across the country for sharing with them two tales of hope: the one in the play and their own. They even travelled to Spain touring their following play, Quilombagem, which compared slavery in the past and in present times. It does not matter whether these young people will ever become professional actors or not. They have learned an everlasting lesson: to be the main actors in the story of their lives. Through that, they will

be able to inspire other stories, as some of them already have, when they became educators working for the Center. The CDVDH arrives at its 20th anniversary with different challenges and questions about the future, like most of Brazilian civil society. Carmen, one of the founders and after whom the organization was named, left Açailândia to affect other places. With the local and international economic crisis, funding to execute new projects and maintain existing ones has become scarce. At the same time, the Federal Constitution, which promised to put equality ideals in practice, is being disregarded, while the rural caucus takes advantage of the chaotic environment to strike a blow at the laws that drive the fight against slavery. the horizon and social movements and people are beaten by police and labeled as terrorist by the government, the answer is no. However her grandson might not end up a slave. He may not turn out to be murdered for claiming unpaid wages from someone richer. He might not become just a name in a dusty file somewhere in court. Maybe he will even inherit a world that is a little fairer compared to that in which her son lived. Yes, his life may be longer and better than his father's was. The reason for that might lie in the work performed by this small organization, with a name that is as long as its persistence, and which keeps on insisting on changing the world starting from the West of Maranhão.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE CDVDH HAS CHANGED - IT IS NOW MORE STRUCTURED, PROFESSIONAL, AND BETTER ABLE TO FACE THE CHALLENGES AHEAD.

Due to this situation, I recently visited the Center. I had imagined that the atmosphere over there would be more pessimistic, as in the rest of the country, but also due to the lack of financial resources. However, I was greeted with the same joy, and they presented me with the same million plans and ideas as in my first visit, 12 years earlier. At the same time, CDVDH has changed – it is now more structured, more professional, and better able to face the challenges ahead. The Center's history makes them proud and strong. I wanted to rectify the answer I gave to the old lady in Maranhão on whether her grandson's life would be better than that of her murdered son. If the country follows the course towards the dark clouds that lie ahead on

The support of Brazil Fund provided legal subsidies to workers who were freed from slave labor. The team formed to locate these workers has registered over 300 people and also filed labor or punitive damages lawsuits. It provided support during hearings, offered guidance and organized campaigns to prevent and eradicate forced labor.

2011 | MOTHERS OF MAY

by Bruno Paes Manso

IN MAY 2006, POLICE OFFICERS IN SÃO PAULO PROMOTED A SERIES OF ATTACKS AND MASSACRES, KILLING HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE. THESE WERE SOMEONE'S SONS AND DAUGHTERS. POLICE WERE PROBABLY SEEKING REVENGE, BUT JUSTICE IS WHAT MANY MOTHERS ARE SEEKING TODAY

The protagonists of violence are usually young men. They are the ones who kill and die the most. Homicides are linked to gender, in the same way testosterone and the values of the male universe fuel conflicts in some cities. So it has been in São Paulo, in Brazil and in the rest of the world, where homicide rates are high.

In many of these murders, murderers believed that their crimes could be justified. In São Paulo, for example, police officers kill the people they see as enemies, believing that they are making the world safer. There are also young people who kill each other in disputes over money, power, in defense of honor and to revenge the death of friends.

There is still a cynical tolerance with regard to such crimes, as if the people who died were not going to be missed. Over the years, in this world doomed to collapse, I often met mothers or wives of young people who had died. They were seen as less important actors in this "boys' club", moving on with their lives despite the personal tragedies they had been through. They were portrayed in TV

images or in pictures in the newspapers, crying, but very little of these stories of suffering, each one of them big enough to fill a book, was understood.

Is there anything worse than the pain of losing a child? Yes. The pain of having

enlightened of human beings.

Nevertheless, social structures in São Paulo haven't collapsed. They remain steady due to the courage and resilience of these women, mothers living in the outskirts of the city, who have found new

THE KILLINGS CONTINUE. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THE PARTICIPATION OF MOTHERS IN THIS DEBATE ALLOWED FOR THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE CYNICISM THAT ALLOWS THESE PERSISTENT PRACTICES

a child murdered by a military police officer. After the trauma, mothers must face grief in silence, because public anger can cause retaliation to friends and family. And that's not all. The memory of these young men who were killed, regardless of the murder reason, is immediately destroyed, as if the victims were guilty of their own death. This kind of pain can crush even the strongest and most

forms of resistance in these conflict zones.

They walk around the city without being noticed; they are discrete and almost invisible. They resist on buses, trains, churches, schools, hairdressers; they work as domestic workers in wealthier neighborhoods, behind the counter of a store or taking care of children in their simple houses, with painted nails, well styled hair and fragrant perfumes.

MOTHERS OF A NEW WORLD

Rafael Bonifácio

Deborah Silva, founder of the Mothers of May Movement, participates in a public act



The Mothers of May present pictures of victims of institutional violence

Rovena Rosa - Agência Brasil

They make sure that life and civilization continues in São Paulo, taking emotions like love, longing and pain to the field of political debate.

The Mothers of May movement, which emerged ten years ago to denounce police violence, is now the main social representation of these women from the outskirts of São Paulo and Brazil. They managed to build an argument that is able to embarrass authorities and society based on the sorrow caused by the loss of their children.

The fight began after the May 2006 attacks, when 41 security officers were killed by a members of the First Command of the Capital (a.k.a. "PCC"), a criminal organization. In the ten days that followed, at least 494 people were killed

by gunfire, and many attacks were carried out by police officers seeking revenge. The deaths were cynically tolerated, but the importance of the cause had already been raised: enough of killing our children.

One of the victims was the street cleaner Edson Rogério da Silva, killed on May 15, 2006. He was Debora Silva's son, one of the founders and leaders of the Mothers of May. Deborah faced depression after Rogerio's death, but she saw her son in a dream asking her not to give up the fight. When she started organizing the movement, she did not even know how to go to São Paulo using public transportation. Ten years later, she has been all over Brazil and the world to denounce the police violence in São Paulo.

She formed alliances with other

movements, participated in debates all over Brazil, helped other mothers to give new meaning to their pain, turning it into a struggle. She worked to rebuild the memory of their dead children, took part in the debates to formulate projects meant to control police violence. She promoted the notion that life is sacred, using the legitimacy of being a mother as well as her right to feel unconditional love.

The deaths continued, as well as the killings and massacres committed by police officers. However, I believe the participation of mothers in this debate allowed for the deconstruction of the cynicism that allows these persistent practices. The story of another founder of the Mothers of May, Vera Lucia dos Santos, was one of the stories which

marked me the most as a researcher and journalist. Her daughter, Paula, was killed when she was 9 months pregnant, one day before her C-section, in Santos. It was the night of May 15, 2006, when her daughter went out with her husband to buy milk. It was reported that they were stopped by plainclothes police, who killed the two of them and the baby in her belly. The authorship of the crime was never proved.

After overcoming grief, Vera went on to participate in the Mothers of May Movement, despite being threatened by police officers. Two years after that, members of the same police she was accusing said they found drugs inside her motorcycle's gas tank, which was being used by her son in law. Justice was ruthless and sentenced her to spend three years and two months in prison.

Last time I talked to Vera, after she had already served her sentence, I was embarrassed and devastated because her story seemed to be the proof that we were doing it wrong. I doubted whether writing about it could be useful. What I really wanted was to apologize for being part of this world that had crushed her. Vera continued to work as a hairdresser, from dusk to dawn. She told me she believed that one day she would still find her daughter Ana Paula, her unborn granddaughter and her son-in-law in another life and that in this life everything was all transitory.

Sitting in the kitchen of her house, drinking coffee and listening to her story, I held on to her gentle force while she expressed something that transcended the poor combination of aggressiveness and rationality of the male universe. It was as if her very presence forced me not to lose hope. The hope that the values and feelings these mothers represent might one day transform us and guide us, so as to stop the world from collapsing over our heads.



Rovena Rosa - Agência Brasil

IS THERE ANYTHING WORSE THAN THE PAIN OF LOSING A CHILD? YES. THE PAIN OF HAVING A CHILD MURDERED BY A MILITARY POLICE OFFICER. AFTER THE TRAUMA, MOTHERS HAVE TO MOURN IN SILENCE.

YEARS IN WHICH THE MOTHERS OF MAY RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM BRAZIL FUND
2010
2011
2015
2016
DEATH TOLL IN THE SO CALLED MAY CRIMES
Over 500
YEAR IN WHICH THE ORGANIZATION WAS FOUNDED
2006



2012 | TONICO BENITES

by Spensy Pimentel

HOW AN INDIGENOUS LEADER WENT BEYOND THE BORDERS OF MATO GROSSO DO SUL AND TURNED A LOCAL TRAGEDY INTO A CAUSE FOR THE INTERNET’S GLOBAL TRIBE.

Had anyone heard of the tragedy experienced by the Guarani-Kaiowá of Mato Grosso do Sul before 2012? Among those who follow the news about social struggles more attentively, maybe some will remember the widely disseminated news in the press in the 90s about the suicide epidemic experienced by indigenous people in the last three decades.

But certainly a much smaller portion of the population realized that the Guarani-Kaiowá - the second largest group in the country, with 46,200 people according to 2013 data - not only was the victim of a tragedy, but also the proud agents of a fierce struggle, waged in different ways in the past 500 years. To show the world the real war they have been fighting, the Guarani-Kaiowa have organized, since the late 70s, a movement built around the “Aty Guasu” (large assemblies), in order to coordinate mutual support to resist the eviction of dozens of communities during

the twentieth century - often on the initiative or with the support of official agencies meant to “protect” indigenous people.

It comes as no surprise the fact that

Indigenous Foundation (Funai) was controlled by the military, due to the potential generation of international scandals related to the oppression experienced by

THIS IS HOW TONICO, WITH THE SUPPORT OF BRAZIL FUND, HELPED THE GUARANI-KAIOWA TO MAKE HISTORY, BECOMING ICONS OF THE INTERNET ERA IN BRAZIL

information about the tragedy was much more widespread than the perception that the Guarani-Kaiowa reacted to this oppression. The Aty Guasu movement remained largely underground until the mid-90s. Up to the early 80s, the National

Brazilian indigenous people in the late 60s, at the beginning of the military dictatorship. This is why, even after the re-democratization of the country, the access of anthropologists and other indigenists to the groups was still guarded and sometimes

denied, while leaders’ trips were controlled, and many indigenous meetings were held secretly. Entities such as the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) were already persecuted back then.

The rapid expansion of social media in recent years, and particularly of Facebook in Brazil, especially from 2011 on, has brought new opportunities for free communication. Anthropologists and CIMI had already been collaborating with the dissemination of information on the Guarani-Kaiowa since the creation of the Aty Guasu movement, but the possibilities offered by the new digital era in recent years were responsible for promoting their cause and making it visible.

In October 2012, the dissemination of a public letter written by the Guarani Kaiowa community of Pyelito Kue, in Iguatemi (MS), triggered a broad wave of solidarity to their cause. A striking phenomenon: in more than fifty cities in the country and abroad, supporter groups went to the streets marching to express their support for the Guarani-Kaiowa cause, asking the Brazilian government to stop the eviction of indigenous people from Pyelito Kue. At the same time, they organized several petitions and a virtual campaign asking people to change their last name on their Facebook profiles, signing as “Guarani-Kaiowa”. Debates, public lectures and other events were held in universities and in other spaces across the country to show solidarity with the Guarani-Kaiowa people.

In order to achieve these results, many people, such as the hundreds of indigenous leaders participating in the Aty Guasu movement, or the many indigenists, anthropologists, artists, journalists and others who have supported the group over these last decades, have worked since the 70s, collecting and disseminating information about their tragedy and their struggle in reports, documentaries, articles and photos.

Amid all this, there is a very special

story, perhaps little known, of the Kaiowa anthropologist and Aty Guasu activist Tonico Benites. As a child, Tonico grew up within the landless movement. His community of origin, Jaguapiré, in Tacuru (MS), was one of the first to be reclaimed by the Guarani-Kaiowa, which was made official in 1992. He closely followed the whole process, recently portrayed in the documentary “Martírio” (Martyrdom) by Vincent Carelli. In the film, the audience is introduced to the 1985 episode when the

Anthropologists who had worked with the Guarani-Kaiowa since the 70s and known Tonico since he was a boy were important to understanding his vocation and supporting him in his transition: in Rio de Janeiro, he got a Masters’s and Ph.D degrees in Anthropology, becoming the first Kaiowa with a Ph.D in the country.

In 2008, I left my job as a journalist in Brasília to dedicate my time to studying in São Paulo, and in 2011, I had the pleasant surprise of meeting Tonico again. Back

THE RAPID EXPANSION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN RECENT YEARS, AND PARTICULARLY OF FACEBOOK IN BRAZIL, ESPECIALLY FROM 2011 ON, HAS BROUGHT NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREE COMMUNICATION.

military police, at the behest of a local politician, stormed the community, destroying houses and beating people – many of them were Tonico’s relatives.

Later, Tonico started to teach at the community’s school and was one of the pioneers in the Guarani-Kaiowa’s teachers movement – a major force in the demand for public policies for this people in recent years. He studied pedagogy at the then newly created Mato Grosso State University (UEMS) in Dourados. We first met in 2003, when I was finishing my master’s research on the suicides among the Guarani-Kaiowa, and our talks were crucial to refining my understanding of the feelings and attitudes of youth within this group who end up committing such a radical act. More than 1,100 of these deaths have been registered among the Guarani Kaiowa since the early 80s, and most of them were young victims.

then, both of us were doing our field work for the Ph.D course in Anthropology in Mato Grosso do Sul.

In this period, during our field work, Tonico and I faced the need not only to seek information in the communities, but also to denounce what we saw and heard from them. During this time, the paramilitary attacks against Guaraní Kaiowa camps escalated. Communities such as Pyelito Kue, Ypo’i, Arroyo Kora, Kurusu Amba, Apyka’i and many others were constantly the target of threats and assaults that became an unavoidable part of our research.

Tonico received calls from indigenous leaders asking him to take the problem to the Public Ministry, to FUNAI or to any other authority that could help them. He wrote emails where he transcribed the stories he was told about threats and attacks on communities. In this activity, his



talent as translator and interpreter of his people stood out.

This was when we wrote the project presented to Brazil Fund, supported by CIMI, an organization that has, since the 70s, supported the dissemination of information on the violations suffered by the Guarani-Kaiowa. Tonico’s action, however, become the symbol of a new era, in which the indigenous people themselves, armed with cell phones with cameras and social network profiles can disclose in their own words any threat or attack they receive, often in real time. Using the resources of Brazil Fund, he visited the Guarani-Kaiowa camps, posting pictures on the Internet, as well as stories and short videos to denounce the problems affecting these people.

This is how Tonico, with the support of Brazil Fund, helped the Guarani-Kaiowa to make history, becoming icons of the internet era in Brazil. The Pyelito letter was disseminated on October 2012, because it was first posted on Aty Guasu’s profile on Facebook, a movement in which Tonico was one of the main managers:

“We ask, once and for all, to declare our total decimation and extinction and send several tractors to dig a big hole

to throw and bury our bodies. This is our request to federal judges. We now await the decision of the Federal Court. Declare our collective death of Guarani and Kaiowá of Pyelito Kue/Mbarakay and bury us here. Since we all decided not to leave here dead or alive.

We know that we have more chances to survive with dignity here in our old territory, we have already suffered a lot and we are all massacred and dying apace.(...) As a native and historic indigenous group, we decided to collectively die here. We have no choice, this is our

last unanimous decision.”

At that time, the journalist Eliane Brum compared the letter of Pyelito to the famous founding charter of the Portuguese writer in 1500: “If the letter of Pero Vaz de Caminha marks the birth of Brazil through the written word, it is interesting to think about the kind of mark left by the Guarani Kaiowá letter, more than 500 years later. In the founding-charter it is the invader/colonizer/conqueror/alien who finds things strange and looks to the Indians, to their culture and their land. In the Guarani Kaiowa’s letter, the indigenous people are the ones looking at us.”

With the support of Brazil Fund, Tonico was able to disseminate some of the indigenous perspective on this tragedy that has lasted decades. With very little, it was possible to operate a small revolution in the Brazilian perception of what happens there. The problems endured by the Guarani-Kaiowa are still unresolved – but we consider it a big step that it is no longer possible to attack or threaten an indigenous group without causing a big fuss within Brazilian and international civil society. Whether it is in Mato Grosso do Sul or on the Internet, where thousands of people disseminate information and press authorities, the struggle goes on.

#todossomosguaranikaiowa

THREATS TO GUARANI -KAIOWA
Eviction orders
Death threats
Tortures
Kidnappings
Attacks by gunmen
Murders



Society's empathy is essential to consolidate the citizenship of these young people

2013 | PERMANENT FORUM OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS - FORUM DCA

by Ronaldo Bressane

HUMAN FACTORY

THE INCARCERATION OF ADOLESCENTS IS NOW ONE OF THE MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS CRISES. TRANSFORMING THE MINDSET THAT STIGMATIZES YOUNG PEOPLE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN RENOVATING YOUTH DETENTION CENTERS.

“The Animal Factory” is the title of a famous book written by the American Edward Bunker. Having spent 18 of his 70 years in prison for various offenses, Bunker tells how his first arrest, when he was a teenager, was crucial to define him as a criminal. If it weren’t for the help of a volunteer worker, who showed him the way to books, Bunker would have never built such a solid literary career. Bunker’s thesis is that society sees the person who commits an offense as someone who’s

AT THE TIME THE ORGANIZATION WAS SUPPORTED BY BRAZIL FUND, CEARÁ WAS THE STATE WITH THE MOST OVERCROWDED UNITS, WITH 67.81% MORE ADOLESCENTS THAN THE ADEQUATE NUMBER FOR ITS CAPACITY:

doomed to live and die as a criminal. “The Animal Factory” is also a shocking expression (and commonplace, which

is most shocking) to designate youth detention centers. In such centers, adolescents and young people who were caught



Tomaz Silva - Agência Brasil

up in a crime – not necessarily a serious crime – often evolve in crime. Hailing mostly from dysfunctional families, socially and economically unstable, the young people who are arrested and already undermined find in these detention centers an environment of dehumanization and incomprehension – which acts as a springboard to further anti-social activities. Fortunately, through solidarity and creative strategies, the third sector has infiltrated in these spaces, obtaining small but important victories for adolescents

and young adults. This is the case with the Permanent Forum of Children and Adolescents, from Fortaleza, Ceará.

Tolerate, talk, meet.

The DCA Forum has identified that Ceará is the Brazilian state with the fourth largest number of young people in youth detention centers, 1,083 people, an average of 10.3 for every ten thousand children (the national average is 8). However, according to the Special Secretariat for Human Rights, at the time

the organization was supported by Brazil Fund, Ceará was the state with the most overcrowded units, with 67.81% more adolescents than the adequate number for its capacity: 221% of the centers’ occupancy rate. The National Magistrate of Justice considered the conditions in these centers “very bad”. A euphemism for a state where only in 2012 a young man suffered a very serious injury, with eye loss, and two others were killed inside the detention centers.

After the terrible assessment, the

DCA Forum started to work. Many things were done in different fields. In the center, an extra motivation: the fight against the reduction of the legal age of majority. A simplistic and populist measure with demagogic features, which never worked in any civilized country – and that, if approved, would certainly increase violence, as our friend Edward Banks cited above proved in his books. This proposal served as a catalyst gathering different actors and initiatives opposing it, as well as various human rights agents. But how could people understand the problems that led to the emergence of violence among teenagers?

able to move on.

For starters, the DCA Forum organized a chat on the rights of children and adolescents with different groups of relatives of the detained adolescents. Campaigns and mobilizations against violence and criminalization of youth were created. The Forum has also encouraged hearings with public agencies and social organizations. They made contacts with groups of teens to create a video that deals with the reality inside youth detention centers and the criminalization of poor young people.

The video criticizing violence during the organization of the World Cup in 2014 was watched by 25,000 people.

THE FORUM BROUGHT VISIBILITY TO THE YOUTH DETENTION SYSTEM. IT REVEALED THE TRUTH, FROM ONE YOUNG PERSON TO ANOTHER, FROM YOUNG PEOPLE TO ADULTS AND FROM ADULTS TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

Through a lot of talking, to begin with. Looking at other people is the first step to allow you to see yourself and develop empathy. We live in difficult times in which the polarization of ideas and perspectives about the world separates us more than it brings us closer. The world is not a soccer game; it has amazing nuances and gradients. A young man who has misbehaved can not be labeled as a delinquent – and doomed to be referred to as criminal for his entire lifetime. His mind as well as his body are still in development. Breaking the limits that surround young people, their desires and their flaws and doing the same to their parents, educators, public officials and society in general can be a small step towards establishing a more cohesive community. Without that, society is not

Indirectly, the activities promoted by DCA Forum reached almost a thousand teenagers inside youth detention centers in Fortaleza, 200 people who participated in the seminar “City For Who?”, 200 people who attended the artistic performances at the Youth Sarau and 3,000 people who participated in Grito dos Excluídos 2013 – which launched a campaign against the reduction of the legal age of majority.

For starters, the DCA Forum promoted the visibility of the socio-educational system. Telling the truth, from one young person to another, from young people to adults and from adults to young people. A straight talk about the culture that criminalizes the poor and black youth. The DCA Forum organized NGOs working in defense of youth rights in Ceará,

strengthening civil society, enabling it to perform social control on public policies – always having as its central axis religious, ethnic, partisan, generational and gender tolerance.

Tolerance – better known as taking a deep breath, counting to 10 and patiently listening to the other person – should be exercised every day. It is a term that comes from the Latin word *tolerare* and it means to bear with, accept: the act of indulgence before something you do not want or that you can not stop. It is the principle of empathy. It is the first step to enable a disadvantaged part of society to consolidate the citizenship of young people and make them aware of the track they need to follow. The first step to eliminate from our vocabulary terms such as these sad “animal factories”. After all, everyone knows humans are not self-manufactured. We are generated from one another. With a head and a heart.

The DCA Forum is a network of civil society organizations formed by non-governmental organizations, professionals working in the childhood and adolescence fields, as well as scholars. It is a space for coordination and mobilization in defense of the rights of children and adolescents.

In addition to the DCA Forum, Brazil Fund supported Cedeca – Center for the Defense of Children and Adolescents of Ceará in 2014 and is currently supporting the Group of Women Family Members of Adolescents Confined in Youth Detention Centers.

Children peek at festive event held during the 2014 World Cup

SOCCER DOES NOT LIKE THE POOR

Bruno Tortura

2014 | NATIONAL COORDINATION OF THE WORLD CUP PEOPLES COMMITTEES

by Fred Melo Paiva

THE WORLD CUP IN BRAZIL TRIED TO TAKE PEOPLE OFF THE FIELD AND TRANSFORM SOCCER INTO AN EXPENSIVE PRODUCT. OUTSIDE THE STADIUMS, MANY PEOPLE WERE FACED WITH THE WEIGHT OF CAPITAL.

Soccer in Brazil has ruled out the poor. Stadiums have eliminated discounted sectors – no more cheap seats that could be bought with change forgotten in our pockets, to watch games in sections where we could stand (swaying to the sides, shifting away from the advertising boards). No more standing pens, replaced by “numbered seats”, a symbol of a soul-

are meant for the poor.

Having never understood what democracy means – perhaps because here we only have an imitation of it – the average Brazilian perceived the beach and soccer stadiums as examples of this regime that, apparently, is only well succeeded in the upper part of the world map. Soccer stadiums used to be a place where white

TO SILENCE THOSE WHO HAVE PROTESTED AGAINST THE DICTATORSHIP OF FIFA STANDARDS, GOVERNMENTS ENGAGED THEIR POLICE, GUNMEN WITH RUBBER BULLETS, TEARGAS AND FLASH BOMBS.

less stadium, the original grounds of the supporter that does not cheer. No more black people in the stadiums. No more “ugly people” in the stadiums. No more counterfeit shirts in the stadiums. In fact, no more stadium – just like the barbecue grills were replaced by “gourmet spaces” after being struck by a “gourmet ray”, stadiums became “arenas”. After all, a “stadium”, you will agree, is just like a “sale”. They

and black, rich and poor were equal with regard to the breathtakingly inexplicable passion for a soccer club. Soccer stadiums were indeed like that, but arenas are not. They are divided into castes: there are sections for the very rich, such as the boxes, sold for thousands of reais; there are sections for the rich, which are separated from the very rich and also from the sort-of-rich. The worst seats are set aside for the



Tomaz Silva - Agência Brasil

Protests against sports mega-events in Brazil

almost rich. One caste does not meet the others, inside the arenas. An arena is like a Facebook bubble: you can only find your equal, because Zuckerberg blocked those who are different.

At Arena Corinthians – don’t call it “Itaquerao” because it could depreciate its value in the case of a future sales opportunity of the stadium’s naming rights – there is marble and television in the bathrooms. At Allianz Park, Palmeiras, about a hundred wi-fi routers were installed to ensure the efficient operation of smartphones, allowing the emergence of a new institution in soccer games: the supporter’s selfie, as important as the three points. The famous “tropeiro” (traditional food from Minas Gerais) followed a different recipe in each of the stadium’s bars, which caused a joyful competition involving price and ingredients. In the new Minas Gerais arena, the production of was pasteurized. The

price increased five times. The “tropeiro” became deplorable. At least, when you go drain it off, you’ll find a bathroom made of marble.

The arenas killed soccer’s popular expression. Flags were banned in many places. “I paid and I have the right to watch the game,” claim the neo-fans whose vision cannot be hindered by people from their own team or by some other supporter who insists in watching the game standing, not aware of the arena’s rules. You can’t find club banners anymore. They were accused of covering the advertising signs. The percussion instruments have disappeared along with the most creative songs. In this crime against popular culture, the obnoxious soccer fan, who complains about his newly acquired rights in the arena is the one who call the shots. He is a consumer before being a fan. He paid and he wants to see the show. If there is no show, let’s say

his team doesn’t do well in that game, he boos, flounders, gets really mad. The neo fan is a customer; his team is a product; his voice is a message to the customer service department: “I paid, I have the right.”

The poor fans who used to sit on the old cheap seats are now sitting on their couches – they can’t pay for those seats anymore, and they are not entitled to any rights. But watching the game from the couch is not guaranteed either, because now they have to pay for cable TV to watch the games. If they pay for cable TV – or they steal cable, this is not enough to guarantee it, either. Now, in addition to having cable, they’ll also need to pay for the Premiere channel. Watching the games has become a complicated task. So, the old fans are left with other possibilities: listening to the game on the radio, going about with their lives, watching volleyball games or hoping for a good omelet recipe

next Master Chef season. It is unlikely that the old fans’ kids will come to like soccer – it’s not for them.

The inaugural point of our *gourmet* soccer was the World Cup 2014. Old stadiums were put down. They were accused of being obsolete and unsafe – and in their place, public-private partnerships built new arenas. These partnerships, in turn, were accused of embezzling money, paying bribes to politicians and top hats and favoring contractors. To pay all of their creditors, the only way was to collect this money from the fans. Until you make it impossible for them to pay for the tickets, and then, the only ones left to pay for this debt are the barons.

The marble of the unmentionable “Itaquerao” is only an allegorical simplification of what was done with the poor people in the inaugural moment of this process. Between evictions and voluntary move outs due to the real estate speculation surrounding the new arenas, about 250 thousand families had to leave their homes. The General Law of the World Cup, imposed by FIFA on the federal government, expelled street vendors from the areas surrounding the arenas, preventing many people from the right to work. In the halls of the host cities, they set up informal gentrification programs in which homeless people disappeared from the map and even the wastepickers were banned from the “Sustainable Cup.”

In order to confront those who organized protests against the dictatorship of FIFA standards, disrespecting the existing laws, bending them in favor of private initiative, at the expense of public interests, evicting poor families, clearing away trees to make way for the World Cup equipment, with exorbitant and non-transparent expenditures, the government engaged the police, bringing gunmen with rubber bullets, tear gas and flash bombs to protect the arenas. By suffocating the social movements that threatened to

prevent the Cup from happening, the military police gained strength to continue with their *modus operandi* based on protecting the rich and having zero tolerance for the black, the poor and the residents of peripheral areas.

In May 2014, the Brazil Fund for Human Rights helped organize and finance the “1st Meeting of those Affected by Mega-events and Mega-projects of the National Articulation of the Popular Committees of the World Cup and Olympic Games: people’s participation and democratic involvement against the violation of rights”, held

facilities that held games during the Cup, only Arena Corinthians registered occupancy rates higher than 50%. The other arenas, therefore, fall into this inglorious category of urban fauna known as “white elephants”. “Itaquerao” (may no one hear us) is being investigated for corruption. The soccer club Atletico-MG refuses to play at Mineirão because the consortium that manages it offered the club a draconian contract. Without Atlético, the only solution is for the state to “save” the consortium. Together, Arena das Dunas (Natal) and Fonte Nova (Salvador) have held more

IN MAY 2014, BRAZIL FUND SUPPORTED THE FIRST MEETING OF THOSE AFFECTED BY MEGA-EVENTS AND MEGA-PROJECTS OF THE WORLD CUP AND OLYMPIC GAMES POPULAR COMMITTEES.

in Belo Horizonte. The event brought together various groups, including informal workers and homeless people who have had their human rights violated by the World Cup, the Confederations Cup and the Olympic Games. The meeting resulted in the “People’s Plan of Justice, Repair and Prevention of Human Rights Violations”, in addition to a complaint letter named, “May a Cry of Goal not Obliterate Our History”.

More than two years after the World Cup in Brazil, the main legacy of these mega-events are the arenas. Of the twelve

than 170 events unrelated to soccer, another way to pay the bills. At Fonte Nova, not even that solves the problem.

By supporting reports on the vulnerability and exclusion of the poor in mega-events like the World Cup and the Olympic Games, the Brazil Human Rights Fund played an important social role, which today, after some time, also includes a cry for help against the “elitization” of soccer stadiums and the lack of access to the immaterial culture represented by soccer in Brazil.

In total, Brazil Fund supported in 2014, the year of the World Cup, 19 projects proposed by groups that faced negative impacts of these mega-sports events in the country. Organizations have mobilized and given rise to a movement to fight for more just and sustainable cities, which is still working. Twelve projects were supported in the World Cup host cities. One of the highlights of this network is its ability to produce counter-hegemonic information on the impact of the World Cup, especially with regard to the evictions motivated by the mega-events.

Bruno Torturra

HIGHLANDS,
WATERS AND
MOUNTAINS
DECIMATED

House buried in Bento Rodrigues. A whole district disappeared under Samarco's mud in Mariana. Highlands, waters and mountains were decimated

2015 | MOVEMENT FOR THE MOUNTAINS
AND WATERS OF MINAS (MOVSAM) - MINAS GERAIS

by Lucas Ferraz

THE BIGGEST ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER IN BRAZILIAN HISTORY BURIED A RIVER, CITIES AND THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE. AND IT ALSO CAUSED THE CREATION OF A CIVIL SOCIETY MOVEMENT TO FIGHT FOR COMPENSATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Those who were born in a mining town learn very early in life that there is no mountain that can not be broken, and there is no geography that resists permanent transformation.

The biggest and most recent mining tragedy taught us even more than that: entire villages can also disappear, such as what happened to Bento Rodrigues, a district of Mariana, one of the oldest towns in Minas Gerais, ravaged by the sea of mud that leaked from Samarco's dam in November 2015.

As is widely known, when large scale mining occurs without complying with environmental rules and in collusion with politicians and agencies that should monitor the activity, it can cause enormous and often permanent environmental, social or economic losses.

The project proposed by the Movement for the Mountains and Waters of Minas, whose campaign motto was, "Water is more valuable than ore!" was conceived after one of the main environmental liabilities, still little discussed, which is water insecurity.

Polluted or seriously compromised rivers such as the Doce, flooded by

Samarco's mud, are one of the consequences of rampant mining - mining is still a very popular activity in Minas and is also responsible for serious damage to rivers and their effluents due to the improper use of substances such as arsenic and cyanide.

Krenak indigenous group, who live in the Aimorés region and are no longer able to use the waters of Doce for their festivals and rituals.

Itabira, the birthplace of Vale (the country's largest mining company), and where the current large-scale exploitation

THE DISASTER IN MARIANA BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE OBSCURE *MODUS OPERANDI* OF MINING COMPANIES WITH REGARD TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY OPERATE - IN MINAS GERAIS, THIS PRACTICE HAS PERSISTED FOR MANY, MANY DECADES.

Samarco's mud in the Doce River, the largest river basin in the Southeast region of Brazil, also caused serious damage to the lives of thousands of people. Fishing communities in Regência, in Espírito Santo, and in Aimoré, Minas Gerais, are out of work - many agreed to work cleaning the affected areas, as a mean of survival. The river situation also affected farmers and changed the habits of the

of iron ore originated, was informed, two years ago, that to the surprise of the population, the risk of running out of water is something real. The serious drought that hit the region found in the mining model an evil ally that almost caused an unprecedented water rationing.

The water is just one of many environmental problems. Cauê, a hill at the center peak of the city, which inspired the poet



Bruno Tortura

Carlos Drummond de Andrade during his childhood, disappeared. For many years now, where Cauê used to be there is now a deep crater, which has become an area to dispose ore waste.

Entire neighborhoods keep on being evicted, such as Vila Paciência, one of the oldest in the city, which has been experiencing a slow deactivation process for almost ten years. The goal is to increase the mining space – people from Itabira grew up hearing that the mine and the town are Siamese twins, and it is difficult to know where one begins and the other one ends.

The water threat has an explanation. Itabira’s waters are part of one of the main aquifers in the state, named Cauê. Part of the water consumed by the 100,000 residents of the city, however, comes from a tailings dam that belongs to Vale, after

being treated.

Nevertheless, the noble water is considered of maximum purity precisely because the geological formation of the area is mostly underground, where mining activities are held. And this water is being used for mining – the process of iron ore concentration in the plants requires huge amounts of water; according to estimates, 10% of the water used in one single day of mining operation in the Itabira mines would be enough to supply the city.

Despite the undoubted development – Itabira has become, thanks to mining, one of the ten municipalities in Minas Gerais with the highest revenue – it is necessary to ration the use of natural resources, increasingly scarce.

The damage caused by the rupture of Samarco’s dam adds to the consequences of other disasters that are already known

by the population of the so-called Iron Quadrangle, at the center part of Minas Gerais state, an area that encompasses the capital, Belo Horizonte, and old cities such as Ouro Preto, Mariana, Sabara, Itabira, Congonhas, Nova Lima. This is the heart of the state, the place where it was originated from the mining activities in the seventeenth century.

In the Iron Quadrangle, recent mobilizations tried to preserve areas still untouched by mining. An example is the project to build a park at Gandarela Mountains, which surround mining towns like Caeté, Itabirito, Ouro Preto and Barão de Cocais.

These mountains are home to the largest area of “cangas ferruginosas”, geological capes that protect and feed the aquifers in the state, which are fundamental to replenish the aquifers – not to



Bruno Tortura

mention the beautiful rainforest that still stands in the region formed by mountains and valleys.

The enormous potential of Gandarela for mining, however, attracts the greed of numerous companies. The Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) took over in 2010 the idea of creating Gandarela National Park, but the project still only exists on paper.

Only the mobilization of the local community could end the alienation imposed on the municipalities of that region that depend on mining.

The disaster in Mariana brought to

THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE RUPTURE OF SAMARCO’S DAM ADDS TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF OTHER DISASTERS THAT ARE ALREADY KNOWN BY THE POPULATION OF THE SO-CALLED IRON QUADRANGLE, AT THE CENTER PART OF MINAS GERAIS STATE.

light the obscure *modus operandi* of mining companies with regard to the government and the communities in which they operate – in Minas Gerais, this practice has persisted for many, many decades.

We can’t, once again, miss the opportunity to promote changes in the relationship between municipalities and mining companies, so that human and environmental rights are minimally respected.

MOVEMENT FOR THE MOUNTAINS AND WATERS OF MINAS (MOVSAM) - MINAS GERAIS
Mariana tragedy
40 billion liters of mud left behind a 650km of destruction
19 people died
More than 200 families lost their houses
One year has passed by since the tragedy



Gilmar's selfie

//FROM
NOW ON,
THIS IS ME//

2016 | LGBT CONNECTION IN THE SLUMS

by Karla Monteiro

GILMARA'S ENGAGEMENT GAVE RISE TO CONNECTION G, A GROUP THAT SWEEPS PREJUDICE AWAY, STEPS UP, AND FIGHT FOR THE LGBT PEOPLE IN SLUMS.

Everything seemed to be leading to an unforgettable weekend, all friends from the preparatory course were traveling together to Paraty. The year was 2005 and it was the first time that Gilmar Santos da Cunha, who was 20 back then, left Rio de Janeiro. He rarely ever left Complexo da Maré, a set of 16 slums and 140 thousand inhabitants, in the north part of Rio, where he has lived since the age of four. The trip was organized by CEASM – Center for Studies and Solidarity Actions of Maré. Everyone in that festive bus lived in that slum. Their ties went beyond the classroom.

On arrival in Paraty, the hostel had separate bedrooms for boys and girls. Huddled by his false personality, Gilmar went to the boys' room. "Get out, your place is not here," said his colleagues, mocking him, as usual. He dragged the suitcase to the women's room. And, surprise, his place was not there either. The option was to sleep in a tent in the backyard. A decade later, Gilmar became Gilmara. And he never forgot that weekend.

"I was upset. At dinnertime, I proposed a discussion and, for the first time, we discussed homosexuality in the slum", she says, sprawled in the chair,

very comfortable in her costume: a long black skirt and a black shirt. Gilmara takes room: she is big, voluptuous, busty, chubby, with such a loud laugh that it overlaps the noise outside. We are in her office, a dark but comfortable room, with multiple computers, doors open to the sidewalk, right in the middle of Maré.

community. If we look inside the slums, we see that the reality of LGBT people can be much worse than in other territories. In our public meetings, they used to throw onions at us."

From Gilmar's engagement as an activist, as he still didn't see himself as a trans, he was "only queer" as he defined,

IF WE LOOK INSIDE THE SLUMS, WE SEE THAT THE REALITY OF LGBT PEOPLE CAN BE MUCH WORSE THERE THAN IN OTHER TERRITORIES. IN OUR PUBLIC MEETINGS, THEY USED TO THROW ONIONS AT US".

Around three in the afternoon, the slum is pretty busy.

The sidewalks are taken by street vendors, drug dealers and people selling cosmetic products. The sounds trample with each vendor struggling to scream louder. On the streets, in a disjointed dance, cars, motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians. Unaware of all that, doors wide open, Gilmara continues: "When we got back to Rio, I created a small group to discuss actions to fight prejudice in the

Conexão G de Cidadania para Moradores de Favela emerged, in 2006, a year after that trip. "Our idea was to work to reverse the notion that LGBT people only think about sex, promiscuity and being sissy," he says. Over the decade, hosted at the NGO Redes da Maré, Conexão G swept away prejudice and stepped up. "One of our first actions was to organize our own LGBT Pride Parade, which takes place every first Sunday of September at Maré".



Complexo da Maré slum, in the north part of Rio de Janeiro.

Fernando Frazão - Agência Brasil

Then, they stablished a partnership with civil and public authorities and they engaged in activities of different natures: they created a film club that exhibit films oriented to the LGBT community, a health fair, regular seminars on STD and AIDS services for the LGBT population living in the streets, debates to discuss gender affirmation and training courses in computer sciences. The work performed by Conexão G was structured on three pillars: fighting violence against gay and transgender people in the slums, education and health promotion. “Our motto is: no victimization, we are gay, we are equal,” says Gilmara.

Their newest project, “Nice to meet you, I Exist” was selected by Brazil Fund’s call “Together against the violence

CREATING AN APPLICATION TO DENOUNCE PREJUDICE IS PART OF CONEXÃO G’S PLANS

that kills youth in Brazil” and received R\$40,000. The work is based on itinerant groups that will take legal services, medical, psychological and social assistance to the victims of prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in four slums in Rio: Cidade de Deus, Rocinha, Complexo do Alemão and Complexo da Maré.

Gilmara is excited: “We will hold workshops on civil rights and citizenship, in order to train local actors for the defense of human rights. We will also create an

application that will enable people to report prejudice within the slum territory. We will also create a database and we’ll map the violence against LGBT people in the slums.”

While she talks about the “Nice to meet you, I Exist” project, whose goal is to reach 1,000 young people and train a hundred of them to become multipliers, Gilmara ends up talking more about her own biography. She does not like to talk about the past. To get where she is, as the coordinator of Conexão G and as



Exhibition with pictures of Complexo da Maré.

Fernando Frazão - Agência Brasil

Tânia Rego - Agência Brasil

a “T,” as she refers to the fact that she is transgender – she has been through some hard times. “Do you really want to know these things?” she asks, lowering her gaze, making clear that she is upset.

As a child, she was there when her father was killed in a confrontation between police and criminals. Her mother raised three children through hard times, with the meager salary of a housekeeper. Since he was a little boy, he already felt he was in fact a she. “I was a little girl, I wanted girl clothes. But if I showed it, my mother would beat me”, she says. At school, she represented the perfect victim. “I would suffer all kinds of mean treatment,” she says.

As a teenager, Gilmara thought she would finally find salvation. She got deeply involved with a Christian group called Toca de Assis, where she suffered many penances during the five years she was one of their members. “In the confessions, I would speak about my desire and they would tell me to pray and fast.

Once, my penance was to eat the leftovers of my brothers who lived in the streets”.

She was about to make the pledge when she decided to drop everything, she couldn’t stand to stifle her desires, sufferings, so she joined CEASM to prepare for the university entrance examination, so she could study psychology. “I was accepted and studied all the way to the 3rd year, but I had to leave due to personal problems.” Already engaged in LGBT activism, she was still Gilmar: “The church was still inside of me”. If I felt desire, I would kneel down. And as

my desire only increased, my knees were squashed for praying so much”.

Three years ago, finally, after seven years as a LGBT activist, she came out of the closet. Or, as she describes it, she took her new look out of the closet: “Everything was stored in a box, all I had ever dreamed of wearing. I annihilated myself to make my mother happy. To be gay was ok, but not a transvestite. But one day I woke up and said to myself: Today is the day. I left the room with a lot of make up on; When she saw me, my mother asked, ‘What is this?’ I just said: ‘You better get used to it’. From now on, this is me”.

RIGHT TO FREE SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Brazil Fund has supported **17** projects on this theme

The first of them was held in **2007**

The supported projects take place in three regions of the country

OUR NUMBERS

BRL 12 MILLION

in grants (USD 4 million)

10 ANNUAL CALLS and **7** SPECIFIC
CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

Around **300** on-the-ground
groups supported

20 training WORKSHOPS

for grantees

More than **150** onsite VISITS to
monitor projects in the 5 regions of the country

24 EVENTS

TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS

14 CAMPAIGNS
and **25** COMMUNICATION PIECES

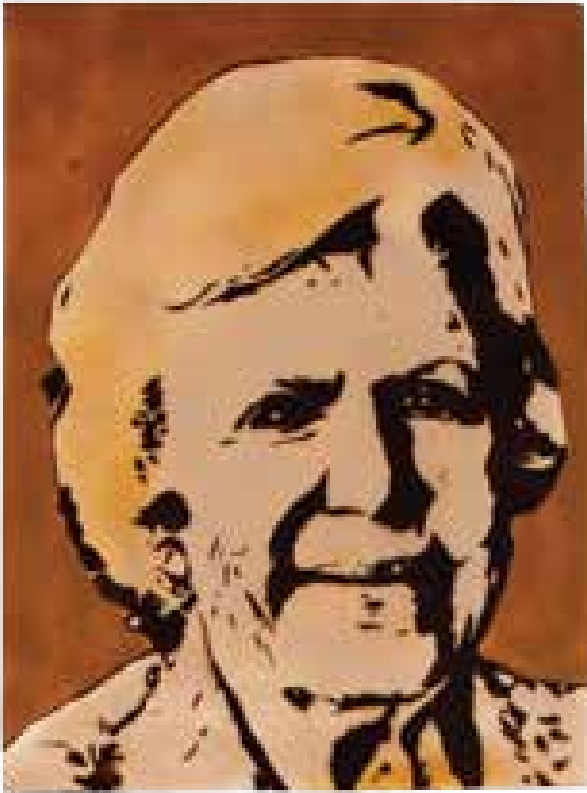
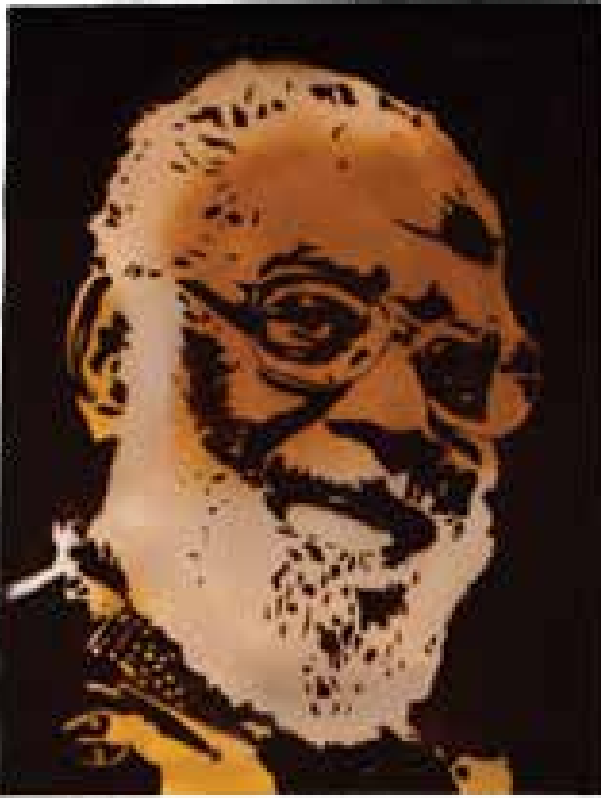
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