

STRATEGIES OF THE STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTS:

THE EXPERIENCE OF PIQUIÁ DE BAIXO – MARANHÃO



TRAINING MANUAL.

EXPE- DIENT.

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INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC TO INTRODUCE
THIS MANUAL IN TRAINING



Piquiá de Baixo, on the banks of the Piquiá River, with the facilities of steel and cement companies in the background

Construction of “Piquiá da Conquista” neighborhood for the resettlement of 312 families from Piquiá de Baixo (photo from February 2020).



This Manual is an initiative of the partnership between the organizations Justice on the Rails (JnT), the Community Association of Residents of Piquiá (ACMP), the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) and the SAGE Foundation. It was constructed on the basis of lived experiences in the struggle of the Piquiá de Baixo community in defense of their rights in the face of violations committed by Vale S.A. and companies with similar activities in the region. Piquiá de Baixo is located along the Carajás Railway in the city of Açailândia, state of Maranhão, on the eastern edge of Brazil’s Amazon region.

How strong is the resilience power of a community representing just over 1% of the population of a municipality with 112 thousand inhabitants, located between the urban and rural areas, far from the eyes of public authorities, but at the center of the

exploitation interests of extractivist companies (mining, pig iron, steel and cement factories) in order to resist and keep fighting for their rights for more than a decade?

At what point did this community realize that these new neighbors, who appeared as inducers of economic and social progress, represented a harm to health, the environment and community life? What are the strategies found by the community to face the challenges of health damages, intrigues caused by the companies, the loss of fishing and

domestic breeding for sustenance, due to the air and water pollution?

These questions will be answered in this Manual, whose methodology is based on the conjugation of the verbs see-judge-act, and on the principles and methodology of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed developed by Paulo Freire.

The Manual begins with a brief presentation of the Piquiá de Baixo neighborhood and then brings to each theme the stories of the community's residents sharing their own experiences. This part is followed by a list of difficulties experienced by the community and strategies that the community has adopted or that can be adopted in similar circumstances. At the end of each unit, a suggested script is presented for developing the theme in training programs.

In this Manual, the history of the

community's struggle is told based on the author's conversations with the residents – conversations that made it possible to bring out important steps in this trajectory – bringing also her experience as an educator trained in conflict mediation, community organizing and security of Human Rights defenders.

In the Annexes, you will find a summary of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, a timeline of the struggle of the community of Piquiá de Baixo and Mr. Edvard's complete letter to his grandson. These documents can be useful in training programs.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to everyone who collaborated for the realization of this Manual with the firm hope that it can contribute to the difficult journey towards affirming the human and social rights violated by big business.



Carajás Corridor: Vale S.A.'s railway line for the disposal of iron ore mined in the south-east of Pará. The Piquiá de Baixo community is located 14 km from Açailândia

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC TO INTRODUCE THIS MANUAL IN TRAINING.

A CONVERSATION WHEEL:

- a) Provide chairs in a circle.
- b) Make a welcome moment with the refrain of the song: “Seja bem vinda/o lelê, seja bem-vindo/a lá lá! Paz e bem para você que veio participar.” It can be with a different refrain or a poem or a short enactment expressing the community’s fight for rights.
- c) Ask a person to recall an important learning moment that has occurred in the community in its struggle for some right. After affirming the importance of this sharing, explain that much can be learned in the fight for rights.
- d) Throw a ball, which can be made of crumpled paper, or another non-dangerous object, to a person in the circle and ask her/him to say a right that the community still needs to fight for (the ball can be passed on to about 5 people).
- e) Linking the experiences and the rights that still need to be achieved, this Strategies Manual is presented as an instrument that brings systematized experiences towards strengthening the fight for rights.

A REMINDER. it is always necessary to prepare the meetings in advance so that there is no shortage of material and for the environment to be ready and welcoming. It is always suggested to record the meetings, with activity reports, photos, videos, material produced, etc. You can choose a person in advance or at the beginning of the activity for the recording.

1.

**WHERE WE
SPEAK FROM:
HOW WAS
LIFE IN PIQUIÁ
DE BAIXO?.**

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

“It was really good here! We had fish at ease. We could plant anything. The “banho do Quarenta” (place where people bathe in the river) gathered people from everywhere! Some people drank too much and made a mess. But it was good here, indeed!”. (Mr. Antônio). “The community of Piquiá de Baixo started in 1958 when the first families arrived here. Some men arrived before their wives, their sons and daughters. They were people from Piauí, Minas, Bahia, many of them from neighboring municipalities. My parents say that they came on foot from Imperatriz, which is 70 km from here. What attracted families was access to cheap land. Then, each one brought on a relative and another and then one more, and when you looked, there were already more than 400 families” (Simone).

“In truth, it was good here! We used to bathe a lot in this stream. There was a lot of fruit: jackfruit, mango, banana. If someone got sick, there was always some good tea. There was also confusion, men wanting to fight, being bullies, but at the time of need people came together. They joined to build the water well. Women built the Mothers’ Club next to the school. The cemetery was at the top and it alwa-

ys had flowers. But the best thing was the festivals in the church of São José”. (Nice)

In the middle of a healthy and beautiful vegetation, this community, formed by migrants with a dream of giving a better life to their families, and with problems common to all community relationship, would change a lot after the construction of the Carajás Railroad (EFC) and the arrival of iron industries in the years between 1984 and 1988.



SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

a) As a welcome, ask people who can stand (if there is someone in a wheelchair the exercise can be done sitting), to stretch their body and give a hug to themselves. The hug should last for a few moments so that the person has time to think about his/her abilities and qualities. Then ask people to hug somebody else and say to them one of his/her own qualities or skills. Close this moment by saying that all qualities and skills are important in the fight for rights.

b) According to the time of the community’s existence (example: the community has existed for 20 years), divide people into 4 groups. Group 1 must recall what the community was like in the first 5 years; group 2 will remember the community during the next 5 years and so on. The small groups prepare a report for the

whole group by drawing, singing or doing a theater. It is important that groups are motivated to bring good and difficult moments, cultural aspects (celebrations), etc. in their reports. In the presentation of the groups, you can have a paper on the wall with a timeline for notes on the elements brought by the groups.

c) Present the work of the groups.

d) Whoever is conducting the meeting should close it emphasizing the most important moments of the community's struggle presented by the groups, as well as their meaning brought out.

e) End, if possible, by sharing a snack to celebrate the life and resistance of the community that is the place where we talk from.

2.

FEEL, INTUIT, ACT: THE COMMUNI- TY BEGINS ORGANIZING.

NARRATIVE WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

When the construction of the railway started, many people were employed, and many made plans to work in the iron companies. It was so much movement that one didn't even have time to think straight. When the residents realized, the railroad was already there, and everything changed very quickly. The community's lands now belonged to the companies, the gardens no longer had space and the air became gray.

That was not right. But people didn't want to talk about it. Some were afraid of losing their jobs, others thought it didn't matter and some thought that people who worried just wanted to show themselves. Few people complained openly. Among them there was Mr. Edvard who led the group, Mr. Joaquim and a couple more people from the community. To-

gether they started to think and discuss what to do. There were a lot of sick people with breathing problems, infections in their eyes and a lot of itching in their bodies, not to mention the shrill noise of trains that would not let anyone talk or listen to the radio.

"At times I got discouraged. It was very difficult to talk to people about what everyone was seeing and feeling. Even so, we remained firm. We went after the mayor and city councilors, but what they did was tell us that companies were important to the municipality. Mr. Edvard even wrote to President Lula, who responded to his letter. But things did not change. The solution was to join more people from the community, form a residents' Association and seek outside support to strengthen our struggle". (Mr. Joaquim).



DIFFICULTIES

- Having to repeat the same story many times, and several times to the same person;
- Complaints from the family about the time and even household money that go to the struggle of the community;
- Due to so much pressure, obstacles and even threats appear... many moments of doubts as to whether the community is on the right path;
- The distancing of people for fear of being seen with those who carry out the community's struggle;
- Difficulty in understanding who to fight against, who to turn to and what to do.

STRATEGIES

- The group organizing for personal visits to the people in the community with whom they had more affinity and confidence to talk about the problem and the importance of coming together, gaining in this way new members for the fight;
- Creation of the residents' Association;
- Conversations with social and religious leaders to seek support.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

a) Welcome: choose an excerpt of a struggle song (the lyrics can be copied or projected on the wall) for everyone to sing. Then, one can ask if there is any news from the community to be shared.

b) Ask for three volunteers who will choose together a right that the community still needs to conquer. While they define the right, the rest of the group is divided into three (if the group is small, it can be in two). Then each of the three volunteers should go to a group to convince people to join them in the fight. You will have 5 minutes for that.

c) In the big circle, each volunteer will tell how many people they have convinced, and participants will say what, in the speech of the volunteer, convinced them. Only then will the volunteer tell the group what was most difficult in the exercise.

d) The leader of the activity should always value people's efforts and participation. After this sharing, a text relevant to the theme of the day is read (it could be the introduction to this unit 2) and discussion is opened in the group.

e) Close the meeting by asking each participant to say an important word to be used when trying to win someone over for the fight.

3.

THE POWER OF NET- WORKING.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

It had been a long time since Mr. Edvard, Mr. Joaquim and other people in the community had been fighting to denounce those companies, until Antônio from the Center for the Defense of Life and Human Rights “Carmen Bascarán”, who at the time was not yet a full lawyer, introduced Mr. Edvard to Fr. Dario of the Comboni Missionaries. There, Mr. Edvard told the story that he had repeated many times. The priest listened and soon wanted to know more. Every time the priest went to the community, he took along someone else to also get acquainted with the problem. The priest said that more people had to be informed and come to know what was happening.

Through Antônio, the priests came, from the priests came another lawyer, then the organization Justice on the Rails (JnT), and then, professors from the federal university and other support groups. The community was no longer alone.

Every time we talked about the diseases due to the pollution caused by the companies and about our struggle, those who listened asked many questions. Sometimes the questions confused us a little, but they were very important for us to understand that we needed to seek

more information to improve our fight. We were getting stronger.

“That was how, in 2011, with the help of Justice on the Rails, Global Justice and the International Federation of Human Rights, the document “Brasil quanto valem os direitos humanos?” (Brazil, how much are human rights worth?), which dealt with the problems that the mining and steel industry caused in the community, was published. A few years later, a new document was released: the report “Piquiá foi à Luta” (Piquiá took on the fight), which showed that all the progress and achievements in the community were the result of the mobilization of the residents themselves”. (Kelly).



DIFFICULTIES

- Knowing to what extent to trust the people who were introduced to the community;
- Having to change plans in order to receive and accompany people who arrived without warning;
- Deciding when and by whom to be photographed or filmed;
- Streamlining the narratives to avoid having different positions in the community on the same subject;
- Discerning what to do when the visitors’ attention was focused only on one or two people, thus causing jealousy and scratching relations in the community;
- Organizing the contacts and contributions;
- Fighting the temptation of being guided by interests contrary to those of the community.

STRATEGIES

- Get information on the people or groups being received; where they come from, what interests; what they stand for; in whose name they are there; who are the people to trust; who in the community knows those people;
- Arrange in the community who could be available to receive people; who could speak on behalf of all and what to say;
Organize well the time and space for meetings and visits;
- Some precautions for meetings: do not leave confidential documents exposed; take care that the place is clean, ventilated and welcoming; always define who does the registration of people and the topics treated;
- Make sure that the visits are accompanied by more than one person from the community and with prior notice to allow time to prepare;
- When receiving a proposal, do not decide on the spot, but take it for community discussion and deliberation;
- Assess in the group the degree of importance of each alliance;
- Always defend the interests of the community;
- Open space so that more people from the community can develop their leadership, so that there is alternation in the composition of the Association's board.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

- a) Welcome people and ask them to remember and share on someone who helped them achieve something important in life.
- b) After sharing, whoever the activity leader should ask people to report experiences of networking, because, through good contacts and working together it is easier to achieve good results. This will be the hook to introduce the theme of the meeting.
- c) Ask someone to read the text of item 1.3, "The power of networking", including difficulties and strategies. Then invite people to chat about the text.
- d) Following that, the participants are divided into small groups. Each group will receive markers and cardboard sheets. On the cardboard, they are invited to write the names of organizations and people with whom the community can network, and how each of them can contribute (+/- 20 minutes).
- e) Each group presents its report and thus the whole group will be able to visualize the network of articulations that the community has already formed.
- f) To close the meeting, it is suggested to stress the importance of taking care of alliances and networking. It is also advisable to reread the items of the strategy, before deciding concrete actions on how the community can strengthen its articulations.

4.

THE OPPRES- SOR IN THE MIND AND VOICE OF SOME PEO- PLE IN THE COMMUNITY.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME



“The community was well united when the demonstration took place in front of Gusa Nordeste iron mill to demand compensation payment for the resettlement lot. The agreement for the resettlement of the community had been reached through the mediation of the State Public Prosecutor. After that, some people who worked for the companies or had relatives there, who previously supported the movement, began to criticize the Association’s board. They even went so far as insinuating that some of us were making money on the outside, that our allies were

using us to their advantage”. (D. Tida).

Many people were afraid of losing their jobs because the companies threatened to dismiss workers who participated in demonstrations against them. There were conversations that some residents were passing on information about the organization of the community to the companies. Some people were saying that businesses controlled the local government and therefore did not believe that the community could stand a chance.

Fear and uncertainty could be overcome, but when some residents began to defend the interests of the big companies, the climate changed in the community, and the freedom to speak and to plan actions was no longer the same.

With these divisions, some families sold their houses, but the money was not enough to buy a good house in another neighborhood. Thus, several families ended up paying rent or living with relatives, and others returned to the community paying lower rent here.

The way out was investment in awareness-raising programs in the community so that people could understand the strategies of the companies and the potential of the community as a political subject with voice and rights.



DIFFICULTIES

- Deception in the promises of companies;
- Threats of unemployment;
- Smear campaigns by companies against community leaders and supporters, using people from the community for that;
- Lack of employment alternatives, as smaller businesses in the area work for the large companies and the public authorities are guided by the interests of large companies.
- Employees' lack of awareness of their rights as working class.

STRATEGIES

- Realization of meetings to refine the arguments and narratives;
- Identify ways to gain the respect and trust of people who are in doubt or feel insecure;
- Ask the network of supporters to aid in political training aimed at the full exercise of citizenship and affirmation of rights;
- Establish respectful treatment for people who defend business so that they understand that the fight is for the rights of the community and for their own rights. For that, it is very important to friendly approach people, their families and relatives, while at the same time being firm in the defense of the purposes of the struggle;
- Identify who in the organization can be more suited to talk to the person who is insecure or defending the interests of companies;
- Studies on the rights of the community and the duties of companies and public authorities.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

a) Welcome with the song: “Cidadão” (Zé Ramalho). After listening to the song, ask participants to say what the song means to them. Only after this sharing does the leader emphasize that the song brings out social inequality and the exploitation of the working class.

b) Divide the participants into 3 groups. A group must represent residents who defend the interests of companies; the second group will represent the interests of the community; the third group will have the role of writing down the points presented

by each side on a cardboard (or other large sheet) and at the end saying their impressions about the presentations.

c) Whoever conducts the training should be prepared to mediate the conversation so that the group can understand the tricky ways the companies employ when using community's members to speak on their behalf, without judging these people. The whole group will have to be helped to understand that the real enemy is not the person who defends the interests of the company, but the violations committed by the companies (30 minutes for the activity).

d) Read the text introducing this unit 4, including difficulties and strategies, and then ask the participants to indicate other strategies that can be added to the text list.

e) Conclude the training by thanking the participants for their interest in dealing with such a sensitive topic.

5.

STUDIES AND RESEARCH ON COMMUNITY PROBLEMS.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME



When the community took the initiative to organize for the right to health, decent housing, safe community living, no one had any idea how much it would be necessary to network with other organizations and seek support in the city, the State and even outside of Brazil to move forward in the pursuit of those rights.

In addition to willpower, organization and courage to fight, the community still lacked many other skills to find proof of everything that made people in the community sick.

It was with the support of professors from the Federal University, of Justice on the Rails' (JnT) professionals and a partnership with a group of doctors from Italy that a survey was conducted on the pollutants emitted by the companies and the impact on the health of community's residents. Before this research there was always someone saying that the residents were ignorant, that they were exaggerating or did not know what they were talking about.

It took many days of work, but the result was very good. It was possible to measure the level of noise pollution caused by the still mills and the trains passing on the Carajás railway; quantify the percentage of impairment in people's lungs due to the gases emitted and much more. The fact is that the results of the surveys served as documentary evidence for various lawsuits in favor of families in the community.

Another important study was carried out by the People's Health Surveillance Group formed by young people from the community itself to investigate air quality.

DIFFICULTIES

- Organizing the documents recording events and actions taken in the community to support the research;
- Communicating in real time to the whole community the purpose and nature of the activities being carried out, as well as finding consensus on them;
- Organizing the community to host and accompany researchers in the community;
- Maintaining regular contact with external supporters;
- Receiving people who do not speak the Portuguese language;
- Understanding the researchers' speech;
- Knowing how to apply the research results to the best benefit of the community;
- Getting the results of the research to be presented in return to the community

STRATEGIES

- Community training on how to make and maintain contacts in the social struggles process;
Map families with availability to host people;
- Maintain a list of people who can assist with language translations;
- Create newsletters to keep the community and external allies and supporters informed about relevant community issues;
Search for, and maintain contact with, communities that have similar problems;
- Research where to find information about the community (city hall; testimonies of early residents; old photos; newspaper articles, etc.);
- Establish partnerships with universities;
Engage students from the community in research carried out in the community;
Discover ways to apply the studies done in the community.
Join people to study together issues and facts, in the city, the State, in Brazil and the world that can affect the community (a type of social analysis);
Based on studies, improve or build a strategic plan for the achievement of rights in the community.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

- a) Welcome people using the group exercise of “untangling hands”. People, in a circle, hold hands, look carefully at who is on the right and left; then they release their hands and walk around the room for a couple of minutes getting mingled. Then, from where they stand, they should join hands again with the same persons as before. The wheel will be completely intertwined, and people must try to untangle the group and return to the wheel without releasing their hands.
- b) Back to the circle, the leader should ask what people felt and observed. S/he should take advantage of the utterances to emphasize how important it is to observe the environment to see what is happening, to understand how things work, what are the obstacles to common action and the abilities needed for positive change. This dynamic is meant as an introduction to the theme of studies and research.
- c) Ask for 3 volunteers to read the text introducing unit 5. Each person reads a part and then the whole group comments on the text for about 15 minutes.
- d) Show a video about one of the problems that the community faces (pesticides, mining, etc.).
- e) Open the floor for people to share about what caught the attention in the video.

Then, taking advantage of the reports expressed by the participants, reinforce the importance of research and studies to make progress in the fight for rights.

f) Finally, you can review the points of the strategies (above) to see what the community has already experimented and what needs to be improved. A problem or situation that deserves more research in the community can be detected and decided on.

IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONS WHEN DOING RESEARCH

- 1** Welcome teachers who seek partnership with the community;
- 2** Discuss and choose studies of interest to the community;
- 3** Select people to receive and accompany teachers, students and other researchers in the community;
- 4** Introduce the partners at the community assembly, as well as the results of research and studies;
- 5** Publicize the research and studies' results;
- 6** Make sure that the community and the Association are included as co-authors in the final reports.

**YOU CAN ACCESS RESEARCH REPORTS ON THE COMMUNITY HERE:
WWW.JUSTICANOSTRILHOS.ORG**

6.

THE CHOICE FOR RESET- TLING AND ITS MANAGE- MENT.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

People can talk and criticize, but they know that the right place for decisions is the assembly. When it came to making the decision about what type of reparation the community would choose, there were many doubts, discussions and even disagreements. There were those who wanted individual compensation, who wanted to remain in Piquiá de Baixo even with the pollution; however, a large majority, in assembly, opted for the resettlement of the community. Nobody could enjoy good health living there.

It took several assemblies until the choice for resettlement won a good majority consensus. Some 20% of families preferred not to accept the proposal. Despite the concern about the future of these families and the intrigues caused by some people who rejected the proposal, the fight went on, as there were many issues to be resolved. Where would the new neighborhood be built? How much would it cost? Who would pay for the resettlement? How would the resettlement process be managed?

The companies never admitted officially their responsibility for the damage to the community but ended up taking on the financial costs for the purchase of the land, passing on the money through the Union that represents them. Vale, in order not to officially admit its responsibility, even created a sort of a contest and a prize to disguise the transfer of resources to the resettlement. There were many demonstrations, articulations and actions until this victory. (see the complete chronology of the resettlement process in Annex II).

For the financing of the houses, the way found was to seek the resource of the “Minha Casa Minha Vida”, a subsidized government housing program for low income families, with the hope that, in the future, payments would be exempted. One thing at a time! At that time, the important thing was to decide on how to carry out the project; after all, 312 houses would be built and nobody had experience with that.

Through Justice on the Rails (JnT), a group of architects for popular housing (USINA), was invited to offer technical advice for the planning of the new neighborhood and was introduced to the Association, which made it possible to learn about the benefits of self-management. In self-management, as opposed to giving a contractor the management of the work, the Association is the one who would decide and conduct the construction. Thus, the resettlement plan, the choice of the model of the houses, the selection of contractors who would do the physical work, the financial management, the decision on the community spaces to be built, everything would be decided collectively and conducted by the Association.



DIFFICULTIES

- Implementing a truly democratic process with the participation of women within a macho culture;
- Lack of practice of collective dialogue in the community's culture;
- Understanding the different institutional roles: associates, board of directors, fiscal council and assembly;
- Maintaining the quorum of the assemblies to give legitimacy to decisions;
- Reconciling individual interests in favor of the interests of the community;
- Fears when making decisions for the medium and long term;
- The low level of self-confidence in the community's management power.

STRATEGIES

- Identify people who have good community acceptance to conduct the meetings;
- Prepare the agendas of the assemblies well and ensure wide dissemination of the convocations;
- Make use of good welcoming and closing dynamics for assemblies;
- Having moments of spirituality;
- Prepare in advance the information that will be passed on and discussed at the meetings, making use of audiovisual aids that are easier to understand;
- Present more than two proposals with advantages and disadvantages of each one, considering the collective interest as the greatest good to be protected and defended;
- Be ready to respond with intelligence and respect to the statements that may arise in favor of companies, as well as provocative and non-constructive questions;
- Never conduct a meeting without following the requirements of the Bylaws: advance notice, quorum, reading of the minutes of the previous meeting (at least the deliberations) and persons responsible for doing the minutes and records (example: photos, footage);
- Publicize the deliberations of the assembly (when possible, use local radio);
- When there are conflicting issues, seek out trusted external observers who will be present at the meeting.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

a) Introduce the meeting welcoming people with warmth and share the community news. In the center of the wheel there should be several cutouts with figures, and objects (pen, vase, ball, keys, photos of houses, landscapes, animals, car, etc.). Whoever is conducting the training gives some of the people an object; the other participants are invited to go to the center of the circle and pick up a figure or object. Then people are invited to tell a story in 1 minute based on that figure or object.

b) After listening to all the participants, the leader thanks everyone and invites the participants to talk about what it was like to tell the story based on something that was given/imposed or something they had chosen.

c) From there, talk about the power of “choice”. With what emerges from the reports, point out aspects of freedom, responsibility, power and equality as aspects of a democratic society. Reflect with the group that in the capitalist system, especially in a country with so much inequality, the power of choice can be seen as a threat as it can lead to different and more effective forms of production without exploitation and denial of the rights of people and Mother Earth.

d) Read the first part of the text above “The choice for resettlement and its management”. Listen to the group about their impressions and ask if the community has ever needed to make a choice involving many people.

e) After the sharing, divide the group in two: group 1 should discuss the list of difficulties in the text, and if they want, add more; group 2 will discuss the strategies and may add others to the list (20 minutes);

f) Each group presents the results and their understanding about them.

g) Ask participants to say which are the most important decision spaces in the community.

h) End the meeting by reading the following sentence together (a different one can be chosen): “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with someone” (African proverb).

7.

LEGAL STRATEGIES.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

In a country with so much social inequality and an elite full of privileges, the search for rights requires planning and strategies. Some have already been considered in previous sections. Here, the strategy that involves lawsuits will be presented. It must be used when other paths have been tried or when the right sought can only be achieved through judicial means. This is because access to justice in Brazil is expensive,

lawsuits take time and most authorities of the Judiciary defend the interests of the elite and companies. In the Piquiá de Baixo struggle, four moments were highlighted in which it was necessary to implement this strategy:



- 1 To claim compensation for the damages to the health of 21 families whose houses bordered on Gusa Nordeste plant and who were therefore the most affected by pollution;
- 2 To claim that companies contribute to the payment of the resettlement lot. In this case, a Conduct Adjustment Term (TAC) was made and the companies' Union took charge of making the payment;
- 3 To submit the charge of rights violations suffered by the community at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
- 4 To denounce and prosecute a citizen who led a group with community people, and others from nearby neighborhoods, to invade the resettlement terrain. In addition to trying to invade the lot with people who were not on the list for resettlement, this citizen slandered and defamed the Association's board. The Association's response was to let him know that his attempts to divide the community had limits. Limits guaranteed by law.

DIFFICULTIES

- Knowing how to choose the right moment to activate the legal strategy;
- Knowing where to find reliable allies;
- Convincing the direct victims and their witnesses;
- Ensuring the safety of victims and witnesses;
- The Association's scarce resources to finance the costs of legal proceedings;
- Little understanding of legal terms and deadlines;
- Guaranteeing the systematic monitoring of legal actions that usually take years.

STRATEGIES

- Have support from a trusted and knowledgeable lawyer;
- Discuss at the meeting all the risks and benefits of a lawsuit;
- Take the decision collectively, before starting an action;
- Study the possibility that the action be promoted by the State or the Union's Public Defender;
- Gather all documents that demonstrate the right and the attempts to achieve it, prior to the decision to activate the justice system;
- Define who will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the lawsuit. A process can take years. If you do not have someone to work closely with the lawyer or the Public Defender, the process may take longer;
- Raise funds and seek partnerships to finance the costs of the lawsuit (travel, accommodation, photocopies, etc.);
- After knowing the names of the prosecutor and judge assigned to the case, it is important to raise their political and ideological line, try to find out if they are relatives or close friends of the business owners. If the judge or prosecutor lacks impartiality, they should leave the case.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

- a) Welcome: ask people to form trios and create a choreography with the song “Nosso direito vem” (it may be a different rights-related song, that the group knows).
- b) Read this unit’s text, including the difficulties and strategies, and open a group discussion on it.
- c) During the discussion, ask people to talk about the main violations committed by companies in the region. The leader asks someone to take notes of the violations and read them back to the group.
- d) Among the violations, reach an agreement as to the one that is considered the most serious.
- e) Invite the group to prepare for a People’s Trial (“Tribunal Popular”) to judge the case. Ask who would like to be: the judge, prosecutor, lawyer, witness and defendant (e.g. the company). The rest of the group will compose the Jury.
- f) Allow about 10 minutes for the actors to prepare their arguments and then the trial begins.
- g) After the trial, the floor is opened for people to express their impressions and feelings.
- h) End with an assessment of the activity and an exchange on what people have learned anew.

ATTENTION!

In the justice system, deadlines are very important. Therefore, it is essential to have someone from the community who accompanies the legal action and a very attentive and responsible lawyer. Another point to be careful about is the lapsing of deadlines (statute of limitation), that is, some rights can only be requested in court until a certain time after the violation; from then on, the person or the community can no longer seek justice through the system. That is why it is important to have a lawyer who can help the community to know what those rights are and the time frame to claim them in court.

8.

ACTION MONITORING.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

In the final part of almost all the Association's assemblies, there was a report on the progress of the lawsuits introduced to seek indemnity to the families who suffered health damages, as well as on petitions to City Hall or the Public Ministry. Everything was recorded in the minutes, but nobody understood much. All that participants care for was to know if the requests would be granted and the cause won. The lawyers and the board directors did not hide in their expressions that they felt alone in using this strategy.

Someone also recalled that Mr. Edvard (president of the Association) had gone to the United States, at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, to denounce the companies due to the State's and the companies' negligence about the socio-environmental impacts on the



community, and that Flávia, a member of the board, and the Association's lawyers had gone to Belgium, at the European Commission on Human Rights, to take the same complaint, because it was important that buyers of the companies' products were made aware of the impacts on the communities where the raw material was extracted.

But hardly anyone knew what happened next. Then the idea arose to engage other people in the community in the follow-up and monitoring of the documents sent to all those public bodies in Brazil and at the international level, as well as in the monitoring of the actions presented to the Public Ministry and the Judiciary to indemnify families and to favor the resettlement process.

DIFFICULTIES

- Understanding the difficult words of the legal documents that go to the authorities and outside the country;
- How to find and organize all those documents;
- Finding at least six people to form a group for monitoring;
- Understanding how the various public institutions work in order to know how to conduct the monitoring.

STRATEGIES

- Raise the names of the people who wish to be part of the monitoring group;
- Hold talks with lawyers to learn about the actions that are in progress, what they are about and the procedures in each of the public bodies concerned;
- Make a survey of all forwarded documents and the lawsuits underway and list the persons in charge of them;
- Create a monitoring system, including a way to keep the entire community informed.
- Hold regular meetings of the monitoring group to analyze the evolution of the cases and plan the sharing of information with the community

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

a) Welcome participants and invite each person to come to the center of the circle and mimic how they feel that day. After all the presentations, explain that looking at oneself, at what you are feeling, is a form of monitoring. When you know how you feel, you can appreciate that feeling or do something to change it, if necessary.

b) Next step will be to divide the participants into small groups for each group to talk about monitoring community and legal actions and choose one action in the community that needs to be monitored. After choosing the example, the group should write down the difficulties in carrying out the monitoring (15 minutes).

c) Each group presents the result and, subsequently, this unit's text is read. The difficulties and strategies, previously written on cardboard, are now presented for all people to see. New points in the difficulties and strategies can be added.

d) Based on the list of difficulties and strategies, the whole group can be invited to think about the actions that are underway in the community that need to be monitored.

e) End by asking each person in the circle to say a word or phrase that demonstrates the advantage of monitoring community actions.

9.

BUSINESS AND PUBLIC POWER: AN AMBIGUOUS RELATION- SHIP

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

When the community found out that it was the city and the state government's responsibility to authorize the functioning of the companies, and that they had to supervise their operations, everyone was excited, as it would only take a document asking the mayor and/or the governor to order an inspection and to take action. But it was soon discovered that the power of extractive companies had already won the support of the mayor and the governor.

The law says that government and

political authorities must govern and make laws for all, and cannot favor some to the detriment of others, unless it is for the sake of ensuring social justice. It is not possible to take care of the community's health while authorizing the operation of companies that violate the rules of environmental impact, causing damage to people and the environment.

Again, it became clear that it was necessary to invest in awareness-raising programs in the community in order to exercise social control over public policies. This action began with a survey promoted by Justice on the Rails (JnT), Justiça Global and FIDH, which produced the report "Brazil, how much are human rights worth?". In addition to reporting on the situations of violations and the actors involved, the document made recommendations to companies, governments and public bodies for the defense of collective rights. The second report "Piquiá took on the fight", a partnership between JnT and FIDH, verified whether the recommendations had been implemented and to what extent.

The report made clear that public authorities base the approval of concessions to the companies on information presented by the companies themselves, and that there were companies operating without the proper authorization, with the knowledge of the authorities. A shame! But the community was not silent and tried to put pressure on the authorities.



DIFFICULTIES

- Little knowledge on the part of the Association's board and the community about the legal responsibilities of public authorities and companies;
- Official economic policies favorable to companies;
- Smart manipulation strategies of companies in their attempt to achieve their goals;
- The community's lack of awareness of the social class struggle and workers' rights;

- Abuse of the power of authority;
- Companies' influence and financing of political party interests;
- Limited use of the community's power to pressure authorities;
- Lack of social control by organized civil society (non-profit organizations, unions, social movements, etc.).

STRATEGIES

- Awareness-raising initiatives on how the Brazilian State was formed, who controls power, and on class relations in the history of Brazil;
- Training on the human rights that companies must respect as a condition to operate;
- Exchange with social organizations that have been fighting longer and with successful practices;
- Training on participation and demonstration rights;
- Study of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
- Knowledge about social control and about inspecting and control bodies in the structure of government.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

- >Welcome people and invite those who may know to say a “What is it?” phrase. Example: What is it? It has scales but it is not a fish, it has a crown, but it is not a king? - Pineapple!”. After the sharing, talk about the message of this game, that is, about what looks like something, but in reality, it is not. Make the comparison with public authorities that should govern for all, but stand in fact on the side of the companies. Explain, if necessary, the meaning of the word “ambiguous”.
- Read the text on “Business and public power: an ambiguous relationship”; open the floor for people to share their impressions.
- Distribute strips of paper with each one of the difficulties in the text list. The participants must read and say what they think about that. After each person speaks, the others can give an opinion as well.
- Ask people to make suggestions on how to face promiscuity (explain the word) between public authorities and companies. After listing the suggestions, the strategies listed in the unit can be read.

10.

NO DOZING OFF ALLOWED: TAKING CARE OF THE COM- MUNITY.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

“It is very annoying that my “co-madre” (my friend) cannot come over and talk with me, because of these squabbles in the Association’s assemblies.” (D. Ciça) “To this day we are still waiting for the benefits promised by Vale, and nothing. They came here to just make fool of us!” (Lima).

The assembly began and it soon became clear that there was something strange in the air. People who never attended the assemblies were present. Sitting in the back of the room, they didn’t even listen to what was being presented. They were there to disrupt the assembly. It was necessary that religious leaders who were participating would ask for calm and respect. The strangest thing is that other persons in the assembly, who should speak up in that situation, either remained silent or left.

Something was happening and the necessity to listen more to the commu-

nity to understand and seek solutions became clear. This was urgent in order to avoid that the main community’s purpose, that was the struggle for its rights, would be damaged.

Until the decision about the choice of self-management in the resettlement process, the assemblies were very full. Then people thought it would be up to the board of directors to take care of the rest. In turn, the bureaucracy to obtain the documents and authorizations to proceed with the resettlement project was so great that the board no longer had time to look at other needs of the community.

As the popular saying goes: “If you leave the space empty someone will occupy it”. That was what almost happened. Vale started to send its people to offer benefits to some people and to announce projects to divide the community.

Residents who were against the deliberations of the assemblies joined with people with political interests from outside the community to take over the decision process and try to invade the land destined to the resettlement. At this point, it became clear to the board of directors, the fiscal council and the executive team that, despite they were working hard, they could not doze off. More attention was needed to other needs in the community.



DIFFICULTIES

- Lack of skills of those who are in charge of activities in handling conflicts and situations that are not planned;
- Interference of people inside and outside the community, with political and/or

- economic interests, to influence the opinion of some members of the community;
 - Lack of opportunities to discuss ideas between one assembly and another;
Distance between the Association's board and the whole of the community;
 - Building consensus on the choice of remedies to be claimed by the community;
 - Lack of planning to reconcile attention to the resettlement process and to the community;
 - Day-to-day emergencies in the resettlement process that take up the time of the direction of the Association;
 - Maintaining vigilance over opposing groups and systematic communication with the community;
 - Dwindling of socio-political awareness-raising initiatives with the community;
- Dilemma between preserving jobs and preserving health and nature.

STRATEGIES

*“If you want to get there fast, go alone,
but if you want to go far, go as a group”*
(African proverb)

- Create activities outside the assemblies capable of bringing people together and empowering them;
- Open conversations with people in the community to understand what generates non-constructive, slanderous and defamatory statements, in order to deconstruct those narratives;
- Create an agenda for the presence of board members in day-to-day community activities;
- Develop activities that strengthen the Association as a legitimate space for community's representation;
- Prepare in a didactic way the information and accountability to be shared in the Association's assemblies;
- Build consensus on rules for participation and interventions in the assembly: time limit, order of interventions, agendas, etc.;
- People representing the community to adopt the plural first person when speaking on behalf of the community;
- Community training on conflict mediation;
- Identify people contrary to the interests of the community and openly declare their intentions to the assembly in order to stop their disruptive behavior. Try to anticipate the attacks of the opposing groups;

- Disregard, by not supporting, sharing or paying attention to, false or biased information through social networks;
 - Plan actions including community groundwork and information on the progress of projects;
 - Invest in activities that meet other demands of the community (sports, education, culture, social assistance, etc.);
 - Have a list of trusted contacts that can be sought out in urgent cases: reference persons from the community itself; lawyers; security officers; communicators; religious and public authorities, etc.;
- To the extent possible, always take emergency decisions in a collective way;
- Explain to the community the true intentions and purposes of companies in their “community interventions”.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

- a) After the welcome, find a person to volunteer and stand. His/her chair is removed from the circle. The leader explains that the participants who are seated must change places at each command, according to what is said. Example: “Everyone who is wearing slippers!”. Standing, the first person speaks out the phrase. All the people to whom the phrase applies, get up and change chairs among themselves. The person who called out tries to occupy a chair as well. Whoever loses the seat gives the next command and tries to occupy a chair, and so on. People who are called cannot go without changing chairs.
- b) After the game, briefly talk about the importance of being attentive to movements so as not to let other agents take their place.
- c) Divide the participants into groups and ask them to recall situations in which the community organization was at risk from other people’s interventions. The group should list the weaknesses of the community at that time (e.g.: It had very rare meetings).
- d) Ask the group rapporteurs to present the result to everyone.
- e) Present a poster with the list of difficulties that are in the text, and invite the group to discuss the causes of those difficulties as well as those that came from the small groups.
- f) Ask someone to read the strategies and ask them to add others based on the experience and/or the needs of the community.
- g) End with a “round of ball”: whoever is leading throws the ball (it can be made of paper, or other soft object) to a person and that person must say a word that reminds them of “state of attention” (e.g.: smart); then that person throws to somebody else, and so on.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES



Community strengthening should be continuously cared for. There is no point in having good ideas, good allies and even some achievements if the community is not together in the fight.

Individuals and families need to be motivated all the time. For this, it is necessary to pay attention to other dimensions of community life besides what concerns the struggle that is being carried out. It is necessary to look at how children, adolescents and young people are cared for and protected. It is necessary to see if there is domestic violence in the community and so on.

In Piquiá de Baixo, the most favorable place to talk with women about reparations, such as resettlement, is now the income-generating groups created to support them. With teenagers and young people, it was through sport and cultural activities; the way to engage men was through manual activities to improve the neighborhood. This does not happen spontaneously. It is necessary to take



initiative and plan the actions and soon the community will be livelier, and the assemblies more participated.

It is necessary to take time to listen to people's desires and interests, to support solutions to important problems faced by some women, to sit on the fronts of homes to learn from the most experienced people, all of this with the objective to get to know and gain the community's confidence. It is necessary to cry with the mothers about the loss of their children, celebrate the finding of a job, be together to complain about the absence of the doctor at the Health Center.

One must be present to face machismo. In the community of Piquiá, one of the women had to leave the income-generating group because her husband forbade her to participate. The other women decided that her name would not be removed because together they would work for her to return to the group. There were those who left the group because they expected a quick financial return, without allowing time to understand the most important gains of collective entrepreneurship.



In the movement aimed at strengthening the community, two groups of women emerged for income generation (the group “Mulheres Artesãs” (Artisan Women) and the “Da Horta para a Cozinha” group (From the Garden to the Kitchen); initiatives like

Football for Citizenship with boys and girls; two reading points with activities for children and teenagers. Some activities that had taken place in the past were resumed along with new ones. All of them help to reach families faster to hear their ideas, complaints, suggestions and gain their engagement. Tips:

- 1** Maintain a quarterly/half-yearly routine of evaluating the situation to check, among other things, the progress of the support and mobilization of the larger community;
- 2** Identify the main needs of different groups in the community: children, adolescents, youth; women; male parents; elderly; educational needs (day care, adult education, transportation, etc.); access to quality water; specialized health care, etc.;
- 3** Engage people in the planning and the realization of projects;
- 4** Be aware of public calls for projects that can finance activities of interest to community groups;
- 5** Identify and motivate new leaders;
- 6** Involve the community, whenever possible, in decision making.

VALE'S STRATEGIES TO DIVIDE THE COMMUNITY

It would be another Thursday afternoon like any other until the school principal's phone call warned us about a meeting with Vale S.A.'s staff that would take place the next day at 9 am. The entire community had already been notified. The expectation of the director and the community was to possibly be receiving funds for social projects. In the opinion of the board of the residents' Association, this would be another attempt of the mining company to enter into the community to divide it.

The situation was delicate. The Association's board was distant from the community and the expectations of several residents were high. At the first meeting, the board representative just listened. At the second meeting, board members warned attendees about the company's ability to make promises that are not kept. This was a way of alerting the community and telling the company that there were people on the lookout. At the third meeting, some action needed to be taken, as the words of the company representatives simply repeated the already known script: promises without commitment; adulation to individ-



uals and groups creating differences within the community; imposition of agendas...

Between the first and third meetings, there were several conversations to help people in the community understand the company's movement. Thus, in the third meeting, the Association's board of directors could count on the support of the ma-

jority of those present to put an end to the company's attempt to invade and control the community's organization and create parallel movements.

A letter from the Association was written to Vale's central management saying that the community was open to dialogue, but that the agenda for this dialogue should be built together.

After receiving the letter sent by the Association, the company representatives did not return to the community anymore, nor did they give satisfaction about the expectations raised by them of projects that would be carried out. The only pronouncement took place at the company's investor meeting apologizing for what had happened.



11.

THE POWER OF COMMUNICA- TION.

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

DIFFICULTIES

STRATEGIES

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

As soon as Fr. Dario got to know the needs of Piquiá de Baixo, he said that they needed to be publicized and that it would be very important to find out who else was carrying out a similar struggle in other places. Following his advice, the community of Piquiá de Baixo discovered other communities that were more advanced in the struggle and this made it possible to learn a lot from them.

One of the lessons learned was about the different forms of communication: folders, booklets, magazines, videos, artistic expressions, campaigns, interviews, among others. Another point was to know the importance of the content of the communication, what exactly would be the message, in what forms it should be conveyed, to which audiences it should be targeted and the right time to send it out.

On a given occasion, a news story made to support the community's struggle was used in a lawsuit against the Association because the way it was written allowed for interpretations different from what the community intended. At another time, a story for a wide-audience television channel created problems in the community because, although very good, only a small group knew that the report would be made. At the time, many residents did not feel respected because they were not informed. They heard about the report on television. The oppo-



sition people wasted no time and soon took the opportunity to promote intrigues with the applause of the companies.

Communication is very important for social struggles. If well taken care of, good communication can raise support for the cause of the struggle in the four corners of the world. The interviews given by the women representing the community in travels to Colombia, Peru, Italy, Switzerland and Belgium, and the campaigns carried out with the support of the International Federation of Human Rights - FIDH prove the transformation power of communication.

This whole movement was fundamental for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the topic of dangerous substances and toxic waste, Baskut Tuncak, to choose to visit Piquiá de Baixo on December 13, 2019.

DIFFICULTIES

- Fear of reprisal by companies;
- How to ensure that a good number of people in the community get involved in decisions without jeopardizing the communication strategy;
- Knowing how to identify whether requests for interviews are favorable, or not, to the interests of the community;
- Finding community members who are willing to be identified in the reporting of complaints and in communication initiatives to which the community is invited;
- Local media being sponsored by companies and politicians.

STRATEGIES

- Make lists of media and programs that are willing to open up space to the message of the community;
- Maintain contacts with journalists and the media that support the cause;
- Develop a press office for the organization for media relations;
- Prepare well the message intended to be conveyed;
- When possible, consult a lawyer about the content you want to disclose;
- Research who sponsors local media and what their interests are;
- The decision to grant an interview should be made collectively and, when possible and advisable, after consulting allies, before the interview is given;
- Search for information about the journalist responsible for the interview/story;
- Promote community training on how to deal with media (how to be objective; stay focused; define the message, etc.);
- Avoid speaking in the first person, when speaking on behalf of the community;
- Get organized to respond to new interview requests. It is common after gaining visibility in the media that new invitations occur;
- Prepare for possible attempts to disqualify and criminalize the people who gave interviews and the Association/group/community. Those affected by the report can use community members to disqualify what was said in the report;
- Look for legal preventive advice, as well as in cases of defamation cases.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

- a) Welcome and invite participants to the “cordless phone” game using the phrase: “Knowing how to communicate what you want is one of the ways to achieve what you want” (the phrase can be a different one).
- b) At the end of the round, a conversation begins about what makes good communication (20 minutes);
- c) Ask people to share what means of communication families in the community have more access to (e. g. TV Globo, TV Record, Rádio ..., UOL, Union Jornal, etc.). Each mentioned media must be written down and posted on the wall.
- d) In a circle, talk about the level of trust in each of the means of communication, who finances them, their political line, and what cautions need to be taken with them. Then, you can read the list of difficulties and open for comments on each point.
- e) Ask people to talk in small groups (those who are sitting next to each other) about the means the community uses to communicate with residents and partner organizations, when making complaints or publicizing its actions (10 minutes). Following that, the results of the conversation are shared.
- f) Put the strategies on a poster and after reading each item, ask if the community already develops that strategy. If the answer is yes, ask a participant to mark that point with a green dot. If the answer is “more or less”, use a yellow dot, and if the community still has not implemented the strategy, paint a red dot. At the end of the reading, help the group to identify what needs to be improved in order for the community to have good communication.
- f) End the meeting by asking each person to say the most important learning for them in that training.

ATTENTION!

Everything that is communicated needs to be proven so that it doesn't raise complaints. It is also important to have guidance from a lawyer to know what to avoid in order not to commit a crime of defamation. With the media, it is not all flowers!

The criteria for choosing who will represent the community need to be agreed upon with the community to avoid disagreements or creating differences in the community. Prepare the person with regard to what they may encounter and create opportunities for sharing their experiences upon return to the community.

TIPS FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY

- 1** Define well the objectives and methods for national and international actions;
- 2** Identify collaborators to count on for media contacts, document preparation and financial support;
- 3** Find support for the translation of documents and public notes;
- 4** Search for partner organizations operating in countries where companies have their main office or other operation;
- 5** In each case, choose the person(s) who will represent the community and assist them in preparing the documents: passport; visa to enter the country, etc. (it is necessary to do everything in advance because these things can take time);
- 6** Create a fund to finance visibility actions;
- 7** Be ready for companies' pressures on leadership and on the community due to incidence activities;
- 8** Keep the community always up to date on everything that is done and always try to provide opportunities for the participation of different persons;
- 9** Give visibility in the national and local media about international incidence.

PEQUIÁ DE BAIXO
EXIGE RESPEITO!!!



12.

OTHER FIGHTING STRATE- GIES

12.1 LETTERS AND E-MAIL

12.2 PETITION

12.3 PUBLIC PROTEST

12.4 ROAD CLOSURE

12.5 BEING A SHAREHOLDER

12.6 COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEARING

No matter the size and timing of a community struggle, all of them require planning, strategies, leadership, recording and celebrating. As we saw during the struggle of Piquiá de Baixo, a struggle still underway, several strategies were needed to advance in the conquest of rights.

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMICS TO WORK ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS IN TRAINING.

FOR THE “PETITION” ITEM, it is suggested to invite the participants to prepare a petition at the training meeting itself to claim improvement in some public service in the community. After drafting the text, it should be presented to the whole group for opinions on how it can be improved, and then agree on how to collect signatures and forward the petition.

FOR THE OTHER STRATEGIES, it is suggested to divide the participants into small groups for each of the following fighting strategies: Public Protest; Public road closure; Being a shareholder; Public Hearing.

Each group reads the text about that strategy and presents its content using one of the following modalities:

- a) A dramatization in the form of a theater
- b) A poem or song
- c) Drawing or painting
- d) Suggestions of slogans to use in the public act
- e) A plan for one of these actions based on a community need
- f) Other ideas...

12.1 LETTERS AND E-MAIL

Remember the letter that Mr. Edvard wrote to President Lula asking for help so that the mining companies would respect the rights of the community? The letter has always been an important means of communication. It was very common to send letters by the postal service. This still happens, but it has become customary to use electronic mail – e-mail – as it is faster and more practical.

In the case of a letter by regular mail, in order to have a proof of its sending, it must be sent as a registered letter. In this modality, the person who sends the letter has a receipt. The e-mail, in addition to being faster, is stored in the sender's electronic mail (e-mail box).

By post or by e-mail, the letter is widely used to make a claim and to put pressure on some subject. The greater the number of letters asking for a certain action, the greater the chance that the recipient will pay attention.

It's very important:

- 1** To state clearly what is being requested;
- 2** That the information be correct and objective so that the authority understands the request well;
- 3** That the contact information of the sender be complete and free of error to facilitate the reply;
- 4** To check the possibility of sending the letter with a copy to allies or other authority;
- 5** To make copy of what is sent;
- 6** To follow up on the reply (if reply is delayed, write again requesting attention);
- 7** To publicize, depending on the case, the letter and reply.



LETTERS CARRY GREAT MEANING

The same Mr. Edvard, one day, wrote a letter to his grandson explaining the importance of the community's struggle. Many years later, Mr. Edvard died and that letter was released. To everyone's surprise, the letter told the story of the Piquiá de Baixo struggle and inspired the entire community on how significant the struggle for resettlement was.

Excerpts from the LETTER OF MR. EDVARD FOR HIS GRANDSON, MOSES:

"You know, Moses, never lose your dreams. Nowadays someone may even want to buy them, as the eucalyptus planting firms did with my colleagues: they bought their small lots of land to make room for monoculture, to produce charcoal for steelmakers, and with that many of my companions sold their dreams for money.

My dream has always been to get out of here. Of course, I arrived before the steelmakers and I would have the right to remain in their place. But these firms are too powerful, and, in the beginning, we were unable to raise our voices to prevent them from settling. (...)

When they arrived, a smoke screen was immediately raised between the firms and our houses: in addition to the pollution, from the beginning it made me think that they had something to hide and that all those promises would not come true so easily. (...)

My revolt found support from others and we decided to go to court. A courageous gesture: finally, we thought, these firms will listen to us. (...)

Perhaps justice is blind, but my impression is that it has a good sense of smell to catch the perfume of those who have money. I don't know if I can say this openly, Moses, maybe I'll expose myself too much, but I write just for you so that you won't be disappointed in the future as it happened to me. (...)

In fact, I have the impression that for us in Piquiá the path of liberation has started a long time ago. Bringing the people together again and again without anyone being discouraged is the miracle of resistance; being able to keep a single voice in front of companies, without giving in to possible private and seductive proposals that divide the group, is the miracle of unity. " (The full letter is in Annex III).

12.2 PETITION

With the arrival of the iron companies and the expansion of charcoal production, the community has seen health problems increase a lot. People complained, but they complained alone and without result. Then, someone had the idea of making a petition. On a notebook page they wrote:

- Name of the Community Association;
 - Name of the authority and the public body to which the petition would be sent;
 - The problem and what was being claimed, with place and date;
 - Contact and address for reply.
- Following that, three columns were drawn for Name, RG-CPF (personal ID) and Signature. “More than 300 signatures were collected, which meant more than half of the families who lived in the community”. (Flávia)



IMPORTANT!

- 1 That the petition's text is short and expresses well what is being claimed;
- 2 That the names and documents' data of signers are legible;
- 3 Make copies of the petition (with the signatures) before handing it over to the authority;
- 4 Request the protocol number at the agency where the petition is presented and, if possible, the name and contact details of the person who receives it;
- 5 Follow up on what happens to the petition after delivery;
- 6 Keep the people who signed the petition informed about what happens

12.3 PUBLIC PROTEST

“When you are alone, you can speak loudly, even shout, but it is difficult to be heard. But when we get together, our ideas and our voices start to be heard. It was like that with Gusa Nordeste. It was necessary to gather the community and its sup-

porters and occupy the front of the company so that they would listen to us” (D. Tida).

The Association’s board called an assembly, in which the idea of the protest was presented and commissions were established to:

- 1 Take care of posters and banners;
- 2 Define who would speak on behalf of the community with company representatives, journalists, police, authorities;
- 3 Inform public authorities in advance about the occurrence of the act;
- 4 Think about safety: do not allow alcoholic beverages or drugs, control traffic, keep an eye on those who approach the demonstration, calm hotheaded persons, etc.;
- 5 Organize water and food support if the protest is prolonged;
- 6 Contact supporters: lawyers, City Council and State Assembly representatives, social organizations, journalists;
- 7 Prepare a first aid kit;
- 8 Appoint someone to make records of the protest (photos, footage, text for the press, etc.).



The occupation lasted 36 hours. A stove and a cooking gas cylinder were taken there. The food was made right there on the road and there was even singing accompanied by guitar. It rained, but people did not go away. In the sun, the rain, during the night and the day, people continued steadily without getting discouraged. The entrance and the opening of the company’s gates were released only when the Public Prosecutor’s Office, with the presence of the Association’s board of directors, advisers and a representative of the companies’ union, reached an agreement for the iron companies, through their union organization, to pass on the money that was lacking for the payment of the resettlement land.

*“This fight is ours, this fight belongs to the people,
it is with justice that a new world is made”*
(Song refrain used in the public act)

ATTENTION TO THE RISKS

In these activities, there may be people infiltrated with the intention of causing a riot, throwing drugs or weapons, taking pictures or filming the leaders. These people may be wearing social movement T-shirts and say they know someone in the community to hide their true identity. It is very important to be vigilant and never accept to hold any object from strangers.

12.4 ROAD CLOSURE

“We never get discouraged! As the song says ‘Se é para ir pra luta, nós vamos!’ (if we need to go to the struggle, we will fight). After several unsuccessful attempts at dialogue with companies and public authorities, the Association, with the support of partner organizations, decided to close down Highway 222 at the height of Piquiá de Baixo neighborhood to draw the authorities’ attention. At the agreed time people arrived and when a good group was formed, the roadway was occupied. The people responsible for taking care of the closing points soon took their posts and we stayed there until the authorities decided to receive us to address the community’s problems”. (Flávia). It was very important to plan:



- Which route had the greatest impact for the objectives;
- Expected time and length of stay;
- People to talk to the police and drivers;
- Persons to take care of the closing points of the roadway;
- Team to make posters, banners, slogans, pamphlets explaining the act;
- Sound team;
- Security team to prevent accidents (guidance on what to do in case of police intervention with pepper gas and other truculent approaches);
- First aid team;
- Persons in charge of speaking to authorities and journalists;
- What to do if it would become necessary to disperse ahead of schedule;
- Name the person to make records of the act.

12.5 BEING A SHAREHOLDER

“Ah! It was great when we found out that big companies have a lot of shareholders. Shareholders are people who become partners in the company by buying their shares or bonds. Even if few shares are bought, this new shareholder has the right to participate in the shareholders’ assembly. That was how Mr. Willian, a resident of the community and other supporters, bought some shares and started to take part in the yearly meetings, usually held at the end of April.

Before each company assembly, our shareholders hold a meeting with other

people and organizations that make up the International Articulation of People Affected by Vale (AIAAV), to prepare their intervention (critical vote). Those who participate also have the duty to inform the Association on what happened at the meeting.

“The problem is that we know little about this business-financial world and the meetings take place in the city of Rio de Janeiro, a long way from our community. But we go because this is another important space to denounce and demand our rights”. (Mr. Antônio).

How to become a shareholder:

- Research whether the company that violates human rights has shares to sell;
- Create a fund to purchase the amount of shares that allows participation in the shareholders’ meetings;
- Seek financing for travel;
- Articulate with other social organizations that are shareholders;
- Prepare the intervention in writing with a critical vote and justify it to convince the largest number of shareholders about the objective to be achieved.

CHECK IT OUT

<https://atingidospelavale.wordpress.com/2020/04/30/relatorio-acionistas-criticos-10-anos-de-atuacao-da-articulacao-internacional-dos-atingidos-e-atingidas-pela-vale/>.



12.6 COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEARING

Most people in positions of authority come from the upper middle class or the elite. They are the ones who had access to the best schools and influences to reach important political positions and good jobs. Many of these people do not know what poverty or the difficulties of the working class are. At most, they repeat made-up phrases to win the people's sympathy for political interest. When they go to a suburban neighborhood or a rural settlement, their advisers make sure the streets are cleaned, the sidewalk guides are painted, there is a group of ass-kissing people to clap their hands and prevent the population from having a chance to speak out.

When the meeting is held in their offices, only a very small group of people representing the community can go. The public officer always has advisors at the meeting to cut the interventions of the community and say that everything will be arranged, not to mention that the time for the meeting will be very short because the authority has a very busy agenda.

The alternative solution is public hearings promoted by the community. In those, the community makes the rules. The community of Piquiá de Baixo held a public hearing with the UN Special Rapporteur on toxic waste issues in December 2019. The result was that



he took the complaint from the community to the Brazilian government and the international community with recommendations asking for measures for companies to respect the laws of socio-environmental impact and pay attention to the health of the population.

After the public hearing, the city and state authorities called the Association to talk about the community's problems.

ATTENTION

It is very important that someone is responsible for monitoring and following up on what was agreed upon at the public hearing.

HERE'S HOW TO ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEARING:

- 1** Define well what you want to achieve with the public hearing;
- 2** Reach out for the help of partners who support the fight and who can help organize the audience;
- 3** Invite university professors and other renowned professionals who can support the cause and be present at the hearing;
- 4** Ensure that a good number of people in the community are prepared to take part in the hearing;
- 5** Prepare the invitation to the authorities (executive, legislative and judicial) that you want to invite and see who can intermediate their acceptance;
- 6** Invite other authorities and, if possible, when delivering the invitation to the main authority, say the name of someone of importance who will be present (this tends to contribute to the acceptance of the authority);
- 7** Include in the hearing agenda a walk with the authorities through the community to give them firsthand contact with the local social conditions. If this is not possible, an audiovisual presentation on the problems should be prepared to be presented at the beginning of the hearing;
- 8** Contact the media to publicize the hearing (ensure alternative media because the official media are rarely present);
- 9** Define task teams: welcoming committee; preparation of the place; hearing record; security (keeping an eye on people who appear to spy or disrupt); preparation of documents to be presented to the authorities;
- 10** The place for the hearing, if possible, should ensure that chairs are placed in a circle so that there is no hierarchical positioning. If it is necessary to set up a table, community leaders must occupy it;
- 11** The initial greeting should first be left to the community, following that, the authorities should do it in 1-2 minutes. The demand of the community must be at the center of attention. The first people to speak are community representatives and leaders. They present the problems and the claims. Only then is the floor given to the authorities;
- 12** It must be agreed that the speeches, all of them, must respect a certain time and must not be interrupted;
- 13** The hearing should end with a speech by the community leadership, recalling the agreed-upon commitments and the deadlines set for the return of those commitments

13.

TAKING CARE OF SAFETY: SECURITY CONCERNS

NARRATIVES WITH TALKS

SUGGESTION OF GROUP
DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME

The fight for rights in Brazil is always risky because it exposes disrespect for human rights. If in the course of the struggle any leader or other person in the community suffers threats, slander, defamation or risk to life, it is necessary to act quickly in defense and protection of that person. So, it is very important that the organization has a good security plan and knows which allies it can count on. Some tips:



- Create a support network in the community to care for the safety of all, especially the leaders;
- Keep personal and organization documents up to date and in order;
- Keep originals and copies of documents in safe places;
- Make copies of computer documents (backup) and keep them in a safe place;
- Have at your disposal a list of contacts that can be activated in case of emergency;
- Decorate at least two telephone numbers of people who may come to your aid or to the aid of the person or organization in danger;
- Keep the lawyers' phones easily accessible;
- Inform coworkers of your travel routes;
- Ensure proper social behavior by everybody to avoid accusations;
- Record any occurrences that seem foreign to your routine (e.g. unknown car hanging around the house or the organization's headquarters);
- Know your family's and your organization's neighbors;
- Be careful about what you throw in the trash;
- Request identification of people who come to deliver services at home or in the organization;
- Take good care of physical and emotional health. Stress always leaves a person more vulnerable;
- Do not post sensitive information or photos on social networks;
- Be careful about information sent by email, WhatsApp and other social networks.

**GET TO KNOW THE CAMPAIGN “LIFE BY A THREAD” ON THE WEBSITE:
WWW.REPAM.ORG.BR/AVIDAPORUMFIO**

**FACEBOOK @AVIDAPORUMFIO
INSTAGRAM @AVIDAPORUMFIO_CAMPANHA**

SUGGESTION OF GROUP DYNAMIC ON THIS THEME.

- a) Welcome the group and ask each person to say what makes them feel safe. Whoever is conducting the training must stress that security is a necessity and a human right. That when a person feels safe s/he is much more likely to accomplish what they want.
- b) Invite each person to take a marker or pencil and a piece of paper and write or draw the name of a leader who has been persecuted or threatened by virtue of the struggle in the region.
- c) In a circle, each participant must tell why s/he chose that person and what rights s/he defended when threatened or persecuted.
- d) After everyone has spoken, the activity leader should motivate those present to put in their work plans strategies for taking care of their own safety and that of the organization.
- e) Ask each person to mark next to each item in the safety tips list the + sign if they already do what is written; +/- if it is done, but still needs to improve; and - if they don't do yet. Then ask people to share how they are taking care of safety based on the signs marked by them.
- f) End the meeting by reinforcing the importance of security so that the fight can move forward. End with a group hug or with each person saying a word of support and friendship because affection is part of feeling safe.

ATTENTION!

**If there is time, you can watch the video of the campaign
“Life by a thread” - www.repam.org.br/avidaporumfio**

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ANNEXES.

ANNEX I

SUMMARY OF UNITED NATIONS' GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Three types of duties of the State and Business with respect to Human Rights:

- PROTECT
- RESPECT
- REPAIR

I. PROTECT = It is the duty, in the first place, of the State to respect, and cause Companies to respect, Human Rights.

States should:

- protect the population against human rights violations committed in its territory;
- prevent, investigate, punish and repair such violations through appropriate laws and mechanisms;
- ensure that all companies in their territory respect human rights in all their operations;
- enforce the laws; periodically evaluate such laws;
- promote respect for Human Rights by companies with which they conduct business transactions;
- require, if applicable, due diligence in human rights matters;
- ensure that all government departments and agencies are aware of the State's Human Rights obligations in relation to Companies.

In regions “affected by conflict” it is the duty of the State:

- to ensure that companies identify, prevent and mitigate risks to Human Rights;
- to assess and address the main risks of abuse, paying special attention to both gender and sexual violence;
- to prevent the risk that companies will be involved in serious human rights violations.
- to punish companies that are involved in serious human rights violations and refuse to cooperate to resolve the situation;

II. RESPECT = Business companies are responsible for respecting human rights and States must ensure that this happens.

This means that **Companies must:**

- prevent their own activities from generating negative impacts on Human Rights;
- face the consequences when this happens;
- mitigate the negative impacts on Human Rights due to its operations or those of third parties that have commercial relations with them;
- must have policies and procedures appropriate to their size; the means applied must correspond to the magnitude of the company and the negative impacts caused;
- establish a due diligence process on Human Rights to identify, prevent, mitigate and report on how they address their impact on Human Rights;
- institute proceedings that make it possible to remedy any negative human rights consequences that they cause or have contributed to cause.

Political commitment: Companies must assume a political commitment with respect for Human Rights, **a public statement**, which must:

- be approved at the highest management level of the company;
- be based on specialized internal and/or external advice;
- establish what the company expects, in relation to Human Rights, from its personnel, its partners and other parties directly linked to its operations, products or services;
- be widely published and disseminated internally and externally;
- be reflected in the operational policies and procedures necessary to incorporate the commitment assumed within the entire company.

Due diligence: In order to identify, prevent, mitigate and repair the negative impacts of their activities on Human Rights, companies must carry out audits, which must:

- cover all negative impacts on Human Rights caused by them;
- having complexity proportional to its size and the negative consequences on Human Rights and Nature
- be an ongoing process.

To assess **Human Rights risks**, companies must:

- use internal and/or independent human rights specialists;
- conduct **substantial consultations** with affected groups and other stakeholders;
- be based on appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators;
- take into account information from both internal and external sources, **including affected stakeholders**.

The company must **officially communicate**, especially **when requested by interested parties** and when the risk of negative impact is serious, the measures taken to face the impacts of its activities on Human Rights. Communication must be accessible to its recipients and provide sufficient information.

III. REPAIR = The State and Companies must guarantee mechanisms for redress for the adverse impacts they have caused or contributed to cause.

Companies should:

- first, comply with the law wherever they operate;
- try to prevent and mitigate the consequences that are more serious or that may become irreversible.

Repair mechanisms:

1. **States** should take appropriate measures to ensure, through judicial, administrative, legislative or other means that those affected can access **effective remedies**.

To do this, they must:

- take appropriate measures to ensure the effectiveness of national judicial mechanisms;
- limit legal, practical and other obstacles that may lead to denial of access to remedial mechanisms;
- establish effective and appropriate **out-of-court complaint mechanisms**, in parallel with judicial mechanisms, as part of a comprehensive State system for redressing human rights violations related to Companies.

2. **Companies** must establish or make available **effective operational-level reporting mechanisms available to people and communities** that suffer negative impacts.

Non-judicial reporting mechanisms (both State and non-State) should:

- be based on **participation and dialogue**: Companies must consult the interested groups, for whom these mechanisms are intended, about their design and performance; so that they can address and resolve complaints;
- be **legitimate, accessible and transparent**: the parties are informed at all stages;
- **be equitable: victims have reasonable access to sources of information, advice and expertise necessary to initiate a denunciation process on equal terms, with full information and respect.**

(Obs. Synthesis made by Renato Paulino Lanfranchi)

ANNEX II

TIMELINE OF “PIQUIÁ DA CONQUISTA” RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

Extracted from: FIDH / JNT. **PIQUIÁ TOOK ON THE FIGHT: An assessment of compliance with the recommendations to address human rights violations related to the mining and steel industry in Açailândia, Brazil.** May 2019.

2007

On the basis of judicial investigation carried out by biologist Ulisses Briggatto Albino, a court decision understands that the evidence presented during the process is sufficient to prove the pollution of the place and the damage to residents;

2008

Residents of Piquiá de Baixo make a collective decision to seek a new place to live with dignity;

2011

Decree n. 610, published by the Municipality of Açailândia, declares of social interest, and authorizes the expropriation of, the land;

2012

In March, a decision by the Court of Justice guarantees the possession of the land to the municipality;

At the end of the year, technical assistance by Usina is contracted and planning for the new neighborhood begins;

2013

The Community Association of Piquiá's Residents (ACMP) protocols the basic resettlement project in the Municipality of Açailândia;

In December, the definitive basic urban and housing project, with a full budget, is submitted to the bank, Caixa Econômica Federal (CEF), for evaluation and approval;

2014

In the face of a new impasse, due to Sifema's (Maranhão Union of Iron Industries) delay in depositing the complementary amounts for the conclusion of the expropriation of the land for the new resettlement, the solution is the mobilization of the residents of Piquiá;

With the resolution of the impasse and constant pressure from the community, the Municipality of Açailândia publishes Decree n. 105, of May 28, 2014, approving the subdivision project called "Resettlement of the community of Piquiá de Baixo";

On December 17, the basic resettlement project (in its urban-housing and technical-social aspects) is approved by CEF in São Luís and finally sent to the Ministry of Cities, in Brasília;

2015

The resettlement project is finally authorized by the Ministry of Cities to be financed through "Minha Casa Minha Vida", the federal government's public housing program;

During 2015, two determining facts:

On June 13, the Municipality of Açailândia enacted Law n. 432, which makes ACMP the definitive owner of the land for the construction of the new neighborhood;

On October 20, the Piquiá de Baixo case is formally denounced to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in Washington, DC, embarrassing the representatives of the Brazilian government present at the hearing for the State's failure to act;

2016

Resettlement project contract signed by ACMP representatives at an audience at the Planalto Palace (Federal Government See), in the presence of then President of the Republic Dilma Rousseff;

In October, the execution project presenting in detail the main steps required to carry out the work, in addition to the budget and compliance with fundamental technical standards, is submitted to CEF, again for evaluation and approval;

2017

The Cooperation and Partnership Agreement is signed between the Community Association of Residents of Piquiá (ACMP), the Vale Foundation, Vale S.A. and CEF;

In November, the community of Piquiá takes on the fight again. 50 residents of Piquiá carry out a protest in front of the Caixa Econômica Federal headquarters in the capital São Luís;

2018

With the signature of the execution project, the process can finally proceed to the final phase of the beginning of the construction works;

In September, the final approval is given, and the respective financing contract is formalized that same month between the Community Association of Residents of Piquiá and the Government's Social Development Fund, represented by Caixa Econômica Federal;

In November, the construction of Piquiá da Conquista begins, in self-management modality, with the Association and its consultancy having the role of coordinating the various stages of the work. ACMP's expectation is that the entire construction project for Piquiá da Conquista will take, in the best scenario, two years.

ANNEX III

MR. EDVARD'S LETTER TO GRANDSON MOISÉS

Dear Moses, I apologize.

The day you will be able to read and understand my letter, I don't know if I'll still be around (also because they say that all this pollution, in addition to damaging the heart, kills people's lungs!).

But for now, I apologize for leaving you a house and a neighborhood so dirty and run down.

I tried in many ways to prevent all this violence, you know?

Even the priests laughed when they learned that one day, in desperation, I wrote to President Lula! I studied until the eighth grade incomplete and I had no idea who could help me.

But the president answered me, you know?! He told me to contact "the agencies in charge".

Thank goodness that the priests and the Human Rights Defense Center joined me and supported me. I feel like they are friends.

This is what I wanted to tell you: choose reliable friends early! A friend is not the one who does things for you, but the one who encourages you and teaches you how to make a dream happen.

That's right, a dream. You know, Moses, never lose your dreams!

Nowadays someone may even try to buy your dreams, as the eucalyptus planting firms did with my colleagues: they bought their small lands to make room for monoculture, to produce charcoal for steelmakers, and with that many of my companions sold their dreams for money.

My dream has always been to get out of here. Of course, I arrived before the steelmakers and I would have the right to stay in their place. But these firms are too powerful, and, in the beginning, we were unable to raise our voices or prevent them from settling in. They choose the places where the people are weakest, they convince us with vague promises of work and wealth, and that's how they made up the minds of many.

When they arrived, a smoke screen was immediately raised between the firms and our houses: in addition to the pollution, from the beginning, it made me think that they had something to hide and that all those promises would not come true so easily.

Shortly thereafter, a flood of eucalyptus came to invade our yards and surrounded the neighborhood. It was the so-called "green curtain", to - they say - protect the homes from pollution.

And so, amid smoke and these eucalyptus sticks, we learned that firms like to lift 'curtains' and hide behind them.

For a while, we tried to beg some improvement from these wealthy entrepreneurs: if they had so much money to set up the companies, maybe with a few crumbs to spare they could even transfer our houses to a less polluted region.

One day, Moses, I took courage and went to talk directly with the owner. I thought: “my grandson will be proud of me!”. Yes, he received me, listened to me ... but in the end he even made fun of me! He said it was easy, he said that his firm had powerful loading machines, that they could load our houses the way they were and take them anywhere to another neighborhood!

I was sad and embarrassed. I thought that we poor people are only worth as an ornament when the companies want to show some gesture of “social responsibility”: a sponsorship for the local soccer team, a movie session for the people to have fun, some literacy classes for adults, without further commitment .

My revolt found support from others and we decided to go to court. A courageous gesture: finally, we thought, these firms will listen to us. We were 21 families claiming compensation for damage to health.

Once again, we organized ourselves and went to the fight. The beauty of this fight is that we don’t get tired, and when there is a defeat, we react with more courage and conviction: it is too clear that we are the victims, there is an evident injustice! The law cannot deceive itself: we will be compensated!

Sometimes grandparents can also be deluded and dream like an inexperienced young man ... after all, it is hope that sustains us. But I learned, Moses, that hope is a child who needs two older sisters: patience and wisdom.

In fact, the courts were wrong: so far, we are waiting for a response from them, the process is going too slow, they say that there is insufficient evidence, that there is no way to compensate ...

Perhaps justice is blind, but my impression is that it has a good sense of smell to catch the perfume of those who have money. I don’t know if I can say this openly, Moses, maybe I’ll get in trouble for this, but I write just for you so that you won’t be disappointed in the future as it happened to me.

What I assure you, my grandson, is that, despite the disappointment, your grandfather will never be discouraged! After all, I’m fighting not for me, but for all of you children, who don’t deserve all of this.

I would like, for one of your next birthdays, to give you a new land, clean, healthy, free! That is why, when you were born, I insisted so much that your name be Moses: your generation, I am sure, will open new paths of liberation and life through this violent model of development.

In fact, I have the impression that for us in Piquiá the path of liberation has started a long time ago. Bringing the people together again and again without anyone being discouraged is the miracle of resistance; be-

ing able to keep a single voice in front of companies, without giving in to possible particular and seductive proposals that divide the group, is the miracle of unity.

In these weeks, moreover, something new has happened. The Public Prosecutor's Office, due to popular pressure, entered the dispute more decisively and made a concrete negotiation proposal.

What a pride to be able to sit, finally on equal terms, at a dialogue table with the presidents of companies and employers' unions, lawyers, prosecutors ... and this simple but courageous grandfather of yours!

I did not reach President Lula, but I have managed to make my humble condition a strong denunciation against the contradictions of big business!

We live in shacks, but trains run by Vale are loaded with iron ore for export: R\$ 45 million per day!

Many of my friends ended up being fired by steelmakers at the end of 2008, but we found that they exported over 138 million reais in the same year, improving the levels of the previous year by a lot.

Yes, Moses, while the poor have hard time to survive, the powerful ones continue to grow. But this time around the contradiction is glaring in the eyes of many, and these entrepreneurs are terribly afraid of damaging their image! Here in Piquiá we usually repeat that our giants also have feet of clay!

We are the clay of these powerful ones: even when we remain silent and obedient, they remain standing. But if the clay starts to move, my friend ... get out of the way!

Moses: I moved, also in your name. I hope this movement never stops.

*With affection,
your grandfather Edvard.*

