I – Current activities

INTERAÇÃO is currently working in the communities below:

City of São Paulo

Jardim Redenção
Informal settlement, 30 families, located in São Mateus, East Zone. In this area a savings group was set in an emergency mobilization effort to overcome a legal eviction of private owned land. The savings group was initiated in April this year, without real engagement of most of the families. In July they were visited by an exchange mission from South Africa in order to promote savings and discuss the eviction issues. In this visit the families showed low level of knowledge of the real land situation, about the evictions suit and the negotiations for land acquisitions, intermediated by politicians and lawyers. Besides we identified general frustration and no determination at all to over take the negotiations in order to keep the families in the settlement. After the exchange we went through a process of integration of the families through the savings scheme and weekly meetings to have as soon as possible an overview of the real situation, legal suit, land issues, negotiations history and real payment affordability of the families. We identified through this process that the area belongs to an urban plan, with possible expropriation by the municipality in the future (Municipal Law, approved year 2004). As a conclusion we assumed that the cost benefit for the owner in evicting the families was not good, considering the costs of an eviction and the low market value of a real estate under expropriation perspectives. This fact stimulated the families to try new negotiations with the owner, the eviction was set for September 23rd was postponed with no date. In that way the community sent the owner a new acquisition proposal, based on concrete efforts by the residents in identifying the real affordability for down payment and monthly installments. This proposal is now being negotiated with the owner with the participation of all the resident families and technical support of INTERAÇÃO to set up meetings, schedule with the owner’s lawyers and fix up payment sheets. The savings group saved approximately R$ 7,000 (ca. US$ 3,000), part of it being used to pay for legal advising in order to postpone the eviction process. The perspective for savings is set up a reserve fund to cover eventual problems of the families by paying the monthly installments. In this case a real impact of the work done is that families are remaining in their houses, which besides their homes, are the main economic asset they have, considering the high financial investments through the eight years they live in the area.

In addition, with better self steam and having solved the emergency eviction issue, the families are now better prepared to propose a partnership to the local government related to future development and specific to the urban project, eventually avoiding the future land expropriation.

City of Osasco

In Osasco we work in 4 poor settlements, or slums: Jardim Aliança, Jardim Vicentina, Portal Campo and Portal Meinc.

Those areas were appointed by the Municipality as subject of a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed with Durban Municipality, South Africa. This MOU has SDI support for communities and officials exchanges in order to change experiences.

The first exchange happened in July 2005, with representatives of the Homeless People Federation of South Africa and a city official from Durban.

Jardim Aliança
Area owned by the electricity company, located under high power towers in risky conditions. A legal action was taken by the Public Ministry to relocate all families living there. During the exchange the enumeration of the shacks was done, as well as a survey with the resident families. We counted 226 shacks and during the month of August the families did check and verify the data. Also during the exchange visits 3 savings groups were set, considering the division of the area in 3 sectors for the enumeration (A, B and C). Besides counting and enumerating, the families did a preliminary mapping,
sketching all the enumerated shacks and the boundaries, pointing out reference points like streets and shops.

In the months of August and September, INTERAÇÃO (i) monitored the savings schemes, offering support related to meetings organization and accounting; (ii) offered technical support for data verifying and set of an electronic data bank; (iii) acted intensively to build up a partnership community-municipality, in order to identify alternatives for relocation and permanent settling of the residents.

Results: the community members presented to the municipality 4 land alternatives for relocation. The areas were visited and checked by the municipality together with community representatives, and one of them was selected to develop a housing project and permanent settlement of the families.

The data collected during the enumeration was handed to the Housing Secretary, which jointly with the residents, identified the shacks in the aerial shot and proceeded with the technical mapping of the area. The enumeration was added to the official municipal data bank, and is now used as starting point to develop a housing project jointly with the population. There were meetings with community members, Electricity Company and Housing Secretary to point out the tasks of each actor and design a joint strategy for the relocation of the families. Without integration and organization, Electricity Company and Municipality had no communication channel with the residents of the area, individually mentioned in the legal acts. INTERAÇÃO contributed to put together all the actors involved: Community, Electricity Company and Municipality, and mobilized efforts by the residents in order to think and define strategies and alternatives for the imminent eviction or an eventual temporary relocation without sustainability.

Jardim Vicentina
Private land, highly dense, very poor living conditions. INTERAÇÃO started to work straight in the area since the exchange in July 2005. During the last 2 months an enumeration was planned and made, several savings schemes were set and a partnership with the Housing Secretary was implemented.

The self enumeration was prepared together with the community members, who determined the survey questions, collecting the following data of each person: sex, age, identification number, time of residency, income; and of each shack: wood or brick constructed. The slum was divided into 4 sectors: A, B, C and D, the counting was made by two groups, exchanging all day long. As a total, 107 shacks were enumerated in August, 21st. At the same time the residents did a preliminary mapping and measuring of all shacks.

In the following weeks the residents, assisted by INTERAÇÃO, proceeded to the checking and verifying of data, in order to finish the data bank and deliver to the Housing Secretary.

Several meetings occurred with city officials, local politicians and the land owner in order to jointly point out procedures and strategies for land regularization. It was clear the intention of the owner in exchange property taxes debts for the land, which would be transferred first to the Municipality and afterwards to the families living in the area.

As best alternative, was established: the owner would start an administrative process proposing tax debt exchange to be analyzed by the proper authorities and city departments. At the same time the Housing Secretary started the process for an urbanization project of the area in partnership with the community and based on the community data base.

INTERAÇÃO is monitoring the development of the savings schemes, introducing the methodology of weekly meetings for accounting and discussions about the uses of funds. The main goal is keep community mobilized for the upgrading project and implement reserve funds to, if necessary, buy the land and or invest on housing improvements.

Portal Campo and Portal Meinic
In those neighbor areas, with approximately 600 houses, several savings groups were initiated since the South African visit. Currently INTERAÇÃO is monitoring the strengthening of the groups, planning the self enumeration and proceeding, like in the other areas, to build up a partnership with the Municipality for a development project.
The main target of the partnership is design a long term strategy for land regularization and development of a housing project with the implementation of infra-structure and improvement of the houses.

**Várzea Paulista**

Vila Real
Informal settlement, with approximately 6,000 families living under very poor infra-structure and housing conditions. Also subject of the July exchange, when 3 savings groups were implemented and the planning for a self-enumeration, with SDI exchange support, started.

There are weekly meetings with representatives of the community to consolidate the savings schemes and define strategies for the self enumeration that should start simultaneously in 2 sectors, with approximately 200 houses each. The forecast for starting the enumerations is November 2005, with planned conclusion in 6 months.

Also in Várzea Paulista was established a partnership with the local government, who has plans to promote the land regularization and upgrading of the area.

**Novo Gama – Goiás**

Jardim Boa Vista
Informal settlement with approximately 1,500 families threatened of eviction (legal suit won through all the stages by the owner). A funded partnership was implemented with the owner and Municipality for enumeration and starting of a regularization program through federal subsidies (PSH, social housing subsidy program). In the months of July and August 2005 a full enumeration and technical mapping of all the plots was completed by INTERAÇÃO, with a well equipped supporting team and the local residents. Several meetings took place with local leadership and community members for conflict resolution and clarifications about the PSH program.

In the month of October 2005 about 539 sales contracts were signed, finalizing a first group of beneficiaries. In this case secure tenure is guaranteed for those 539 families benefited by the program, now protected of eviction threaten. The rest of the families not located at risky areas will probably be benefited in a second action within the next months and the Municipality in responsible in designing a plan for the risky areas.

**II – Background**

INTERAÇÃO started its activities at the beginning of 2005, and though the methodology is under construction, some results can be observed, as the remaining of Jardim Redenção families in their houses, the implementation of partnerships with the municipalities of Osasco and Várzea Paulista, not feasible without organization and mobilization.

Beside the partnerships with Osasco and Várzea Paulista, INTERAÇÃO established a partnership with the National Cement Association and the National Construction Material Retailers for designing and future implementation of a credit program for building materials. In addition INTERAÇÃO is in the final stage for a partnership with the Electricity Company, private energy enterprise for a regularization program in informal settlements located in the Metropolitan Area of São Paulo.