



GENDERED DESIGN IN STEAM

Itapecuru mirim,
Porto de Pedral,
Serra da Misericórdia,
Brazil

ID88

Technologies for another form of construction: experiences by women from popular movements



The research project is based on a housing movement called “Mutirão” which emerged at the end of the 1980s, where residential areas were constructed on the outskirts of populated cities in Brazil. This collective activity is usually led by women (around 80%) who organize, coordinate, and work on-site. This study deploys the female perspective that has been systematically erased by colonial and patriarchal orders, to redesign construction sites, materials, tools and techniques and deconstruct the barriers created by sexual division of labour. Through participatory processes and workshops, this study uses female perspectives to resurrect ancestral construction techniques, such as the Pana: a fabric that serves both as an object for daily activities such as for carrying things around, and as a manual that outlines technologies and construction techniques from women in different territories of Brazil.



Serra da Misericórdia Workshop

Team

Diana Helene Ramos
Principal Investigator
Architect (PhD) - UFAL

Amanda Azevedo
Co-Principal Investigator
Civil Engineer (BSc) - SOLTEC/UFRJ

Kaya Lazarini
Architect (MSc) - USINA/USP

Jessica Lima
Civil Engineer (PhD) - UFAL

Eva Rolim
Graphic Designer (PhD) - UFAL

Flávia Araújo
Architect (PhD) - UFAL

Bruno Mendes
Engineer (PhD) - UFABC

Institution

Federal University of Alagoas

Outcomes

- Increased understanding of construction and presentation technologies based on participatory processes that included women in the radical re-definition of what is seen as important to the women.
- The final outcome was Pana a feminist technological tool, containing instructions on the ancestral technologies that have been central to the territories where these women inhabit.
- Articles, lectures and public debates in national and international academic seminars and congresses. A few examples:
Article included: “An essay on capitalist urbanization as technology: coloniality, racialization and cisheteropatriarchy”.
Presentations included: “Technology, work and care: technological resistances in the Serra da Misericórdia” by Amanda Azevedo, “Decolonizing Land: Collective Property in Brazil and Mexico” by Kaya Lazarini, and “Weaving Nets and Resistance: Analysis of urban living conditions of fisherwomen at Colony Z-25 in Porto de Pedras-AL” by Bruna Oliveira. All team members of the project.



Top: Pana tied in many ways by members of the team
Bottom: Diana on beach showing Pana

Methods

- Inspired by workshop participants, and Ursula’s Le Guin text on the carrier bag theory, they moved towards designing a piece of fabric, which would be the manual of the most important technologies for each of the collectives, connected by the trees that inhabit their territory.
- Through relationship building, debate on technology and gender and a survey on workshops and participatory methodologies a collective cartography workshop was developed.
- The cartography activity had two phases, first individually mapping and then a group discussion on visions of the territory through the making of a collective map.
- Pictograms were used to create unity and ease synthesis between all three workshops.
- The results were analyzed for commonalities between the maps and information gathered. Then the team (along with local articulators) identified and defined technologies that would benefit, in different ways, all the communities.



(Left to Right) Making of the collective map in Serra da Misericórdia Workshop; Pictograms in Quilombo Santa Rosa dos Prestos; Zica Pires presenting her individual map which would inspire the Pana

“Children were always present at our meetings and we prioritized caring for each other as a feminist radical methodology”

— Diana Helene Ramos

Lessons & Future Directions

- They want to have a final activity, where they will present the Pana created to the territories to enable an collective evaluation of the process.
- Additionally, they are interested to see what the consequences of bringing this creation into the world will be, they trust that it may serve as inspiration for many women’s actions in this common territory.

Learn more



www.carleton.ca/gendesignsteam/

@gendesignsteam

@GenDesignSTEAM

GenderedDesign STEAM

A partnership between

