



DESIGNING PUBLIC PLACES IN SOCIAL INEQUALITY CONTEXTS

Lessons from the Baobab Garden (Recife/BRAZIL)

Circe Gama Monteiro

INCITI – Research and Innovation for the Cities

UFPE - Federal University of Pernambuco

PARQUE
CABIARI

INCITI



RECIFE
PREFEITURA DA CIDADE

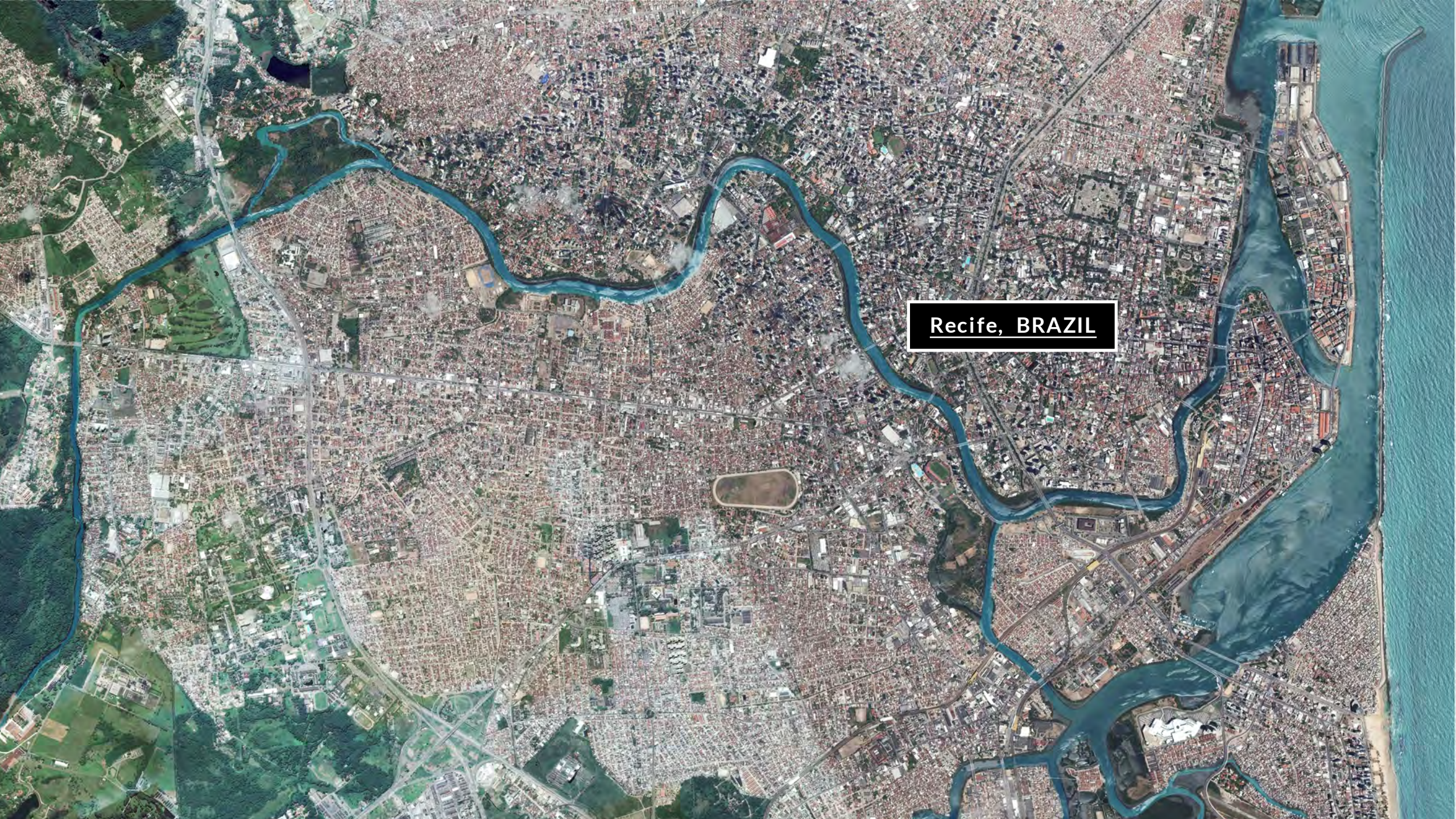


Recife

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image IBCAO
Image Landsat/Copernicus

Google Earth





Recife, BRAZIL









**HOW TO PROMOTE A
HEALTHY CITY IN FACE
OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY?**

- It is **NOT SUFFICIENT** to built **MORE PARKS** in the city, but to build **SUCCESSFUL** parks.
- Parks that are **DEMOCRATIC SPACES**, used by all types of people.
- Places where people **LIKE TO GO AND STAY** as part of their daily habit or routine.
- We need to build a **PUBLIC REALM**, a place of commons.



**RECIFE:
MIXED SOCIAL AND
SPATIAL SEGREGATION**

- Recife is a city with **HUGE SOCIAL INEQUALITY** and with an **UNUSUAL SPATIAL SEGREGATION**.
- The wealthy and the poor dwell in neighbouring spaces.
- The city is mainly occupied by poor neighbourhoods with islands of wealth.
- **THE RIVER DIVIDES TWO CITIES:** The formal city with infrastructure and good urban services, and the informal city composed by communities and popular neighborhoods that has fewer equipments and services.



POPULATION DENSITY

Inhabitants per km²



130 12,500 30,000

INCOME

Monthly average per house R\$



0 600 3,800

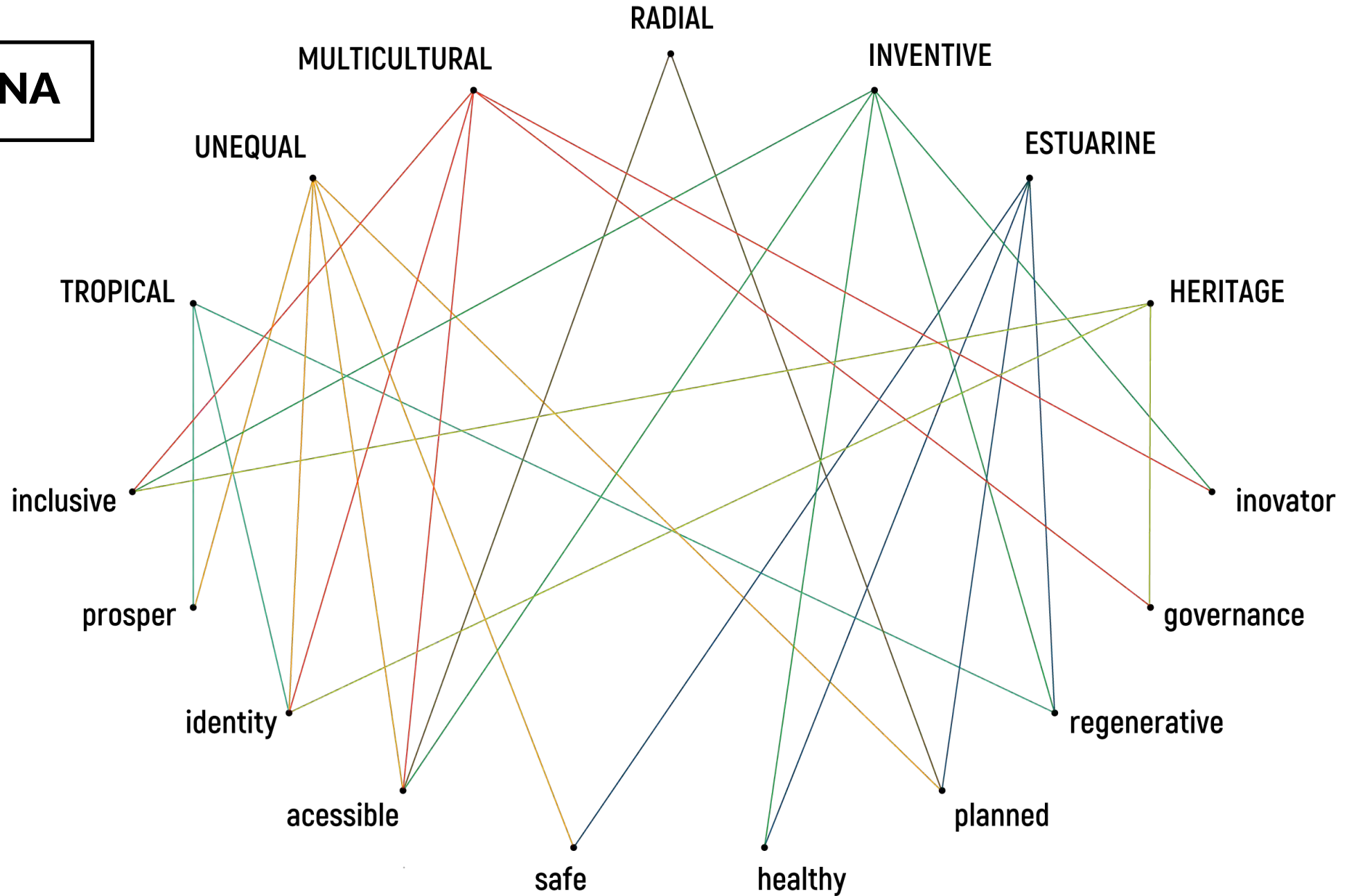
PUBLIC SPACE RATE

By neighborhood %



0 5 35

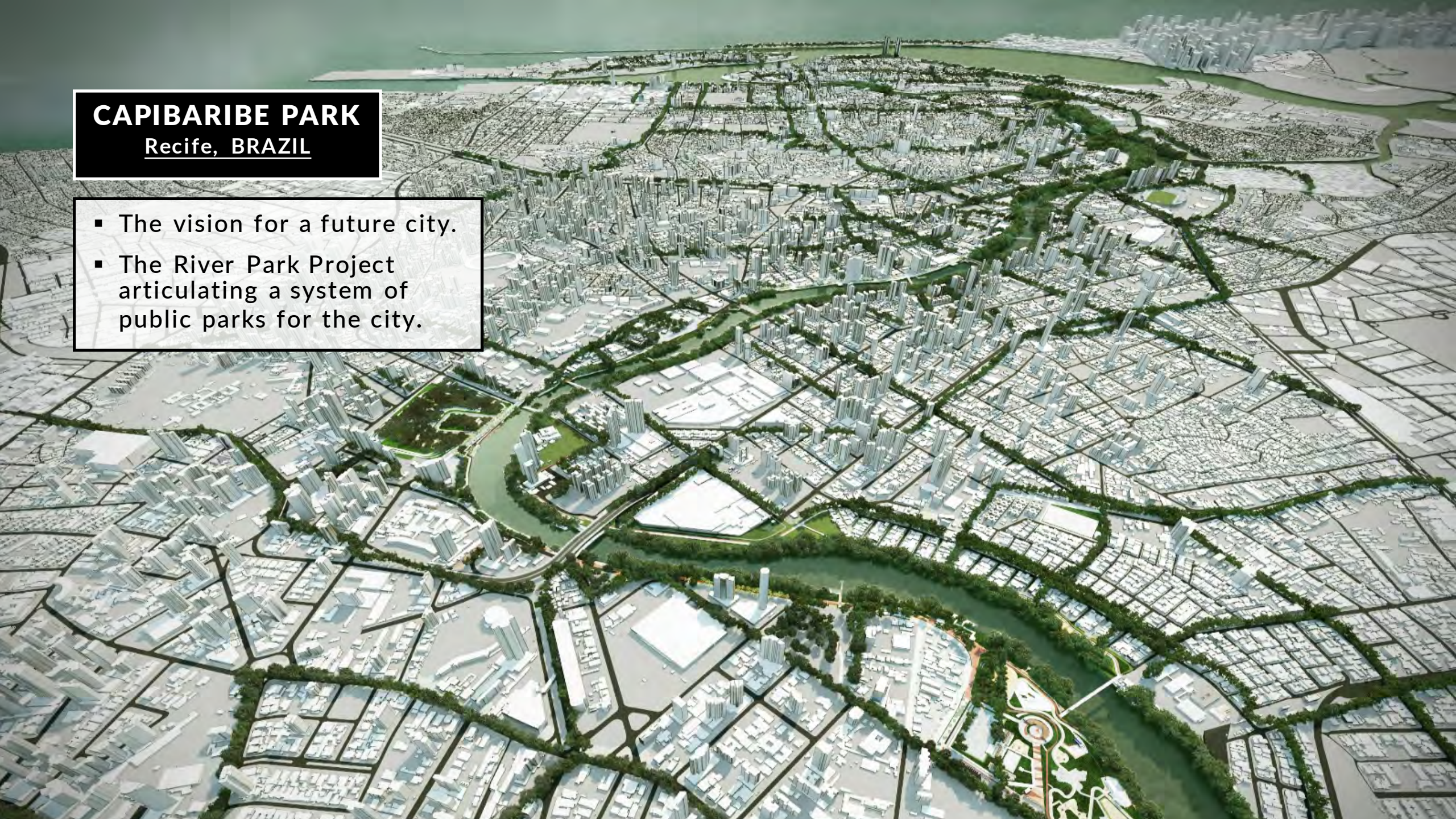
RECIFE'S DNA



CAPIBARIBE PARK

Recife, BRAZIL

- The vision for a future city.
- The River Park Project articulating a system of public parks for the city.



PARQUE CAPIBARIBE'S GUIDING CONCEPTS

DESIGN SENSITIVE
TO **NATURE**

DESIGN SENSITIVE
TO **EXPERIENCE**

DESIGN SENSITIVE
TO **PEOPLE**

DESIGN SENSITIVE TO **NATURE**

- To reconcile the **CITY** with **NATURE**
- To **HONOR** the place of waters
- To reckon the relation of **GREEN** and **BLUE SYSTEMS** and the **CITY**



DESIGN SENSITIVE TO **EXPERIENCE**

- Urban Infrastructure Design aiming **QUALITY OF URBAN LIFE**
- Mitigation of **CLIMATE CHANGE**



DESIGN SENSITIVE TO **PEOPLE**

- A city that **EMBRACES NATURE** is **HEALTHY** and **SECURE**
- Public spaces of **ENCOUNTER** and **INCLUSION** to experience a **HAPPY CITY**





CAPIBARIBE PARK: DESIGN PROCESS

NEGOTIATION

- **OPEN DIALOGUE** and **URBAN PROVOCATIONS**
- **CONNECTING** with communities
- **INVOLVEMENT** and **PARTNERSHIP**
- **ENGAGEMENT**
- Strong network of **COMMUNICATION**
(Facebook, Blogs, Whatsapp, Telegram, Twitter, Instagram)



URBAN ACTIVATION

- The project is about the **PROCESS**, and result based approach
- **LIBERATING** and **UNCOVERING** places
- **PROTOTYPING** of solutions
- **OCCUPATION** and **EVALUATION**
- **IMPLEMENTATION**
- Strategies of **CONSERVATION** and **COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT**



A woman with short dark hair, wearing a white tank top, stands in profile on the left side of the frame. She is pointing her right index finger towards a large, colorful map projected onto a wall. The map shows a river, several bridges labeled 'PONTE RUAQUE', 'PONTE 7 DE', and 'PONTE 8 DE MACEDO', and a grid of streets with red numbers. The background is a light-colored wall.

METABOLISM

- **LEGISLATION** incited by a plan and a vision
- Incentives and rewarding **STRATEGIES**
- **MONITORING** of use to embrace new possibilities
- New forms of **MANAGEMENT**
- **SOCIAL ASSESSMENT** (The Urban Happiness Index)

THE BAOBAB GARDEN: A SUCESSFUL STORY AND A GREAT NEW CHALLENGE

BAOBAB GARDEN



BAOBAB GARDEN



BAOBAB GARDEN

- OPEN PARK: Access available day and night.
- USERS: People **FROM ALL OVER THE CITY** including youths from peripheral neighbourhoods.
- The garden has no written rules, only an invitation: **STEP ON THE GRASS, EMBRACE THE TREES AND TALK TO THE BIRDS.**



**PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT
EXPERIENCES IN THE
SAME PUBLIC SPACE**

BAOBAB TREE

To climb or not to climb?



PICNIC TABLE

*The dispute for the comunal table
for parties and meetings: learning
the experience of sharing.*



PICNIC TABLE

*The dispute for the comunal table
for parties and meetings: learning
the experience of sharing.*



GIANT SEESAW

*From a romantic equipment to
a dangerous radical sport.*



GIANT SEESAW

*From a romantic equipment to
a dangerous radical sport.*



GIANT SEESAW

*From a romantic equipment to
a dangerous radical sport.*



FLOATING PIER

*Surrounded by natural landscape
to rest, meditate, fish, date...
but also to swim and to smoke
marijuana.*



FLOATING PIER

*Surrounded by natural landscape
to rest, meditate, fish, date...
but also to swim and to smoke
marijuana.*



HOW TO PROMOTE A PUBLIC DOMAIN?

BAZPA

PIA QUEM?



BAOBAB FOR WHOM?

- When the problem arose: the recognition of **WE AND THEM**.
- The feeling of fear from the "different" ones
- The middle class asked the police to **EXPELL** the youths from poor neighbourhoods
- The "paradise" was attacked: graffiti all over the garden.



RESTORATIVE MEDIATION

- Invitation for a collective meeting.
- To look each other in the eye, to talk.
- Understand the different experiences but also one common interest: nature
- Make people accountable for their behaviour.
- Find ways to respect differences and to coexist.



RESTORATIVE MEDIATION

- "Friends of the Boabab" more than a teeshirt.
- Uniting all sorts of people wanting to volunteer as garden keepers.
- The arisen collaborative system for the garden's maintenance.



Wellington Baobá



08:23



08:43 ✓

Wellington Baobá



Calu

17:56

Opa, Wellington! Muito obrigado por nos avisar.

18:48 ✓

+55 81 8889-9403 ~Simone Cesar

Wellington Baobá

Calu



Obrigada pelo aviso querido. Amanhã vou lá.

19:50

+55 81 8889-9403 ~Simone Cesar

Obrigada pelo aviso querido. Amanhã vou lá.

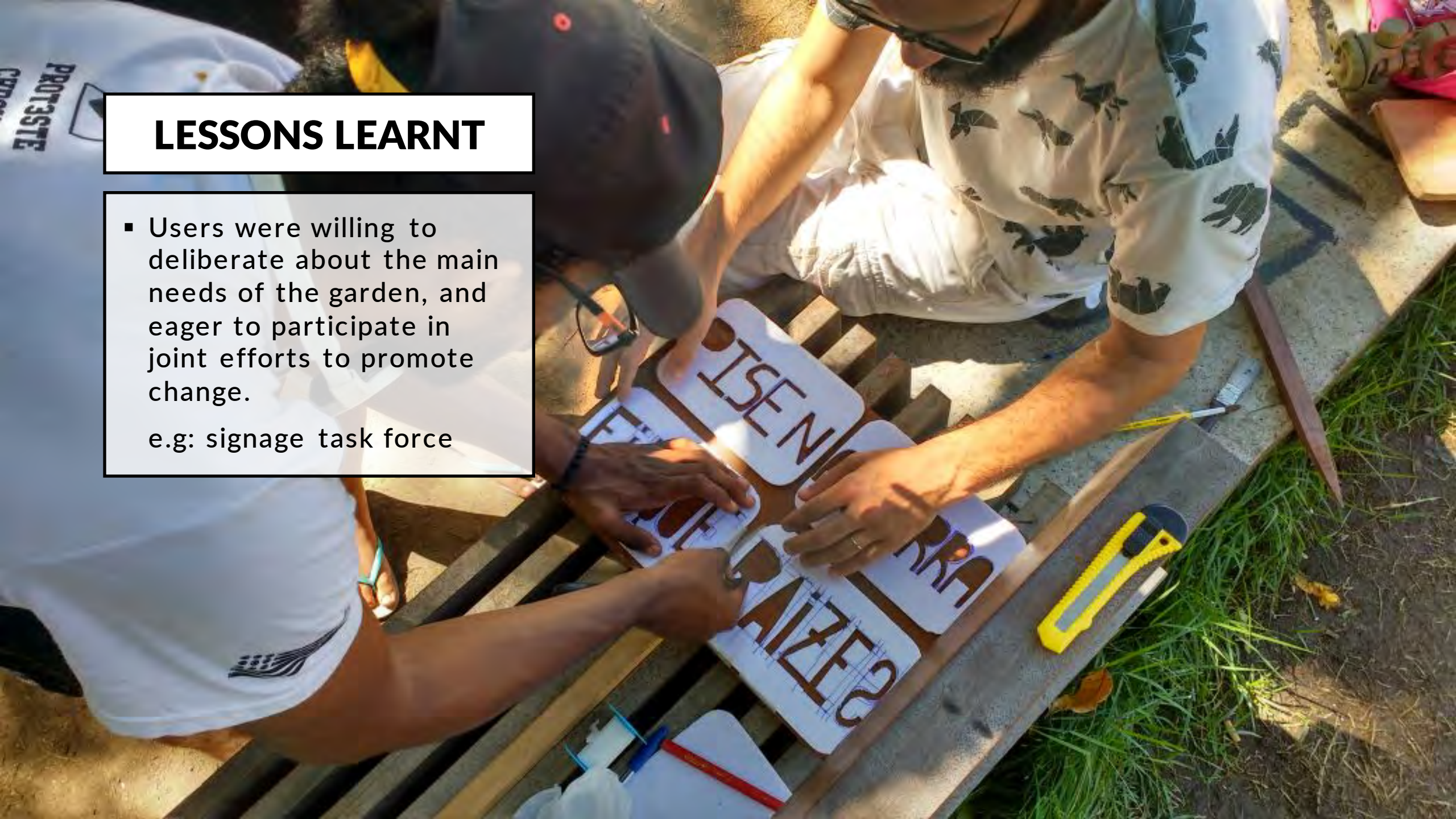
Obrigado, Simone

LESSONS LEARNT

- Care with public spaces can arise spontaneously, autonomously and carried out by the users of these places.
- “Isabella’s Law”
- Whatsapp Group “Friends of the Baobab”

LESSONS LEARNT


- Users were willing to deliberate about the main needs of the garden, and eager to participate in joint efforts to promote change.
e.g: signage task force





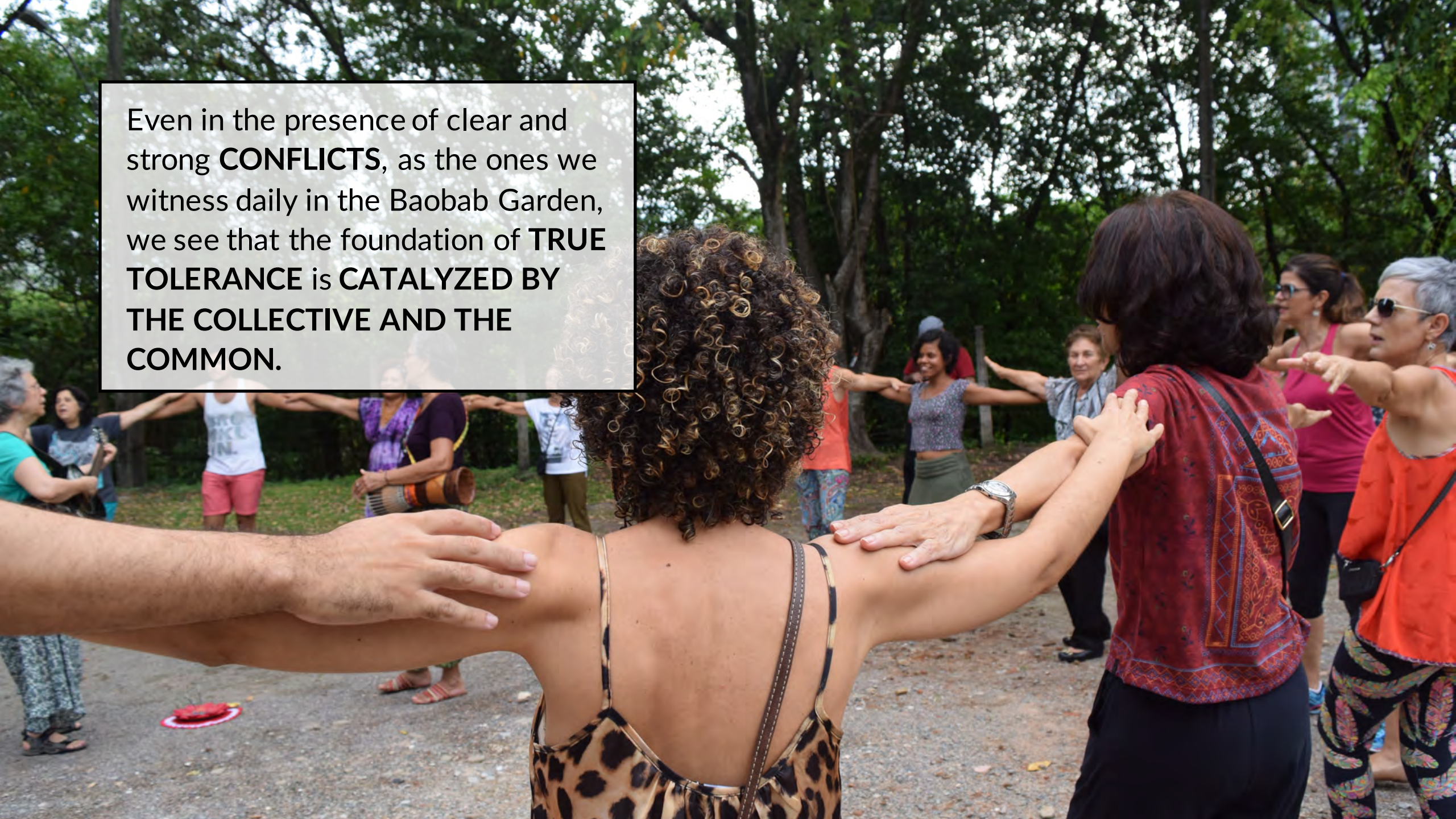







A healthy city consists not only in the existence of public spaces for playing, running and breathing fresh air, but also of an environment where **PEOPLE CAN BE ACCEPTED** by the expression of their own **IDENTITIES**, without prejudice, comparison or judgment.

Even in the presence of clear and strong **CONFLICTS**, as the ones we witness daily in the Baobab Garden, we see that the foundation of **TRUE TOLERANCE** is **CATALYZED BY THE COLLECTIVE AND THE COMMON.**



A photograph showing the lower legs and feet of several people wading through a muddy, water-filled area. The mud is dark brown and splashing, with some water visible. The people are wearing shorts, and their legs are covered in mud. The background is blurred, showing more people and foliage.

The Baobab Garden is still an ungoing social lab where we are learning how to design a place of commons respecting diferent cultural values and practices.

PARQUE CAPIBARI



RECIFE
PREFEITURA DA CIDADE



@parquecapibaribe

www.parquecapibaribe.org