



Co-design of decisions: a model of social participation - simple steps

WEAVING A COLLABORATIVE CITY





01 Questioning what participation means and to what degree to we want it.

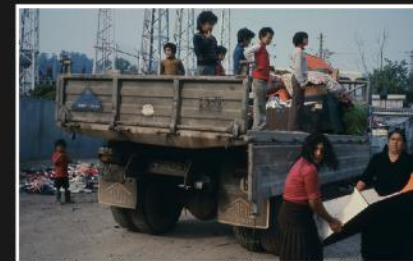
This mean that we shouldn't take participation as granted. In some cases, participation might not be needed or may even be a problem. In others cases it should be very active, big and have a direct commitment from the community. It is important to question what level of participation is adequate for the given case.



Construção do bairro social de Santa Tecla
Construction of the Santa Tecla social housing estate

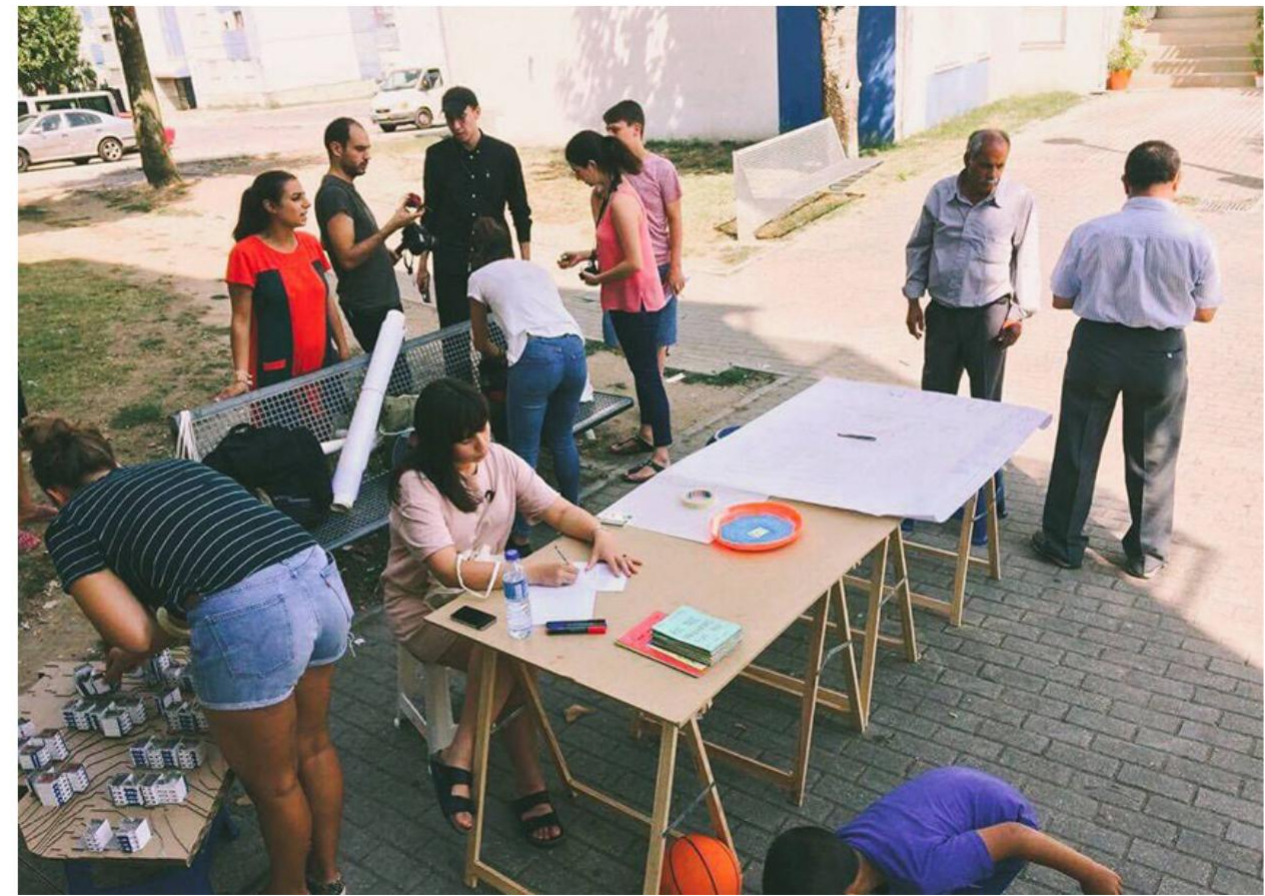


Realojamento da ocupação informal da Zona das Lages para o bairro social de Santa Tecla
Rehousing from an informal settlement in Zona das Lages to the Santa Tecla social housing estate



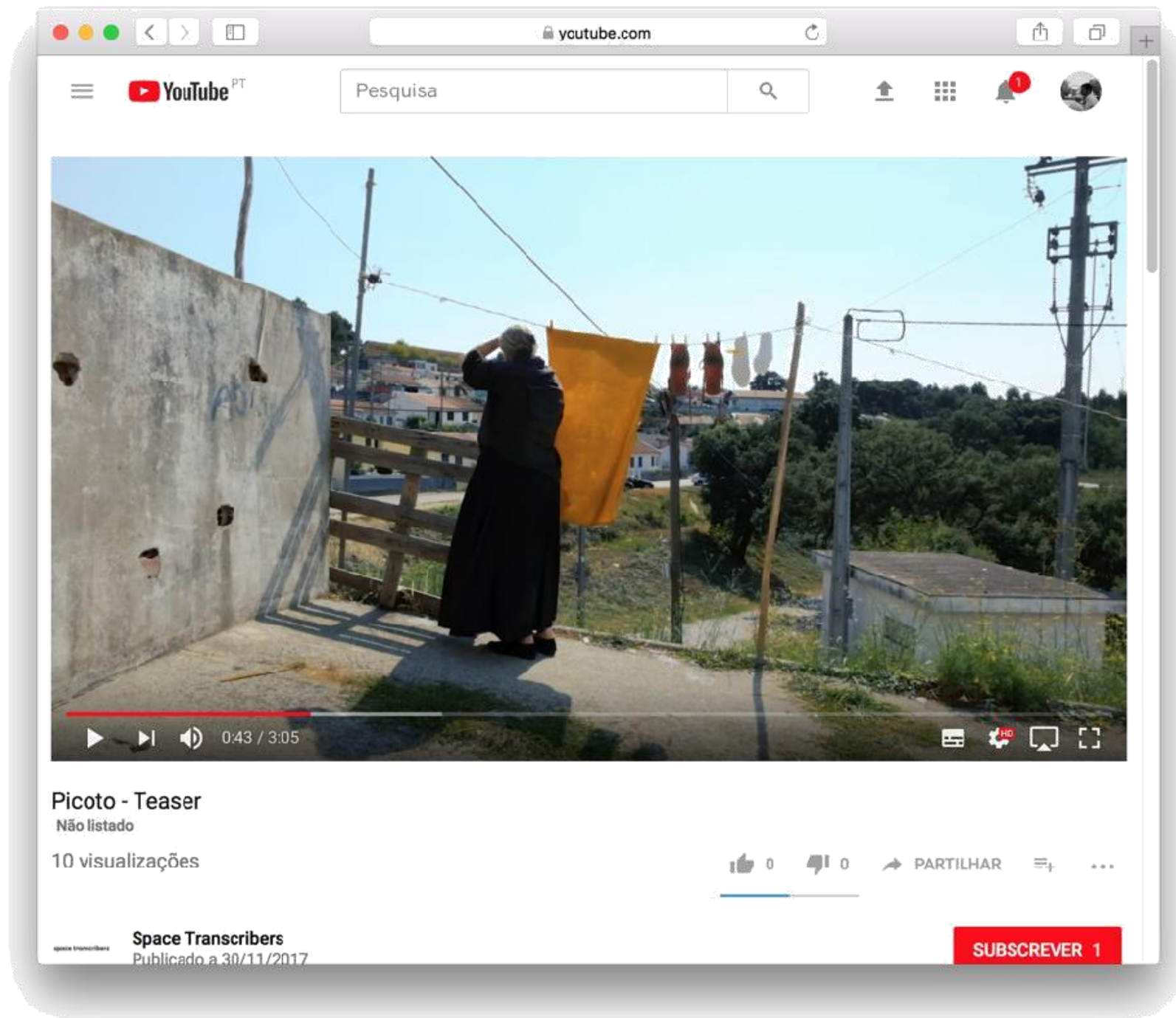
02 Getting to know about the history of the place.

We might want to jump immediately into finding solutions for a given problem, but the history of the place might give us some clues of good solutions we might want to replicate or bad solutions that we should not replicate. Search in archives, universities and libraries. They might have the job done already.



03 Using artistic practices as a way for people to express their needs and points of view.

Surveys and interviews are seen as a scientific way of obtaining peoples' opinions. Though they might seem necessary and universal, surveys make it difficult to appreciate the emotional level or the kind of connection that is forged, for example, in a simple face-to-face conversation. So, we should find alternative ways of enabling people to express themselves. Art is a solution for this.



04 Knowing who we want to reach at different moments.

Knowing who we want to reach is crucial. Some activities might reach the neighborhood scale, and others the city scale.



05 Understanding what has already been done and taking a risk

Probably other people or NGOs might have tried to address the problem you are working on. If yes, try do understand deeply what were their concerns, what and how they did it, what worked well and what didn't work. This is to avoid doing the same errors again, and bringing a new approach to the community. This creates trust.



06 Designing a tool of first engagement

If you are not part of the community and you want to engage with it, you need to gain its trust. Just because you trying to help them might not be enough. Try to design an engagement tool. Arts also helps here.



07 Defining yourself. Who are you?

Communities react to different stakeholders in different ways. So the way you present yourself might be crucial to gain the trust you need from the community. Are you a representative of the municipality? Are you a researcher? A social worker? An artist? An architect? How would people react to these titles? What expectation or fears do these titles carry with them?

You might be an explorer, in constant flux in and out of the estates, or a peaceful mediator between the conflicting sides, negotiating miscommunication and opening up the estates to external collaboration thanks to the honesty, transparency and clearness of our intentions, or maybe just a socio-spatial storyteller, who seek to promote change towards more fluid conversations



08 Anticipatory design

More than jumping into finding solutions, designing good questions is crucial. Good questions then lead to great answers.



09 The problem of representation

Not everyone understands an image the same way. You might need to employ creative ways of communicating an idea such as designing on a 1:1 scale, on the ground, the proposed solution for the site.



10 Being vulnerable and accepting that being afraid is ok. Not knowing what to expect might be a good starting point.

Not knowing what to expect might be a good starting point. Dealing with other people is not easy. Working in a new social context might be frightening. And that is ok. There are no unique solutions. Not knowing and being curious might be the best way to find a great and creative solution.