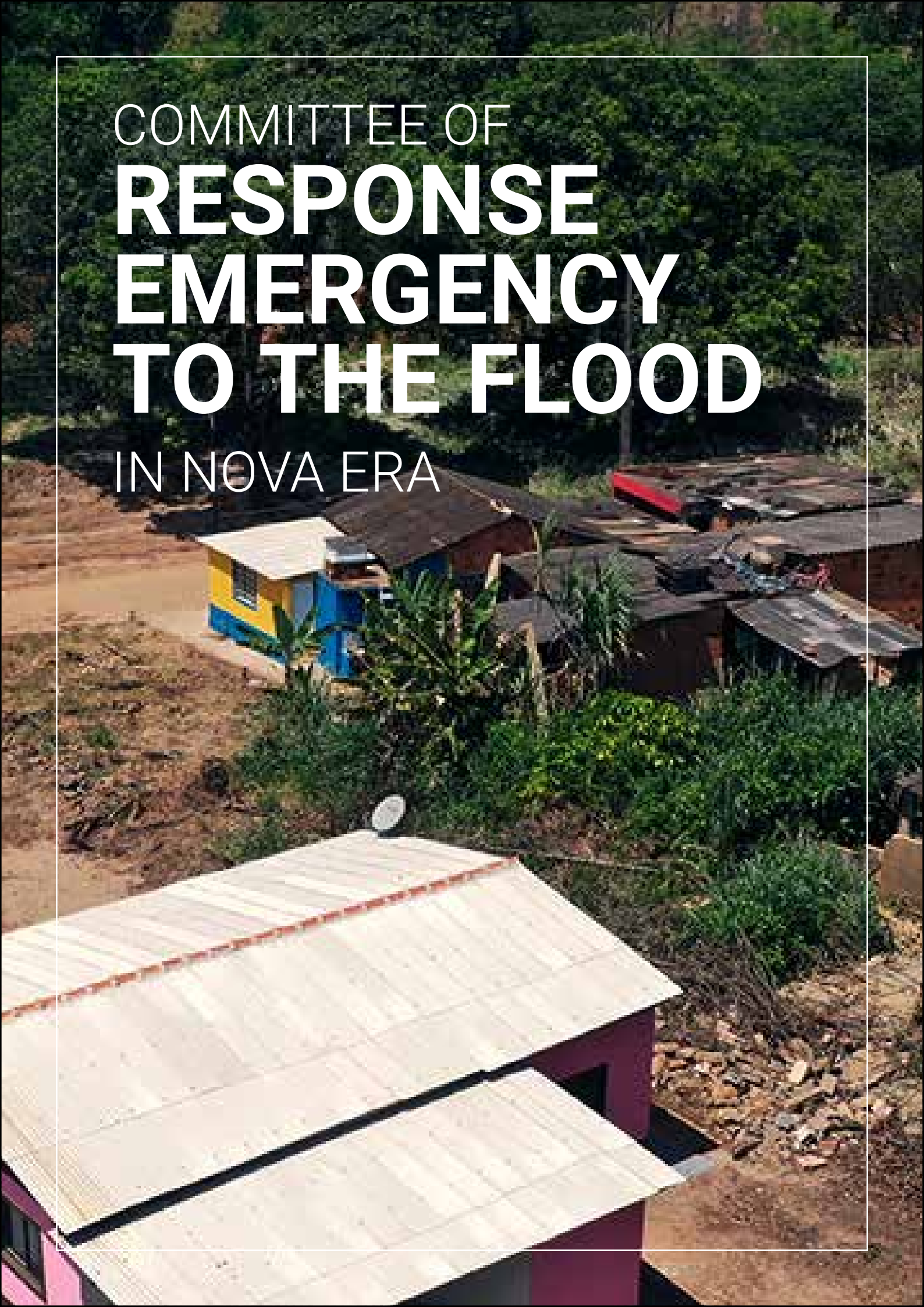
COMMITTEE OF

RESPONSE EMERGENCY TO THE FLOOD

IN NOVA ERA



ABOUT 4,600 MILES SOUTH LIES MY HOMETOWN, NOVA ERA, WHICH IS SMALL 400-YEAR OLD TOWN IN THE MOUNTAINS OF BRAZIL. ON JANUARY 24, 2020, THE PIRACICABA RIVER OVERFLOWED ITS BANKS AND FLOODED MUCH OF NOVA ERA.

This flood was devastating and impacted more than 350 families with many, who were of very modest means, losing everything.

A fundraiser was started based in the Newark and New York City area. In a short amount of time, we were able to collect more than $13,000 with a target of replacing two essential staples for the affected families - stoves and mattresses. The donations came from all sources - corporations, individuals and even some Brooklyn children who had a most inspiring sidewalk bake sale.

In addition to the generous cash donations, we also received many other in-kind donations in the USA. Things such as T-shirts for the Nova Era workforce volunteers, paint equipment and my airfare were all donated by US businesses.

When I arrived in Nova Era on February 18, 2020, I was overwhelmed by the enormous impact of the flood. The common theme and expression of everyone was sadness and despair. In floods the areas hit the

PIRACICABA
RIVER

PRAIA GRANDE

NEIGHBORHOOD UNDER WATER

hardest are at the lower elevations and often happen to also be the lesser valued neighborhoods where the less fortunate live. Nova Era was no different. In addition to the shear damage caused by the flood, health concerns quickly became another critical task. The initial days were tasked with countless dumpsters to remove

AFTER THE **FLOOD**

building parts, debris, rotted food and damaged personal property.

An ad-hoc Nova Era Floor Relief Committee was developed next to assess the impacted areas and damage types and create remedial work plans. Key people on this committee included the local prosecutor, a priest, a minister, a civil engineer, a police captain and the local judge. In all, we worked in some capacity on forty houses in five neighborhoods.

Of the several Nova Era neighborhoods impacted by the flood, the Praia Grande area was hit the worst. Praia Grande sits on the edge of town near the river and is an area where I had not previously visited. In assessing the damage to Praia Grande, it was obvious that the residents were challenged financially and their modest dwellings were not in the best conditions even before the flood. To the sixteen families of Praia Grande, the flood appeared to be the nail in the coffin for their houses, neighborhood and dreams.

But the world created a different path and the Praia Grande rebuilding story is an awesome and inspiring story of believing, perseverance and a community coming together to overcome a natural disaster, build confidence and restore dignity.

FIRST DAY **OF WORK**

VOLUNTEER

Our approach was originally met with some skepticism by the local residents as this type of community-based, grass roots, volunteer relief efforts are not common in Brazil. There was also a feeling that the planned remedial goals were not achievable. With some initial information sessions with our Relief Committee leaders we broke the ice and little by little the people of Praia Grande – men, women and children – began pitching in to clear debris, remove unstable house parts and cooperatively develop a vision and plan to restore and rebuild.

THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, **WOMEN, MAN, AND CHILDREN**

Coral
tudo de cor para você
LojaCor
Loja especializada em cor
TIGRE
Coral
Decoro

PARTNERS

BEFORE AND AFTER

YELLOW HOUSE

BEFORE AND AFTER
PINK HOUSE

BEFORE AND AFTER

OLIVE HOUSE

BEFORE AND AFTER
ORANGE HOUSE

BEFORE AND AFTER

BLUE AND WHITE HOUSE

BEFORE AND AFTER

PURPLE AND RED HOUSE

BEFORE AND AFTER

SALMON AND BLUE HOUSE

BEFORE AND AFTER
INSIDE HOUSE

AS A NOD TO THE US DONATIONS, ARTUR SELECTED THIS PRINT FOR THE FINISHED HOUSE!

29 DAYS AFTER
OF WORK

After a few days the enthusiasm spread and a movement started. We let the sixteen families of Praia Grande know that we would help all of them but only if they all helped each other. Each day more and more people showed up and soon there was a daily volunteer workforce of 25-30 people complimented by 5-10 paid workers for equipment operations and other items that needed to be effectively performed by paid trades. The work in Praia Grand started on February 21, 2020 and continued for twenty-nine straight days including weekends.

Work on the houses varied due to the specific flood damage, house elevation and pre-existing conditions. After the debris removal, one thing that all of the houses would receive would be a fresh coat of paint.

We put a request in to a Brazilian paint company, Tintas Coral, and to everyone's delight, they generously sent a truckload of paint from Sao Paulo to Nova Era with paint in every color. Enough paint to

paint many, many houses. Nothing make a bigger change and fresh look like the power of paint. Due to the immediate aesthetic and morale boost, we created a roving paint brigade that created a new meaning for paint the town. The roving paint brigade showed up and painted houses in a different Nova Era neighborhood each Saturday.

WAS HELD ON MARCH 21, 2020. THE FACES OF DESPAIR AND HOPELESSNESS THAT I SAW IN FEBRUARY WERE REPLACED WITH JOY AND PRIDE.

LUCH **TIME**

With kitchens destroyed by the flood, the daily hot meal served to the volunteer workforce was something all looked forward to. Having meat each day was a highlight to many. Soon word spread and even the local dogs heard about the lunches.

DELIVERY **DAY**

After twenty-nine straight days, the work was complete. A summary of the Nova Era relief work by the numbers:

16 houses completely rehabilitated in the Praia Grand neighborhood

40 houses painted in five different neighborhoods

09 new stoves provided

30 new mattresses provided throughout Nova Era

00 dollars spent on overhead, travel and administration. All donations went directly to this project.

BEFORE AND **AFTER**

MARTAIZES STREET IS THE MAIN
ROAD INTO PRAIA GRANDE

PROJECT

VISION LEFT TO BE EXPLORED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD VEGETABLE GARDEN IN COOPERATIVE FORM

Dylan & Max
BAKESALE
All proceeds will be donated to
SATURDAY - FEBRUARY
12 PM - 2 PM
SMITH x BERGEN

DONORS

Soon after Delivery Day, Covid-19 hit Brazil and our lives changed. The rehabilitation of the houses was critical and timely as these families were now spending significant time at home.

THANKS

COTTA
MATERIAIS PARA CONSTRUÇÃO

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