

Feminist Solidarity in the Resistance and Construction of Alternatives to Extractivism

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Between 12 and 16 November 2018, we met in Maputo, Mozambique, Angolan, Brazilian and Mozambican women sharing experiences and knowledge related to the resistance to extractivism and the construction of alternatives to the extractive model in our territories. For a week, we left our homes, our families, our fields and farms, and our work to talk about feminism and the importance of



building international feminist solidarity as a tool to strengthen our struggles in our territories. Our discussions about what unites us have been enriched by our diversity and our differences. We have seen that our lives are linked to the earth through our work and our production: cassava, sweet potatoes, rice, green corn, massala, beans ... all these foods symbolize our lives, our struggles and our history.



Angolans, Brazilians and Mozambicans take part in exchange of knowledge about resistance and construction of alternatives to extractivism.

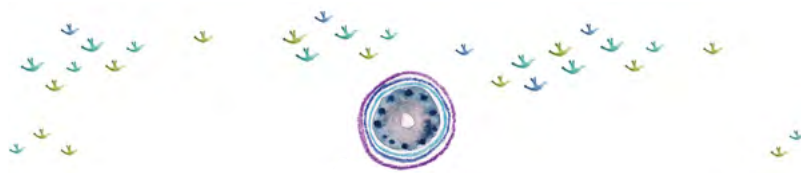


Sexual Division of Labor

through the fulfillment of the so-called “conjugal obligations” when we do not feel like it.

To meet all these challenges, we realize together the importance of joining with other women in self-organized spaces where we are free to share our experiences, our feelings, and turn them into a feminist struggle against the system that oppresses us.





Our debates were done collectively, valuing the experiences and knowledge of all.

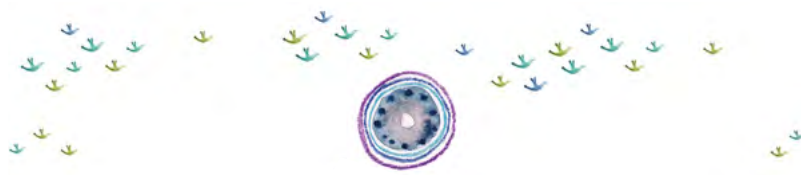
Body and territory

We realize that our bodies play a key role in our struggles. Our hearts feel the pain and sadness of reports of violence, the abuses of mining companies, and the difficult stories of other comrades. But it is also the heart that transforms this pain into struggle, into resistance. We saw the importance of keeping our bodies healthy to be together, to run after our rights. Our legs give us the lift to stand, walking hard. They have no limits, they allow us to move. Our legs and feet allow us to continue walking. Our mouths allow us to verbalize, to take away from us the sufferings and the experiences. Our arms allow us to embrace other companions and touch them. Our hands allow us to conduct the day-to-day work, and also serve to defend us. Our eyes must always be wide open to see the world and other realities, as well as the injustices of the big companies that are hurting us. It is from there that tears come out when we are sad. Our brains are where we store our knowledge and memories about the reality of each other that are far from our eyes. We realize that our genitals can be a

source of pleasure, because we do not just live in the fields and farms, but also suffering, when husbands, military men, miners and other men see our genital organs as a commodity or as an obligation.

We also realize that in fact the body and all these parts are interconnected. That labor pains we feel in the whole body, that the body reacts to stress with stomach pains, deregulated menstruation, hair loss. And that all this is linked to the brain and heart of



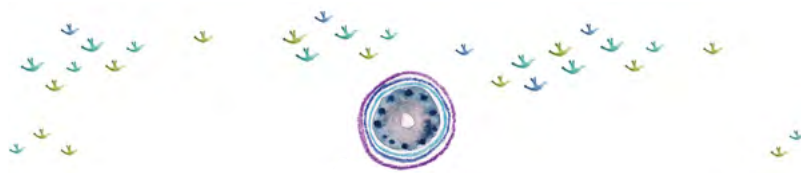


the woman: what the brain cannot digest, the heart suffers, bleeds and there comes the feeling of revolt and we cry. So we have also seen that for the head to work well, we need the heart.

All that we describe happens because the body is the first place from which we apprehend our experiences. The capitalist, patriarchal and racist system wants our bodies as a source of labor, manpower. And it is often the work that shapes our bodies. However, we do not get back to us the wealth that our bodies create. We create wealth but we have no water, we have no energy. Our hands are left with the calluses but without the benefits of the wealth that we create. To this we add that the instruments of labor of capital are created only to give us more work, to extract more of our work and not to diminish our effort. That is why it is important to create our own instruments of work.

We have also seen that the body of us women is thought to produce new workers to be appropriated by capital. We are often seen only as reproducers. Moreover, our body is also seen as being at the disposal of men, to satisfy their desires. We have seen that sexual violence is a way of humiliating women and always making us feel foreign in the public world. As if our place as women was just the house and around the house and every time we travel and we will cross the city, we feel that we are in a more vulnerable situation, as if we were in a place that is not ours.





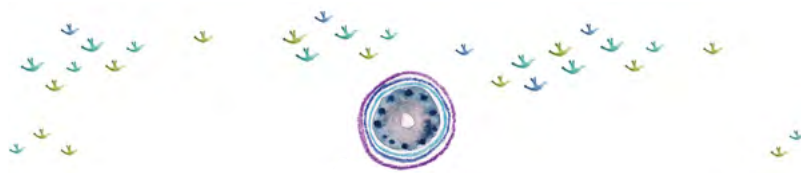
Through collective drawings, we reflect on how our bodies and our territories are connected.

Impacts, resistance against transnational corporations and extractive industries

We have seen that many of us are organized in movements, unions / trade unions, cooperatives and groups that are, in one way or another, in the fight against predatory extractivism, practiced by transnational corporations, that destroys our lives and our territories. We are aware of the impacts that transnational corporations cause and the difficulties of building resistance to them. We see that there are patterns in the behavior of the extractive companies, be they agribusiness, mining, irrigated fruit growing, or REDD. We are aware that machismo dominates the entire process of extractive industry.

The performance of these companies is often based on lack of information and community consent. Many invade the lands and operate without a license, without informing of their presence. Companies also spread lies to confuse and divide communities: they say they will create jobs that never come, try to buy leaders so they can help the company legitimize itself. In doing so, some families end up giving up and selling their land, often at very low rates.





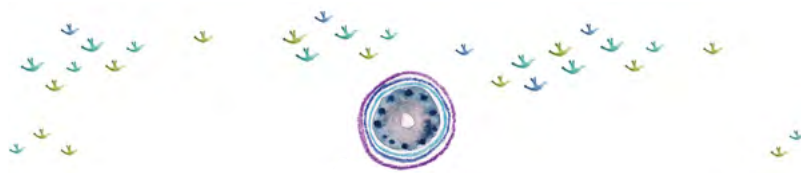
We had a day of exchanges with women and men who are organized in the fight for land in Maracuene.

In the case of mining, when there are jobs in companies, they are usually dedicated to men. Women who manage to work in mining companies such as Vale, for example, have their sexuality controlled by the company. The impacts are suffered mainly by women. With the large number of foreign men arriving to work in businesses, there is also an increase in sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, increased prostitution and cases of teenage pregnancy, and premature marriages. There are cases of 12 year olds with 3 children, abandoned by the foreign husband. We women also feel the impacts when we see that water and our lands are taken over by companies, leaving us with nowhere to take our food and our sustenance. Often companies try to trick us through Social Responsibility actions, which are just a makeup to mask the permanent change they will cause in our ways of life. There is a case, for example, where a mining company destroyed the river and in turn built a fountain for the community.



In addition, women do not have a voice or participation in the dialogue spaces for the reparation of damages caused by companies. It is men who negotiate and the

first ones to have access to information. In resettlement cases, often the places where they put us are worse than the places where we lived. We are withdrawn from our farms and our gardens. The houses they give us in return are of poor quality, we are forced to change the way we live. But often resettlement does not even occur and we are forced to find individual solutions to the problems caused by the companies. Sometimes we get cash damages worth far below what would be fair. And we know there are things that are not possible to make up for through money. We know there are laws that force companies to pay the government for what they extract. However, there is no transparency or participation of women in decision-making or resource use. We also know that often the extraction of natural resources is connected with armed conflicts and the militarization of our territories. With the arrival of mining companies, checkpoints are set up in which situations of sexual abuse and violence against women are recurrent.



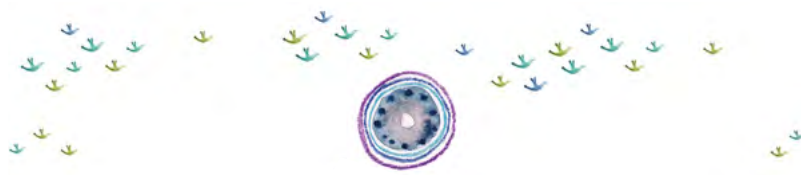
We discussed the challenges of building a fight in the field.

Another process that concerns us is the increasing commodification of nature. Recently, in some of our territories, the landfill for the carbon market is occurring. This means that nature's ability to transform carbon is being commodified. We know that the origin of this is in the negotiations between governments and companies to reduce carbon emissions generated by the way production is organized in our societies. We know that those who emit all this carbon dioxide are industries, agribusiness in cows, cars, hydroelectric plants that deforest large amounts of forest, among others. We realize that REDD is a mechanism created by the companies that pollute, so they do not have to stop polluting. They get their license to continue polluting on the grounds that they will buy carbon from other territories to compensate for their pollution. In practice, this means that they will come to our countries, because it is where the forest is. And the forests are where there are communities that know how to live with the forest, who know how to manage the forest so that it continues to exist. With the advent of REDD, there is also the criminalization of people and practices that existed before. Enterprises

come through international NGOs that propose a contract to communities where they are banned from tampering with areas for a period of 90 years. Practices that communities used to do in harmony with nature, such as fishing, fruit harvesting, are prohibited and areas are fenced. In addition, there are always outsiders going to measure carbon, going in and out of communities. Often, the alternative that is presented to these communities when REDD is installed and it is no longer possible to live in the countryside and the farm becomes tourism. But in practice what occurs is a predator tourism, which increases sex tourism, selling girls and early pregnancy.

These aspects and others lead us to conclude that the extractive industries operate from similar standards, whether mining, agribusiness or REDD. And they benefit from patriarchy to put the accumulation of capital above the lives of women and the territories in which they live.





Construction of alternatives

We realize that our struggles of resistance are directly linked to the impacts the extractive industry has on our lives. And that the gains we had were achieved through struggle and social mobilization. Recognizing our ability to diagnose impacts and build our resilience, we realize that many of our struggles are also affirmations of alternatives to this model we criticize. They are statements that we want society as a whole to be organized in another way.

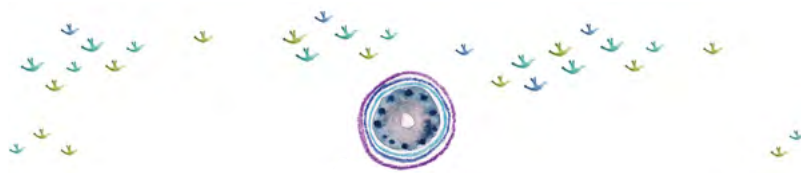
In this sense, we begin a process of sharing the processes and strategies in which we are involved.

We realize that an essential element in the construction of alternatives is the self-organization of women in our places. Bringing women together in our places and establishing alliances between us to be on the move, in action to transform the world and our lives. We have seen that we must have a process of permanent resistance, in alliances with other movements, on a local, national and international scale. We have seen that the global reach of the World March of Women is very important in the resistance and the construction of alternatives, because it allows us to be connected with other women in other territories.

We have seen that it is very important to create liberated territories where we can organize our lives and maintain our ways of life from our own strength. For this, we understand that it is important to value the work of women, especially in production for self-consumption. In addition to self-consumption, we have seen that there are experiences of creating consumer groups in the city for agro-ecological products in the countryside. However, we know that these experiences require resources and time, after all are processes that give work.

We have seen that the alternatives we are building, such as agroecology, are based on ancestral knowledge of the women who came before us and taught us a lot. Often there are actors from outside our territories who think we know nothing, that they know what is best for us. They disregard our knowledge and what we have been doing for a long time. We understand that the alternatives we are building do not repeat this pattern because they are based on our experiences. These are popular initiatives aimed at transforming the world from our territories.





We reaffirm the importance of resisting and building popular alternatives to the current extractive model. In XXXX, we affirm the importance of agroecology as an alternative!

The communication also presents itself as an important tool in the fight against predatory extractivism, denouncing the problems that affect the communities and presenting strategies to repair the injustices and violence committed against the populations. We understand that communicating, rather than informing, is a construction of a dialogue, processes of mobilization, participation and social inclusion.

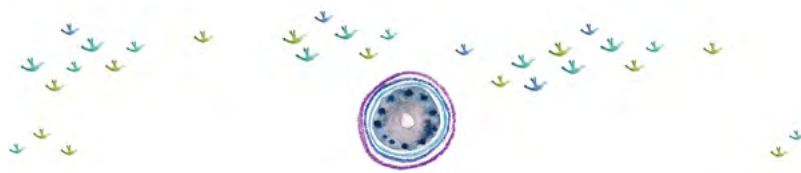
Considering that women are the most affected by the extractive development model, our resistance to capitalism also needs to be built on the symbolic plane, rejecting the hegemonic speeches imposed mainly by the media that reaffirm at all times the macho and patriarchal character of society and the various types of violence against women.

The media still do not consider women as subjects, removing them from public space and from any articulation with politics. They also contribute to the objectification and historical commodification of women's bodies, hyper-sexualising children and young people, and imposing certain standards of beauty and behavior as references for women.

We understand, therefore, that it is necessary to build an alternative communication based on anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anticolonial and anti-patriarchal values and that it is sensitive to the damage caused by extractivism that is depleting natural resources. A communication that considers issues related to race, gender, sexuality and classes.

Within these aspects, our strategy affirms that it is fundamental to produce and consume feminist communication, made by us and for us. The communication that we want must therefore be elaborated in a communitarian, collaborative, participative and alliance (and convergence) way with other movements. It is not our goal to commercialize information, but to create spaces of visibility, solidarity and dialogue, understanding that communication, as a fundamental right of the human being, serves public interests and collectivity.

So our effort is for us to tell our own stories of struggle against extractivism, breaking with the practices that are invisible to us and that support patriarchy. We want to hear the reports of problems from the voice of the



women themselves, considering that, in most cases, the sources of information are always composed of men. We need to give our women a voice so they recognize each other.

Our challenge is also to build a process that shows the plurality and cultural and geographical diversity of women. We are many, many and we must break with the existing inequalities among us women. We also need to ensure that more comrades master the techniques of information production and distribution. We cannot fail to point to social networks as an important tool for the growth of the circulation of feminist communication (and for the feminism we want to build). We point out that they stand out in this new communication scenario, although these platforms are problematic, since they belong to large communication groups that steal our information, commercialize our data, in order to design new forms and patterns of behavior, including the political one. However, we outline the scope they have and the best way to use them.

Referrals

We commit ourselves to disseminate the audio-visual materials resulting from our workshop in our communities, as a tool to create international feminist solidarity among our peoples.

We pledge to be mobilized for the international day of women's struggle, 08/03; to denounce transnational corporations on 24/04 in the context of 24 hours of feminist solidarity; and to build a new meeting, this time in Angola, between August and September 2019, in which we will further deepen the debate about the alternatives that we women are building in our territories.



We resist living, we march to transform!

We will keep going until we are all free!

This initiative was inspired by the collective work of the African Feminist Reflection and Action Group. The group is composed by 40 feminist academics, social activists and progressive women from trade unions and the political arena across the African continent. From November 2017 on, the participants engaged regularly – during so called Feminist Labs – in critical debates around the challenges that derive from neoliberal development patterns and political backlashes against women for a contemporary African feminist activism. The gatherings have been facilitated the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Mozambique office.

