

“Tenant today, *posseiro* tomorrow”⁽¹⁾

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“Each day, what we see in the invasions in Goiânia is misery on the table of the worker... we were evicted from the countryside by powerful farmers. The only alternative was to come to the city for a better life. Here, we had to face reality: unemployment, expensive rents and living costs.... unemployed, unable to pay rent, we are forced to invade....” (Union of *Posseiros*, 1982)

SUMMARY: *This paper tells the story of FEGIP, a federation of tenants and “posseiros” working in Goiás state, Brazil and their struggle over the last 17 years to assist tenants and the homeless. Section I serves as introduction and Section II outlines the methodology and scope of the research. Section III provides some basic information on the city of Goiânia, and the situation of tenants within the city. Section IV explains the central role of tenants’ movements in creating an alternative means through which low-income families are able to secure housing. It analyzes the specific nature of FEGIP - the Goiânia Federation of Tenants and Posseiros - and former organizations. Section V illustrates these strategies with a number of histories of individual settlements. The final sections consider the achievements and impacts, and some conclusions are drawn following an assessment of their effect on both local and national housing policy.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF Goiânia was established in 1933. It emerged both as a planned city built by construction companies with their employees and as a spontaneous settlement built up by labourers constructing their own houses. It was in this way that the first *barrios* occupied by *posseiros* were created and, as a result, both the divided nature of the city and the housing problems have been with Goiânia since its inception.

Until the 1970s, Goiânia grew rapidly. With this growth, the city lost its intended structure which was planned to accommodate 50,000 urban dwellers within a 30-year period. Some 37 years after it was founded, Goiânia already had 363,056 inhabitants. As the city grew, the housing problem became more acute due both to the rising population and to socio-economic problems such as unemployment. With housing difficulties compounded by a lack of public housing policies, illegal settlements

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1. A first draft of the research report prepared mainly by L. Moraes and R. Barbosa was presented at an IIED meeting in London in May 1997. Taking into consideration the seminar participants' focus and observations, a further draft in English was prepared by Y. Cabannes using part of the existing portuguese material. The report will be presented to FEGIP's General Assembly to help reflect on recent activities and help redefine new strategies in relation to tenants.

spread throughout the urban area. Those unable to afford rents turned to organized land invasions, resulting in the slogan "Today's tenant is tomorrow's *posseiro*". The number of illegally occupied settlements increased and, by 1991, 12.3 per cent of the population of Goiânia were living in such settlements while 33 per cent were living in rented accommodation.

Since its creation, FEGIP (the Goiânia Federation for Tenants and *Posseiros*) has fought to secure citizenship rights for *posseiros* (the name given to those occupying common land). The Federation demands that all levels of government implement housing policies to address the housing needs of those receiving wages that are below 12 times the legal minimum. To accomplish its objective, FEGIP operates a wide range of activities including meetings and seminars, the formation and strengthening of community based organizations, information bulletins, a newsletter, alternative radio stations, a mobile TV channel, and state and regional congresses. These and other strategies are intended to bring *posseiros* together to strengthen the fight for housing.

Tenants have always been part of FEGIP although the organizations which preceeded FEGIP did not have the word "tenants" in their title but focused on *posseiros*. However, today's *posseiros* are, for the greater part, yesterday's tenants. The case studies in this paper describe how most *posseiros* were either tenants or migrants to the city. The dream of every Brazilian family is to have their own house and to be free from the obligation of paying rent and, for many families in Goiânia, FEGIP has long been a part of achieving that dream.

FEGIP has secured political power in the community through its support for the struggles of homeless people. It has responded to local occupations and sought to strengthen movements such as those of Barrio Anhanguera, Fimsocial, Jardim Botânico, Jardim das Oliveiras, Lajeado, Dom Fernando, Parque das Amendoeiras and others. Its capacity was strongest during 1980-1990 and, more recently, the organization has been weakened due to a lack of resources enabling it to remain independent. The government's attitudes and actions towards FEGIP have long sought to undermine the organization. Nevertheless, the organization has successfully resisted cooptation efforts made by both state and municipal government over the past 15 years.

FEGIP's presence now extends beyond Goiânia. The organization has contributed to important national popular movements and to the creation of organizations which have made significant contributions towards the fight for urban reform such as the *Articulação Nacional do Solo Urbano* (ANSUR) or the National Network for Urban Land and the *Movimento Nacional de Luta pela Moradia* (MNLN), or the National Movement for Housing Struggle.

II. METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE "ACTION RESEARCH"

THE FINDINGS OF the research presented in this paper are

2. This methodology, called Research for Action, is that used by Cearah Periferia in the Community Leaders Urban Training and Research Centre based in Fortaleza.

3. Some of the rich material gathered and processed, and the interview reports are not included in this paper but can be consulted in the final report of the research programme (available in portuguese from the authors).

4. Graeff, E.A. (1985), *1985 Goiania: 50 anos*, Mec-sesu, Brazilia.

the results of a process in which representatives from grass-roots tenants' organizations have played a leading role.⁽²⁾ The first stage involved the Tenants and *Posseiros* Federation from Goiás State (FEGIP), the National Movement for Housing Struggle (MNLM), one local researcher and one representative from the NGO Cearah Periferia jointly defining and planning the objectives and scope of the research. This stage also involved the collection of basic (but scattered) information on a number of possible case studies and preliminary interviews with a number of local residents. The second step was to search for scarce material related to tenants issues in Goiânia. FEGIP archives were opened and reviewed, relevant legal documents (particularly those which had been influenced by FEGIP) were examined and official statistical sources consulted.

The third stage of the field work was realized mainly by FEGIP members with methodological assistance from a local researcher (Lúcia Morães) and Cearah Periferia (Yves Cabannes). A survey on the living conditions and socio-economic profile of tenants was carried out by community representatives involved in ongoing tenant struggles. Some 58 questionnaires were completed by tenants drawn from eight settlements in Goiânia and, simultaneously, six case studies were selected from a possible 75 settlements and analyzed. The six were chosen because they are illustrative of FEGIP's evolution and practices throughout its 17 years of experience and a synthesis of these case studies is presented later in the paper. Finally, the primary data gathering was completed with semi-structured interviews with 10 key local actors.⁽³⁾

III. THE CITY OF GOIÂNIA

a. The Development of Goiânia

THE CITY OF Goiânia was founded in the central region of Brazil in 1933. Four years later, the city was inaugurated as the capital of the state of Goiás. The city has played a critical role in the urbanization of the interior of Brazil and this process was reinforced in 1960 with the creation of Brasília, the country's capital, just 200 kilometres from Goiânia.

Atilio Corrêa Lima, the city's designer, wanted to incorporate the basic concepts of the garden city (as conceived by Ebenezer Howard) within his plans for Goiânia:

"The central part of Goiânia, as appears in the detailed design of Atilio Correia Lima, recalls dramatically the garden city of Letchworth, not only because of the concept of centrality but as well, and mainly, because of the ease with which the urban structure fits to the natural land. In both cases, the centre is on the top level and the city spreads downwards, towards the railway line and the railway station, communication with the world."⁽⁴⁾

From a technical perspective, the plan for Goiânia was suc-

cessful but it did not address the social and economic development needs of the future city. The master plan did not include residential areas for the workers building the city. As a result, whilst the planned city was emerging on the left bank of the Botafogo River, on the right bank, the first “invasion of land” was taking place to provide shelter for the construction workers and for the migrants coming in search of work.

In 1938, a new master plan was designed, incorporating the spontaneous workers’ settlements in the areas of Vila Nova and Universitário and, in the western sector, of Aeroporto, Oeste and Coimbra. The original plan was designed for population of 50,000 who were expected to settle gradually over the next three decades. However, the city grew rapidly and, by 1958, Goiânia’s silver jubilee year, the estimated population was already 110,000.

b. The Significance of Tenants

Table 1 and Graph 1 provide an overview of both the evolution of Goiânia’s population and the significance of rental housing. This data has been obtained from the official census⁽⁵⁾ and the figures have to be treated cautiously as their accuracy has been questioned, especially for the 1991 census. Nevertheless, they provide a broad summary of the past trends.

5. Statistics from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics Foundation (*Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*)

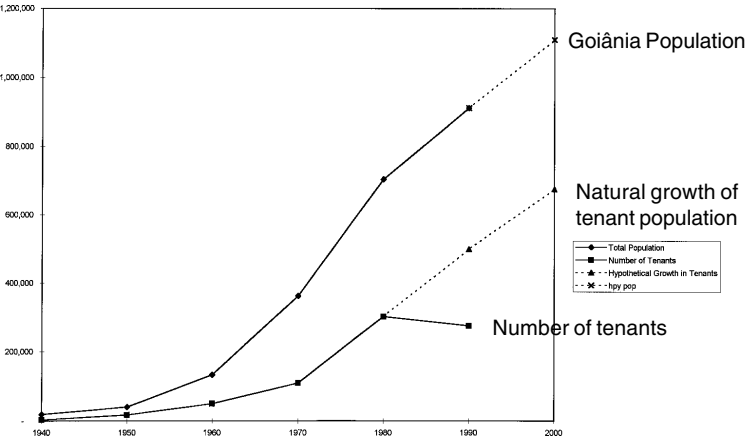
Table 1: Evolution of Goiania Urban and Tenant Population (1940-1991)

Year	Urban population	Number of rented housing units	Tenants population	Per cent of tenant population
1940	18,889	577	2,885	15
1950	40,333	3,501	17,505	43
1960	133,462	9,834	49,170	37
1970	363,056	21,859	109,295	30
1980	703,682	60,578	302,890	43
1991	912,136	55,192	275,960	30

Source: IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics Foundation, *Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*)

Data Processing: Fegip/Cearah Periferia

Graph 1: Evolution of Goiania’s Urban and Tenant Population: 1940-1990



The rapid growth of Goiânia's population between 1950 and 1980 is illustrated in both Table 1 and Graph 1, and is mainly the result of high in-migration. Between 1980-91, the annual growth rate fell to 2.3 per cent, considerably less than the 6.5 per cent achieved in the 1970s.

After 1980, the migrants started to settle in the municipalities on the outskirts of the capital. As a result, the population of Goiânia metropolitan area grew to nearly 1.3 million inhabitants with some 71 per cent living in Goiânia city itself (922,000). This population is considered primarily urban although a small number are classified as rural dwellers. The preliminary data for 1996 indicated a population of nearly one million in Goiânia city.

Even in the early years of Goiânia, the proportion of tenants was significant (15 per cent in 1940) despite the fact that both construction workers and newcomers were building their own city, albeit outside the boundaries of the master plan. The number of tenants was growing more quickly than the overall population. In 1950, 17,505 persons out of the 40,333 included in the census (43 per cent) were paying rent. During the next two decades, the tenant population grew six-fold, to 109,000 persons in 1970. However, during this period, the growth rate of the tenant population was slower than that of the overall population and the proportion of tenants in the city fell from 43 per cent of the total to 30 per cent. Between 1970 and 1980, the trends changed again. The overall population roughly doubled in ten years, rising from 363,000 in 1970 to 703,000 in 1980, however the tenant population nearly tripled, going from 109,000 to 302,000 people. By 1980, 43 per cent of the population were renting their accommodation.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the tenants' movements began to emerge and focus primarily on alternative housing solutions. The unique feature in the evolution of the tenant population in Goiânia is clearly indicated by the graph. Whilst the city gained more than 200,000 new residents between 1980 and 1991, the tenant population decreased in absolute numbers from 302,000 to 276,000. If the 1970s trend had continued into the 1980s, the number of tenants should have reached about 500,000 people.

This reversal in the number of tenants in both absolute and relative terms is primarily due to the tenants' movements and the strategies they have followed. It is their demonstrated capacity to reverse "natural" trends which makes Goiânia and its people's organizations such a unique case study.

c. Tenants in Goiânia Today

At present, there are four major categories of rental accommodation in Goiânia. These are:

- *Pensões* (pensions or boarding rooms) are a common form of rental accommodation in the centre of Goiânia. *Pensões* are usually simple, poorly equipped rooms in a row building with a single exit to the street. They rarely provide permanent rental

accommodation. A low-income family or a new migrant to the city, generally a lower-middle class employee such as a clerk, may stay in a *pensão* for a couple of months before progressing onto another kind of accommodation.

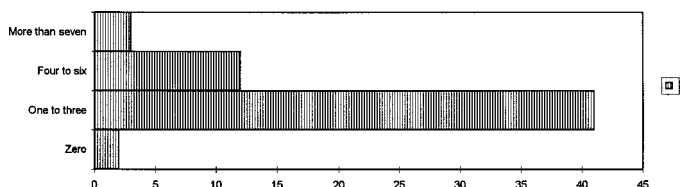
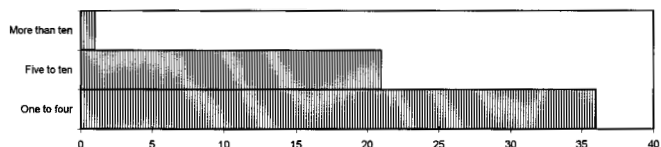
- A second form of rental accommodation in the inner-city is formal sector private rented accommodation in houses and apartments. The cost of such accommodation ranges from US\$ 300-400 - three to four times the minimum monthly wage. Therefore, it is not accessible to the poor and hence is of marginal interest to this research.
- Uncontrolled private renting is the primary source of rental accommodation in Goiânia, especially on the periphery of the city. Shacks or two/three bedroomed basic houses are usually rented by petty landlords. Usually the shacks are on recently occupied land which are slowly transformed into two or three bedroom houses as security increases. The renting of rooms or part of a plot is commonly undertaken by *posseiros*, who rent part of their house or a backyard room. Many tenants in Goiânia live in such accommodation. Relations between the owner and the tenants involve a complex set of obligations and are rarely based solely on monetary exchange.
- Sub-letting part of a rented room or house might take place to assist members of the extended family in need of accommodation and, in some cases, such accommodation is offered even to non-family members. More research is needed on this growing but poorly understood form of rental accommodation.

The minimum monthly wage in Goiânia at the time of the research was US\$ 116. With few exceptions, rents fall in value from the centre to the periphery in a series of concentric circles. The lowest rents in the area known as "ex-garden city" and now the centre of Goiânia are between US\$ 300-400 with rents dropping to US\$ 80-100 in the peripheral areas where services are lacking. Even the lowest cost rental accommodation is very expensive relative to income, being equal to one minimum monthly wage, and this explains the search for alternative sources of accommodation.

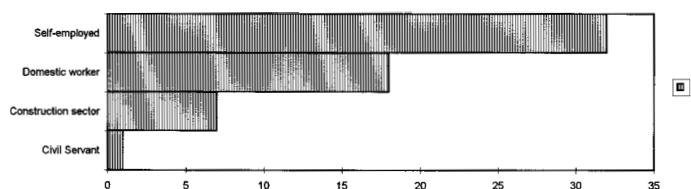
d. Who are the Tenants?

The survey (carried out in eight selected areas of the city) provides information on socio-economic indicators, living conditions and rental agreements for 58 tenants and their families.

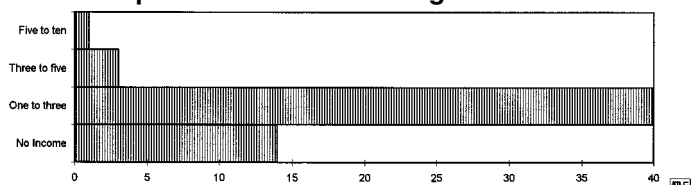
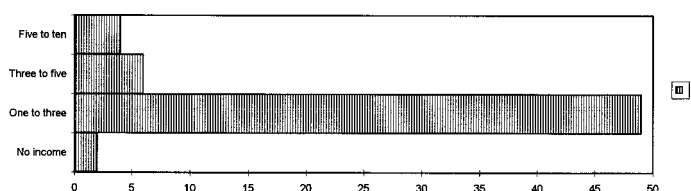
Size of families/persons per house (Graphs 2,3). Most families have between one and three children (41 families out of the 58 interviewed) and, as a result, the number of persons per house is generally fewer than four (62 per cent of the cases). In one third of households (21 cases), five to ten people live in the same house.

Graph 2: Number of Children in the Family**Graph 3: Number of People in the House**

Jobs/skills (Graph 4). Thirty-one per cent of those interviewed are unemployed, a figure in excess of the official rate. The majority (55 per cent) of the tenants are self-employed. Domestic workers (31 per cent) and construction workers (12 per cent) are other trades from which people secure a living.

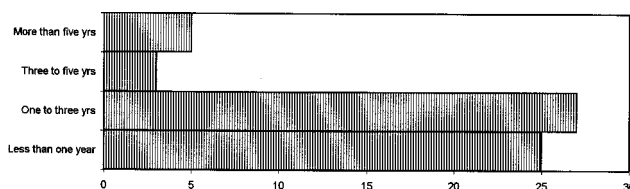
Graph 4: Sectors of employment

Monthly household income (Graphs 5,6). Nearly 25 per cent of those interviewed (14 cases) said they had “no income”. Most (69 per cent) earned between US\$ 116-350 per month, that is, one to three monthly minimum wages (40 cases). Most families (84 per cent or 49 cases) also received an income of between one and three times the minimum wage.

Graph 5: Monthly income of household head expressed as a multiple of the minimum wage**Graph 6: Monthly household income expressed as a multiple of the minimum wage**

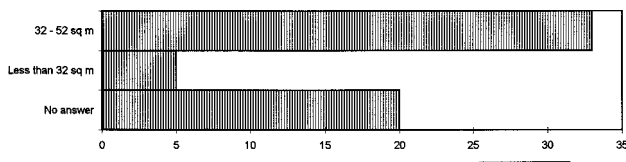
Duration of stay in the present home (Graph 7). Twenty-five of the 58 families interviewed (43 per cent) had been in their present rented home less than one year. Twenty-seven (46 per cent) had been there between one to three years. Only three families out of the 58 had been in the same house for more than five years. This is an indication of the high mobility within the uncontrolled rental market as households continuously look for affordable rents.

Graph 7: Duration of stay in present house

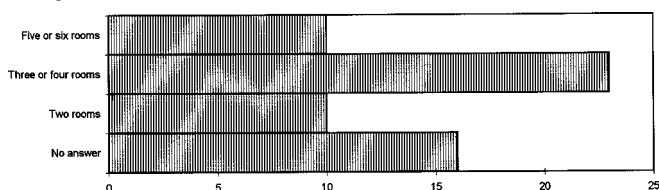


Size of the house and number of rooms (Graphs 8,9). The rented units are usually small with an area of less than 32 square metres (33 out of the 38 who responded). Most have three/four rooms (23 of the 42 answers).

Graph 8: Size of the house

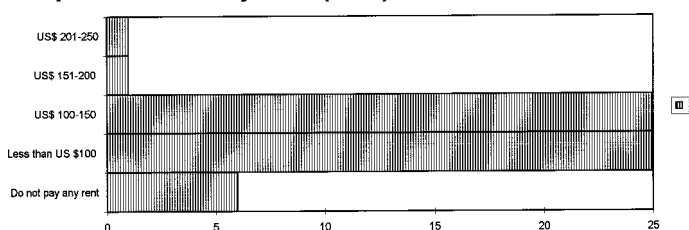


Graph 9: Number of rooms



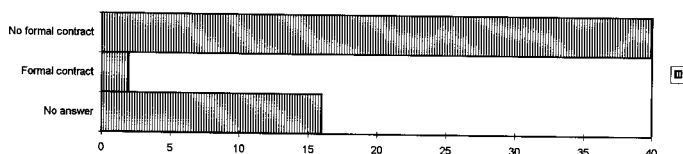
Value of the rent (Graph 10). Six of the 58 families (10 per cent) do not make any financial payment for their accommodation. The overwhelming majority of the tenants (86 per cent) pay less than US\$ 150 per month; half of these pay between US\$ 100-150 and the other half less than US\$ 100 (usually between US\$ 80 to 100).

Graph 10: Monthly rent (US\$)



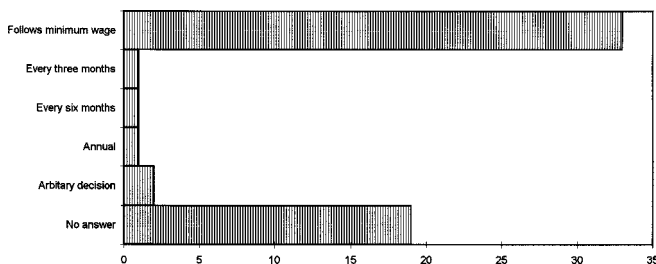
Nature of the contract (Graph 11). Sixteen of the interviewees gave no answer to this question. Only two of the families had a written contract, one with a real estate company. Most of the tenants in Goiânia (95 per cent of the families interviewed) have no form of contractual agreement with the owner of the house.

Graph 11: Nature of the rental contract



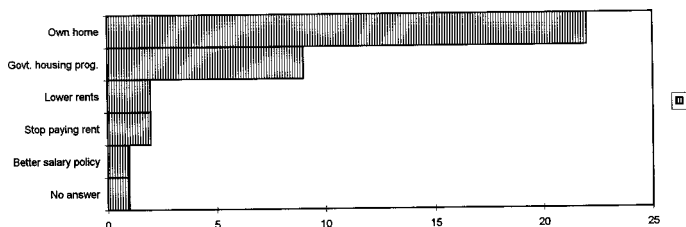
Rental increase: how does it happen? (Graph 12). 85 per cent of those who replied to this question said that their rent increased in line with the increase in the official minimum monthly wage which, in Goiânia (and the rest of Brazil), is the economic index with most impact on the lives of the poorest groups. Only two families indicated that the increase happened "according to the landlord". These results demonstrate that, even if the rental market is uncontrolled, undeclared and unregistered, it follows some economic rules.

Graph 12: Reasons given for rent increases



Main demands from the tenants (Graph 13). The most popular strategy for improving the quality of life is to "get their own house" (22 out of 37 answers or 59 per cent); 24 per cent stated that "...the government should have housing programmes", meaning that the government should give them access to a house of their own. Only two interviewees demanded a "reduction of rent value".

Graph 13: Demands and desires of tenants



These data indicate that tenants' main aspiration is to stop being tenants and to become home-owners. This understanding is crucial to FEGIP's strategy.

IV. THE CENTRAL ROLE OF TENANTS' MOVEMENTS FOR CREATING OPTIONS

THE EXPERIENCES OF the tenants' movements in Goiânia cannot be understood without an explanation of the concept of *posseiro*. This concept relates to a free right over all land which has not been subject to the sub-divisions which have taken place all over Brazil since colonial times. These lands are without formal owners or title deeds and *posseiro* is the name given to those claiming a right of use over these untitled lands.

For the Union of *Posseiros* of Goiânia, the denomination "urban *posseiro*" was a political victory. They stated in 1984:

"..... we realized that our name of "invaders" was not proper because the land where we lived was abandoned and idle. Invaders (or squatters) are those who obtain large portions of land, taking it away from a productive function and turning it into large areas of idle, non-productive lands, bringing poverty, hunger and death to thousands of workers."

With this understanding, the communities themselves defined their own political agenda and regained their self-esteem. The name of the first tenants' movement was the Union of Invaded Lands and, in 1984, the movement renamed itself the Union of *Posseiros*. The invasions became urban *posse* and the squatters or invaders became urban *posseiros*. From the late 1970s until today, a locally based grassroots movement composed primarily of tenants and *posseiros* has provided a substantive alternative to rental accommodation. This section now describes its evolution and transformation and presents FEGIP's strategy.

Three milestones can be identified in FEGIP's history:

- 1980 Formation of the *União of Invasões* – (Union of Invaded Lands)
- 1984 The *União of Invasões* becomes the *União of Posseiros* (Union of *Posseiros*)
- 1987 The Union of *Posseiros* becomes FEGIP - Goiânia State Federation of Tenants and *Posseiros*

In the political arena, the end of the 1970s was marked by both the struggle against the dictatorship and by the growing strength of organized sectors. More and more of the working class were involved in resisting the dictatorship. Levels of rural to urban migration increased due to the economic recession combined with the government's policy of giving more land to some of the most powerful landowners. Those who came to urban centres joined already impoverished urban dwellers, inadvertently contributing to an increased demand for social services.

Increasing politicization and discontent in low-income urban settlements resulted in the emergence of demonstrations such as the "Empty Pan March", the first popular demonstration to demand reductions in the costs of housing and rent. The lack of

a political response meant that many urban residents started searching for alternative accommodation. Small land occupations started to take place in many cities throughout Brazil and, within a short period of time, hundreds of invasions had taken place. The state reacted with violent repression towards the squatters. Nevertheless, these spontaneous and unorganized occupation groups started to establish links among themselves. New representatives began to emerge at a local and national level.

In Goiânia, the Union of Invaded Land was created on 7th December 1980 at a meeting of representatives from occupations throughout the city. The union was established as a result of a mass occupation of land in the north of the city. This occupation had involved 5,000 families and had taken place the previous year. The "Union of Land Invaders" supported the struggle for wider recognition of the invader's rights, and raises the self-esteem of the ex-tenants and *posseiros* and also addressed tenants' collective needs, such as:

- **Expropriation of private lands** occupied by *posseiros* and/or the purchase of these lands from their private owners. Once these lands are taken over by the government, they can be transferred to the *posseiros*.
- **Legalization** of existing *posses*.
- **Transfer of expropriated sites.** The Union (and now FEGIP) press the government to give the land to the *posseiros*.

Following the expropriation, the *posseiro* families struggle to acquire basic infrastructure and services such as electricity, schools, transport, roads and pathways, health centres, sanitation and recreation in addition to legal land tenure.

The Union of Invaded Lands supported all the invasions that took place in Goiânia. As it sought to consolidate a political movement through the struggle for decent housing, social respect and citizenship, it realized that its name was too limited. In 1984, the Union of Invaded Lands was renamed the Union of the Urban *Posseiros*. The invasions were called urban *posse* and the invaders urban *posseiros*. The change in name did not reflect a change in fundamental principles and objectives but rather the understanding that the union should widen its activist base by including other kinds of tenants in the city. The union believed that housing was a problem for all low waged tenants. Members emphasized the right to housing and sought to encourage *posseiros* in other cities to join their struggle to achieve their rights.

Between 1983-86, the Union of *Posseiros* intensified its efforts by creating several grassroots organizations within the *posse* areas. The role of such organizations developed to include a range of activities such as organizing demonstrations to publicize their principal demands and establishing collaborative links with other organizations and institutions such as the Catholic University of Goiás. A range of further activities developed as a result of these links. Professional assistance was provided through a team of students and lawyers who supported

the movement's cause. A group of student journalists and their teachers helped to promote the work of the union through the "Fourth of October" newsletter, a people's radio station and a mobile TV station.

The Union of *Posseiros* organized local meetings to support and reflect on the development of settlements within the union. Such meetings helped to identify tensions which might be responsible for more significant problems within the union and also helped engender an appreciation of the successes of the union including the increasing willingness of government agencies to recognize urban *posses* and the recognition of housing as a major social issue. It was during this period that the government declared by decree that 22 *posse* settlements should be expropriated for public use. However, the decree was not acted on and the validation expired before any dispossession took place. More and more local organizations were created and, by 1986, over 90 per cent of *posse* had some form of representative association. The organization successfully broadened its popular base and it was frequently consulted by tenants and those under the *Banco Nacional da Habitação* (National Housing Bank) loan scheme for low-income households.

The democratic *Partido do Movimento Democrático do Brasil* (Democratic Movement of Brazil Party) government tried to weaken the *posseiros* movement by offering public services and state housing programmes. During the dictatorship, the repression of the urban *posses* was brutal and vicious; today the repression is more subtle and polite. For example, in areas where new urban *posse* groups are emerging, the state will begin a process of negotiation with the leaders. However, meetings are constantly postponed. This tactic weakens the organization and, usually, the initial leadership is replaced by one more favourable to the state.

Vila Mutirão is an example of public sector housing offered by the state to undermine the people's own process of acquiring land and developing housing. In this settlement, 1,000 houses were built using *mutirão* (mutual aid). More than 5,000 people worked on the site to turn 108,000 concrete boards into houses. However, the people working there were not local families in need of improved homes but staff from state agencies and private building companies. The residents of the settlement were brought to the site after the houses were constructed. These families had lived in *posse* areas close to the city centre for over 15 years. The Union of *Posseiros* criticized the Vila Mutirão project on many grounds:

- the houses were badly constructed resulting in poor environmental conditions;
- families were forced to move to this new site which was more than 15 kilometres from their previous accommodation located close to the city centre;
- they have to repay loans from the National Housing Bank, making livelihood struggles even more difficult.

"Before moving here we used to have our tidy houses, with

6. Dona Geralda, *Quatro de Outubro Newsletter* editorial, 1985.

7. Mr Se, *Quatro de Outubro Newsletter*, 1984.

8. Syndicate of the Journalists of Goiás, undated.

plants in the garden, everything well-built, then the government people came and forced us to go. We did not receive any compensation and we lost everything we had. The least they could have done was to give us new houses. Now they want us to pay instalments for these shanty houses they put us in."⁽⁶⁾

"They said they would give houses to those who did not have one. This is a lie. I used to have a big house in the São Jose villa, with plantation, pork-breeding and horses, drained water, lots of rooms, clear light and comfort. I have been brought here and what do I have? Nothing."⁽⁷⁾

The Union of *Posseiros* continued to lobby the state government to secure their demands for the legalization of *posse* areas, the provision of services and better housing options for the tenants in Goiânia. During a meeting with the then state governor Iris Rezende, (today the federal Minister of Justice), the *posseiros* asked for the creation of a state commission with responsibility for negotiating with the union. Union members also sought a state decree (*Projeto de Lei*) to lay down the government obligation to regularize the situation of the *feminais* who used to be tenants and had become urban *posseiros* living in public or private areas.

The proposal for a commission was promptly accepted by the government. However, the government selected its own professionals to form a commission which was meant to represent the *posseiros'* interests. It also recommended that the commission form a local representative association. A parallel organization to the union therefore emerged: the *Posseiros* of Goiânia Association (APG). This government action was attacked by many of the organizations that supported the Union of *Posseiros*:

"We, journalists of Goiânia, in the Second Journalists' State Meeting, reject the action of the government in trying to divide the *posseiros* struggle by creating the '*Posseiros* of Goiânia Association'. We understand that the only organization which really represents the *posseiros* families' interest is the Union of *Posseiros*."⁽⁸⁾

The Urban *Posseiros* Commission (*Comissão dos Posseiros Urbanos*) was responsible for the regularization of all *posse* areas and a long process of negotiation began. Hundreds of tenant families approached the Union of *Posseiros* for support. These families wanted their demands to be included in the negotiations with the government. The movement itself started to change; its leaders assumed that the cause of *posseiros* already occupying lands was resolved. Each day, a nervous tenant would appear in one or other city land occupation, bringing to light clear evidence that the tenant of today is the *posseiro* of tomorrow (Federation of Tenants and *Posseiros* of Goiânia - 1987).

The urban movement had moved from being a Union of Invaded Land to a Union of *Posseiros*. In 1987, the movement had extended beyond the city to the state of Goiás and the original

communities had been joined by those from other cities. At the same time, increasing numbers of tenants living in the city were applying to the movement for assistance.

This change in name legitimized what was happening in practice. Hundreds of tenant families would come to FEGIP with numerous problems; some had been evicted from their rented houses or were living only in loaned accommodation or were late with rent payments. Within four months, 6,000 families had joined FEGIP. The government threatened not to give recognition to FEGIP who, in turn, pressured the government through demonstrations and land occupations until it gave in. During 1987, the first private lands were occupied: Jardim Curitiba I, Jardim das Aroeiras and Jardim das Oliveiras. From the beginning, many of the Federation's activities were concerned with informing, pressuring and demanding government action.

The early 1990s shaped a new framework for social movements in Brazil. Changes at local, national and international level demanded new responses. FEGIP was primarily responsible for the creation of national movements such as the National Movement of the Struggle for Housing (MNLM) and the National Network for Urban Land (ANSUR). The period has not been an easy one for social movements such as FEGIP, with considerable political uncertainties. It was pressure from such social movements that forced the impeachment of President Collor and the subsequent realignment among parties of the right. Throughout these years, the Left has still been suffering from Lula's electoral defeat of 1989 which caused a profound political identity crisis among the low-income groups. It is within this context that FEGIP sought to articulate and realize its struggle.

V. FEGIP'S STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, FEGIP has followed two complementary strategies, a grassroots oriented strategy to support the often informal and unofficial world occupied by their members and a government oriented strategy to address the official world.

The grassroots strategy focuses on community organizations. Seeking to empower communities, it works to increase their self-confidence, independence and internal democracy. FEGIP starts by encouraging the residents to organize themselves or to further develop an existing level of organization. The first stage is the creation of a commission of delegates (representatives). This body is in charge of presenting the interests of the community to the official bodies and then negotiating with them. Another task of the commission is to generate and intensify a debate within the settlement to strengthen the level of representation of the community, turning the commission into a "dwellers' association" (*associação de moradores*), legally constituted and registered. At this stage, the community initiates an election process to choose its representatives through a secret ballot. Normally, elections are heavily disputed with the government often supporting their favoured candidates.

The strategy to deal with the official and formal world has

been, since early days, one of the dominant strategies of FEGIP and its predecessors. In this way, FEGIP seeks to place the tools and practices needed to strengthen the grassroots movements within the agenda and framework of local, state and central governments. In so doing, it seeks to strengthen the right of these movements to be recognized as legitimate participants within society. Through this process the democratization of the state is also strengthened, the state is encouraged to respect its obligations towards its citizens and full citizenship is validated.

FEGIP and its partners (primarily the Catholic University of Goiás, the catholic church in Goiânia, the National Network for Urban Land (ANSUR) and the National Movement for Housing Struggle (MNLN)) design legal statutes, regulations and other proposals and presents them to the appropriate bodies:

- city council - for local laws (*lei organica da municipio*, master plan law, Municipal Fund for Housing and others);
- legislative assembly (state parliament) for laws at state government level such as the state constitution, state funds and councils; and
- national congress for national laws such as those related to constitutional changes.

It has been difficult for FEGIP to strengthen its grassroots strategy because of the context within which they work and its hostility to democratic and representative grassroots organizations. The clientelist attitude of both government and the political parties means that FEGIP has to continually support grassroots organizations. They do this with the understanding that community mobilization strengthens the democratic process and builds up a sense of citizenship. But the success of their strategy requires a continual investment in new leaders, building their capacity to be opinion formers and representatives within society.

However, in the recent past, FEGIP has no longer been able to make these investments and this lack of activity is placing the Federation in serious political jeopardy. Difficulties have arisen for a number of reasons:

- a lack of financial resources. All support requires resources and FEGIP does not have access to NGO monies and has no other means to fund activities such as training;
- constantly adjusted development projects instigated by politicians have led to the cooption of leaders and made it virtually impossible to motivate and mobilize communities;
- many of FEGIP's best leaders have taken up national responsibilities with the grassroots movements.

VI. PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES AND EXPERIENCES

SIX CASES HAVE been selected from among the nearly 200 settlements that have worked with FEGIP (see Table 2). Each

case is representative of a specific type of land invasion and, together, they constitute the major landmark in the history of tenants' struggle in Goiânia.

Setor Universitário is typical of the first phase of land invasions which coincided with the development of the planned garden city of Goiânia as the new residents (mainly building workers) sought somewhere to live.

The next three cases, Jardim Nova Esperança, Jardim Botânico and Parque das Amendoeiras are illustrative of the evolution of FEGIP's strategies. After 1979, land occupations entered a new phase, taking place on idle private lands. These land invasions were large and well-organized. The vast majority of these new *posseiros* were tenant families searching for land on which to build their homes and avoid rent payments.

The Renascer project is on a much smaller scale and is illustrative of other recent invasions which have drawn on FEGIP's capacity to develop partnerships with supportive local authorities and international NGOs.

The last case, Residencial Itaipú, is a settlement formed in 1996 which is still being consolidated. This invasion illustrates the new forms of action arising from a closer relationship with the National Movement for Housing Struggle (MNLN).

Table 2: Synthesis of Case Studies

Name of <i>posse</i>	Date of occupation	Type of owner	Land area in hectares	Number of initial plots	Number of residents
Universitário	1933	Private/public	20.5	912	4,500
Jardim Nova Esperança	1979	Private/expropriated	122.5	3,140	25,000
Jardim Botânico	1980	Public	2.3	140	700
Parque das Amendoeiras	1986	Private/expropriated	3.1	124	624
Renascer	1995	Public	2.4	100	500
Residencial Itaipú	1996	Public	10.8	400	2,000
TOTAL			161.6	4,8163	3,324

The first case started before the tenants' movement was formally organized but the other five demonstrate the effectiveness of FEGIP. Together, they involve some 30,000 people, one-third of the total of those who have acquired land with the assistance of FEGIP and the preceding organizations.

a. 1933: Setor Universitário - The First Invasion in Goiânia

The present FEGIP president, Mr Sebastiao Ferreira da Silva, lives in the Setor Universitário *posse*. He tells the story of the

occupation: "During the building of Goiânia, the local administrator, Mr Pedro Ludovico, encouraged workers from other towns to come to work in Goiânia. This was how the first occupations took place."

Setor Universitário *posse* is one of the oldest areas of invasion in the city dating from the time of the original plan for the garden city of Goiânia. The *posse* includes several consolidated areas within the limits of Setor Universitário, a traditional, wealthy neighbourhood in Goiânia housing both the National University and the Catholic University of Goiás.

The occupiers came from rural areas, in search of work. They were not registered with the local authorities either as rural landless workers with the local authority or as tenants, and therefore had no papers: "Initially, the occupation was tolerated, even encouraged, by the state who was interested in cheap labour. It was the cheap labour force that was responsible for the building of Goiânia. Repression started after the city was consolidated. In the 1960s, the government, who used to caress, started punching hard. Houses situated by the Botafogo River were burned... The attacks were violent and house owners started taking legal action whenever expulsions took place."

Faced with increasing repression, the *posseiros* started organizing. They formed an association, named *Liga Pro-Melhoramento*, to protect their *posseiros* rights. However, the association was soon linked to the government and it abandoned the cause of the *posseiros*. Until the end of the 1970s, the *posseiros* had no government help. Then, a new association was created and an attempt made to reactivate the *Liga*. The new association started a process of legalization and site development, at the time a privilege restricted to registered areas.

From its inception, FEGIP has had the support and direct participation of the Setor Universitário association. In spite of the many victories and improvements that have been achieved, residents in the *posse* areas do not think they have security of tenure. Many eviction notices have been issued by the courts. In October 1993, Mrs Maria had her house demolished by the police. The local authorities had to expropriate the land to enable the rebuilding of the house and the continued residence of Mrs Maria in the *barrio*.

b. 1979: Jardim Nova Esperança - A Landmark Community Organization Seeking the Right to Housing

The popular poet Maria de Jesus, a *posseira* living in Jardim Nova Esperança, tells of the ten-year struggle to secure their land. In her poems, she tells of how people organized themselves and achieved public recognition. In one poem "Former Tenants", she also describes how people secured political support to defend the *posseiros*.

Jardim Nova Esperança emerged from the occupation of empty private land. Families started occupying the site in July 1979, camping on the land and hoping to build their houses. In September, the families resisted an eviction attempt by the owners. A more violent attempt to evict the families (by now 5,000 strong)

9. Association of Jardim Nova Esperança Residents, 1980.

was made on October 4th and several *posseiros* died, some were arrested and houses were destroyed. However, the squatters held the land and October 4th is now celebrated by *posseiros* as an historic day in the struggle to obtain land in Goiânia. Celebrating the success of the new residents, the settlement was named Jardim Nova Esperança (New Hope Garden). The name was taken from the work of the poet Maria de Jesus, who lives in the *barrio*, after she described the battle in one of her poems, "Ten Years of a New Hope".

On October 4th, 1980, Jardim Nova Esperança celebrated its first anniversary: "This was a very important day to us. The day of our resistance; on October 4th, we celebrate the day of the invasion and the happiness we feel for being able to live here and build up the *barrio*. Today, all streets are opened and the plots demarcated by the residents."⁽⁹⁾

The neighbourhood plan, simply drawn, was signed by Robinho, *posseiro* and community leader, later to become one of FEGIP's founders. The initial improvements in the *barrio* were done by the residents. They demarcated the plots and laid the streets. Later, they developed their housing through *mutirão* (mutual aid). Today, 18 years later, the *barrio* is completely consolidated, with asphalted streets lined with many trees, a water supply, electricity, public street lights, schools, commercial areas, adequate housing and property rights for some. Sanitation is the only service still to be installed.

The founding members now constitute only 20 per cent of the residents in Jardim Nova Esperança. This is explained by Geralda: "Some of the landless workers carried on their fight elsewhere. Others could not afford the costs of these neighbourhood improvements, and left the *barrio* to start elsewhere."

Jardim Nova Esperança is more than just another *barrio* added to Goiânia. It is a landmark in the tenants' fight for housing and a symbol of the *posseiros*' fight for citizenship.

c. 1980: Jardim Botânico - The Urban Environment

Jardim Botânico *posse* is adjacent to an ecological zone and park in Goiânia which covers 960,000 square metres in the south of the city. This public space is divided into three sections: a conservation area, a recreation and relaxation area, and a residential neighbourhood housing 700 urban *posseiros*.

The invasion of the *botânico* was both slow and spontaneous. Neusa Maria, one of its residents, describes it thus: "In 1980, an old homeless lady coming from the municipality of Rubiataba decided to build her house on the edge of the forest alongside the park. Soon, other families joined in. They could no longer afford rents."

In 1982, the state began an attempt to evict the families. The municipal authority argued that the houses would damage the local ecology and they sent the police in to destroy the houses. The community resisted and, in August 1983, a violent intervention resulted in beatings and arrests. The community created the Jardim Botânico residents' association with FEGIP's support. In March 1984, the residents organized the "green

10. *Information Bulletin*, August 1989.

mutirão" and the "tree planting *mutirão*" as a reaction to the campaign of violence against them. Men, women and children planted 300 trees. The following year, during the second *mutirão*, 150 more trees were planted. The Jardim Botânico community held the first ecological *mutirão* in Goiânia.

The association has always supported the homeless and tenants' fight within Goiânia. During meetings, members analyze and discuss their problems, and possible strategies and activities. Jose Mauricio, president of the association at the time, asserted in the association's newsletter: "Democracy is achieved each day with the participation of the people.... with this consciousness we will elect our new directors and council members on 20th August..."

The association has achieved many things since it was formed: the right to occupancy for Jardim Botânico dwellers was secured; asphalt roads and paths; water and sanitation; garbage collection; a basket of essential stable food for 300 families; milk tokens for 300 families; and tree-planting and replanting of more than 3,000 tree seeds around Jardim Botânico.⁽¹⁰⁾ Ecological conditions and the *posseiros* are a central concern for future developments. The residents propose the conservation of the park whilst the municipal government demands that the *posseiros* be evicted. As a result of its leaders' political power and support from other organizations, Jardim Botânico *posse* has progressively achieved recognition. *Posseiros* today seek recognition of their continued rights without compromising the rights of those who have lived in the area for 17 years, and without interfering with the local ecology. All *posseiros* defend the conservation of the park.

d. 1986: 'Parque das Amendoeiras' - FEGIP and Alternative Communication

Sixty-two year-old, Mr Antonio Severino describes the occupation of Parque das Amendoeiras:

"The occupation took place on 11th January 1986, when a group of friends decided to occupy the area - I had just arrived in Goiânia and I was a tenant. I took part in the meeting. They were all tenants who lived in the east side. At the time, we did not know the owners. It was said that the land belonged to three people.

The occupation was to take place on the following Friday. But it was moved forward to Thursday. We were one single group. At 8 a.m. we walked into the area, put our tents up, waited for eight days and then started to demarcate the plots and streets. The police arrived three days later demanding us to leave; we resisted and the police gave up!"

Parque das Amendoeiras *posse*, along with other *posse* areas, is located in the east of the city. There are now 125 families living on the site, about one third of whom are the original *posseiros*. Mr Antonio believes that the families who have left the land have done so because of its increasing value, the origi-

nal families having sold their *posse* rights and bought cheaper land elsewhere. The residents achieved the gradual recognition of their *barrio*.

"The association of the *posseiros* was vital [in this struggle]. We initially formed a commission and then a residents' association. The association gave us more power to pressure the government to let us remain in the area. It took us a lot of courage. It was very hard, we were being threatened by the police and by the 'sharks'. We managed to organize, through meetings, until we formed the 'Union of Invaded Lands' and later we created FEGIP. The association was very important...."⁽¹¹⁾

11. Resident quoted in FEGIP Bulletin, 1989.

Today, the settlement has obtained basic infrastructure such as electricity, water, sanitation, asphalt roads and public telephones. Residents have a written document assuring them of secure tenure. In Amendoeiras, FEGIP adopted a new community mobilization strategy based around an alternative communication network and created the popular radio station and the mobile TV channel. Community meetings have been enriched by drama and music. In this work, FEGIP was supported by the University of Goiás Department of Journalism which has developed a programme for all *posse* areas. This offers an alternative to the "bourgeois" media which has extensively criticized the land occupations.

e. Renascer - Community Organizations Building Partnerships

Renascer is not a land invasion but an experience created through FEGIP's partnership with NGOs and educational institutions. FEGIP and its predecessors have long sought to establish links with other organizations. It was hoped that such links would provide local organizations with technical assistance and increase their skills in political analysis. Renascer is a project which involves the Catholic University in Goiânia, the Methodist University of Piracicaba (in the state of São Paulo) and Misereor, a German NGO.

FEGIP asked Misereor for assistance to enable 200 tenants to build their own houses: 100 in Goiânia and the others in Piracicaba. A partnership was arranged between FEGIP (responsible for the political organization of the members), the municipalities (responsible for the plots and site development) and the University (which through the Popular Housing Programme became responsible for fund management and technical assistance). In December 1994, FEGIP signed an agreement with the Catholic University of Goiás and Misereor. More than 70 per cent of the project has been carried out with very positive experiences for the local families. The project demonstrates that new partnerships can help to address housing needs. Similar projects have also been carried out by Habitat for Humanity (a US based NGO) and COPHG (a local housing cooperative, the *Cooperativa*

Popular de Habitação de Goiânia) where tenant families, in partnership with NGOs are building their own houses.

f. 1996: Residencial Itaipú: “National Day for Land Occupation”, Habitat II comes to Goiânia

Residencial Itaipú is the most recent mass land occupation in Goiânia, undertaken to celebrate 6 June 1996, the national day for land occupation. Julia Ester, Housing Coordinator of the National Movement for Housing Struggle describes the occupation: “It was decided that 3rd June would be the day of the demonstration to coincide with the starting of the ‘Second Habitat Conference in Istanbul’”. Demonstrations also took place in other states to pressure the government into tackling the housing problem of Brazil.

An empty, privately owned urban area on the east side of the city was occupied. Other *posse* areas already exist within this area. Large empty urban areas characterize the region and its population is well-organized, with support from the Catholic Church. On 3rd June, there were few families, tenants or sympathizers but soon the numbers increased to 1,000 families. Violent police repression took place, with legal eviction orders and, in the end, the owners were successful in forcing the people off the land. The abuse and disrespect showed by the judiciary and police were denounced in Istanbul by MNLM representatives.

The *posseiros* formed local organizations to organize the people and negotiate with the public administration. The families went to Itaipu, public land in the same part of the city. Julia believes that 70 per cent of those living on the site are still *posseiros*. The association still strives for the development of the area, which is gradually taking shape as a *barrio*. This is another victory for the people in their fight for housing. The Itaipu occupation has been the last occupation led by the masses in Goiânia; it demonstrates the inadequacy in the current housing policy.

The cases above describe the occupations that have taken place in Goiânia since its inception. In the early years, there was little city based support but in the last 17 years the invasions have been organized. The case studies demonstrate the active role played by FEGIP and, more recently, by the National Movement for Housing Struggle in the fight for housing and citizenship rights by low-income families.

VII. ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS

a. The Scale of Housing

THE MUNICIPAL PLANNING Institute in Goiânia has officially registered 193 *posse* areas (or non-legally registered lands) in the city of Goiânia. Seventy-five of these communities have been successfully mobilized by FEGIP (and its predecessors) during the last 17 years. The other invasions took place autonomously

through independent attempts to replicate the strategies of FEGIP. In total, the *posse* areas include about 200,000 people, about half of whom have been mobilized directly by FEGIP. As a

Table 3: Consolidation Process of Occupied Land. Case Studies

Area/name of <i>posse</i>	Housing process	Land regularization process	Infrastructure improvement (percentage of dwellings)				Public facilities		
			Water	Energy	Water sanitation	Paved roads	Health centre	Community centre	Sports School centre
Universitário	Self-help	Partially legalized	80	100	60	60	Yes	Yes	No x
Jardim Nova Esperança	Self-help and mutual aid (<i>mutirão</i>)	Legalized	100	100	0	100	Yes	Yes	Yes x
Jardim Botânico	Self-help	Green area (not legalized)	100	100	0	80	Yes	No	No x
Parque das Amendoeiras	Self-help	Through legalization process	100	100	100	100	Yes	Yes	No x
Renacer	Mutual aid (<i>mutirão</i>)	Legalized	100	100	0	0	No	No	Yes
Residencial Itaipú	Self-help	Legalized	0	100	0	0	Yes	No	No Yes

SOURCE: FEGIP 1997, Direct Suvey.

Data processing: Barbosa R., Yves Cabannes, L. Moraes.

result of FEGIP's activities, therefore, about 10 per cent of Goiânia's current population has obtained access to housing.

b. From Housing to Neighbourhood Development.

Table 3 summarizes the results of the 1997 survey. It is evident from the table that the struggles for land and housing have resulted in more than just housing. One of FEGIP's main achievements is illustrated by the fact that in all these settlements the **strategy has led to real neighbourhood development** for some of the lowest-income households.

Of the six cases led by FEGIP, three already have legal tenure of the land and a fourth is currently undertaking a legalization process. All of them now have electricity and most of them have piped water and paved roads and paths. Water based sanitation has only been obtained in Parque das Amendoieras and the communities are currently campaigning for these facilities. Focusing on public services, grassroots communities, both through mobilization and their own efforts, have obtained the following investments from the public authorities: schools (in all cases), health centres (in five of the six cases) and community or sports facilities (partially in three of the six cases).

c. Impact of FEGIP on Urban Policies and Urban Laws

Since the formation of the Union of Invaded Lands, the ex-tenants have been anxious to get laws which will help in their struggle to legalize their land holdings. One of their first successes was a law passed in 1980 which set out the conditions under which such legalization could occur and which gives guidelines for the transfer of lands. The law arose from a specific community supported by the Union of Invaded Lands and was passed as law no. 5988. In 1982, using the new law, the local authority was able to transfer, free of charge, land to squatters living peacefully on it. This law was published on the very last day of a government directly linked with the dictatorship and the military forces. This first victory was to be followed by others throughout the years of FEGIP's struggle.

Among the most significant legal successes have been changes in the equivalent of the "municipal constitution" (Organic Municipal Law). In 1989, two fundamental articles (167 and 168) were added which stipulated that the municipality must "...channel resources from its own budget to social housing" and must "...define areas and establish norms...for the sub-division of these areas, for the settlement of the needy population." Further clauses in the same law referenced the grassroots and tenants movements in Brazil which, whilst not constituting a legal recognition, gave hope and inspiration to others.

d. Impact on a National Scale

FEGIP played a seminal role in the movements which led to the 1988 constitutional changes, by which the whole urban framework was substantively changed (in particular Article 182

on the social function of urban property). Other constitutional changes obtained during the same period opened up new possibilities for grassroots movements. Civil society groups are now entitled to propose laws to parliament once a certain number of signatures have been obtained.

This possibility of presenting "laws from people" initiatives has been effectively used by several housing related organizations and movements, and FEGIP has played an important role. The National Fund for People's Housing, put forward in 1990 and again in 1991, received 850,000 signatures from all over the country. Whilst this initiative has not yet been approved, it has already influenced public policies.

Some of the FEGIP leaders have joined, and sometimes funded, various social initiatives and movements through which their ideas and strategies have been disseminated. This is particularly the case for the National Articulation for Urban Land (ANSUR), the National Forum for Urban reform (FNUR) and the National Movement for Housing Struggle (MNLM) which is now represented in most Brazilian states. The national coordination of the National Movement for Housing Struggle is currently based in Goiânia and has close links with FEGIP.

VIII. FEGIP: CONCLUDING REMARKS

FROM THE PARTICIPATORY research process, FEGIP representatives have identified several critical findings:

a. Organized tenants have found their own way of obtaining decent housing. They have achieved this through :

- land occupation
- resistance
- self-reliance
- pressure on public institutions
- mutual aid (*mutirões*) and cooperatives
- negotiations
- partnerships with other organizations

b. The struggle for a piece of land and for housing has been a good entry point to secure serviced neighbourhoods for low-income households. Organized groups have been able to lobby government agencies for essential infrastructure and services including water, health and education.

c. The processes fostered by FEGIP have been directed neither by NGOs nor universities. Most of the relationships with NGOs and universities have been tense and conflictual. However, FEGIP believes that these relationships need to exist and that FEGIP needs to develop a positive engagement with right-minded professionals.

Equally important, their successes have not been realized through a project approach to development but rather through

a continuous process of support, offered first to tenants and then to the groups who invade land.

d. The IIED/Cearah Periferia/FEGIP research has been the first research process which has allowed FEGIP members to reflect on their own struggles and successes. It has encouraged a positive process to define necessary new strategies and plans for tenants and homeless people. The findings from the research will be presented to the FEGIP general assembly for a more substantive discussion on future directions.

