**A manifesto from the people of Petrópolis**

On that day our streets turned into rivers.

That day the siren didn't sound.

I saw everything fall from my window. That noise in my ear is constant.

I remember a lot of people who have been lost.

The floods took our joy.

I think that my heart has turned to stone because I cannot cry.

The night is a silence that hurts.

When the public authorities arrived, they arrived authoritarian. They took away the authority of those few who were helping, the residents of the community themselves.

Sometimes people see us as a number, as a title, but no one is there for us.

So we take action ourselves.

We are our own authority.

This is what we did in the first five days.

**In the midst of crisis we kept thinking**On the rainy day, I thought 'someone has to keep thinking here'. Everyone wanted to get their hands in the mud, and I said, "first we have to turn off the electricity".

When I saw it, my street had turned into a river. It was water everywhere. And I thought: If I don't drill a hole in the front and back of my house to let the water pass through, the water will take my house.

**Where is the whistle?**Children today see me and ask "uncle, where is the whistle"... because they saw me in that situation with the whistle to alert the families to get out of the houses. That makes me happy. They see in that project the importance of bringing security.

**No time for tears, it was time for action**

I have spoken to my mother that I cannot cry and I wondered if my heart had turned to stone. But I think that to put yourself in these situations you have to think a little more rationally.

In those first five days we were saving lives. Our hearts had turned to action.

**We used what we had learnt from 2020**We lost many people in 2020 because we did not have a support point, an alert system. After that tragedy we did the work of making the community aware of how to receive the civil defense (equivalent to the Emergency Management in Australia), which had been seen almost as an oppressive force. We all sat down and talked and planned. I asked for a support point, a security system for the families. We put this place. That was why this time we lost a lot less people. We saved many lives. If I had the system I have today in 2020, I would have saved a father of a family at that time.

**Solving the social rental problem**After the rain, I spent 49 days there in the Forest community and in the end I had 98- 99% of the social rental families relocated. There had been people from social assistance calling me asking how I could solve the social rental problem of other families, then I saw that I had succeeded in what I had proposed.

**We have created projects out of the rains**

The name of the project I created out of the rain is Lotus Flower. It's because this flower grows in the mud. And that's it ... we have to make it bloom again. The children are our future and we are forming a chain of good. If everyone does a little bit we can change a good part of the world.

**To honour loved ones lost**

I remember a lot of people who have been lost. My idea is to make a space to honor those people, a memorial.

**Throughout these times, many of us draw strength from difficulty.**

I think the things that happened in my childhood made me strong. I always drew strength from my difficulties. My parents separated and I went to live at my grandmother's house and suffered all kinds of abuse from my aunt. My father had an illness for 20 years and I thank God for giving me this time to learn to be stronger, God gave me this diploma.

Some of us had our childhoods stolen and now we work for children:

If I had to write a book, it would be 'My Stolen Childhood'. The marks on my body help me remember to fight for children's rights … I've always taught my children to resist and not conform ... I have to fight or else I will feel powerless. We have to be like a spring of water - reborn every day.

We teach. We awaken something in children’s minds... Getting good things into the kids' heads, especially those who hang around the bar, drinking all day. We are trying to get them to understand that they are equal, that they have equal rights

**The world needs people like us**

To work inside the community tires, us ... sometimes it seems that nothing changes ... But when we start to see changes in the lives of children, of some families that we accompany ... it is gratifying. And what I can say is that the world needs ‘people like us’...

We have to try to transform, in my case through sport, through education, try to end this disparity from the community to the elite.

This is our manifesto. This is what we have done and what we are going to do.

We are one step ahead of what we were before.

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This manifesto was written by David Denborough and Lúcia Helena Abdalla, from the speeches from Petropolis community leaders, on September 23rd, 2022.