OPEN STRATEGY AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES TO TACKLE STREET-DWELLING SITUATION: THE CASE OF THE FDC/CANTO DA RUA PARTNERSHIP
The case presented is the construction of a collective strategy for the Brazilian social organization that works with the street-dwelling population in the city of Belo Horizonte, called Canto da Rua (The word Canto in Portuguese has a double meaning because it means both “corner” and “chant”. As such, “Canto da Rua” can mean both Street Corner and Street Chant).

From August to November 2022, Canto da Rua, with the help of the FDC under the leadership of professor Maria Elisa Brandão Bernardes, undertook the construction of a strategic plan based on approach that have been called “open strategy”. It is a construction that involves internal collaborators and also external agents of the organization, such as customers, suppliers, business partners, universities and research centers. The methodology, which implies inter-organizational collaboration, has been used to solve complex social problems because it leads to the promotion of more effective solutions. It also creates social capital, strengthening the cohesion of those involved and allowing them to use their relationships to achieve the desired results.
CHALLENGE OF DESIGNING THE SOLUTION FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

Through an agreement with FDC’s social support area, the intervention was articulated as an action research. In this way, the teacher who guides the construction of the plan and monitors its execution would also study the process as it unfolds. This would lead to the generation of knowledge that is on the rise in academia and wide-ranging discussion around Society’s Grand Challenges.

We can summarize the initiative main desired impacts:

- Design an integrated solution to deal with the homeless population, taking advantage of knowledge acquired through the work of the Apostolates and the Emergency period,
- Design a solution to deal with the homeless population been also the protagonists;
- Build strategic planning with a high degree of participation by internal and external agents;
- Build a strategic planning with transparency;
- Build strategic planning with a quality decision-making process;
- Generate knowledge about the strategic process of social organizations and about the open strategy in grand challenges and its effectiveness.

THE IMPACT

As intended, flexible, customized strategic planning was carried out, involving heterogeneous participants in an open environment of participation and input from all. The process had constant transparency of the content under construction, and the decision was shared through the mixed class/intervention meetings. The plan approved in November 2022 attests to its quality and legitimacy with Canto’s different stakeholders.

- The Canto Cidadão Axis, 400 people from the homeless population are served daily (Monday to Saturday), from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, totaling around 10,000 monthly visits.
- In the Housing axis foresees the construction of about 30 housing units receiving more than 50 people in the Housing First model

According to the participants and those present at the launch, the intention is to become a benchmark for the capital BH to be emulated in other cities in the State of Minas Gerais and even in Brazil.
After the completion Canto da Rua has already advanced in the legal definition, in the project for the construction of houses and the reception with training of specialized professionals. Also it’s already established the housing first project’s advisory board.

Canto da Rua space was inaugurated with the presence of authorities and speeches from the protagonists. The building is eco-friendly and is already home to several of the initiatives premeditated in the Strategic Plan.
TESTIMONIALS

“The non-linearity of the discussions... because it was also a learning process where you have a strategic look at the volume of actions, where you have a strategic look at the different views of people participating in society”. (Elke Oliveira – Coordinator of the State Center for the Defense of Human Rights of the Homeless Population- CEDDH)

“A bunch of people who thought different things, but who at a certain moment managed to align these ideas in the proposal to build something unprecedented aimed at a forgotten segment of the population, and we kind of materialized it in front of them: ‘this is going to work, this is going to work’.” Samuel Rodrigues – Coordinator National Movement of the Street People Minas Gerais