OPEN STRATEGY AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES TO TACKLE STREET-DWELLING SITUATION: THE CASE OF THE FDC/CANTO DA RUA PARTNERSHIP

CANTO DA RUA

FDC

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EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**

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.

Strategic Planning Final Workshop

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.

Bord House-In First

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.

The new headquarters

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

INTRODUCTION

With the end of the pandemic and the economic crisis installed in Brazil, the number of homeless people in the country increased considerably. In BH 10,241 homeless: for every 100,000 inhabitants, 340 are homeless. The Civil Society Organization Canto da Rua took the lead in dealing with the problem in an multidisciplinary and collaborative manner. To this end, it obtained the support of several public and private institutions. However, it was required to build a strategic plan that would guarantee the good use of the donated resources.

Thus, 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" (Chesbrough & Appleyard, 2007). 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 (Selsky & Parker, 2005) 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.

ABOUT
FDC

FDC is a Brazilian business school that for 47 years has had the mission of contributing to the sustainable development of society by articulating Executive Education, Academic Education and Social Education to develop managers, executives and entrepreneurs of public, private and third sector organizations. FDC is among the best business schools in the world, in 9th place among the executive education schools participating in the Financial Times 2023 ranking.

In 2020, the school launched the Social Education segment and created the FDC – CSCDS (Cardinal Dom Serafim Social Center) which supports social organizations and their managers, young people in situations of social vulnerability and popular entrepreneurs, through the development and training and affirmative scholarship program.

ABOUT
CANTO DA RUA

When the crisis of the new coronavirus broke out in Brazil in March 2020 and city halls in several cities decreed the lock-down, the Homeless Apostolate of Belo Horizonte had to act in an emergency way to take care of the street dwelling population. The emergency initiative was supported by several private volunteers, the Development Department of the State of Minas Gerais, bodies of the federal and state justice system, the City Hall and foundations of private entities.

The emergency initiative was considered successful: the population welcomed, fed, referred, many were housed in temporary housing. However, as the pandemic subsided, the country's economy deteriorated and the number of homeless people increased. The multi-sector stakeholders involved in the project then decided to collaborate so that the collective action would become perennial. Thus, Canto da Rua, civil society organization, was born.

THE CHALLENGE

After working on an emergency basis, Canto da Rua received the assignment of a land large enough to build accommodation and housing and where it will be able to apply its methodology for addressing the homeless population on a permanent basis. The entity also received donations from private organizations and foundations such as AcelorMittal Brazil. The counterpart demand was the creation of a Strategic Plan to guarantee the use of the resource in an organized manner.

The intent of the strategic process was to articulate organized actions, with clear accountability to current and future donors, and ensuring that the homeless population was the protagonist. Therefore, it was necessary to build a strategy and an organizational structure that the entity, which until then had operated as an emergency project, did not have.

FDC was approached as the institution that could provide guidance for carrying out the planning. The intention, however, of the organization's leaders and applicants, Sister Cristina Bove (Advisor of the National Apostolate of the Street People) and Maurício Melo (Advisor of Institutional Relations of Canto da Rua), was to carry out a process as participatory as possible with the civil society and the representatives of the street population themselves, so that they could build legitimacy for the plan, and support for its implementation.

The challenge was configured in two dimensions: the design of the optimized solution to deal with the homeless population in an integrated manner and with the beneficiaries as the protagonists; and the construction of the strategic plan through the "open" methodology.

Strategic Planning Workshop

CHALLENGE OF DESIGNING THE SOLUTION FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

According to Decree 7053_23/12/2009, the homeless population is "the heterogeneous population group that has in common extreme poverty, interrupted or weakened family ties and the lack of regular conventional housing, and that uses public places and degraded areas as a place to live and support, temporarily or permanently, as well as shelter units for temporary overnight stays or provisional housing."

However, there is no integrated public policy that addresses the problem. According to surveys pointed out by Canto, 91.4% of the homeless population want to leave the streets; salaried work and access to housing appear as the main means of doing so. The great concern of Sister Cristina Bove, leader of the National Apostolate and the Canto da Rua Project, is that ***"the demands of the street population are transversal to the fragmentation of public responses: the pop street demands housing, but also work and income, health, culture, leisure and sport..."***

She knew that with the land donation, there was potential to build a larger solution.

According to Cleonice Lopes, leader of the Street Apostolate of the Archdiocese of BH, ***"Being able to count on FDC's strategic planning is something that, in a way, brings relief and strengthens this endeavor. (...) Bringing together several actors: the initiatives of the first, second and third sector, is something unprecedented [for us] ...."***

OPEN STRATEGY CHALLENGE

In the process of building an open strategy, it is recognized (Splitter at el, 2023) that there are three inherent and important tensions to be taken care of: the issue of transparency (visibility on the constructed content), inclusion (degree of participation of internal and external agents) and the scope of the decision (the choice of course of action to be taken) - which are contingent and variable..

Hautz et al. (2017) draw attention to the fact that expanding participation in strategic planning generates ambivalent effects: despite being able to improve the content of strategic decisions, controlling the process is more complicated and ends up being slower. Another challenge pointed out is that people end up having high expectations of having their contributions become effective in decisions, and can be frustrated.

Specifically, when dealing with a multisector, another challenge can arise if the commitment is unbalanced: the process can result in biased participation, favoring extreme and/or privileged segments with time and energy to participate (Innes & Booher, 2004).

These are characteristics raised from the literature, which still claims to lack empirical studies.

Thus, 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 (e.g. Journal of Organization Studies special issue, January 2023).

Therefore, 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 COMMITMENT

The PILARIS Program is a long-term approach focused on the development, management, governance and leadership competence for Civil Society Organization. FDC´s approach to education is co-creating solutions together with the partner. In order to understand the context of Canto da Rua and to work in partnership, a management team was created.

Two initial meetings were also held, in the first meeting the team of FDC visited the premises of Street Apostolate and got to know the Canto project. After internal alignment on better addressing the demand, a new meeting was held with Sister Cristina Bove and Maurício Soares, to present the proposal and validate it.

The program offered to the organization implied the development of strategic planning with the support of a teacher/advisor who subsequently monitors the progress of implementation monthly. The organization also receives monitoring on specific topics and its managers are trained through the LDP – Leader Development Program.

The following figure shows the main program blocks:

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES WITH THE PARTNER SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Strategic Planning "Direction" 40h/year	Monthly Management Assessment – AGM Measure results 4h/month	Tutoring Apply the knowledge 24h/year

COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE ACTIVITY
Online
PDD- Leaders Development Program
Expand knowledge - Train - 7 modules of 16 hours each

COLLECTIVE EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES - EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES
Leaders Meeting Annual Meeting

The final commitment was:

- conduct a strategic planning process flexible enough (in terms of instruments and language) to involve heterogeneous participants (executives of partner companies and former homeless people);
- provide an open environment for everyone's participation and contribution - where tacit knowledge was made explicit and generated a contribution;
- ensure a process with constant transparency of the content under construction;
- stimulate strategic thinking in participants through mixed class/intervention meetings;
- ensure the completion of the quality plan for presentation to society by December 2022;
- generate knowledge about the strategic process of social organizations and about the open strategy process in grand challenges and its effectiveness.

THE L&D INITIATIVE

The target audience of the L&D initiative was a total of 35 volunteer individuals and/or members of organizations involved, who were divided into two groups:

- the Work Group - WG - which had 12 people who led the change process as intra and inter organizational multipliers.
- the Extended Group - which had all external and internal stakeholders who could participate at different times to build the solution.

The process had the participation of members from eleven different entities, in ten meetings the workshops were inspired by the classic logic of strategic planning, which was being built/adapted by the group itself, customizing the subsequent step as the process unfolded. FDC's activities with the group included training (flipped classroom methodology) and referrals for strategic decision deliberation.

PROGRAM
DESIGN

The kickoff of the program took place on August 23 with the Work Group. At this meeting, the group was installed, as well as agreements for the functioning of meetings and deliberations. The open strategy concept was introduced, as well as its difficulties and advantages and the initial work proposal presented, adjusted and agreed upon.

From then on, the meetings alternated between the Work Group and the Extended Group, the methodology following the flipped classroom training, with contributions, with care in the delivery of referrals for strategic deliberation.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Considering the classic stages of strategic planning, the participants had an initial theoretical contribution on the assumptions and functions of a strategic plan and a proposed approach with stakeholders; as protagonists of the process, the group chose to work according to thematic criteria. They prepared the meeting and reassessed the choice of invitees for the extended group.

In the second meeting, the WG participants took over the conduction of the workshop after the initial opening of the FDC, explaining the process and methodology. The leaders presented their demands and opened the topics for group discussion. The group also conducted the debriefing and closing of the meeting.

The third meeting was for sensemaking, that is, construction of collective interpretations, of all the information received and possible referrals.

FDC professionals carried out behind-the-scenes work, seeking the main critical success factors for civil society organizations, contemplated by academic literature. This table with 16 FCS based the guiding questions on the strengths and weaknesses of the organization that took place in the fourth meeting. FDC helped to consolidate the main ones. SWOT thus had a first draft.

The fourth meeting was once again open to the Extended group of stakeholders (open strategy). The SWOT matrix was discussed in groups, always led by a WG member, and where alternative actions were proposed.

The following meetings focused on the WG for definition and strategic choices, but always with the presence of members of the Extended stakeholder group who were invited to continue contributing to the WG meetings. In these workshops, the mission and vision of the new Canto was defined. They also defined the priorities and, with the help of FDC, built the strategic map, discussing each objective and its integration with the whole. The definitions did not take place in a linear fashion, throughout these four meetings, the issues returned to renegotiations of meaning and actions. .

At the last meeting, the strategic plan was presented to public administration and civil society authorities, who approved it. The institutions present were:

- State Center for the Defense of Human Rights of the Homeless Population - CEDDH
- State Department for Social Development
- State Department for Human Rights
- National Apostolate of the Street People
- Street Apostolate of Belo Horizonte
- Canto da Rua articulation and management group
- National Movement of the Street People
- State Department for Social Development - SEDESE
- Public Ministry of the State of Minas Gerais
- Court of Justice of Minas Gerais
- Association of Volunteers of the Court of Justice of Minas Gerais
- UFMG Citizenship Centers

The program followed the steps below:

	Session themes	Objectives	Participants	Deliverys & Progress indicators
1	Initial Meeting -	Preparing the workshop	WG - 12 people	Adjustment and validation of the Work Plan
2	Workshop with stakeholders	Engagement and input of information about the context	Extended Stakeholders	Survey of Threats and Opportunities
3	Analysis work with WG	Consolidation and analysis about the context and its impacts	WG	Better understanding of context, external view and prioritization
4	Internal Analysis	Engagement and diagnosis of the organization's Strengths and Weaknesses	Extended Internal (WG + internal guests)	Understanding about the greatest difficulties and strengths of the organization
5	SWOT construction	Engagement and diversity in the proposal of strategic solutions	Extended Stakeholders	Engagement and broad participation in the search for solutions (collective sensemaking)
6	Strategic choice	Consolidation of analysis and strategic choices	WG	Negotiation of meaning (sensemaking) and negotiation of priorities
7	Organization of choices	Construction of the strategic map	WG	Negotiation of priorities
8	Identity reassessment	Definition of the Mission, Values and Vision	WG	Review and collective construction
9	Organization of initiatives	Definition of Main Initiatives	WG	Identification, triage and choice of Main initiatives
10	Launch of Strategic Planning	Conclusion and final agreements	Extended Stakeholders	Presentation to civil society

OPEN STRATEGY DILEMMAS

There was care in the methodology to pay attention to the dilemmas of transparency, inclusion and decision throughout the entire process. Thus, the conduct of the meeting sought to ensure the participatory inclusion of all those present.

The process was in fact slower than the traditional one and many realignments were necessary to ensure consistency and logic for everyone whose participation was intermittent (due to the methodology adopted and even personal problems - such as absence due to travel, problems with children, illnesses, other conflicting commitments). In fact, the most frequent actors ended up prevailing in the decisions. However, every meeting began with a recap of the overall logic of the program, where the program was and the decisions taken up to that point - which could (and often were) questioned and which were eventually revised. In order to address the expectations of the contributions being made effective in the decisions, every decision taken was explained to the exhaustion about its criteria and assumptions.

THE DELIBERATE PLAN:

As a result, the constructed ideology is:

Mission of Canto da Rua: To promote convergences and connections for the integral care of life and guarantee of rights, aiming at overcoming the street situation.

Vision: Consolidate a space that promotes coexistence, boosts protagonism and incidence in public policies for the homeless population

Values:

1. Ethics and transparency
2. Non-partisanship and Inter-religiousness
3. Shared decisions
4. Performance and systemic care
5. Coexistence of differences with equality and equity
6. Defense of the identity and dignity of the person
7. Protagonism of street pop
8. Peace and solidarity, with a view to social, environmental and economic sustainability
9. The strategic map, collaboratively constructed and approved, has the following premises:
    - Integrated Methodology agreed and explained, anchored in the reality of the street population.
    - Networking (public, private and society partnerships)
    - Innovative and integrated action approach: 1- House-in First: 2- Entrepreneurship 3- Citizen welcome; 4 - Culture Sport and leisure; 5 - Documentation, research and memory

- Expand the ecosystem network, targeting new sources of funds to enable self-sustainability.
- Permanently articulate with various instances of public power in a non-partisan manner
- Communicate customized with each sector of society.
- Systematize data for access by street population and society.

To fulfill the research aim, 16 in-depth interviews were carried out and, together with the researcher professor's Maria Elisa Brandão field notes, were analyzed to generate knowledge about the strategic process of social organizations and about the open strategy process in grand challenges.

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.

- Iin 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 of the project and at the point of this report, 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.

Housing first project

On June 21, the 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.

The new headquarters

With regard to the first impacts, Canto da Rua has already achieved the following results:

Related project	Activities	Number of people affected
Mobilization and convoying of aid	Welcoming and addressing the demands of the homeless population including individual accompaniment to hospitals, town hall, etc. Awareness-raising of the homeless people's own needs and the necessary referrals	1.928 individuals assisted (some receive multiples help) 12.915 referral of aid 5.000 hours of individual active listening
	Dialog circle	472 people took part in dialog circles, divided into groups, where 64 hours were employed.
Entrepreneurial Lives Program	Basic registrations for those interested in working to generate income	882 individuals
	Contacts with partner companies	35 enterprises
	Workshops on Entrepreneurship, Sales Techniques, Digital Marketing and Photography, Education and Financial Management	100 hours of training provided in a total of 24 workshops 79 individuals participated
	Trainings aiming to prepare for 4 different initiatives of solidarity economy (food service; cleaning products; ecological crafts; fabric reuse)	360 hours of training provided in a total of 78 workshops - 32 individuals participate
	Qualified listening to guide the axes of the program by the "Streets Office"	358 individuals homeless
Housing first program	Referral to homes and housing	48 people assisted, 24 of whom are already living in the houses
Program to enter in the formal job market	Entered in the formal job market	48 individuals
	Trainings aiming to prepare students for their first employments	60 hours of training provided in a total of 10 courses attended by 12 people in each session
	Curriculum vitae preparation and distribution to employment agencies	89 potential candidates
	Individual support; preparation for job interviews and follow-up after integration	386 hours of individual support to 286 individuals (182 pre-integration, 104 post-integration)

TESTIMONIALS

"Canto da Rua will certainly have a different face after this process.It would be one way if we hadn't called Fundação Dom Cabral" (Edson Franco – National Movement of the Street People)

"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 - Coordenador National Movement of the Street People Minas Gerais

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

"PILARIS, since its launch, has already trained managers of more than 100 social organizations, surpassing 1,500 participants directly.

The work with Canto da Rua was very challenging. Even though there was an idea of the objectives to be achieved, there was no structuring of the work to be developed. However, the people who were willing to take part in the project were eager to make it happen! It was very interesting and rewarding to follow the development of the project, as we saw people's engagement in making it happen! (Luana Fernandes, Executive Coordinator of Civil Society Organizations - FDC).

THE TEAM

Canto da Rua: Cristina Bove, Claudenice Rodrigues, Maurício Soares, Alessandro Fernandes and Homero Storino.

FDC: Professor Maria Elisa Brandão, PhD, Sergio Rabelo, Luiza Fagundes, Luana Fernandes.

Launch of Canto Headquarters – FDC, Canto representatives and Minas Gerais State Government representatives

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