

## Case study report: Belo Horizonte

*“We have made many advances in terms of mobilization. Today the Forum is a space of dozens of groups. I think this has no return.” (network representative)*

### Case Study: Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH<sup>1</sup>

Case summary	
Brief description	A network of organizations and individuals to produce and disseminate knowledge as promote advocacy interventions on themes pertinent to youth with a specific focus on issues related to violence against black youth as well as to urban mobility of young people in Belo Horizonte and its metropolitan region.
Main results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized as an important reference on youth issues in the State of Minas Gerais.</li> <li>• Collective creation of a website with the 10 most important aspects related to youth rights (Youth Political Platform) to influence candidates to public offices in the 2014 federal and state general elections; the platform became a national reference for organizations dedicated to promote, protect and guarantee the rights of young people.</li> <li>• “Okupa”<sup>2</sup> became an annual event for Belo Horizonte and its metropolitan region, supported by the state and municipal governments; NAP helped making the event more decentralized (several municipalities started to hold the event) and engaged a broader range of youth in its planning and implementation.</li> <li>• Opening and democratization of the Youth Reference Center in Belo Horizonte; a public center dedicated to the development artistic-cultural-sports activities and promotion of debates on issues relevant to the youth.</li> <li>• Participation in a federal committee to plan the federal budget on youth for 2014 and 2015.</li> <li>• Election of Áurea Carolina, former Forum Executive Secretariat’s coordinator, as a representative for the municipal council for Belo Horizonte.</li> </ul>
Main enabling factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective construction and strengthening of the culture of partnership.</li> <li>• Strong, creative, participatory and appropriate content and methodologies for the target audiences.</li> <li>• Powerful communication with all key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Scaling up the number of networks’ participants and beneficiaries.</li> <li>• Clear focus on fighting to end violence against young people.</li> <li>• Technical and financial support from Instituto C&amp;A.</li> <li>• Support from key member organizations, such as Associação Imagem Comunitária that shared its office space and its expertise on fundraising.</li> <li>• Inclusive governance and leadership team profile and commitment.</li> <li>• Factors of the political scenario external to the Forum.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Youth Forum of Greater Belo Horizonte

<sup>2</sup> A one day annual event to promote the occupation by the youth, especially from poor neighborhoods, of public spaces of the city. The event includes many artistic and cultural activities, as well as debates on youth’s rights and needs.

Main challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence against black youth is not an easy subject to discuss with the society in general.</li> <li>• Decentralization of activities and services to peripheral areas of the city and the metropolitan region.</li> <li>• To be able to give voice and representation to the youth in the different spaces.</li> <li>• Accessing most vulnerable population.</li> <li>• Continuous mobilization of the Forum members, social groups and young people in general.</li> <li>• Combining deepness and scale of formative meetings for the youth.</li> <li>• Overcoming the resistance of other groups that disagreed with the Forum's positions.</li> </ul>
Key lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed, serious, professional, creative, caring and empathetic work directed towards dialogue and co-construction is key to the Forum's success.</li> <li>• Truly democratic governance and management empower members' greater commitment and political leadership.</li> <li>• Planning and implementing actions by, with and for young people improve the level of mobilization.</li> <li>• Improvements in management and having paid staff was crucial to ensure the quality of Forum's activities and operational capacity.</li> <li>• For the network to remain relevant and effective, it is important to continuously carry out collective reassessment of the context as well as realign expectations and priorities of the network's main partners.</li> <li>• Continued advocacy and alignment with government representatives at public policies level, and not merely with technical representatives, is fundamental to ensure more adherence and sustainability to actions.</li> <li>• Scaling up connections and territorial coverage, besides giving more visibility to the Forum, took the youth causes much farther and to a wider audience.</li> <li>• Sustainability of the network should be always a major concern to the network's members and leadership.</li> </ul>

## 1. Introduction

Created in August 2004, Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH is an open and non-partisan network of autonomous entities, movements, groups and activists that work to defend youth rights and to incentivize the creation of public policies for the youth. Their main focus is related to violence against black youth and the rights to culture, education and urban mobility of the youth, especially the ones that live in the suburbs of Belo Horizonte. The choice of the theme as a priority agenda started from the understanding of the vulnerability that is tied to the juvenile condition. Nationwide researches, such as the Mapas da Violência<sup>3</sup>, portray the Brazilian young population as one of the segments most vulnerable to violence in the country, both regarding lethal violence and other rights violations.

The Forum has 12 member organizations, including NGOs and cultural and political activists groups on youth rights and culture, and 22 individual activists (Annex I). It is currently considered the main reference on youth issues in the state of Minas Gerais by a wide and diverse range of social actors. From 2013 to 2015, the number of invitations per year received by the Forum from social movements, state and municipal government and even from the media to participate in various events to discuss youth issues, including lectures, workshops, roundtables, and events for exchanging experiences increased from 22 to 154. There are so many requests that the Forum is having difficulty attending to

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<sup>3</sup> Brazil's Violence Maps

all of them. In 2015, it was awarded the Prêmio Cultura em Rede<sup>4</sup> by the Ministry of Culture. Within the framework of the Networks and Alliances Program, Instituto C&A has technically and financially supported Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH between 2013 and 2015. The main goal was to promote a better social control of public policies related to the youth. The objectives and strategies of the support changed each year, but there were always resources committed to strengthening of the Forum itself and to huge advocacy, mobilization and communication activities. In 2016, even after the end of Instituto C&A's support, the Forum remains highly mobilized, carrying out important actions for the city of Belo Horizonte and its surrounding cities, as well as formalizing new partnerships that guarantee their sustainability in the short and medium terms.

What made it possible for Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH to reach this level of recognition and sustainability? What were the factors that strengthened its success? What were the greatest challenges? What is the role of their leadership? What were the greatest lessons learned in this trajectory? These are questions that this case study seeks to address in the context of the support by Instituto C&A.

### **Macro Timeline**

**2004 – Creation of the Forum** as Fórum de Entidades e Movimentos Juvenis da Região Metropolitana de BH<sup>5</sup> to encourage the dialogue among organizations and movements with other constituencies of civil society and with municipal government, to promote youth participation and guarantee the rights of the youth.

**2009 to mid-2011 - Activities interrupted** for reasons such as the transition of leadership, the lack of planning and focused strategies and lack of empowerment of Forum by the youth themselves.

**End of 2011 - a) Reactivation of the Forum:** Discussions involving the construction of the Centro de Referência da Juventude<sup>6</sup> (CRJ), presented by the municipality as the main public equipment focused on this segment, led to it b) Forum **changed its name** to Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH and also became a space where the youth are the main protagonist. In order to carry out its mission, the Forum defined four interrelated strategies for action: popular education, mobilization, communication and advocacy<sup>7</sup>.

**2013 – 2015 – financial and technical support from Instituto C&A.**

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<sup>4</sup> Culture Network Award

<sup>5</sup> Juvenile Entities and Movements Forum of the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte

<sup>6</sup> Reference Center for the Youth

<sup>7</sup> **Mobilization:** Mobilization of society for better living conditions for young people through participatory dialogue methods to involve different audiences. **Advocacy:** Influence in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for youth. **Popular Education:** Collaborative construction of knowledge, valuing the knowledge of the participants, in a perspective oriented to the critical understanding of reality and aiming at social transformation, especially in capacity building and training activities for youth and professionals. **Communication:** Dissemination of content aiming at the visibility of the actions of the Forum and its partners; dissemination of knowledge; and the increased dissemination of events, opportunities for the youth.

## 2. Main activities and results

2005 to 2006 – Fostering of the structuring of the Coordenadoria Municipal de Juventude<sup>8</sup> and the reactivation of the Conselho Municipal de Juventude (CMJ) de Belo Horizonte<sup>9</sup>, which influenced the creation of Municipal Youth Policies in the state capital. These policies, that should be always redesigned and improved, inform how the municipality structures its actions for and with the youth (e.g. what are the instances of discussion, what are the priorities).

2012 – Focusing the agenda: addressing issues of violence against youth (denial and/or violation of rights) became its main agenda; b) Launching of the Agenda de Enfrentamento à Violência contra as Juventudes<sup>10</sup>, a document that exposes and denounces different forms of violence committed against youth in Belo Horizonte, started to disseminate the cause and called for public policies to overcome the problem; c) Organization with Observatório da Juventude from Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG)<sup>11</sup> the 3rd edition of Okupa<sup>12</sup> which is a one day event that promotes democratization of the access to public spaces for young people and seeks to give visibility to artistic and cultural interventions and policies of youth groups, especially in the outskirts of the city with art, culture, music and debates. This is a priority action for the Forum since its inception and today it has been consolidated as an annual event in Belo Horizonte and its surrounding cities.

2013 – a) Technical and financial support of Instituto C&A initiated for a 3-years period enabled the Forum's strengthening; b) Launching of the Juventudes contra Violência<sup>13</sup> campaign, that was a follow on the Agenda, conceived in a collaborative way among different youth groups that increased visibility around the theme, sensitizing public agents and managers to promote policies to deal with the problem and mobilizing young people and civil society organizations to act as multipliers of the campaign with their families, schools and community. The campaign was combined with several formative meetings for adolescents and young people. Forum's visibility grown significantly with the campaign and c) The Forum began to occupy a seat in the Conselho Municipal de Juventude de Belo Horizonte<sup>14</sup>; that gave the Forum greater strength influence public policies and programs in favor of the youth<sup>15</sup>.

2014 – a) Launching of the educational kit "Okupa: juventude, cidadania e ocupação da cidade<sup>16</sup>", consisting of a board game and a booklet that helps adolescents and youth better understand their rights and the instances of a Municipality that can be accessed to get them guaranteed. The educational kit was produced with the active participation of young people and a gaming specialist. The material was well received and is still used today, both by the Forum team and its partners, such as the government of Belo Horizonte and the state of Minas Gerais; and b) Launching of the Juventudes contra Violência political platform (Annex II), which established 10 priority issues for civil

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<sup>8</sup> Municipal Secretariat of Youth

<sup>9</sup> Municipal Council of Youth of Belo Horizonte

<sup>10</sup> Agenda to Face Violence against Youth

<sup>11</sup> Observatory of Youth of the Minas Gerais Federal University

<sup>12</sup> "Okkupy" – event conceived by Observatory of Youth of the Minas Gerais Federal University

<sup>13</sup> Youth Against Violence

<sup>14</sup> Municipal Council of Youth of Belo Horizonte

<sup>15</sup> In another youth empowerment strategy, in 2015 the Forum chose not to run for a seat for the Conselho Municipal de Juventude. It is represented, however, by young people who took the position as representatives of other groups that are members of the Forum.

<sup>16</sup> Okkupy: youth, citizenship and occupation of the city

society and governments to commit to effectively address violations of rights suffered by the young population. The initiative involved decentralized communication, advocacy and mobilization activities: during the 2014 elections, the platform was presented to more than 20 candidates for positions of the Executive and Legislative branches at state and national levels; and in 2015 to parliamentarians and government managers in the different spheres of government, improving the quality of the debates and proposals. The elaboration of the platform involved a lot of work in research and data systematization. Therefore, it also provided great learning to the Forum staff. In addition to the major advocacy action, today the political platform is the main conceptual reference for Forum members and some of their partners on youth issues, providing consistence on their discourse and helping on the decision making about how to address the different topics that come from the political and context.

2015 - a) Development and launching of the research "Monitoramento de políticas públicas para o atendimento a adolescentes e jovens em situação de uso e abuso de álcool e outras drogas em Belo Horizonte<sup>17</sup>" (carried out in partnership with the NGO Cipó Comunicação Interativa<sup>18</sup> and with the support of the Ministry of Health) and of its interactive infographic. This research enlarged the dissemination of knowledge about the youth's needs and also the connectivity of the Forum with new a NGO organization and with the Ministry of Health; b) Decentralization of the 6th edition of the Okupa, that was not organized exclusively in downtown Belo Horizonte and started to have decentralized actions in the cities of Greater Belo Horizonte. Municipalities of Santa Luzia, Nova Lima, Contagem, Ibirité, Sarzedo and Santa Luzia were involved. The decentralization is still a challenging issue for the Forum and public policies in general, as the political and social system tends to bring all services and activities to the city centers.

2016 - a) Production of the publication "Fazendo Junt@s - Experiências e Metodologias do Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH<sup>19</sup>" that disseminates the formative methodologies; and b) Occupation and opening of the CRJ for all young people of Belo Horizonte (box below)<sup>20</sup> and c) Aurea Carolina, former coordinator of the Executive Secretariat of the Forum was elected Belo Horizonte's most voted councilman in the 2016 elections. Great part of her political leadership was built in dealing with the Forum activities. Now she will bring all her expertise on youth issues to the municipal legislative.

### **Opening the CRJ**

Since the announcement of the CRJ project to the present day, the Forum has been a protagonist in the debate and discussion with the municipal government, as well as in mobilizing groups of young people towards the importance of the issue.

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<sup>17</sup> Monitoring of public policies for the care of adolescents and young people in situations of alcohol and drug abuse in Belo Horizonte

<sup>18</sup> Vine Interactive Communication

<sup>19</sup> Making together: Experiences and Methodologies of the Youth Forum of Greater BH. Publication created late in the scope of the project supported by Instituto C&A, though in its final version and layout, but not yet launched. The evaluators had access to the content in its final format

<sup>20</sup> Due to the great energy demand generated by the occupation of CRJ, Okupa 2016 was rescheduled to the beginning of 2017. However, there are already resources available for its realization and the planning of activities and strategies are already under way. It is worth mentioning that the resources were obtained through project selection sent to the Municipal Foundation of Culture of Belo Horizonte.

At the beginning, the Forum questioned the absence of effective social participation in the process and of a conceptual project that guided the construction of the CRJ, so that it could be an artistic-cultural and political creative space for youth. Also in 2011, the Forum was responsible for holding a public hearing on the issue in the City Council, with participation in a joint committee for the discussion of the CRJ and the dissemination of an open letter to the city that denounced irregularities in the construction of the CRJ.

After the government's many comings and goings, with uninterrupted actions of mobilization and advocacy by the Forum, the CRJ was inaugurated in 2014. However, in the first half of 2016, the equipment had not yet been opened to the public and the youth's participation as an active part in the management and planning of the activities of the CRJ had not been guaranteed.

Faced with this, discussions about the opening of CRJ deepened and culminated in the occupation of the building for 45 days. The Forum led the occupation movement, which also brought together other youth groups and movements.

The end of the occupation was mediated by the Promotor de Justiça da Infância e Juventude<sup>21</sup>, which supported the creation of a management group that could integrate the civil society. CRJ was opened to the public in June 2016, but the participatory management committee is still being structured.

Despite the tension resulting from the occupation of CRJ, all the interviewees were unanimous in recognizing the importance of the Forum's role.

*The Forum is the most important player in the area of political claims for the youth. The CRJ only exists because of the action of the Forum. (Strategic external informant)*

With these actions, and also with other day-to-day activities (e.g. formative meetings, communication strategy, annual Okupa event, advocacy and public positioning) the Forum registered, from 2013 to 2015, a significant impact, mobilizing directly 1300 adolescents and young people, as well as 120 educational professionals, 300 social leaders and 500 members of community groups. (Instituto C&A monitoring report)

### **3. Management, Governance and Leadership**

The Forum proposes to act in a collaborative way, achieving great dynamism in its organization. Therefore, each member contributes according to its interests, possibilities and availability. The Forum is thus committed to the permanent co-responsibility of civil society groups and its individual activists, in order to strengthen working in networks in a democratic and non-hierarchical way.

It is worth noting that individual activists are as well received as the people who represent organizations. The Forum sees a lot of power in diversity. Even public servants can participate in Forum, provided they do so as autonomous activists.

Youth protagonism is a non-negotiable value for the Forum, although there are also older members. There is a clear concern that the young person should be properly represented and actively engaged in the Executive Secretariat, in the Management Group, as well as in the planning and execution of strategies and actions.

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<sup>21</sup> State Prosecutor for Children and Youth

Over the years, the Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH has experienced different operational and management arrangements. In 2013, with the encouragement of Instituto C&A and the desire to "organize the house", the Forum made an effort to restructure its governance and began to act as follows:

- Grupo Gestor<sup>22</sup> (GG): Open to the participation of activists and representatives of groups that are part of the Forum. It is responsible for the main deliberations and decisions concerning the network, including the design of the actions agreed upon in the strategic planning meetings that the Forum organizes twice a year, one of which is always a moment of immersion. Eventually, the GG is divided into work committees for the parallel development of activities. Participation in the face-to-face meetings of the GG, which take place every two weeks, hosted by different member organizations, is also open to non-members of this group. Today, the GG has 12 organizations and two autonomous activists.
- Secretaria Executiva<sup>23</sup> (SE): The SE is responsible for network internal animation and mobilization, operationalization of the decisions taken within the scope of the GG, as well as for the taking care of requests received from partners. Currently, the Secretariat works in a physical space at the headquarters of one of the organizations member of the Forum, sharing responsibilities in communication, mobilization, articulation and advocacy tasks. Since 2013 it has a paid staff, which today consists of three professionals and two trainees.
- Grupo Ampliado<sup>24</sup> (GA) - deactivated: it consisted of all the groups and activists that make up the SE and the GG, as well as any other group or activist who, whether or not linked to the Forum, wanted to attend open meetings to discuss specific issues related to juvenile rights.

At the end of 2015, the Forum chose to deactivate the GA and further extend its proposal for openness and participation. Any person or organization is welcome at the GG meetings, being able to participate in the discussions and deliberations, with no selection criteria at all.

Decision-making processes are shared internally and, in general, are based on the search for consensus, ensuring space for discussion. In addition, there is great concern in guaranteeing permanent communicative processes, which contributes to the construction of their collective memory. All meetings are registered, systematized and forwarded to the members for their knowledge and input. This shared management also guarantees the training of new leaderships, which is fundamental for its sustainability as a network. From 2013 to 2015, the Forum changed the composition of its SE and it had no impact on the relationship with the financial partner (Instituto C&A) nor did it compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of its actions.

*The proposal is the democratic radicalization and horizontality. There is a concern to validate everyone's participation in decision-making, including that of new members. We work on a proposal for the search for progressive consensus. (Forum representative)*

*Today there is a concern for new leadership to be trained in the Forum. Each time I see new faces representing the Forum, and more and more young people. (strategic external informant)*

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<sup>22</sup> Managers' Group

<sup>23</sup> Executive Secretariat

<sup>24</sup> Expanded Group

Another interesting moment, which encourages the entry of new members and the mobilization of the current ones, is the annual presentation of the Forum. People are invited to discuss a specific theme and to get to know the actions and planning process of the Forum. The event is well promoted and new people and organizations (NGOs and cultural and political activists groups) always show up. This has been a very important gateway to the Forum for promoting the cause, mobilizing the network and expanding its membership.

As mentioned, the Forum SE only began to be paid from 2013. This new configuration of the SE allowed the Forum a much greater and more effective operational capacity than the previous configuration, as about 3 to 5 people started to dedicate all working hours on the Forum activities. The professionalization of the SE of the Forum appears as the main distinguishing factor of what was the Forum before and after the support of Instituto C&A. Funds to pay the professional staff was the turning point factor. The sustainability of this form of management was guaranteed for 2016, with resources from a new funder, and is in the process of being renewed for 2017.

*Other youth movements emerged in the period, but the professionalization of the Forum gave it a protagonist status. (Forum representative)*

*From 2013 onwards, the Forum has become much more qualified. The hiring of professionals for the SE professionalized the management and actions of the Forum. The events were a hit and for a reason. (strategic external informant)*

*The support of the Program was also essential for the professionalization of the Forum's work, as well as for the capacity to systematically pressure the government. Professional growth was exponential. Certainly, the actions of the Forum would not have had the scope they had without this support. Nor would so many actions be taken. (strategic external informant)*

The representatives of the GG feel supported by the SE and the SE team, in turn, feels legitimized by the GG. This relationship of cooperation and complicity seems to have very positive effects on the dynamics of the Forum.

*In this year, we carried out the occupation of the Centro de Referência de Juventude. It was a very intense action that lasted about 40 days and that required a lot of mobilization and coordination. Luckily we got the support of everyone. It was a demand that emerged from the context and that the Forum could embrace and lead. I believe that the GG is more united because of the intensity of the work carried out in recent years. (Forum representative)*

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the militant profile and life experience with youth issues, combined with the in-depth theoretical knowledge on the subject, gives the members of the Forum a unique legitimacy. (For better understanding of the militant profile see interview with the coordinator of Nosso Sarau and member of the Forum GG - Annex III)

*The group is very prepared. The boys articulate very well. I have a very good impression of them. They have a very adequate political consciousness. And the youth have a lot of respect for them. (strategic external informant)*

*The Forum guys militate a lot and may be one of the few movements that can attract the youth in a way to dialogue with it, in their language. (Forum representative)*

#### 4. What favored the success of the Forum?

- **Collective construction and appreciation of partnerships**

The Forum has the proposal to work on the perspective of co-construction. Though it is an activist group, it seeks dialogue and to establish relationships that can lead to the construction of something better. The team has a constant concern in having an empathic approach to others. In that sense, there is almost a mantra in the voice of the representatives of the Forum: "There is no advocacy without affection". In addition to this, there is also ongoing dialogue and action in conjunction with the Coordenadoria Municipal da Juventude de Belo Horizonte<sup>25</sup> and with government programs for youth such as Programa de Controle de Homicídios - Fica Vivo!<sup>26</sup>, of the state government, and the Serviço de Convivência e Fortalecimento de Vínculos para Adolescentes e Jovens de 15 a 17 Anos - Projovem Adolescente de Belo Horizonte<sup>27</sup>. From these dialogues, many actions were carried out, ranging from training activities (e.g. capacity building in methodologies of working with youth for Fica Vivo professionals), to advocacy actions in public policies (e.g. opening of the CRJ). In any case, the various players respect the Forum and want to work more and more with it.

*The Forum is the pebble in City Hall's shoe. Sometimes there is a radicalization in the positioning, but I know it is necessary. (strategic external informant)*

*Public Security is not done by itself. The partnership with the Forum was very important for the political formation of our public. Many young people who participated in the trainings began to integrate collectives and take another stance on their rights and on the genocide issue. (strategic external informant)*

The Forum also favors the strengthening of other political and cultural initiatives in the city, following the work of forums and permanent discussion areas, such as the Círculo Socioeducativo das Brigadas Populares<sup>28</sup>, the Comitê Mineiro do Fórum Nacional pela Democratização da Comunicação<sup>29</sup>, the Frente Mineira sobre Drogas e Direitos Humanos<sup>30</sup> and the movement Minas diz Não à Redução da Maioridade Penal<sup>31</sup>. This willingness to broaden the range of actors with which the Forum dialogues also broadens the people who debate and join the youth causes.

- **Strong, creative, participatory and appropriate contents and methodologies for the target audiences**

In all the actions that are carried out, the Forum sought to get contributions of the groups directly involved in the action to develop methods that favor participation during the activity in question. For the conception of the Juventudes contra a Violência campaign, different spaces for reflection and definition of strategies were created, with the participation of autonomous youths, members of cultural groups, activists of social movements and representatives of public agencies. This process was crucial to generate the necessary commitment to the second stage of the initiative, when the Jornadas

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<sup>25</sup> Municipal Youth Secretariat

<sup>26</sup> Stay Alive State Program

<sup>27</sup> Service for attachment fortification for youth – 15 to 17 years' old

<sup>28</sup> Round tables about juvenile correction measures carried out by Brigadas Populares

<sup>29</sup> State Committee of the National Forum for communication democratization

<sup>30</sup> State Committee for drugs and human rights

<sup>31</sup> State says no to the reduction of age for adults criminal punishment

de Maio pelo Fim da Violência contra as Juventudes and the circuito educativo Juventudes contra a Violência were held. The participation of young people in the planning and implementation of the campaign helped to improve language (making it more appropriate to the youth) and develop communication methodologies more effective to mobilize other young people to participate in the training activities.

Both Forum members and external stakeholders consider the content and formative methodologies proposed by the Forum to be highly qualified (e.g. game, platform, campaign, training and social networks content). In the case of the Okupa Educational Kit, for example, even a game specialist was hired to support the production of the material. The quality of the products gives even more legitimacy to the Forum. For the formative meetings it became clear that it was more effective to deliver more in deep and long term training for less people, then quick meeting with no follow up for more people. The right measure of how much to go deep and how much to scale up is still a challenge. The words creativity, innovation and the will to do better and better appear in the statements of the interviewees from inside and outside the Forum.

*What we can perceive is that the Forum, when it takes on the issue of the genocide of young black people, it brought a lot of content and property to the subject. (strategic external informant)*

- **Powerful communication**

The actions of the Forum, its positioning and the contents produced are communicated through different media and formats, such as the Forum and the Juventudes contra Violência campaign websites; a page on the social network Facebook; emails are sent to contact lists – always updated as new actions are carried out -; and channel on Youtube, as well as the production of printed materials linked to the main actions of the collective, such as pamphlets, folders, posters, stickers and publications (Annex II). By the end of 2015 the institutional website had a monthly average of 1000 visits, and the access peaks coincide with the actions of greater effort taken by the collective. At that time, the Facebook page of the Forum has almost four thousand likes and has already achieved an organic reach<sup>32</sup> of 25 thousand people in posts of greater prominence. The update of both sites and social networks has been done in a collaborative way, since members of the Forum suggest content for publication.

The relationship with press vehicles is quite active and aims at guaranteeing more visibility and legitimacy for the actions of the Forum and collaborating in the dissemination of the cause. Today, the Forum is often sought by the press to comment on youth issues. The team is aware of the opportunity and the responsibility it brings.

*The communication actions of the Forum are very well planned and executed. They have a very wide reach. We are always attentive to what the Forum is doing, even to be able to reverberate. (strategic external informant)*

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<sup>32</sup> Total number of people that have seen a post without paid advertisement.

During the course of 2015, a communication diagnosis was carried out, which resulted in strategic planning according to the target audience. The tendency now is for the Forum's work in the area of communication to be even more efficient.

- **Scaling up**

In 2013, the Forum was active in Belo Horizonte and in three other municipalities in the metropolitan region. The decentralization of Okupa and the construction of the Political Platform contributed greatly for people from other municipalities to join the cause and for the Forum to have national visibility, since representatives from other states also joined the network. The Platform development also influenced the decision by the Federal Government to invite a representative from the Forum to attend meetings in Capital City of Brasilia to discuss, among other things, the federal budget for the youth. By 2015, the Forum already had representatives from 11 municipalities as well as had achieved national recognition.

- **Clear focus**

Since 2012 the Fórum das Juventudes has defined its main focus, which is facing violence against youth. This definition is not seen as a limitation, but rather as a guideline for action that facilitates all those who act in the Forum in planning and decision making. In this sense, the actions and strategies that were being implemented always reinforced each other. In other words, instead of addressing in depth all the possible issues related to youth, the Forum has developed a chain of strategies and activities closely connected with each other. An example of this would be the Agenda da Juventude contra a Violência e a Juventude contra a Violência Campaign. The Forum members first developed the agenda, with the most important priorities for the youth and then elaborated the campaign. When the campaign was launched, many people were already aware of the priorities.

- **Support from Instituto C&A**

The support of Instituto C&A, through the Networks and Alliances Program, made possible a paid SE, the expansion and qualification of the actions, the diversification of the products and the training of some of the representatives of the Forum. The financing period (three years) also allowed the team to have the opportunity to deliberate and innovate. Finally, the flexibility with which the Instituto's team has placed itself as a funder favored the proposal of co-construction and collaborative work. There was always openness to understand the new demands that emerges from the context and review strategies, timeline, and budget allocation. More than this, the wiliness to contribute to better results, without reducing the networks autonomy.

*It is a consensus that the representation of Instituto C&A was essential to this growth that the Forum has experienced. Not only the financial support, but the technical support was also important. At first there was even a mistrust of certain organizations that made up the Forum to receive support from an organization that came from the business world. But Instituto C&A has always respected the autonomy and work of the Forum. (Forum representative)*

Regarding this point, it is worth mentioning that, at the beginning of the Program, the Forum requested support from Instituto C&A for the Juventudes contra Violência campaign, which had a clear position against reducing the age of criminal responsibility. Although the Instituto C&A did not have

an institutional position on the subject, it was able to give the support, choosing not to expose its brand in the campaign.

- **Support from key member organizations**

Both the Associação Imagem Comunitária and the Observatório da Juventude da UFMG have been very important to the Forum. Because they are more mature organizations and have more resources, they can provide relevant support such as headquarters, interns and support for filming and editing activities. This kind of support enabled the Forum to pay more attention to its core activities.

- **Leadership team profile and commitment**

Joy in being together, caring about the other, commitment for the cause, openness for diversity, militancy and life experience in youth issues are some of the qualities of that were observed that created a singular chemistry that gives strength to the Forum.

- **Factors of the political scenario/external to the Forum**

The 2014 presidential elections, the Estatuto da Juventude<sup>33</sup>, the report on the genocide of black youth, and the discussion on the reduction of the age of criminal responsibility were external factors that gave more visibility and favored the performance and the debate of the different focus areas and positions of the Forum.

## **5. What hindered the Forum's action? And what were the main challenges?**

- The cause is cumbersome. Particularly regarding issues of violence against black youth, there is difficulty in joining broader sectors of society.
- Decentralization has been and still is a challenge. The youths come to the center of Belo Horizonte, but still with much difficulty in mobility and the Forum has difficulties in carrying out actions in the other municipalities of the RMBH. The actions that are implemented require a much greater effort.
- To be able to give voice and representation to the youth in the different spaces. Although there are laws that guarantee this right, there is still a lot of resistance.
- Difficulty to access young people living on the streets and those with special needs. Since those are more vulnerable populations, different approaches for reaching them are necessary.
- Continuous mobilization. Despite efforts to ensure continued engagement of the different Forum members, as well as of young people who have gone through training and activities, this is a permanent challenge.
- Development of formative meetings that are deep enough to mobilize the youth and, at the same time, short enough to interact with a large number of people.
- Overcoming the resistance of other groups that disagree with the Forum's positions and the way it operates. The Forum is a nonpartisan movement committed to promote dialogue. With the great visibility it has had in recent years, it has come to be the object of some contestation of other movements, including of young people movements.

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<sup>33</sup> Legal framework for the youth

*One consequence of this recognition is that the questions about the Forum's performance have also increased. It is a consequence of being more exposed. The Forum has already been labeled elitist, made up of white college students, unwilling to quarrel or very combative and aged. (Forum representative)*

## **6. A look at sustainability**

The sustainability of a network is enhanced by political, technical and financial aspects. The financial aspects can be more or less tangible. Contributions as voluntary work and space for operation of the network can be as important as grant support. As seen, the technical and political sustainability of the Forum grown considerably from 2013 to 2015. At this time, we will give more light to the financial sustainability, but with the clear sense each aspect of sustainability can influence positively or negatively the sustainability as a whole.

At the start, the sustainability of the Forum was guaranteed, mainly, by the resources provided by the groups that are part of the Forum and, to a lesser extent, the partners that accompany the work of the collective. There is no membership fee established. This proposal remains to this day. The contributions are of diverse orders: people, infrastructure, logistics, financial, political-methodological, among others, and vary according to the possibilities, the involvement and the current context of each group and activist.

However, the Forum has always been attentive to the possibilities of external financing. In recent years, in addition to the support of Instituto C&A, the Forum also had occasional financial support from partners, focused on the costing of specific activities, and carried out a collective funding action on the Vakinha.com digital platform, to finance part of the activities of the 6th A Juventude oKupa a Cidade.

After Instituto C&A's support ended, in December 2015, the Forum sought new funders and began to count on support from another funding partner to meet SE expenses. The Sociedade Inteligência e Coração<sup>34</sup>, linked to the Augustinian priests, formalized the one-year support and should renew the funding for the year 2017. As already reported, the Forum obtained funding from the Cultura em Redes Award<sup>35</sup> and the Belo Horizonte's municipal foundation of culture. In addition, a trainee from the SE is paid with an extension grant from UFMG.

It should be emphasized that many Forum members already have the experience of raising funds for their own organizations. At the moment, the Forum is discussing the possibility of becoming legally formalized to obtain new supporters using its own CNPJ (business tax ID). In short, the issue of sustainability has always been and continues to be a focus for the Forum. In 2015, a sustainability working group was created. It is a non-permanent group that works on needs basis, looking actively for call for proposals and preparing presentations for grant makers.

However, the reports point to a reduction in the volume of activities already in 2016 as a result of the end of the Instituto's support.

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<sup>34</sup> Intelligence and Heart Society

<sup>35</sup> Culture in networks award – given from de Brazilian Federal Ministry of Culture

*The Forum has the energy and experience to go on and get other funding. The limitation of resources will not cause the Forum to cease to exist, but it may compromise the quality of some actions. (strategic external informant)*

*The Instituto C&A has taught us well not to depend on one funder. This orientation is already incorporated as an understanding by the GG of the Forum, but fundraising actions are still being initiated. Today there is even a discussion about whether it would be the case to legally formalize the Forum. (Forum representative)*

## **7. Key Lessons**

A careful look of the action of the Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH brings numerous lessons. The Forum is a network of civil society organizations and autonomous activists with great power of coordination, mobilization and advocacy. The recognition as the main reference for themes of the youths in Minas Gerais state level is due to committed, serious, professional, creative, caring, empathetic work directed towards dialogue and co-construction.

The proposal of democratic action is taken to its full potential. As they say: "the bet is on democratic radicalization." The reports of those who participate in this experience carry a lot of pride and many lessons about how they organize and make decisions. The complete opening for the reception of new members is also a factor to be highlighted. In addition, there is a clear concern to ensure the nonpartisan political formation of its members, either by the self-demand to produce qualified content, or by the opportunity to interact with invited experts and the political issues that arise during the year. It is not by chance that the city councilwoman elected in Belo Horizonte with the largest number of votes in 2016 was Áurea Carolina, former coordinator of the Forum SE.

The protagonism promotion of young people is a big commitment for the Forum. Actions are planned and implemented by, with and for the young. The language, methodologies and strategies used are appropriate to their interests. These methodologies are being built and improved over time, always with the listening and participation of young people. They are implemented also with the youth participation.

The paid staff to be part of the SE was also crucial. The difference between the number of actions taken, finished products and the degree of requests and recognition of the Forum before having a paid team and after the team is structured is enormous. In addition, the SE acts as a major activator of the Forum's actions, operationalizing the decisions of the GG and ensuring continuous mobilization. The members of the Forum are clearly aware of this importance and seek resources so that this structure can be maintained.

It is worth emphasizing that support for networks differs greatly from support to organizations, since the dynamics of action are and should be very flexible, innovative and subject to the demands of the context. Many networks even operate without many resources or fixed structures. As regards the Forum, the existence of a paid executive secretariat contributed immensely to the results achieved. However, other dynamics and management ways of working may be considered to be not specifically an executive secretariat, such as operating committees; local, regional or national animators, outsourced external teams etc.

Another factor to be mentioned, apart from SE remuneration, is the professionalization of management. Conducting periodic strategic planning, preparation of communication plan, creation of a sustainability front, systematization of activities, preparation and dissemination of the minutes of all the meetings are examples of how the professionalism of the management is carried out by the book.

The context of the networks and the interests of the different stakeholders are very dynamic. In this sense, for the network to remain relevant and effective, it is important to continuously carry out a collective re-reading of the context, as well as an alignment of the expectations and priorities of the main players involved. The practice of strategic planning helps to ensure that the Forum has this competence.

The continued articulation and advocacy in public policies level, and not just with some government representatives, is fundamental to ensure more adherence and sustainability to actions. The Forum has pursued this practice, but can extend it to training cases in public schools, for example, in order to make this action more robust and more transformative.

It is very important to have political, technical and financial sustainability of the network as a major concern, so that they can be able to make continuous and progressive pressure in public policies, as well as enlarge their operational capacity and scaling up processes.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the great effort that the Forum has made to scale up its connections and its territorial coverage. The decentralization of the Okupa, the trainings in the peripheral cities, the collaborative construction of the political platform with the participation of other states, besides giving more visibility to the Forum, took the causes of the youths much farther and for many more people.

## **CASE STUDY: Annex I: Groups and organizations members of the Youth Forum of Grande BH**

### **1. Associação Imagem Comunitária<sup>36</sup>**

Not-for-profit organization headquartered in Belo Horizonte with outstanding work in the field of democratization of communication. Since its inception in 1993, it has mobilized and trained multiplier agents for the development of communicative actions and productions in order to strengthen networks that seek to increase their participation in the public realm of youth groups, popular movements, community organizations and cultural groups from the periphery.

### **2. Brigadas Populares<sup>37</sup>**

Political organization of popular nature whose main motto is the fight for the right to the city and the transformation of the current model of society. It is organized in work fronts: Training, Urban Reform, Youth, Anti-prison, Women, and also by thematic circles, such as agrarian and popular advocates, for example. It has worked in peripheries and universities. Currently it is present in Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Catarina, São Paulo and Bahia. Its work method includes organizing and raising awareness of the working class through the struggle for fundamental rights.

### **3. Coletivo Cabeçativa<sup>38</sup>**

Acting in the region of Barreiro, in Belo Horizonte, the Coletivo Cabeçativa aims to promote the occupation of urban space through different artistic languages, especially hip hop and sarau. The group is made up of young artists and activists from different districts of Barreiro, who hold the Batalha da Pista (battle of rimes and rhythms) on the Barreiro skate park and monthly the Sarau Cabeçativa (in the Viaduto das Artes – Arts Overpass).

### **4. Coletivo na Raça<sup>39</sup>**

The mission of the group is to contribute to the training of black people as critics and citizens of the historical, cultural and identity process that integrates the daily lives of the neighborhoods and favelas (slums) of Belo Horizonte and the Metropolitan Region, with special attention to the affirmative public policies. It is composed of young people with different histories and territories of origin in Greater BH, who met in the Núcleo de Formação e Criação Artística e Cultural<sup>40</sup> (NUFAC) and together held the “Eu Negro Sarau Cultural”<sup>41</sup> in Vila de Antenas, Morro das Pedras. The event marks the beginning of the activities of the Coletivo, which currently carries out cultural actions in neighbourhoods and favelas of Belo Horizonte.

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<sup>36</sup> Community Image Association

<sup>37</sup> Popular Brigades

<sup>38</sup> Active-head Collective

<sup>39</sup> Race Collective – “race” here is used as a synonym of skin color/heritage

<sup>40</sup> Center for Artistic and Cultural Training and Creation

<sup>41</sup> Black Self Cultural Sarau

## **5. Conexão Periférica<sup>42</sup>**

The group Conexão Periférica was born in August 2009, based on the concern of young journalists in publicizing the cultural, political and symbolic production of the peripheries. The initial idea was to give visibility to the people who live and/or work in the peripheries and favelas and to groups traditionally marginalized, through weekly radio programs broadcast on Radio UFMG Educativa, educational radio station linked to the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. The periphery is understood not only in its physical sense, as that which is outside the center, but also in its political sense, referring to people, groups and themes that are outside public visibility and debate. Today, the project assumes increasingly collaborative dimensions, effectively seeking to include subjects and groups in the process of building the program. The program airs on Fridays, 4:15 PM EST (Brasília time), by Radio UFMG Educativa 104,5 FM.

## **6. Centro Cultural NUC<sup>43</sup>**

The Grupo Cultural NUC was created in the Alto Vera Cruz neighborhood, in the eastern part of Belo Horizonte, from the rap group NUC - Negros da Unidade Consciente. The space began its activities in 2003 and hosts lectures, debates, video exhibitions and artistic shows, as well as offering free internet access. Art, black culture, technology and hip hop are the pillars of the works offered. Focused mainly on young people and artistic groups from the periphery, the NUC works are guided by three axes of work: cultural training, dissemination and circulation of cultural goods and integrated communication.

## **7. Instituto de Promoção e Desenvolvimento Social Tucum<sup>44</sup>**

Based in Santa Luzia, in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte, Instituto Tucum works with training, promotion and defense of human rights. Its mission is to develop actions based on the re-signification of citizenship and popular empowerment, through the development of projects and actions in the areas of youth, popular education and public policies. It has a community trajectory based on collective activities of human training, adding leaderships, community leaders and related people, belonging to different territories and areas of knowledge.

## **8. Observatório da Juventude da UFMG<sup>45</sup>**

Teaching, research and extension program of the Faculdade de Educação, with the support of the Pro-Reitoria de Extensão<sup>46</sup>. Created in 2002, the program carries out research, collection and dissemination of information on the situation of young people in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte. It also develops training activities for young people, educators and undergraduate and postgraduate students of UFMG interested in youth issues. The program is located in the context of affirmative action policies, guided by four central axes of concern that determine its institutional action: the youth conditions in contemporary societies; public policies and social actions for young

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<sup>42</sup> Peripheral Connection

<sup>43</sup> NUC Cultural Group

<sup>44</sup> Tucum Social Promotion and Development Institute

<sup>45</sup> Youth Observatory of UFMG

<sup>46</sup> University extension programs department

people; the cultural practices and the collective actions of the youth in the city and the construction of methodologies to work with young people.

### **9. Oficina de Imagens – Comunicação e Educação<sup>47</sup>**

Civil society organization founded in 1998 from the experimentation of communication languages in educational spaces and reflection on the established relations between the media and society. The workshop operates through the development of research and communication methodologies for social mobilization, production and dissemination of educational and informative materials, training of players of the Sistema de Garantia de Direitos and cooperation with media and professionals of this area, educational institutions, councils of public policies, government agencies, international organizations, companies and social entities.

### **10. Nosso Sarau<sup>48</sup>**

The group has been working for more than two years on the streets of Sarzedo, a municipality of Greater BH, with the proposal of bringing together young local artists through the text recitals, artistic performances and skateboarding, slackline and other forms of occupying public spaces. At the end of the meetings, the Sarau also promotes book raffles and loans in order to encourage the habit of reading among the participants. The exchange of ideas is another strong point of the group, which has encouraged participating youths to discuss issues that directly affect their lives, including in formal participation spaces such as conferences, youth councils and public hearings in the City Hall. The Praça da Estação (Station Square) and the skating rink of the city are the main meeting places of the group, which also attends culture, leisure and sociability spots in other cities of the metropolitan region.

### **11. Fúcsia**

Created in early 2016, Fúcsia emerged from the initiative of two friends working in the area of human rights, community communication and popular education, who came together to foster actions and discussions in this field. The mission of the collective is to communicate hard realities in a sensitive way, betting on it as a way of transforming reality. The focus of action is the training work with subjects who suffer violations, aiming to enable these people to elaborate their experiences and express them, attributing to this communication empowering senses - such as making it an instrument to dialogue with and pressure the government.

### **12. Terra Firme<sup>49</sup>**

Terra Firme is the meaning of the indigenous word Ibirité, which is also the name of the municipality of the metropolitan region where this group acts. Its main achievement is the Terra Firme Show program, created to publicize and give visibility to militants, social groups and rising exponents of the peripheral youth culture.

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<sup>47</sup> Image Lab - Communication and Education

<sup>48</sup> Our Sarau

<sup>49</sup> Solid Ground

## Individual activists that integrate the Fórum das Juventudes da Grande BH

- Andreico Souza
- Áurea Carolina
- Danúbia Gardênia
- Denise Dias
- Fabíola Rabelo
- Fernanda Cósso
- Fernanda Godinho
- Flávia Nolasco
- Flávio da Silva Paiva (Russo)
- Gracielle Pouzas
- Igor Oliveira
- Júlia Marinho
- Laís Patrocínio
- Nívea Sabino
- Pabline Santana
- Priscilla Ramalho
- Roberto Raimundo
- Sâmia Bechelane
- Sebastião Everton
- Thaiane Rezende
- Thamires Duarte
- Vanesse Beco

## **CASE STUDY: Annex II: Recommended links**

### **Forum's production**

<http://forumdasjuventudes.org.br/>

<http://forumdasjuventudes.org.br/arquivos/publicacoes/>

<http://forumdasjuventudes.org.br/arquivos/notas-publicas/>

<http://juventudescontraviolencia.org.br>

<http://juventudescontraviolencia.org.br/plataformapolitica>

<https://www.facebook.com/forumdasjuventudesBH/?fref=ts>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/forumdasjuventudes>

### **From outside the Forum**

<https://www.mpmg.mp.br/comunicacao/noticias/audiencia-publica-discute-gestao-compartilhada-do-centro-de-referencia-da-juventude-de-belo-horizonte.html>

<http://www.agenciaminas.mg.gov.br/noticia/jovens-em-cumprimento-de-medidas-socioeducativas-vao-a-9o-mostra-de-cinema-e-direitos-humanos>

<http://www.feac.org.br/formacao-gratuita-aborda-juventudes-e-educacao-popular/>

<http://aic.org.br/aic/incidencia-politica/>

<http://www.ebc.com.br/cidadania/2014/05/sociedade-civil-denuncia-higienizacao-em-belo-horizonte-para-grandes-eventos>

<http://www.anped.org.br/news/ocupa-crj-onde-quebrada-se-junta-crj-sem-juventudes-nao-rola>

<http://fonajune.blogspot.com.br/>

<http://juventude.gov.br/conjuve/inicial/manifesto-dos-movimentos-sociais-em-defesa-da-secretaria-nacional-de-juventude#.WEF9MfkrKUKhttp://www.ptmg.org.br/forum-das-juventudes-da-grande-bh-realiza-pre-conferencia/#.WEF7avkrKUK>

<http://g1.globo.com/minas-gerais/eleicoes/2016/noticia/2016/10/por-nenhum-direito-menos-diz-vereadora-mais-votada-em-bh.html>

<http://www.otempo.com.br/cidades/manifestantes-ocupam-centro-de-refer%C3%Aancia-da-juventude-de-bh-1.1305101>