

## Case study report: Nova Iguaçu

*I always consider that the network already exists, that there is a territory. It only needs consolidation, making the connections. This is what we tried to do in this process - the links (Project representative).*

### Case Study: Construindo em Rede Project<sup>1</sup> (Nova Iguaçu)

Case summary	
Brief description	A network comprised of a wide range of individuals working in organizations connected to the Sistema de Garantia de Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente <sup>2</sup> (SGDCA) mobilized to write and monitor the implementation of the Municipal Plan for Early Childhood (PMPI) – aiming at promoting and protecting the rights of small children (0 to 6 years old) in Nova Iguaçu.
Main results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of the PMPI and of a participatory monitoring system for its implementation.</li> <li>• Increased visibility for early childhood in the municipality.</li> <li>• Change in the approach of the Guardianship Councils for Early Childhood: understanding and mobilization for the cause.</li> <li>• Increased dialogue and connections among key partners from government and nonprofit agencies operating in the municipality.</li> <li>• Empowerment of the Conselho Municipal dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente<sup>3</sup> (CMDCA).</li> <li>• Reopening of the maternity hospital Mariana Bulhões.</li> <li>• Creation of children registration offices at the maternity hospital and the main city hospital.</li> <li>• Creation of the Semana do Brincar<sup>4</sup> as an annual official event for the municipality.</li> <li>• Creation of a specific space for small children in the municipal library.</li> <li>• Creation of Brinquedotecas<sup>5</sup> in public health and social service units.</li> </ul>
Main enabling factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of the National Plan for Early Childhood, in 2010, by the Federal Government that suggests the development of similar plans for states and municipalities.</li> <li>• Existence of the National Early Childhood Network's guide designed to help in the elaboration of municipal plans for early childhood.</li> <li>• Support from network members who were more experienced in collaborative work.</li> <li>• Financial and technical support from Instituto C&amp;A.</li> <li>• Diagnosis of the situation of early childhood in the municipality of Nova Iguaçu.</li> <li>• Solidariedade França Brasil team's extensive knowledge about early childhood issues and their high credibility among local actors.</li> <li>• National Early Childhood Network gave visibility to the network dynamics and results.</li> </ul>
Main challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of connectivity between the different municipal secretariats.</li> <li>• Maintaining the mobilization and social control during and after the PMPI approval.</li> <li>• Changes in leadership positions in local government.</li> <li>• Network members' lack of time due to participating in many councils.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Building in Network Project

<sup>2</sup> System to Guarantee the Rights of Child and Adolescent

<sup>3</sup> Municipal Council on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent

<sup>4</sup> Play Week event

<sup>5</sup> Children's playrooms

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of systematized public data on early childhood.</li> </ul>
Key lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive environment and previous experience on collaborative work involving different strategic partners enables network's success.</li> <li>• Participation of network members (individuals or organizations) in other networks enhances the work (contributes to mobilization, visibility and identification of potential new strategic partners).</li> <li>• A network works much better with the presence of competent network animators/mobilizers.</li> <li>• Prioritizing communication through different creative strategies throughout the process is essential to maintain the stakeholders' mobilization in the long run and ensures good results.</li> <li>• Documenting processes and producing materials is very important to ensure people's continuous interest/commitment as well as the network's cohesion and mobilization.</li> <li>• Investing in capacity building of network members is strategic to strengthen the implementation of actions, as well as to ensure network's future sustainability.</li> <li>• Periodic monitoring is essential to obtain constant feedback for improving the work.</li> <li>• Identifying a relevant topic that is fairly unknown to the public contributes to the establishment of an identity for a network and enhances its connectivity.</li> <li>• Networking is neither linear nor a process that can be controlled.</li> <li>• An informal network, without an institutionalization or even a name, can be very successful.</li> </ul>

## 1. How did the Project begin?

The Construindo em Rede Project started before the Networks and Alliances Program call for proposals was announced. As a member of the National Early Childhood Network (RNPI), Solidariedade França Brasil<sup>6</sup> (SFB), the NGO that wrote and managed the Project, participated in the discussion of the National Early Childhood Plan (PNPI) since the end of 2009. The Plan was approved by the Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente<sup>7</sup> in December 2010 and determines its deployment in municipal and state plans. For this, the RNPI created the Guide for Elaboration of Municipal Plans for Early Childhood<sup>8</sup>.

In 2011, SFB and other members of RNPI, including UNICEF, the Xuxa Meneghel Foundation, and CECIP, were responsible for developing such plans with some municipalities in the State of Rio de Janeiro. As SFB had a long-standing work in the Baixada Fluminense region, it contacted NUCREP (Center for Baixada Fluminense's community kindergartens and preschools) to define together which would be the first municipality in the Baixada region in which they would start a process to develop a Municipal Plan on Early Childhood (PMPI).

As NUCREP's headquarters is in Nova Iguaçu, they decided to initiate their efforts in that municipality. SFB and NUCREP then identified the key actors to be involved in the process. Initially, they presented their idea to the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CMDCA) and to the Association of Guardianship Councils. The organizations were very receptive and, in 2012, a project to create an Early Childhood Municipal Plan written.

Coincidentally, shortly thereafter, Instituto C&A launched the announcement of the Networks and Alliances Program. The preparation of the Nova Iguaçu PMPI, despite not foreseeing the creation of a formal network, had all the characteristics of a network process, so it seemed logical for the group to present the

<sup>6</sup> "Solidarity France Brazil"

<sup>7</sup> "National Council on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent"

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <http://primeirainfancia.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/GuiaPMPI.pdf>

Project that they had prepared to be part of this new Instituto C&A's initiative. It is noteworthy that SFB already had a partnership of almost a decade with Instituto C&A, through the Program on Early Childhood Education.

It is worth mentioning that the Construindo em Rede Project differs from the other networks supported by the Networks and Alliances Program, since it is a project that proposes the creation of an informal network within the System to Guarantee the Rights of Children and Adolescents (SGDCA). Therefore, the "Nova Iguaçu Early Childhood Network"<sup>9</sup> is informal, that is, it is not institutionalized, and do not have an official name. It was created at the same time Program was initiated and had the SGDCA as a favorable environment and the CMDCA as its central actor.

## **2. PMPI: Creation, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation**

PMPI's preparation was centered on an important traditional SFB practice: participatory projects.

*This process couldn't be like: we come, build the plan, and that's it. We had to involve the people within that plan, to involve everyone in drawing up that plan. Our goal was to write a text using many hands. That thing the city wanted (Project representative).*

A municipal meeting with all the key government and civil society actors was held to bring them closer to the theme of Early Childhood (children from 0 to 6 years old). At this meeting, working groups (WGs) were defined around the thirteen themes listed as finalistic actions in the RNPI's National Early Childhood Plan. Each WG was responsible for drafting a text on the issues under its responsibility, based on three elements: (i) Identification of the legal framework (existing laws and programs on the subject); (ii) Diagnosis of the situation of the municipality in relation to the theme; and (iii) Elaboration of an action plan to address the issue in the municipality.

The work and studies carried out by the members of the WGs were so intense and broad that they can be interpreted even as a kind of continuous education. After six months of work by the WGs, the proposals were forwarded to a committee responsible for preparing the final version of the text. SFB's team organized a seminar, as if it was a large popular assembly, to present the final version of the Plan and to check whether there was a need to include and/or change anything. This seminar was important to get the mobilize the network members and to recognize the work by the members of the WGs.

The next step was to send this collectively written document for approval by the CMDCA as an institutional policy for the city. Since CMDCA had participated in the whole process, from the outset, it knew everything that was happening. To further facilitate discussions at CMDCA, SFB team handed to all board members a printed copy of the PMPI. The approval of the Plan (Annex I) by the Council board took place still in 2013.

As CMDCA is a deliberative council, this approval already guarantees the PMPI as a municipal public policy. However, to be fully recognized by the society in general and by all Council members, the Project team implemented important strategies to empower the CMDCA and the Guardianship Counselors throughout the Project. The objective was to create conditions for the CMDCA to lead the implementation of the Plan, after the end of SFB support. Throughout the Project, and until today, the SFB team actively participates at the CMDCA meetings.

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<sup>9</sup> This name was assigned by the evaluators to facilitate understanding of the case

*We are in all CMDCA meetings as listeners, but at the same time very active, stating our opinions, advising on issues related to infancy, keeping the Plan alive inside that Council (Project representative).*

The mobilization of the network was the Project's most intense process. In addition to the members of the different governmental and civil society organizations involved, the Project created a space for listening to small children. The idea was to enable the PMPI's primary target audience to be heard as well, so that their perspectives could also be included in the final version of the Plan. In this process, which was consolidated in a publication (Annex I), children from different contexts - downtown, peripheral neighborhoods, public and private day care centers - participated in the hearings and enriched the Plan with their different perspectives.

*As they are the primary beneficiaries of this public policy, they also had to say something. The small children also talk about the problems they see in the city. It was one of the coolest things to see how much a three-year-old child has to say. They painted a river in black and when we asked why they did that, they said it was like that, full of trash. (...) If we asked children living downtown about leisure, they would say "the mall", while for others living in different areas was the "soccer field" ... so, children from different places have different views about the city. (Project representative).*

It was in 2015 that the PMPI was forwarded by the Mayor and approved as a law by the City Council<sup>10</sup>. Thus, in addition to being institutional, the Plan was also consolidated as a regulatory policy. To obtain this outcome, the network did an intense work of conversations with the Mayor, with the leadership within the Municipal Secretariat for Education and members of the Municipal Council councilman. It was an effort directed to convince them that the Plan organizes what needs to be done for small children, often requiring only adjustments to existing projects and/or some initiatives that did not necessarily required financial disbursement, but, mainly, political will.

*For example, we put in the Plan that we have to have 100% children enrolled in preschools by 2016. This has to be mandatory; there is a federal law, the National Education Plan, there was a draft constitutional amendment, it has to be done! So there are things that already have the required resources apportioned. (...) We understand the situation of the municipalities; resources are scarce. But there are many things that depend only on political will. For example, one of the actions that was very simple, was about posters with advertisements of children. To include black children too, to think about diversity when it comes to making the posters at school. This is something that just needs will to be put into practice (Project representative).*

The success of this process was very much due to the proximity of the SFB team with the key actors in the city, especially the ones from institutions. Even after the end of the Program, SFB continues to work in Nova Iguaçu on other projects, such as peace-building culture and capacity building for educators and health representatives. So, the SFB does not leave the day-to-day action within the municipality, the same way as the institutions that participated in this Plan will also continue their work there, such as the Forum on the Rights for Children and Adolescents, the Guardianship Counselors Association, and the CMDCA. Although without the support from Instituto C&A it is not possible to hold events and publications, SFB expects the monitoring and evaluation of the Plan will continue.

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<sup>10</sup> The Municipality of Nova Iguaçu approved on 11/24/2015 the Law Bill instituting the Municipal Plan for the Early Childhood of Nova Iguaçu. The Law no. 4,564 / 2015 was sanctioned by the Mayor on 11/21/2015 and published in the Official Acts of the City on 11/27/2015.

*During the implementation of the Project, we have built relationships that allow the Project to be sustainable over time. We (SFB) are a part of the network for everything we have done and participated in; it will be one of the institutions, members of the network, that will be mobilizing people even without the necessary resources (Project representative).*

The PMPI has planned actions until 2022, coinciding with the 200 years of independence of Brazil. The local political situation is a determining factor for the successful implementation of the Plan. The recent municipal elections for the representatives who will govern the city from 2017 to 2020 indicates that there is a good chance there will be an increased support for the implementation of the Plan. The newly elected Deputy Mayor was the councilman who articulated the approval of the PMPI as a law by the City Council.

*The progresses in implementing the Plan in the municipality are incipient. For example, some squares have been improved and include now spaces for small children to play. But when the government do not have the will, more significant changes do not happen ... The city has no tradition in obtaining support from businesses. A new government needs to liaise with private companies so they start making investments to improve the city, especially in the area of early childhood. (Network representative)*

### **3. Knowledge production and dissemination as a mobilization strategy**

The network produced many important publications, such as the Municipal Plan for Early Childhood, the Municipality Early Childhood Diagnosis, the Nova Iguaçu Map of Children and Adolescents Rights (DCA Map)<sup>11</sup>, the OPINE<sup>12</sup> (Nova Iguaçu Early Childhood in Evidence Budget), the Childhood Map of Nova Iguaçu, among others (Annex I).

*Talking about the budget, something we thought would draw attention, was the thing people liked the least to participate. Discuss numbers, things they do not understand. When we did activities involving children, they mobilized a lot more people. (Project representative).*

With the publications produced by the Project, talking and reflecting about early childhood started to become part of the city agenda. This was seen by the different actors, even the ones working on children and adolescents' rights, as a novelty. Throughout its reflections and productions, the Project was able to bring together, through the Working Groups, for instance, some key actors that did not talk to each other before. During the development of OPINE, representatives from all municipal secretariats had an effective participation and realized how little was spent on early childhood.

*Very good, a real plan! Three guidelines need to be followed: diagnosis, budgeting, and see what can be done... Budgeting is the hardest; people do not realize there is a budget for children. Municipal level data is also very hard to obtain. (external key informant)*

For producing the DCA Map and the Early Childhood Diagnosis, the SFB team supported the CMDCA counselors to compile all the necessary information from Census data and from the various secretariats (health, sports and leisure, social assistance, among others). The data was not systematized in many cases

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<sup>11</sup> The DCA Map is an online tool created by the Oficina da Imagem, with Instituto C&A's support within the Networks and Alliances Program's first cycle, which lists ten themes related to children and adolescents. CMDCA feeds the system with the needed information to produce a report: the DCA Map.

<sup>12</sup> OPINE consisted in analyzing the 2014 budget, verifying how much was planned to be spent in early childhood, based on the budget details. All expenditures related to early childhood (EC) were found and differentiated between exclusive and non-exclusive expenses, i.e., that also benefited other age groups. In 2015, a balance sheet was drawn up, identifying what had actually been executed from that budget.

and accessing them was a major challenge. At the same time, it was a way of getting people to think about this information, both about their production and systematization and about their contents. The idea is that the commission created to monitor the implementation of the Plan will keep updating those data until 2022.

*For example, at the end of last year / beginning of this year we sent a letter to all the secretariats, but not all of them have answered yet. So we're still in this process, but we think it's permanent. A permanent process of knowing what actions are been taken. The big thing for us when we think about communication is not letting the Plan die; bringing it to people's minds, to people's lives (Project representative).*

#### **4. Networking communication: A political tool**

Communication and dissemination are transversal to the work implemented by the network throughout. Keeping all stakeholders involved during the whole process of designing and implementing the Plan was, and continues to be, very successful. There is a group of about 50 people that participated from the beginning and continues to participate. Ensuring this level of participation has been a great challenge. In Nova Iguaçu there are 35 municipal councils, five guardianship councils and several fora; the same people end up participating in various of these organizations. Maintaining the participation and mobilization of these people has taken hard work, which has been successfully achieved by the SFB team. The communication plan was divided into three main blocks: "proximity communication", "institutional communication" and "production and dissemination of materials". The preparation of the communication plan was the result of a training carried out under the Networks and Alliances Program.

"Proximity communication" encompasses the following strategies:

- Robust mailing list, including everyone who has already participated in some network activities, including events, to be invited to the next activities.
- Delivery in person of the products created within the realm of the network to key stakeholders.
- Mobilization to events through emailing, followed by phone calls and WhatsApp messages.
- Systematic dialogue with CMDCA through participation in meetings and validation of documents/proposals, creating an area of articulation and incidence.

In "institutional communication", SFB, with important support from Instituto C&A, used its extensive experience to create different communication tools such as banners, table covers, posters, and Facebook page. Network members would disseminate those communication pieces within their institutions. For instance, the poster "Eu faço parte"<sup>13</sup> (Annex I) was hanged by many of the SGDCA key actors in their institutions. Achievements and outcomes of the network have been communicated in social networks and promoted events.

In the "production and dissemination of materials", as already mentioned, many relevant publications were produced (Annex I). Meetings were held for releasing each publication. Those meetings were seeing as a way to provide feedback to participants as well as a mobilization strategy, since they were produced collectively along with CMDCA and some of the most active network participants. The event to launch the PMPI, for example, was in the City Council. The network invited the municipal secretariats teams and the Sub-Secretariat of the Municipal Councils of Nova Iguaçu, and all SGDCA's actors. In these events, the Project team presented the product that was being launched and invited an external expert to debate a theme related to the publication. The SFB team broadly disseminated the press-releases for each event, by

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<sup>13</sup> "I'm part of it"

sending them to the network member institutions, to the National Early Childhood Network, to the local press and publishing them on the Project's and SFB's Facebook page. Many of these events were replicated/shared/repeated later on by other organizations (Annex II). The meetings gave visibility to the publications and promoted the involvement of actors, consequently, helping to keep the network and its operation alive. This is a strategy of simultaneously producing knowledge, communicating and doing advocacy.

In addition to strengthening the network, the success of the network's communication strategies also gave visibility to SFB as an institution. During the implementation of the Project, SFB became a reference for other municipalities willing to develop their plans for early childhood. They were invited to share their experience of collective construction of a PMPI in various events, mainly by RNPI and its members, such as the UNICEF. The local government (Nova Iguaçu's Municipality) and also from neighboring municipalities, such as Queimados and Duque de Caxias, have also invited network representatives to share their experience.

Instituto C&A also recognized the network's success in this regard and invited SFB to facilitate, together with the Instituto's communication team, one of the Program's capacity building meetings focused specifically on communication. This decision was made even though there were other networks supported by the Program that were specialists in communication.

## **5. Proactive capacity building fosters mobilization**

The capacity building of the SGDCA actors was an important component, mainly during the third year of the Project. In 2015, three major seminars were held in the areas of education, health and social services, which covered the thirteen themes of the PMPI. The idea of segmenting the seminars in different themes was a strategy to attract wider audiences to engage them in the actions proposed by the PMPI. The audience for these seminars were the SGDCA actors, especially those working in delivering services to the public, such as school teachers and social workers, for example. Although the invitations have privileged the audiences connected to the specific theme of each seminar, some teachers, for example, participated in the three seminars and the intersectoral discussion was highly valued. There was a limit of 50 people that could participate in each seminar, given restrictions on space and financial resources. However, the seminars ended up including almost 70 people each, since there was great interest in participating from the actors.

These seminars lasted one day. In the morning, they started with a presentation of the Project and the legal framework related to the theme in question. Then, an external guest contextualized the theme. In the afternoon, the audience was divided into groups and discussed ways to implement the priority actions of the PMPI. Finally, a sketch comedy was collectively created, inspired on the themes that were debated, and performed by a group of professional actors, which always helped to highlight the main points seized that day in a playful and funny way.

The seminar had, therefore, a capacity building component and, at the same time, was structured to produce proposals for action plans to implement the PMPI. From the proposals raised in each group, those responsible for each activity were identified and this information was consolidated in an action plan. The plans were then taken for evaluation by the CMDCA and the Commission for Follow-up, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Plan (COAMA). The Commission then, with the support of SFB, prepared letters for each of the secretariats with the activities that should be under their responsibility. These letters were approved at the CMDCA plenary and sent to the secretariats. This was a practice adopted in previous years when the

information was collected for creating the products and also when implementing some actions forwarded by COAMA, such as the "Semana do Brincar" (Play Week).

*In those three seminars, we listened quite often "this plan is different because it is not just staying as words in a piece of paper". They all got so excited, they stayed there all day, working hard and left with the feeling that they were doing something to make the plan a reality. (network representative)*

Making proposed actions actually become a reality along the way injected people with courage. These people were disbelieving from previous experiences with other projects that never made it "out of a written paper". The project's monitoring and evaluation strategies were very important to keep the flame alive and to reduce the risk of the PMPI to become a dusty document in a hidden bookshelf.

The culmination event organized by the different actors of the network around the "Semana do Brincar", which was one of the actions included in the PMPI, is another important example. The event, which involved the secretaries of education, sports and leisure, brought the children to the center of the city just to play. This initiative is part of the World Play Week, which already exists in cities of several countries and also in other Brazilian municipalities. The Project encouraged schools, the library and health units to engage in activities that involved playing with children, giving visibility to the idea of children's "right to play". A brochure on playing activities from children was developed and launched during that event (Annex I).

The Project has also implemented other capacity building activities. This Project component worked so well that in 2016 some of the leaders of the network were invited to provide training for the "Conselheiros Tutelares"<sup>14</sup>. This training is being funded by the extra one-year support provided by Instituto C&A, along with funds from the Municipal Fund for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, approved by the CMDCA and passed on by the Educational Foundation of Nova Iguaçu. This training is also understood as a key aspect for the sustainability of the PMPI's implementation, due to the relevance of these actors for the success of the Plan.

*The Project was, for the whole time, a continuous capacity building process without us realizing it. (Project representative)*

## **6. Network management and key actors**

The Guide for the Implementation of Municipal Plans for Early Childhood, published by RNPI, served as a guideline for the preparation of the Nova Iguaçu PMPI. The thematic WGs, made up of specialists and people interested in each of the themes, were responsible for (i) systematizing the existing legal framework, (ii) making a diagnosis of the situation of the municipality and (iii) creating an action plan to face the problems found for each theme. At the same time, a PMPI Commission was created, which was responsible for leading the processes along with the Project's team, forming a kind of an executive secretariat. This Commission was composed of some institutions with strong leadership, such as CMDCA, NUCREP and Forum for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (Forum DCA). The Commission prepared the presentation, introduction, principles and guidelines of the PMPI and also made the decision to name all those who participated in the elaboration of the Plan as authors.

CMDCA is a body composed of councilors representing the government and civil society in equal parts, whose objective is to define policies related to children and adolescents. CMDCA has a central role in the Project because it is deliberative. When it approved the Plan, it approved a public policy. The resolution of

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<sup>14</sup> Executive members of the local councils to protect the rights of children and adolescents



CMDCA that approved the PMPI also created a Comissão de Acompanhamento, Monitoramento e Avaliação do Plano<sup>15</sup> (COAMA).

Once the Plan was completed, the network no longer had RNPI's Guide as a reference, since it was used only to help with the preparation of the Plan and not for its follow-up. From this point on, all the strategies of the network began to be originally conceived by the group. COAMA is a temporary commission, valid until 2022, comprised of representatives from the government and the civil society (in equal parts) within the CMDCA membership. It is open to anyone representing an organization that might be relevant to the cause, such as the Forum DCA, District Attorney's Office, the City's legislative power, and other city councils. This was one of the strategies adopted to contribute to the sustainability of the Project after the end of the Instituto C&A's support.

*This [sustainability], we have no control over. We have an approved law and a commission approved until 2022. We must direct our activities in the next years to the right people, who will continue in this network, regardless of the circumstances, so that the Project remains alive (Project representative).*

The Commission and SFB met regularly, especially during the second year of the Project, to create the various materials produced by the network. Since COAMA's role is to follow-up, monitor and evaluate the PMPI, it was the one that took official documents to the municipal secretariats and sought needed information and made them available to the CMDCA. COAMA meetings would initially be every two or three months. However, due to the intensity of the activities, the Commission decided to meet monthly.

The Secretaria Municipal de Educação (Municipal Education Secretariat) was one of the most involved and committed to the PMPI. Many people from the technical staff of that secretariat participated effectively. Few people from the other secretariats had an active participation in the network; there were some secretariats, such as the one for Social Services that demanded a great deal of effort in order for them to get involved.

The turnover at CMDCA and COAMA teams was a challenge for managing the preparation and implementation of the PMPI. SFB team made a special effort to train the representatives of each institution that entered COAMA, in order to strengthen it and ensure that it worked well. Some links in the network also presented many obstacles to mobilization, as was the case, for example, of the District Attorney's Office. Although it supported the network by providing some infrastructure, their participation in network activities was very limited.

For managing the Project, the SFB team held weekly meetings for planning, follow-up and ongoing evaluations of implemented actions. At the end of each year, the team produced an extended evaluation process with CMDCA that also anticipated the actions to be implemented in the following year.

The team was composed of three people with complementary skills: (i) coordinator, (ii) mobilizer and (iii) communication specialist. This division made it easier to get the job done, but in practice, people often accumulated functions. If on the one hand this may indicate the need for a larger team, on the other hand, it shows that the team had a collective spirit and was very cohesive. The people on the team are proactive, both to offer solutions and to keep up to date on key issues. These are essential characteristics for good network leaders.

*Having a good relationship is super important; flexibility to be able to adapt when something does not work (Project representative).*

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<sup>15</sup> Committee to Follow-up, Monitor and Evaluate the Plan

The team members know the spaces and people of the municipality, and have good interactions with them. In addition, they worked full time for the Project and were located in Nova Iguaçu. This was essential for the success of the Project, as this proximity helps with mobilization.

It is worth highlighting the fundamental and decisive role played by the Project coordinator. In addition to the characteristics described above, he has expertise in public policies related to early childhood. Besides being a resident of Nova Iguaçu, he also has a significant trajectory in working with social movements in the struggle for the rights of children and adolescents. Furthermore, he has worked at SFB for almost 30 years and knows the institution deeply.

## **7. Main impacts of the network**

The main impacts of the network and the factors that facilitated or hindered such impacts will be presented below.

1. *Creation of the PMPI and of a monitoring system for its implementation:* The Plan was the first of its kind in the State of Rio de Janeiro and has been used as a reference by RNPI and the UNICEF to guide other municipalities (e.g. Duque de Caxias, Queimados, and also municipalities from other states such as Espírito Santo and Pernambuco) that want to develop a complete plan for early childhood. Even though the Plan became a municipal law, its implementation has been slow and depends heavily on the political will of the local government. The newly elected Vice-Mayor provides hope for an increased implementation of the Plan for the next four years.
2. *Increased visibility for early childhood in the municipality:* It happened due to the network's production of diagnoses, collection and dissemination of strategic data as well as capacity building of key players. By developing the materials collectively, the network helped with the systematization of the information and people start to think about them. When OPINE was released, for example, it was not known that so little was spent from the City budget on early childhood; no one had ever looked at this data. This finding was an important for the municipality as a whole.

*No one looked at these children. We did not have data, so people started to get excited about looking for data. It was very difficult, because no one created data specifically on early childhood. This contributed to the mobilization, because the theme is very important. (project representative)*

3. *Change in the gaze of the Guardianship Councils for Early Childhood:* The Guardianship Councils are taking a more differentiated look at the age groups comprising small children; they have begun efforts to send reports about their small children's cases every three months to the CMDCA. It is not an online system yet, such as the one being implemented at the national level (SIPIA - Sistema de Informação para Infância e Adolescência<sup>16</sup>), but it has already been a significant progress. In addition to the data, the guardianship counsellors asked SFB to provide them with training on early childhood. This is an important result to keep the network alive throughout the implementation of the PMPI.

*We are still in the process; some councils send them regularly, others need to be pressured, but we started to see this data as an important thing. This monitoring is the great thing about the Plan. The great result of this Plan was the involvement of people. They came very willingly to be part of this process. (Project representative)*

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<sup>16</sup> Information System for Infancy and Adolescence

4. *Increased dialogue and connections among key partners:* As mentioned earlier, the network has made it possible for many municipal secretariats and also civil society organizations, that did not communicate before, to start talking and devising strategies to work together on early childhood initiatives.
5. *CMDCA empowerment:* Organizations that deal with problems related to early childhood on a regular basis, especially the CMDCA, have been empowered by the process. Today it is a very lively network; a network that did not exist, but now it is formed. Having a better structured CMDCA is an essential factor for the maintenance of the network, given its deliberative function on policies for children and adolescents in the municipality.

An important factor for the following changes is the political decision of specific people and institutions. The way the processes were conducted in the Project stimulated people to get involved and implement the PMPI in their institutions. Therefore, the main function of the network in the following results was to put the problems up for discussions based on the performed diagnoses and systematized data.

6. *Reopening of the maternity hospital Mariana Bulhões:* The need to reopen this maternity hospital was included as a priority in the PMPI, because when the diagnosis was made, it identified that infant mortality in Nova Iguaçu was increasing, while it decreased in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This maternity specializes in the care of high-risk pregnant women. According to the Project team, the reopening of this equipment has already contributed, to some extent, to a decrease in infant mortality, although there is still no concrete study to validate this claim.
7. *Creation of children registration offices:* With the creation of new registration offices at the larger public hospital in the City (Hospital da Posse) and in the maternity hospital Mariana Bulhões, the chances of not officially registering children born in the municipality have greatly decreased.
8. *Creation of the Semana do Brincar:* The Semana do Brincar, also included as a priority for the PMPI, was incorporated into the official calendar of the municipality and has already been implemented by some municipal secretariats, such as education, culture and sport and leisure, especially in schools. Some of the school principals that participated in the Project's education seminar in 2015, have led discussions with their teachers about the importance of playing with the children. Through these activities and the support from the network, the Semana do Brincar had become embedded with those institutions.
9. *Creation of a specific space for small children in the municipal library:* A new space including books for small children have been created in the City's municipal library.
10. *Creation of Brinquedotecas (children's playrooms):* Legislation mandates that places that offer services to small children should have adequate spaces to welcome them. By consolidating a legal framework on Early Childhood and by establishing priority actions, the PMPI pressed for its implementation in social services equipment (CRAS and CREAS) and in the Hospital da Posse.

Nova Iguaçu has approximately 80,000 children between 0 and 6 years-old. The implementation of the PMPI has benefited some of them and has the potential to benefit the great majority of those children, especially the most vulnerable ones.

## **8. Important lessons to Instituto C&A and C&A Foundation**

The main lessons drawn from this case study that might be relevant to other processes involving network actions include the ones mentioned below.

1. To increase the chances for success of a network initiative, it is important that there is already a positive environment and a previous experience of collaborative work involving different strategic partners.
2. The participation of organizations that make up a network in other existing networks enhances the work, for it contributes to the dissemination, visibility and projection of actions and helps to identify potential new strategic partners.
3. A network works much better with the presence of a network animator, a function that can be fulfilled by one or more people.
4. Prioritizing communication through different creative strategies throughout the process is essential to maintain the stakeholders' mobilization in the long run and ensure good results.
5. Documenting processes and producing materials is very important to ensure the stimulus, cohesion and mobilization of the network.
6. Investing in capacity building of network members is strategic to strengthen the implementation of actions, as well as to ensure future sustainability of the network.
7. Periodic monitoring is essential to obtain constant feedback for improving the network's work.
8. Identify a relevant topic that is fairly unknown to the public, guarantees the identity of a network and enhances its connections.
9. Networking is neither a linear nor a controllable process. There are actions and themes that elicit greater interest and you need creativity to produce effective mobilization.
10. An informal network, without an institutionalization or even a name, can be very successful, because it emerges from the actors' willingness to share ideas, values and bring about change.

The following are some lessons learned about the strategies adopted by Instituto C&A in the Networks and Alliances Program that have helped to ensure more successful work and should be maintained in future programs involving networks that Instituto C&A or C&A Foundation may support.

11. In addition to financial support, provide technical support and be very close to the daily life of the supported projects.
12. Create spaces for capacity building of leaders from the different networks that comprise the Program. Use capacity building spaces to: (a) provide networks with technical training on important issues; (b) facilitate exchanges among the different models adopted by the supported networks; and (c) create moments for critical reflection on the development of networks and the Program as a whole.
13. Carry out monitoring processes for the Program that are focused on supporting the improvement of actions implementation or on the formulation of innovative strategies to deal with new situations posed by the context. Monitoring should not be based simply on data collection on pre-established performance indicators.
14. Support programs long enough for them to experiment, make mistakes, learn and produce meaningful results. Three years seems like the minimum time required for programs with this level of complexity to be properly developed. Annual approval of projects' budgets should be adopted as good practice to prevent the continuity of projects that may have lost their relevance, supporting basis or feasibility.

## **CASE STUDY: Annex I: Links for accessing network publications**

1. Plano Municipal pela Primeira Infância de Nova Iguaçu

<http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Plano-Municipal-pela-Primeira-Infância-de-Nova-Iguaçu.pdf>

2. Olhar da Criança sobre o Mundo

<http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/O-Olhar-da-Criança-sobre-o-Mundo-SFB.pdf>

3. Instrumento de Diagnóstico Situacional da Primeira Infância de Nova Iguaçu

[http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Instrumento\\_Diagnóstico\\_Situacional\\_PMPI\\_Final\\_12112014.pdf](http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Instrumento_Diagnóstico_Situacional_PMPI_Final_12112014.pdf)

4. Mapa da Infância de Nova Iguaçu

[http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Mapa\\_da\\_Infância\\_Final\\_Web.pdf](http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Mapa_da_Infância_Final_Web.pdf)

5. Mapa dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente de Nova Iguaçu

[http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Relatório\\_Final\\_MapadCA\\_NI\\_12112014.pdf](http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Relatório_Final_MapadCA_NI_12112014.pdf)

6. OPINE: Orçamento Primeira Infância em Evidência de Nova Iguaçu (2014)

[http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Opine\\_Balanco\\_Despesas\\_2014\\_Final.pdf](http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Opine_Balanco_Despesas_2014_Final.pdf)

7. OPINE: Orçamento Primeira Infância em Evidência de Nova Iguaçu (2015)

[http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Opine\\_2015\\_Final.pdf](http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Opine_2015_Final.pdf)

8. Cartaz eu faço parte

[http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Cartaz\\_PMPI\\_Eu\\_Faço\\_Parte\\_Final.pdf](http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Cartaz_PMPI_Eu_Faço_Parte_Final.pdf)

9. Revivendo as brincadeiras

<http://www.sfb.org.br/site2015/br/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Cartilhas-das-Brincadeiras-BD.pdf>

## **CASE STUDY: Annex II: Links to articles published on the Project**

<http://blog-ferreirinha.blogspot.com.br/2013/04/encontro-do-plano-municipal-pela.html>

<http://www.noticiasdenovaiguacu.com/2015/12/avaliacao-do-projeto-construindo-em-rede-plano-municipal-pela-primeira-infancia-de-nova-iguacu.html>

[https://www.unicef.org/brazil/pt/media\\_25333.htm](https://www.unicef.org/brazil/pt/media_25333.htm)

<http://www.avante.org.br/plano-municipal-pela-primeira-infancia-de-nova-iguacu-ja-contabiliza-acoes-implementadas/>

<http://primeirainfancia.org.br/plano-municipal-pela-primeira-infancia-de-nova-iguacu-e-aprovado-em-sessao-plenaria-da-camara-municipal/>

<http://primeirainfancia.org.br/cmdca-de-nova-iguacu-apresenta-o-mapa-dos-direitos-da-crianca-e-do-adolescente/>

<http://oficinadeimagens.org.br/nova-iguacu-utiliza-mapadca-para-produzir-diagnostico-das-politicas-publicas-da-infancia/>

<http://primeirainfancia.org.br/mapa-da-infancia-de-nova-iguacu-rj-e-lancado/>

<http://primeirainfancia.org.br/cmdca-de-nova-iguacu-apresenta-o-mapa-dos-direitos-da-crianca-e-do-adolescente/>

<http://primeirainfancia.org.br/cmdca-de-nova-iguacu-rj-valida-documentos-orcamentarios-do-pmpi/>

<http://blog-ferreirinha.blogspot.com.br/2014/11/mapa-dos-direitos-da-crianca-e-do.html>

<http://www.avante.org.br/apos-ter-pmpi-aprovado-nova-iguacu-parte-para-controle-do-orcamento-publico/>

<http://primeirainfancia.org.br/orcamento-primeira-infancia-em-evidencia-e-apresentado-em-nova-iguacu/>

<http://primeirainfancia.org.br/cartilha-traz-registro-de-brincadeiras-das-criancas-de-nova-iguacu/>

<http://www.crianca.mppr.mp.br/modules/noticias/makepdf.php?storyid=1499>

<https://catraquinha.catracalivre.com.br/geral/defender/indicacao/cartilha-traz-registro-de-brincadeiras-das-criancas-de-nova-iguacu/>

[http://www.novaiguacu.rj.gov.br/web2/pagina.php?abrir=exibe\\_noticia\\_principal.php&idnoticia\\_principal=935](http://www.novaiguacu.rj.gov.br/web2/pagina.php?abrir=exibe_noticia_principal.php&idnoticia_principal=935)