

Community Impact Case Study FY21

Ensina Brasil: Community-led ecosystem mapping to prioritize solutions to issues facing Caruaru's students

In an effort to mobilize diverse stakeholders around the initiatives most likely to expand opportunity to children in Caruaru, Ensina Brasil is undertaking an intentional, networked ecosystem mapping process. The organization has recruited a core team of local leaders who will leverage their own communities to develop a shared understanding of the biggest challenges that students in Caruaru face, and to ultimately co-create a set of solutions that will be piloted and collectively executed during the next phase of the project.



The Basics

Caruaru is the second largest city in Pernambuco state, and is home to approximately 360,000 inhabitants. Despite enormous development in the last 15 years, the city still has a considerable social and economic disparity; 68% of its population survives on less than one minimum wage income, and the richest 20% of the city's population makes up 58% of the municipality's annual earnings. The city represents an important medical, academic, cultural and tourist hub of inland regions for neighborhood states and cities; Caruaru is known worldwide for its local cultural heritage, which attracts large numbers of tourists to the city every year.

Ensina Brasil has been working in partnership with the local government in Caruaru for 4 years. They have placed more than 80 fellows in 15 public schools across the city, and with 40 fellows currently teaching in classrooms and 7

alumni working in roles within the education sector, including local government. Ensina Brasil has also developed more than 40 projects alongside the local community, including the first education-focused TEDx conference in inland Brazil to feature community leaders as speakers.

The Approach

Ensina Brasil recently decided to pursue a structured process of uniting different community actors to better understand and address the root causes of inequity for students in Caruaru. The aim of the project is to leverage different community members' voices to collectively prioritize the biggest issues facing students in Caruaru, and to co-create solutions to these challenges. The project is also designed in a way to simultaneously build leadership strength and investment through a participatory process.

Ensina Brasil began by identifying a core team of community leaders and inviting these individuals to tap into their own networks in order to explore the barriers and opportunities in Caruaru's context. The organization regularly convenes the core team to discuss their emerging learnings and to explore potential methodologies - such as systems mapping or design thinking - for eventually co-creating solutions to priority issues. Ensina Brasil's vision is that the project will ultimately yield an action plan with 2-3 solutions that the community can pilot in 2022, with ongoing engagement from local Ensina Brasil alumni who are continuing to work in the Caruaru ecosystem.

The Choices

In order to ensure the success of the project, Ensina Brasil is taking the following steps:

- 1 Leveraging local leadership networks.** By mapping the landscape in a way that relies on existing networks that support children in Caruaru, the organization is broadening their reach beyond their immediate existing allies and reaching a wider, more diverse set of voices to develop a truly collective understanding of inequity and potential solutions.
- 2 Leveraging alumni networks.** In the early phases of the project, 3 alumni from the 2018 cohort - all of whom currently work in educational institutions in Caruaru - have come forward to express their energy and enthusiasm for supporting the implementation of community-prioritized solutions
- 3 Dedicating organizational capacity towards enabling community dialogue.** The core team of local community leaders is supported by an Ensina Brasil staff member - an alum of the program - whose role is to support on project execution and facilitation strong communication across the multiple stakeholders involved in this work.

The Impact

With the project currently halfway through its first year, the core project team is making progress in mapping stakeholders and pursuing conversations to deepen their collective understanding of the root causes of inequity in Caruaru. The team recently held a workshop that brought together 17 stakeholders to debate causes and effects of the factors that affect the system; after the workshop, members of the project team followed up with 6 additional stakeholders to include their perspectives. Based on this, the team is in the process of building the systemic map, which will serve as a visual tool to tell the stories of the educational system in Caruaru and to discover levers and

opportunities for action. This visual will be presented in a follow-up workshop in November to build on initial conversations with the 23 stakeholders who have been interviewed to date.

The Insights

- **Community partnership** -Ensina Brasil believes that sustainable impact will only be achieved through deep community partnership, and that this partnership must begin from the very inception of any project or approach
- **Critical mass** - Ensina Brasil is also betting on growing a critical mass of leaders throughout Caruaru, both through clustering the placement of fellows in the region *and* through building their connections with other aligned leaders and projects throughout the community