

WE ARE ALL PORTO ALEGRE

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Abstract

Collaborative Governance is a government arrangement that involves stakeholders for collective consensus-driven decision-making and usually intends to implement public policies. Like those in cities looking to become smart, contemporary problems are often complex and require the implementation of structures that aim at cooperation to engage different actors, so decision-making is more consistent and long-term. The We are all Porto Alegre program, in the southern Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, applied the concepts of Collaborative Governance to address the complex problem of the informal recycling collection. It was affecting the informal recycling collectors' quality of life and was a concern for citizens, provided their environmental and social awareness. We are All Porto Alegre objective was to create a Public Policy for the gradual removal of informal recycling collection by human or animal traction vehicles on the city streets, creating work alternatives for collectors.

Keywords

Collaborative Governance, Decision-making, Complex Problems.

1. Introduction

In the 1990s, Porto Alegre was one of the first cities in Brazil to implement the public selective garbage collection system, gradually extending this system to the entire city. On the federal level, the National Solid Waste Policy - established by Law 12.305/2010 - fostered the creation of mechanisms to expand the recycling process and support informal garbage collectors through a reverse logistics policy to be established in seven industrial sectors. Simultaneously, the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) made available non-reimbursable resources for the support of informal garbage collectors and for the strengthening of municipal selective garbage collection in the host cities of the 2014 World Cup. The City Hall had made a preliminary

diagnosis on the conditions of recycling centers, in a partnership with Bank of Brazil and with resources from the Inter-American Bank of Development (IDB).

Based on that, it was possible to adopt a public policy of social inclusion in the area of recycling called Productive Inclusion for Informal Garbage Collectors of Recyclable Material Program – We are all Porto Alegre, effective the beginning of 2010, under the pressure of the legislation deadline that instituted the gradual removal of human traction vehicles (HTV) and animal traction vehicles (ATV) from the city streets. The Program was formalized in December 2012, with the signing of the Cooperation Agreement among the Porto Alegre City Hall, Braskem (private sponsor), and BNDES, being led by the City Hall. The agreement also had the participation of private companies, cooperatives, social institutions, universities, associations, and social movements, all of them representing the society. One of the actions was the development of job positions and income alternatives to the HTV and ATV informal garbage collectors, as a result of the gradual reduction of these vehicles in the city according to the Law 10531/2008. The legislation required carters and carriage drivers' formal license, new professional qualification, and their inclusion in the formal market. It also established mandatory requirements for horse care. Among the job and income alternatives offered through professional qualification actions, there were positions in the sorting units of the municipality of Porto Alegre, the operations responsible for recycling activities of the waste collected by the public selective garbage collection. When the program was launched, in 2012, it was established an 8-year adaptation period to totally cease the circulation of HTV and ATV in all areas of the city.

In addition to the waste collectors who worked in the streets of the city, the Program was intended to include the entire solid waste recycling chain, covering collection, sorting, and commercialization. For this reason, it adopted initiatives to expand and qualify the implementation of popular sorting centers, which receive materials from the public selective garbage collection, as well as to promote environmental educational actions.

The We Are All Porto Alegre program implemented a public policy based on Collaborative Governance focusing on the resilience strengthening by developing three

projects, namely Professional Inclusion of Recycling Collectors, Restructuring of Sorting Units, and Environmental Education.

The goal of this case is to present We Are All Porto Alegre to discuss the smart environment and smart governance and the social and institutional sustainability.

2. Context/Problem

2.1 The city of Porto Alegre

Porto Alegre (which means “Joyful Harbor”) is the capital and largest city of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. Its population of around 1.5 million inhabitants makes it the twelfth most populous city in Brazil and its metropolitan area has 4.5 million. The city is the southernmost state capital city. The Rio Grande do Sul, a state about twice the size of Greece, has borders with Uruguay and Argentina, and it is 1.5 hours by plane from Sao Paulo, Brazilian major economic city, and 3 hours from Brasilia, the country capital. It is also a center for gauchos (the popular name for natives of the state) history and culture, famous for its “churrasco” (barbecue) and “chimarrão” (a strong and hot tea prepared with a common herb from southern South America).

Porto Alegre was founded in 1769 by a set of immigrants from the Azores, Portugal. The majority of the population (72%) is of European descent, mainly from Portugal, Italy and Germany – the two last ones resultant of massive migration of Europeans to the Americas since late 1800s until the end of World War II. Around 10% of its population is black, other 10% interracial, 3% Amerindian and 5% others.

The city lies on the eastern bank of the Guaiba Lake (usually referred as Guaiba River), a giant waterbody navigable by even large ships. It is a very green city, with hot summers and cold winters.

In past years, Porto Alegre hosted the World Social Forum several times, an initiative of several non-governmental organizations. The city became worldwide famous for being the first city that implemented participatory budgeting in 1989. Since 2000, Porto Alegre also hosts one of the world's largest free software events, called FISL.

It is a relevant industrial and service center. Some of the top Brazilian universities, such as Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre (UFCSPA) and Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) are there. Innovation is at the top of the agenda, having the city two major technological parks, Zenit and TECNPU, being the latter one of the best in the country, according to the tech parks national association (ANPROTEC).

In 2010, the year of the last national census, the literacy rate was 97%. The high quality of life is one of the city's main features.

2.2 Implementation Plan for the We Are All Porto Alegre Program

Aiming at urban modernization and improving circulation in the city, as well as advancing strategies to prepare the city for the events of the World Cup in 2014, the managers of the Porto Alegre City Hall decided to cease the circulation of garbage collection carts in the urban areas, in compliance with the Law 10531/2008. They also decided to change the artisanal stage of the waste sorting system, mostly done in garbage collectors' houses or in public areas, and to invest in new partly automated waste sorting units. The former garbage collectors were also trained to work in the whole recycling process, so they were able to gradually leave the garbage collection in the streets. These two steps of the program helped reach scale of processed volumes and form consortia and networks for materials processing and commercialization.

The approval of Law 10531/2008 and the creation of the Executive Committee of the Program for the Gradual Reduction of Animal Traction Vehicles and Human Traction Vehicles (Decree 16638/2010) require a formal project specifying financing sources, management, operational structure, physical-financial schedule, and intervention methodology.

The project under the contract between the Porto Alegre City Hall and BNDES was initially called Porto Alegre Productive Inclusion Program for Recyclable Material Garbage Collectors and Selective Collection. It was developed between December 2011 and June 2012 by the Southern Brazil Recycling Consortium (Consórcio Recicla Brasil) consortium of actors with an expertise in waste management and inclusion of vulnerable populations. The program aimed to promote the productive inclusion of garbage collectors and the restructuring of the sorting units in Porto Alegre. The work took place over 26 (twenty-six) months involving secretariats and departments of the City Hall, the BNDES as the financing agent, Non-Governmental Organizations that are specialized in approaching and serving the population of recycling collectors and sorting centers, in addition to various social and community leaders, private entities and garbage collectors, for whom the policy was intended.

For the execution of the project, an agreement was established, and a contract signed between Braskem, the City Hall and the Southern Brazil Recycling Consortium, linked to the Municipal Office for Political Coordination and Local Governance. It gave rise to the Productive Inclusion Program and a new public policy was instituted. A model of integrated and participatory local governance was applied where all agents had shared responsibilities and motivations, in which the authority and responsibility for decision-making depended on an agency, in this case, the City Hall, which was responsible for informing or consulting other stakeholders, during the planning and implementation of initiatives (BORRINI et al., 2013).

2.3 Premises of the We are All Porto Alegre Program

The main premise of the program was to create work alternatives, considering the gradual reduction of HTV and ATV. Other premises were to approach the recycle collectors in the city streets, offering individual and personalized service and referral, to qualify the network of popular sheds for sorting selective garbage, and to offer legal and institutional support increasing productive capacity and scale. The program mainly focuses on increasing income and popular education as a productive unit, moving from the social assistance policy to an economic and social development one.

The Program had two action strategies, described in Table 1.

Table 1 - Action strategies of the We are All Porto Alegre Program

Garbage Selection Units	Human Traction Vehicles and Animal Traction Vehicles
Diagnose popular selection and sorting centers current situation Identify key finance demands Scale the production system Incubate the recycle collectors' association Create commercialization policies Identify successful cases	Registration and feedback Field approach, bonding, and adherence Personalized tracking/monitoring Identification of skills Training and scholarships Financial compensation for carts and horses Access to transversal public policies

Source: Voigt (2016)

In order to carry out these strategies, 63 activities and 79 management goals were developed. Item 4 details how these goals were put into practice.

3. Dilemma

The living conditions of the recycling collectors was a complex problem that had to be addressed in the program We are All Porto Alegre. These families made a living out of garbage collection, which was also a degrading job. This activity at that time involved garbage selection at informal selection units or at the collectors' houses, leading families to literally live in the middle of the garbage, not to mention the use of heavy human-powered carts pulled up and down the city, very often with their kids inside. Figure 1 illustrates the previous situation of recycling collectors in the city of Porto Alegre.



Figure 1 – Informal recycle collection before We are All Porto Alegre Program



Source: Gaúcha ZH (2016)

A collaboration network was established so that the public agency, in this case, Porto Alegre City Hall, working together with other public and private organizations developed and implemented the public policy, as recommended of Ulibarri and Scott (2017).

Based on the formulation of managerial strategies, activities, and goals, Morse & Stephens (2012) emphasize that the process must be initiated with a central group of stakeholders committed to work together. As soon as the partners decide on the results and strategies, the collaborative process moves to the implementation phase, involving a variety of components of mutual support, and agreements and plans are made. Therefore, the program defines those responsible for governance functions and actions to consolidate an integrated support network, Aiming continuous improvement, seminars and executive committee meetings, as well as the structuring of the external evaluation process and the operation of the integrated communication plan governance were organized.

4. Case development

4.1 Program Governance Structure

Considering the risks that could affect the governance structure proposed for the program, an Executive Committee was implemented in February 2013, as well as the management mechanisms of this committee, whose objective was to guarantee the implementation of the program, analyzing the progress of the activities following the established schedule. The committee's main task was to promote strategic direction and alignment for all program initiatives. This committee exercised the role of institutional representation of the program, seeking for building and strengthening alliances and for synergy with other government agencies and private entities (businesses and third sector) to expand technical and financial resources for the projects. The main tasks of the executive committee were:

- a) Convene governance meetings ordinarily and extraordinarily;
- b) Establish the team that should assume the General Coordination of the Program;
- c) Articulate the Support Network to share the challenges and achievements;
- d) Monitor the actions of the program and monitor the performance indicators;
- e) Deliberate on changes in the scope of the project, when necessary;
- f) Promote alignment between government guidelines and the Program's objectives and methods;
- g) Ensure legality, ethics, and transparency;
- h) Respond to public, private, and society entities about the performance and results.

The strategic sectors of the city were represented by the operational team of the project that worked on the front line, relating directly to all the service providers of the Program. Operational team main tasks were:

- a) Coordinate, supervise and answer the portfolio activities, goals, deadlines, and budget;
- b) Lead teams and contracted entities;
- c) Promote mobilization, recruitment, and accountability;

- d) Manage the operational actions according to the planning;
- e) Support the progress of actions;
- f) Suggest and indicate solutions and strategies to the executive committee (strategic/political);
- g) Participate in meetings to provide operational support in the creation and execution of methodologies;
- h) Support the communication team with the schedule of events and news of interest.

Additionally, the support network formed by partner organizations of the program was established, and was in charge of the following functions:

- a) Cooperation: gather and channel technical and material inputs in favor of the project, which should enhance the results;
- b) Advisory forum: issue opinions on ways of acting;
- c) Political-institutional: guarantee a space to legitimize the intervention.

The support network was responsible for monitoring the activities and decisions, being formed by forums with the participation of non-state actors focusing on the We are all Porto Alegre as a public policy, following the precepts of Ansell & Gash (2008) regarding decision-making based on consensus. This network was formed by institutions dedicated to working with recycling collectors, sorting centers, companies and private foundations that fund recycling systems, activists and groups focused on the cause of waste collectors, public bodies from different spheres and municipalities. At least 30 organizations (stakeholders) were contacted and participated in some project activity, where nine were governmental and 21 were non-governmental organizations.

Institutions taking of the support network where a subset of key actors in the network, which are strongly involved (stakeholders offering particularly relevant information, maintaining key resources, and being critical to achieving successful results). According to Ulibarri & Scott (2017), this is the most inclusive forum in terms of incorporating all network actors in decision making.

The strategic and political coordination of the program was carried out by the Executive Committee, which was responsible for indicating the main actions to be carried out by the Technical-Operational Coordination, formed by the Working Groups of each project. The Working Groups were in contact with the service providers and the operating teams that carried out direct interaction with the target audience. The Working Groups, in turn, were in contact with the Operations Teams, the Integrated Support Network, and the Recycling Collectors Forum. The continuous improvement seminars aimed to bring together collaborators and managers who worked in the Program.

To make the governance process successful, collaboration capacity must be mobilized, and the actors must work on tasks in an institutional context different from those to which they are used (Van Buuren, 2009).

5. Closing the case

Employing Collaborative Governance strategies becomes an alternative to deal with problems that are considered complex. However, the nature and forms of stakeholder engagement will depend on how policymakers and stakeholders characterize the problems and address their inherent complexity (Siddiki et al., 2015). The We are All Porto Alegre program is complex, where complexity is a source of difficulties for decision making and the achievement of objectives in the analyzed context, as stated by Remington & Pollack (2016).

Public managers must promote strategies to increase the capacity and effectiveness of the public sector to deal with complex problems, being quality information about the problems paramount for decision-makers. At times, the best political strategies may require detailed analysis to gain clear understanding of the problem (Head, 2008).

Engagement among actors from the private and public sectors with the society, as part of decision-making processes, respecting the diversity of actors, and focusing on collaboration and delegation of power (Newig et al., 2018) is one of the principles of

Collaborative Governance. Increasing society participation in decision-making generates more positive results when citizens are engaged with the government, aiming at the ultimate objective of achieving positive social changes (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

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