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Afro Reggae: The future[1]

Afro Reggae: el futuro

ABSTRACT

Cultural Group Afro Reggae (CGAR) is a Brazilian non-governmental organization that offers alternatives to crime and drugs to youths from the slums of Rio de Janeiro through cultural activities. Since its founding in 1993 by a group of young men from the slums, CGAR has enjoyed great success in expanding its activities and attracting significant funding and attention from the international community. From the beginning, CGAR was able to attract youths involved in drug dealing. The idea was to incorporate them to the group and help them attain professional skills as part of the project, thus helping leverage and expand CGAR's results. CGAR had to break through the negative social prejudice against these young men and women, especially those formerly involved in crime. For 2007, CGAR had 69 projects under way, spread through four slum communities in Rio, including ten music bands, two circus groups, one theater troupe, and one dance group. Yet even with a direct impact on 2000 people every year, and perhaps a much larger number of people indirectly, it was very far away from reaching the more than 1,500,000 inhabitants of slums and other poverty areas in Rio, or the many millions of slum dwellers in Brazil as a whole. Should CGAR continue growing, thus making a larger contribution to the reduction of poverty,

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[1] This case was prepared from public sources and interviews. It is intended for instructional purposes only and not to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation.

violence, and racial prejudice in Brazil? What risks would expansion pose? How should CGAR grow? Where would the resources for growth come from? If it didn't grow, what would happen to CGAR?

Key words: social entrepreneurship, non-governmental organizations, non-profits, organizational growth, poverty, racial prejudice, urban slums.

RESUMEN

Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae (GCAR) es una organización no gubernamental brasileña que les ofrece actividades culturales a los jóvenes de las barriadas de Río de Janeiro como una alternativa distinta a las drogas y al crimen por medio de actividades culturales. Desde su fundación en 1993 por parte de un grupo de estos jóvenes, GCAR ha tenido gran éxito en aumentar su oferta de actividades y atraer apoyo financiero y la atención de la comunidad internacional. Desde sus comienzos, GCAR demostró una gran capacidad para atraer a los jóvenes narcotraficantes. La clave consistía en incorporarlos al grupo cultural y ayudarlos a obtener capacitación profesional dentro del proyecto, apalancando así esta capacitación a favor del crecimiento del grupo. GCAR tuvo que romper los prejuicios sociales en contra de los jóvenes de las barriadas, sobre todo de aquellos involucrados en el crimen. Para 2007, GCAR tenía 69 proyectos en curso, a lo largo de cuatro barriadas de Río, entre ellos diez grupos musicales, dos grupos de circo, un grupo teatral y uno de danza. Aun así, con un impacto directo sobre dos mil personas por año, y quizá muchas más en forma indirecta, GCAR estaba muy lejos de llegar al más de millón y medio de habitantes de las barriadas y otras zonas marginadas de Río, y a los muchos millones extendidos por todo Brasil. ¿Debería GCAR seguir creciendo y así tener un mayor impacto en la reducción de la pobreza, la violencia y el prejuicio racial en Brasil? ¿Qué riesgos podría conllevar el crecimiento? ¿Cómo debería crecer? ¿De dónde saldrían los recursos para crecer? Y si no creciera, ¿cuál sería el futuro de GCAR?

Palabras clave: iniciativas de empresa social, organizaciones no gubernamentales, crecimiento organizativo, pobreza, racismo, barriadas urbanas.

1. INTRODUCTION

José Júnior, co-founder and now coordinator of the Cultural Group Afro Reggae (CGAR), rejected such a pessimistic vision of the slum –so common, however, among the population of Brazil's large cities. At age 38, his success with CGAR has proved that the slum could have a future. José Júnior's own life story showed an example of this potential to change. Born into poverty in Rio's downtown, with just basic schooling, he grew amid violence, drug trafficking and prostitution, and saw many friends die young. But now he was leading a highly visible social initiative, supported by prestigious organizations such as the Ford Foundation, and globally knowned thanks to films like *Favela Rising*. With a staff of 200 and a budget of $2.5 million in 2005, about 2000 people enjoyed every year the benefits of CGAR's activities, which offered opportunities to the youths of the slums through cultural activities (Júnior, 2006, 2007). The main cultural manifestation of CGAR, a band called Afro Reggae (not to be confused with the organization, CGAR), had already recorded two CDs and toured several countries, a result of the rapidly growing number of fans of its special mixture of rap, funk, reggae, rock and *batucada*, a samba-related form of drumming.

But CGAR's success was the source of new worries for José Júnior. Even with a direct impact on 2000 people every year, and perhaps a much larger number of people indirectly, it was very far away from reaching the more than 1,500,000 inhabitants of slums and other poverty-stricken areas in Rio, or the many millions of slum dwellers in Brazil as a whole. An opportunity had materialized to open a new center in the Complexo do Alemão, one of the largest and more violent slums of Rio, and where José Júnior had always wanted to have a presence. Should CGAR continue growing, thus making a larger contribution to the reduction of poverty, violence, and racial prejudice in Brazil? What risks did the expansion of CGAR's activities pose for its members, supporters, and beneficiaries? How should CGAR grow? Where would the resources for growth come from? If it didn't grow, what would happen to CGAR? Would it lose the enthusiasm and support that had made it such a success?

2. SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND RACIAL PREJUDICE IN BRAZIL

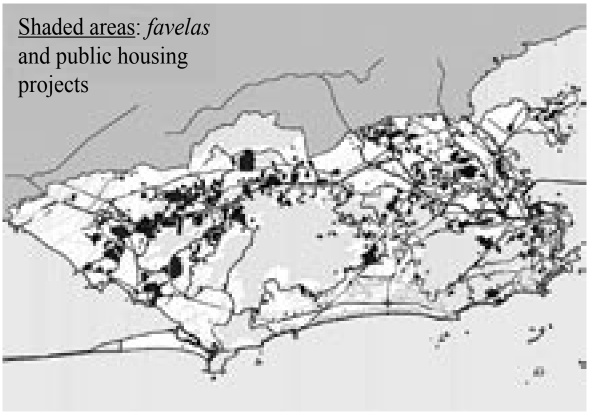
Rio was not just famous for its beaches and postcard vistas. For both residents and visitors, slums were an unavoidable element of the city. In contrast with most large cities around the world, where the poor were shunted away to the periphery or tucked into ghettos, in Rio it was easy to see slums in any part of the city, towering over the skyline from the slopes of steep hills. Such a presence, together with the beauty of the hilltop views and of the sambas written and danced by the slum dwellers, created an idealized vision of Rio's slums in films such as *Orfeu negro* (1959), by French filmmaker Marcel Camus.

But the reality of the slums was very different from the romance of film. The slum was a product of poverty, social exclusion and racial prejudice (Gay, 1994; Goldstein, 2003). The first slum of Rio —still very much in place— appeared a little more than 100 years ago, when black veterans of a brutal military campaign against backlanders in Brazil's Northeast (the so-called *Guerra de Canudos* of 1899), occupied the hillsides of the *morro da Providência* ("Providence Hill") after the government failed to honor promises to provide them with housing. The slopes of the hill, too steep to allow the construction of formal houses, offered a space free from developers' interests and yet close to downtown, where the residents could find jobs. The veterans, reminded by the shape of the hill of a similar one in Canudos called *morro da favela* ("favela hill"), gave this name to their new place of abode[2]. Since then, Rio's slums have been locally known as "favelas."

During the 20th century, slums grew rapidly not only in Rio, but all over Brazil and in many countries around the world. Massive migration from rural to urban areas, resulting from rapid economic transformations and the promise of better living conditions in cities, overwhelmed the capacity of many governments and private developers to adapt zoning regulations, put new infrastructure in place, and build enough dwellings to house rural migrants. The result was the occupation of vacant areas, especially those close to jobs, such as downtown districts (for a map of the Rio Metropolitan Area and the location of favelas, see Exhibit 1). In Rio de Janeiro, slums grew much faster than the total population, so that by the year 2000 the slum population of about 2 million had reached 20% of the city's total (see Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 1

Rio de Janeiro's favelas, 2000.



Source: Cavalieri, F. (2005). Apresentação *Favelas in Rio – Data and Changes*. Salvador da Bahia.

Exhibit 2

Rio de Janeiro's favela population, 1950-2000.

Year	City	% Growth	Favelas	% Growth	% favelas/total
1950	2.377.451	-	169.305	-	7
1960	3.281.908	38	335.063	98	10
1970	4.251.918	30	565.135	69	13
1980	5.090.790	20	722.424	28	14
1991	5.480.778	8	882.667	22	16
2000	5.857.904	7	1.092.959	24	19

Source: Cavalieri, F. (2005). Apresentação *Favelas in Rio – Data and Changes*. Salvador da Bahia.

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[2] Favela is a plant typical of Brazil's sertão, the arid backlands of the Northeast where the Canudos campaign took place.

In Brazil, perhaps more than in other countries, rural migrants not only confronted the lack of housing, but also social and racial prejudice attached to poverty and Indian or African ethnicity, which contrasted with the European origin of the urban middle class (see Exhibit 3 for basic statistics about Brazil and Exhibit 4 for data on Brazil's racial composition). Because of that discrimination, the population of the slums differed substantially from the rest of the population in cities like Rio de Janeiro (Exhibits 5 shows differences between slum dwellers and the city's population overall). Slum dwellers were poorer and "darker" than the rest, which helped keep prejudice alive (see Exhibits 6 and 7 for income and household differences by race in Rio).

Exhibit 3

Basic Statistics for Brazil.

Population (2007 est.): 190 010 647
Age distribution (2007 est.):
    0-14: 25.3%
    15-64: 68.4%
    65+: 6.3%
Gender distribution: 0.976 males/females
(2007 est.)
Population growth rate: 1.008% (2007 est.)
Infant mortality: 27.62 deaths/1 000 live births
Life expectancy at birth: 72.24 years
Adult AIDS infection rate: 0.7% (2003 est.)
Race distribution (2000):
    White 53.7%
    Mixed 38.5%
    Black 6.2%
    Other
    (Japanese, Arab, American Indian) 0.9%
    Not specified 0.7%
Religion (2000):
    Catholic 73.6%
    Protestant 15.4%
    Spiritist 1.3%
    Afro-Brazilian 0.3%
    Other 1.8%
    Not specified 0.2%
    Not religious 7.4%
% Literate population over 15 years of age (2004 est.): 88.6%
GDP base PPP (2006 est.): US$1.655 trillion
GDP growth rate (2006 est.): 3.7%
Per capita GDP base PPP (2006 est.): $8,800

Exhibit 3 (*continued*)

Basic Statistics for Brazil.

Economic activity (2006 est.):

Agriculture and husbandry: 5.1% (main products: coffee, soybeans, wheat, maize, rice, sugar cane, cocoa beans, citrus fruits, meat)

Manufacturing: 30.9% (main products: textile, shoes, chemicals, cement, wood, iron, tin, steel, airplanes, motor vehicles, other machinery)

Services: 64%

Employment (2003 est.):

Agriculture and husbandry: 20%

Manufacturing: 14%

Services: 66%

Unemployment rate (2006 est.): 9.6%

Poverty rate (% pop., 2005): 31%

Income distribution (2004):

Poorest 10% of population: 0.9% of national income

Richest 10%: 44.8% of national income

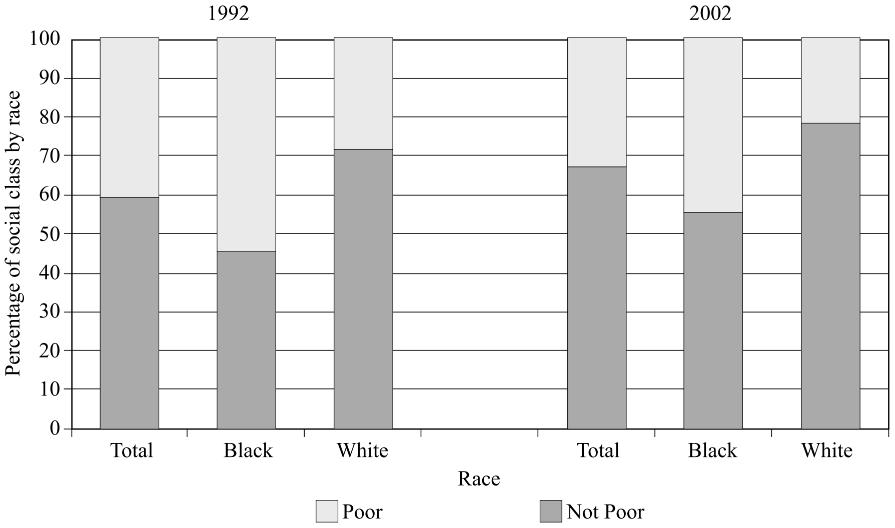
Gini coefficient (2005): 56.7

Inflation rate (2006 est.): 4.2%

Source: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Anuário estatístico 2007*.

Exhibit 4

Distribution of social class by race, Brazil, 1992 and 2002.



Source: Instituto de Estudos de Trabalho e Sociedade, Rio de Janeiro.

Exhibit 5

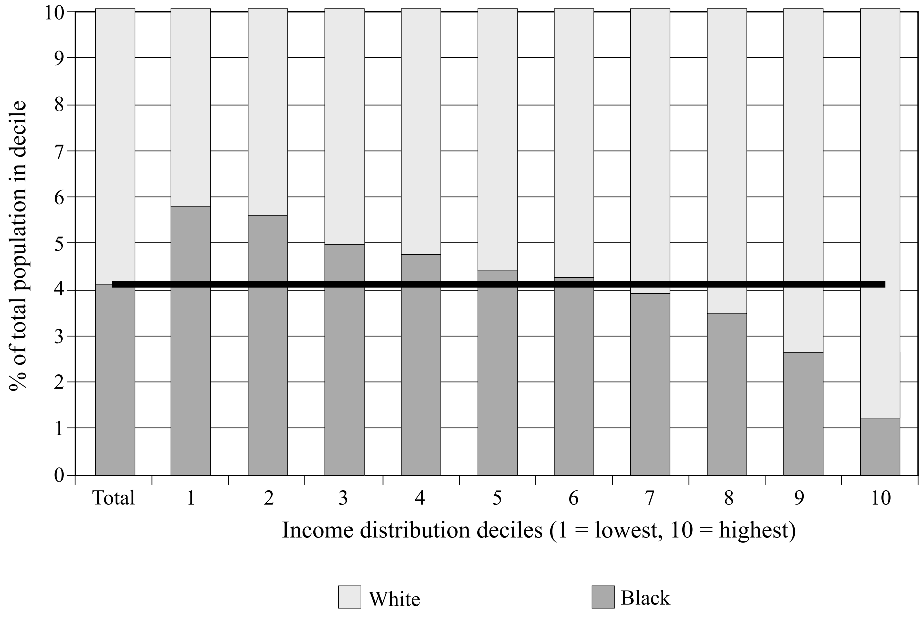
Social indicators for Rio de Janeiro's favela population, 1960-2000.

Indicators	Favela		Nonfavela		Favela	Nonfavela
	1960	2000	1960	2000	% variation	
Demographic						
Population growth rate per year	7,1%	2,4%	2,5%	0,4%	-66%	-84%
Children per woman	4,4	1,5	3,5	1,3	-66%	-63%
Alive-bom Children /children bom	73%	94%	80%	95%	29%	19%
Born in the City	48%	69%	62%	74%	44%	19%
Social						
Illiteracy rate (over 15)	35%	11%	10%	3%	-69%	-70%
Non-school- people	44%	26%	19%	14%	-41%	-26%
People over 8 years of school	1%	14%	18%	43%	1.300%	139%
Over 3 Minimum Salary (MS) income	0,7%	14,0%	14%	38%	1.900%	171%
Household						
People per household	4,8	3,6	3,6	3,2	-25%	-11%
Connected to piped water	14%	91%	81%	97%	550%	20%
With latrines	56%	98%	92%	99%	75%	8%
Connected to electricity	79%	98%	95%	99%	24%	4%

Source: Cavalieri, F. (2005). Apresentação *Favelas in Rio – Data and Changes*. Salvador da Bahia.

Exhibit 6

Income distribution by race, Rio de Janeiro, 2002.



Source: Instituto de Estudos de Trabalho e Sociedade, Rio de Janeiro.

Exhibit 7

Characteristics of Afro-Brazilian household heads, Rio de Janeiro, 1992-2001.

	1992	1993	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2001
Illiteracy (%)	14,9	13,8	11,7	10,9	12,4	11,2	11,9	10,1
Schooling (years in school)	4,8	4,9	5,1	5,5	5,1	5,3	5,2	5,7
Schooling (%)								
Some elementary schooling	72,7	72,6	71,1	65,4	68,8	68,3	68,1	63,5
Completed elementary	11,6	11,6	11,2	14,4	13,4	12,3	13,5	14,5
Some secondary schooling	2,8	3,7	3,2	3,7	3,9	3,4	3,3	4,8
Completed secondary	9,3	9,3	10,5	12,5	10,7	11,0	11,4	12,9
Educated beyond secondary schooling	3,7	2,9	4,0	4,1	3,2	5,0	3,7	4,3
Gender (%)								
Male	26,5	27,4	30,5	30,4	30,3	30,0	30,7	32,2
Female	73,5	72,6	69,5	69,6	69,7	70,0	69,3	67,8
Age (%)								
15-24	7,3	7,6	7,8	6,1	7,5	6,5	6,9	8,9
25-49	57,9	58,6	57,8	57,6	55,0	57,5	55,1	55,8
50+	34,7	33,8	34,4	36,3	37,5	36,0	38,0	35,3
Employment situation (%)								
Inactive	24,4	22,1	23,3	25,4	26,0	26,6	27,3	23,7
Unemployed	2,9	4,0	3,3	4,1	4,8	4,5	4,9	6,8
Employed	72,7	73,9	73,4	70,4	69,2	68,8	67,7	69,4
Median real income(1)	492	452	564	609	566	582	570	547
Participation in median household come (%)	70,3	72,3	71,0	68,7	70,9	71,4	72,3	70,6
Occupation (%)								
Formally employed	48,6	48,4	47,4	47,6	45,8	43,5	42,9	43,4
Military	1,3	1,1	1,5	1,0	1,3	1,2	1,1	1,4
Civil servant	7,6	6,8	7,9	7,9	6,4	6,8	7,6	5,6
Informally employed	18,7	18,1	19,0	18,8	21,5	19,3	20,9	21,5
Self-employed	20,4	22,7	21,4	20,3	22,4	26,0	25,1	24,7
Employer	2,2	2,1	2,1	2,4	1,8	2,3	1,9	2,3
Subsistence farmer	1,0	0,7	0,5	1,6	0,6	0,9	0,4	0,8
Volunteer work	0,1	0,0	0,2	0,4	0,1	—	0,2	0,3
Sector of activity (%)								
Agriculture and mining	6,8	5,4	4,9	5,1	4,7	4,8	5,5	3,6
Public administration	5,9	5,9	6,3	5,8	5,8	5,4	5,4	5,0
Construction	15,0	15,0	14,2	13,1	14,1	15,6	15,3	15,2
Sales and distribution	11,4	12,1	12,6	12,1	13,5	12,3	12,5	13,5
Manufacturing	7,9	6,5	5,6	6,8	4,9	5,5	5,6	4,5

Exhibit 7 *(continued)*
Characteristics of Afro-Brazilian household heads, Rio de Janeiro, 1992-2001.

Domestic service	25,2	27,3	26,6	28,4	30,4	29,1	28,9	31,7
Professional services	13,9	13,3	14,2	12,2	13,1	13,6	13,3	12,9
Health care and education	5,0	5,1	5,9	6,9	4,6	5,6	6,3	5,3
Community service	1,1	1,2	1,5	2,1	1,4	1,7	1,7	1,7
Handicrafts	6,9	7,5	7,7	7,0	6,3	6,0	5,0	6,0
Not otherwise specified	0,8	0,6	0,7	0,6	1,1	0,6	0,5	0,8

Source: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios (PNAD/IBGE).
Obs.: In 1994 and 2000 no field research was done.
Note: (1) head of household income in R$ deflated to Sept. 2001.

Source: Instituto de Estudos de Trabalho e Sociedade, Rio de Janeiro.

3. SLUMS, VIOLENCE AND DRUG DEALING

The social exclusion of the slums, most obvious in the absence of public utility services like piped water and sewerage, allowed the gradual establishment of drug dealers in slums during the 1980s. Bereft of police presence, and close to middle- and upper-class drug consumers, the slums were great places to set up business. As a result, by the 1990s most of the slums had fallen under the control of the drug dealers.

Drug dealing gangs operated on commercial principles, just like firms. They sought profit, setting prices through demand and supply, and competed for market share with other drug dealers. However, as an illegal activity, and thus subject to potential police repression, firearms were crucial for the viability of the "business". Illegality also made competition prone to violence, with the use of weapons to gain and maintain control over particular areas where drugs were sold.

In turn, violence and repression shaped the internal organization of drug gangs, through the need for substantially militarized structures to operate in secrecy and to fight competitors. In Rio, drug dealing was controlled by three competing organizations: the Red Command (*Comando Vermelho*), Friends of Friends (*Amigos dos Amigos*), and the Third Command (*Terceiro Comando*). In charge of businesses equivalent to a medium size company, "proprietors" operated a drug-dealing "franchise" in a slum. Proprietors controlled the "managers," who supervised the pushers' activity at the points of sale, called "smokehouses" (*bocas-de-fumo*). Armed "patrols" and "sentries" protected the *bocas-de-fumo*, alerting about the approach of police or of rival gangs. Drug trafficking also employed "workers" for the transport and preparation of drugs into individual doses for sale (the only task carried out with significant female participation); finally, police officers got regular bribes for allowing or even collaborating with the gangs' activity.

Drug dealing attracted mainly the youths of the slum. A sample of people involved in drug dealing revealed that the main reasons to enter the drug business were to earn money, to help dealers' families financially, and the difficulty of getting jobs in the formal economy. Racial prejudice against slum dwellers, added to the rigidity of the job market in Brazil and to the limited growth of the Brazilian economy (and particularly the economy of Rio de Janeiro), limited the possibilities of formal employment very significantly for young slum dwellers. At the same time, their families needed them to earn additional income for the family to survive. Working conditions in drug dealing were hard: work days lasting more than 10 hours, shifts that could involve up to 24 consecutive hours of work, and no days off (De Souza e Silva & Urani, 2002). The medium monthly wage was low, around $130. And a dealer's life was short, usually ending in death or a long prison sentence. But the alternatives in the informal economy were not much better, while drug dealing offered the chance to move up in the hierarchy and to earn money not only for basic needs, but also to buy brand-name products that conferred prestige among peers, like sneakers from major international brands. For young people, drug trafficking also provided the excitement and status of carrying weapons, and of belonging to an organization that not only enjoyed unchallenged power in the slum, but could also give structure to their difficult lives, or even an identity and group spirit, as in religious groups or military organizations (see Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

Excerpts from the report by De Souza e Silva and Urani (2002).

Law enforcement data for minors in Rio de Janeiro show an increase in unlawful behavior by minors during the 1990s, particularly in drug trafficking and abuse. Also notable is the reduction in the age of entry into drug trafficking, with the average age dropping from 15-16 years at the beginning of the 1990s to 12-13 years by 2000.

The main characteristics of the minors involved in drug trafficking are:

- They come from the poorest families of the favelas, with schooling below the Brazilian average of 6.4 years; a great majority are black or mulatto; they marry much earlier than the average for Brazilian teenagers; they live with their domestic partner or with friends; they believe in God, with increasing affiliation in Pentecostalism at the expense of Afro-Brazilian beliefs.
- They join and stay in drug trafficking to gain prestige and power, to experience strong emotions—"adrenaline"—and to make money to buy products that they would not otherwise be able to afford. Their best friends are also in drug trafficking and in fact their sense of group membership is an important factor keeping them in this type of activity. Another important barrier to exit from trafficking is that after a while, the kids become well known to rival gangs and the police, sealing their fate if they leave the group. The kids' greatest fears are imprisonment, death, and double crossing by friends, which can put them in a precarious position within the group.
- Minors' biggest wish is to buy a house away from the favela. By leaving the area, their families would be less exposed to the risk of violence. For these children, saving sufficient money would be the means to attain their desire, allowing them to move to another state and start a legal business. Most of them, however, fail to save much money because they lack saving habits, and also because of extortion by the police.

- The report also provides the perspectives of the children's family members, experts on this subject, favela residents and leaders, children and teenagers—both drug users and non-users—and police officers. The key proposals to address minors' involvement in drug trafficking that stem from the field interviews are of a structural nature: investment in education and after-school activities in the favelas, and creation of jobs and income generation for the kids' families.

Based on field and workshop research, the document proposes four avenues for public policy: job creation and income generation for kids' families; investment in education and social protection tools; development of comprehensive actions in community spaces, comprising income generation, leisure, educational, urban planning, and other aspects; and implementation of legal measures such as decriminalization of drug use.

With their weapons and organization, drug dealers were *de facto* in charge of enforcing the laws of the slum and meting out justice among slum dwellers; they also had the money to help quite often those in serious need within the community. It was not unusual to hear of cases of residents who were taken ill during the night and were helped by the dealers or by somebody else at the command of the dealers. Stories of gang leaders taking care of the cost of medications for sick slum dwellers were likewise common. In the slum, the formal authorities were the "parallel power." The drug business was the real power.

The main impact of the drug dealers in the slums was not, to be sure, the economic one, through drug-related job creation or income generation; nor was it the development of an authority structure; it was the violence. The main victims of the violence caused by confrontations between drug dealers and the police, and among rival gangs, were the slum residents: first and foremost, the drug dealers themselves, mainly men aged between 15 and 30 years of age; but also police officers, many of whom were slum dwellers themselves; and last but not least, other residents killed by stray bullets, by drug abuse, by dealers' rough justice after running drug-related debts or being accused of crimes inside the community, or by social and family violence in a context where firearms abounded. United Nations statistics showed that Brazil is the country that, without being involved in external or internal warlike conflict, had the largest number of deaths from firearms in the world. Between 1979 and 2000, more than 48,000 people died from firearm wounds in Rio de Janeiro alone. The disproportionate impact of violence on young men affected the city's demographic structure: by 2000, the female population was already 53% of the total, and the life expectancy for the adult women was eight years more than that for men (see Exhibits 9 and 10 for homicide rates in Brazil and in Rio de Janeiro state).

Numerous studies showed that the various police forces active in Rio and elsewhere in Brazil[3] were not only ineffective in preventing and solving crimes, but were often one of the causes of violence. Policing of slums was sporadic, being limited to large-scale, military-style operations known as "invasions" instead of regular patrols. Police officers' low wages made them easy victims of corruption, whereby drug dealers bribed officers to allow undisturbed access by drug buyers to the *bocas-de-fumo* at the outskirts of the slums; other policemen extorted protection money from dealers, or sold them firearms (Cano, Sento-Sé Trajano & Ribeiro, 2002). Poor training worsened the problem, resulting in excessive and indiscriminate use of force by officers. In extreme cases, squads of police officers took justice into their own hands, as under the military regime (1964-1985), to exact revenge against the population of the slum, without distinction among their victims regarding involvement in drug trafficking. The behavior of the police thus increased slum dwellers' fear and distrust towards law enforcement authorities, thereby diminishing further still the effectiveness of the police.

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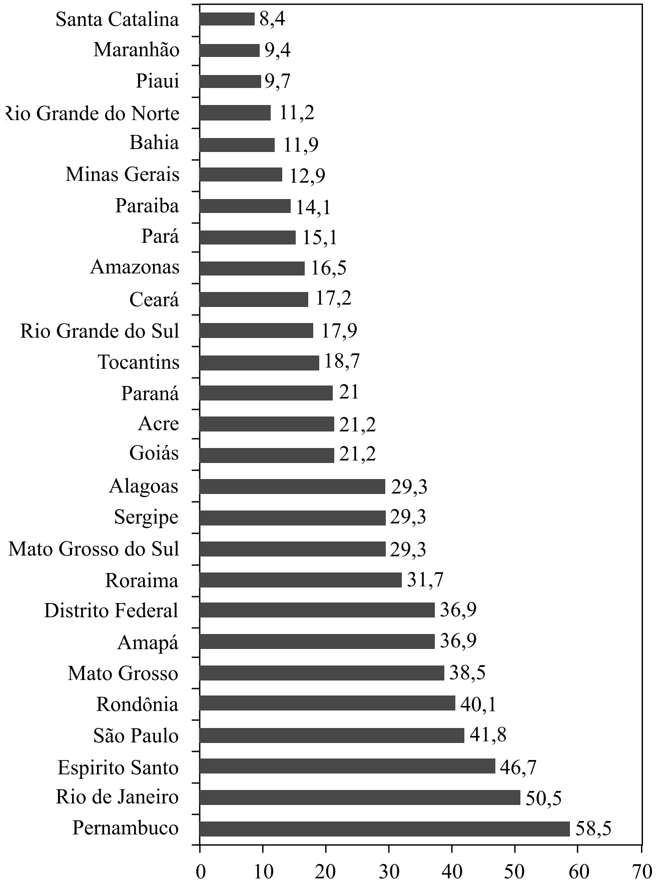
[3] At least three uniformed police forces were active in Rio and in other major Brazilian cities: the *polícia municipal*, under the city government's control; the *polícia estadual*, controlled by the state government; and the federal *polícia militar*, a militarized force known for the greatest brutality of the three.

Exhibit 9

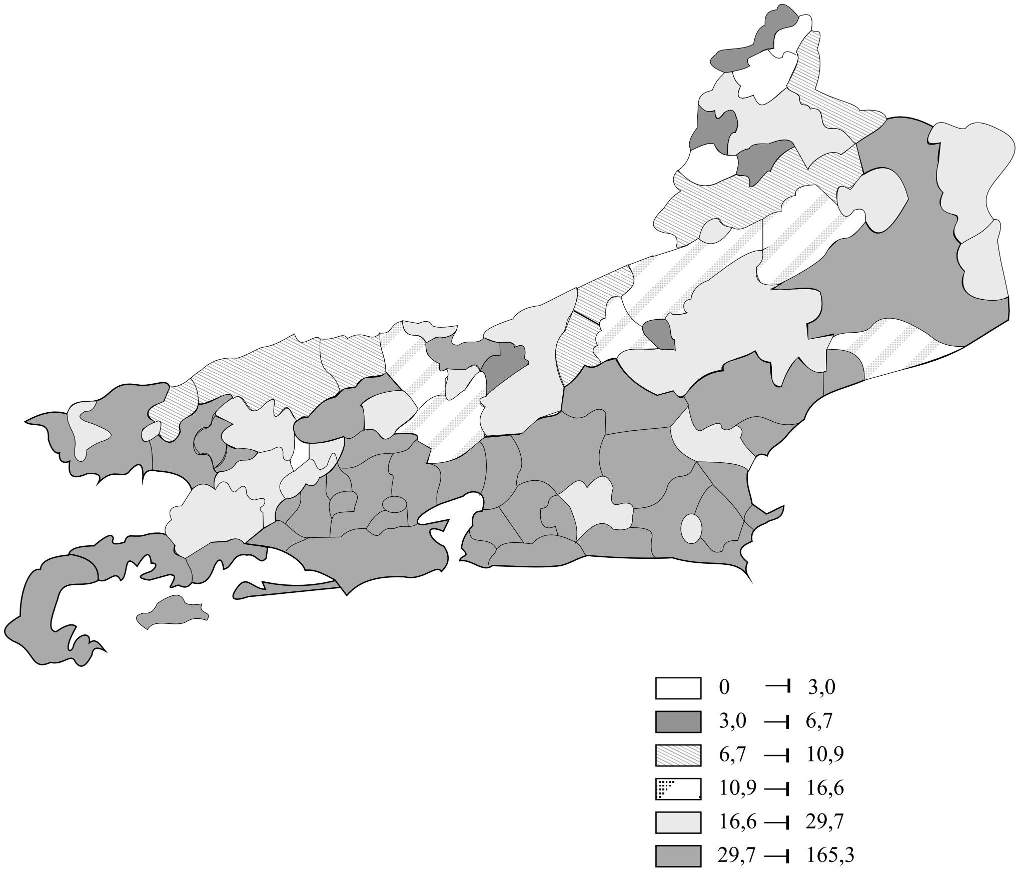
Homicide rate by Brazilian state (number by 100,000 pop., 2001).



Source: *http://www.metodista.br/cidadania/numero-20/a-violencia-e-um-mal-ciclico* 4 de decembro de 2007.

Exhibit 10

Homicide rate, Rio de Janeiro State, 2002/2004.



Source: Waiselfisz, J. J. (2007). *Mapa da violência dos municípios brasileiros.* Brasília: Organização dos Estados Ibero-Americanos para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura.

4. AFRO REGGAE: ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT (Júnior, 2006)

CGAR's humble origins did not augur well for its subsequent success. At the beginning of the 1990s, José Júnior was organizing funk music parties to earn some money in a more appealing way than the minimum wage job he would find, if lucky, as a young, inexperienced, poorly educated, and black man. But that business did not last long. In 1992, after several incidents in Rio's beaches that authorities linked to funk music, funk music gatherings were prohibited. José Júnior then decided to play reggae instead of funk in the parties he organized. Although José Júnior did not know it yet, he was planting CGAR's seed there and then.

CGAR was founded shortly afterwards. In 1993, José Júnior and some friends decided to start a newspaper, which they called Afro Reggae News. "We were a bunch of people without education, unsuccessful in life, without experience, but very utopian. The newspaper had neither announcements nor advertising". The key impulse, however, came from the outside. In the same year, a police officers' squad allegedly decided to avenge the murder of several of their colleagues in the Vigário Geral slum, by carrying out an indiscriminate massacre of slum residents. All told, 21 innocent people lost their life at the alleged hands of the officers (Dudley, 1999). The slaughter, at the time the largest ever in Rio's slums though by no means the only one, pushed José Júnior and his friends to try to do something to change the hopeless situation of the slums.

One month after the slaughter, CGAR opened its first Community Nucleus of Culture in Vigário Geral. The objective was to make Vigário Geral a focal point of socio-cultural activity. The project began its activities with afro dance workshops, garbage recycling, and percussion classes. With a population of African or Northeasterner origin, Vigário Geral was one of the most marginalized communities in Rio, in social, economic, racial, and cultural terms. The situation was not easy in the beginning. In José Júnior's words:

> We rehearsed in the street, borrowed instruments, everybody was a volunteer, I didn't know how to play, that is, I began to teach the guys things that I didn't know. We learned as we taught. There were shootings, police invasions, and gang members around us all the time. Until at one point, the gangstas just stopped shooting because we were rehearsing in the middle of the shootout, but the police continued firing. At last, even the police held their fire because they saw us there. That was the first time that the community cried with joy for freedom —when the police noticed that something good was happening in there (Júnior, 2006).

In 1995 the dance, percussion, and *capoeira*[4] workshops had turned into a band that had started performing throughout the city. In 1996, CGAR opened its second nucleus in another slum community, Cantagalo Hill, and began to train teenagers in circus arts, with subsequent help from a partnership with Cirque du Soleil.

In 1998, the band made its first international tour, playing in France, Holland, England, and Italy. After that, the number of projects took off: more international tours for the band, which signed a contract with Universal Music and issued several CDs; new education projects; the release of a book telling CGAR's story, *From the Slum to the World* (*Da Favela para o Mundo*), and of international films about the group, particularly *Favela Rising*, which gave CGAR enormous publicity outside Brazil.

CGAR also succeeded in the mediation of conflicts in the slums of Rio. CGAR sought to create an impartial group open to people of all social backgrounds. CGAR used its in-depth knowledge of the rules followed by drug gangs in the slums in order to be an effective mediator. CGAR's role began in 2004, with the participation of CGAR members in negotiations with the police, community, and members of the drug gangs. When a rival gang of the slum's dominant drug "business" invaded the slum where CGAR staff were working, CGAR's presence helped avoid bloodshed, showing CGAR's leaders that the organization also had potential as mediator. The opportunity was immediately seized by CGAR.

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[4] *Capoeira* is a cross between a dance and a martial art that originated among the slaves imported to Brazil from Angola.

In 2004, at the invitation of the government of the state of Minas Gerais, CGAR organized theater, percussion, painting, and dance courses for police officers in the state. The project was conceived to bring together the young people of a slum and the police, thus helping break their mutual prejudice. (In fact, police officers suffer from some of the greatest discrimination in Brazil because of their violent, corrupt reputation). After receiving CGAR training, the officers started offering courses for youths from the slums. Eventually, a police officers' band was formed and began performing alongside CGAR's bands in shows.

5. CGAR'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DRUG DEALING

From the beginning of its social work activities, CGAR tried especially hard to attract youths involved in drug dealing. The idea was not just to get them to participate in CGAR's activities, but to incorporate them into the group and help them attain professional skills as part of the project, thus helping leverage and expand CGAR's results. CGAR had to break through the negative social prejudice against these young men and women, especially those formerly involved in crime, as they inspired little credibility or trust in most people. CGAR's efforts were often derided as a waste of time, energy, and money. Yet CGAR's experience was clear: the youths who came from drug trafficking were the best performers in social work. They knew how to respect the rules, they had discipline. CGAR's staff discovered that former drug dealers made great coordinators, with excellent leadership capacity. José Júnior explained CGAR's strategy to attract these youths:

> What interests these young men and women is precisely the glamour and the concepts of the drug culture. Afro Reggae uses the same techniques that the drug dealers use to seduce them: to stop being invisible to society, the desire to belong to a structured group, to have status, self-esteem, and, not least, money. Today Afro Reggae pays better than the *boca-de-fumo* (Júnior, 2006).

At the same time, the personnel of CGAR were not afraid to become a target for the drug dealers because of the possible competition for the youth of the slum. CGAR's leaders felt that the Group's impact was too small to worry the drug dealers. Group members found that the drug dealers liked CGAR, because the group helped keep other members of the drug dealers' families, such as younger siblings, out of the drugs business. Drug dealers claimed that they did not want to be role models for their siblings or their children, because they wanted a better life for them if somebody could give them the hope (Júnior, 2006).

6. THE FUTURE (Júnior, 2006, 2007)

In 2007, CGAR had 69 projects under way, spread through four slum communities in Rio, including ten music bands, two circus groups, one theater troupe, and one dance group. CGAR's projects involved 2000 young people in their daily activities, with 160 employees on CGAR's payroll as instructors and in administration roles. In that same year, CGAR obtained 30% of its budget from commercial activities, such as the sale of music produced by the bands (the rest came from charitable donations and foundation grants). The members of the bands paid a third of the revenues earned from tours and other commercial activities to CGAR, as a franchise fee, keeping the rest for themselves.

For José Júnior, in 2007 the main challenge for CGAR was to strengthen its political, administrative, and financial management capacity. With that objective, CGAR began outsourcing some activities, paying market prices for professional services. A company was hired to manage the administrative and financial activities. CGAR also began to train and prepare staff members to occupy managerial positions in the group. In order to implement the projects already in progress and develop new projects, CGAR needed to select and train a large number of people, entailing a considerable organizational effort. CGAR had recently begun to develop performance indicators, such as parameters to identify young people at high risk of personal and social problems.

For 2015, CGAR set itself the objective of being fully self-sufficient, obtaining 100% of financial resources through commercial activities rather than donations. Another potential source to guarantee financial independence came from the capital donations that CGAR could invest to obtain resources from financial returns. In 2007, the group received some $750,000 from Brazil's state-owned oil giant Petrobrás, and a similar amount from Natura, the largest and most prestigious cosmetics company in the country, which was strongly committed to social and environmental sustainability.

CGAR was committed to individual and collective transformation, focusing on the transformation of the lives of young people in slums to turn them into change agents for the whole community. Besides direct involvement in projects focused on the young, the group worked closely with their families, since family support was fundamental to the success of the youth programs. While CGAR could easily attract young people to their programs, families put a lot of pressure on children and teenagers to contribute to the family budget. To address this need, families received from CGAR not only the benefit of the children's participation in CGAR's projects, but also social services and psychological support for the entire family. CGAR's leaders were also careful to take care of the relationship with the slum community as a whole, working always with approval from the residents' association. In fact, CGAR had refused to work in some slums without working out the priorities and capacities that CGAR should address with the community and community leaders.

CGAR's social work formula was designed to be transferable to other slums, and even to be used as a transformational tool in other contexts and countries. But carrying out the transfer was far from obvious.

Up to now, CGAR had the dynamism to build new projects on the basis of past successes. For instance, the success with the police band from Minas Gerais led the group to develop a similar project with the Rio police, one of the worst reputed in Brazil, to develop the same idea of building relationships between the police and young slum dwellers, thus facilitating mutual comprehension.

CGAR also worked to develop new initiatives. Besides music, dance, and circus, the group identified the training of new entrepreneurs as an important priority for the next few years, since viable businesses could keep young people away from crime, as it had already done with cultural activities.

Another possibility, however, was to transfer ideas, experiences, and knowledge to other organizations that could develop their own projects in other slums of Rio and Brazil. José Júnior believed that those organizations, rather than CGAR, should develop their own capacity to act: "we don't want to be McDonald's." CGAR could work in partnership with those organizations, keeping its participation limited to avoid bureaucratization. The limit to CGAR's growth would be set by the ability of any member of the group to know all other members on a personal basis, thus avoiding the creation of an impersonal bureaucracy.

Apart from its direct impact, CGAR also had to consider the impact of the publicity about the group's success. CGAR's leaders understood all too well that the group could not solve by itself the problems of inequality and violence in Rio, let alone Brazil. Those problems required close collaboration among governments, NGOs, and the private sector. In such a context, CGAR could use its presence in the media to create awareness among politicians, entrepreneurs, and the population at large about the scourge of violence in the urban slums and to combat prejudice against the youth of the slums. For instance, the group developed a program of visits and exchanges with many schools in Rio and other countries, to show young people from outside the reality of these slum communities, and to create opportunities for young slum dwellers in schools outside the slums.

Could CGAR increase its impacts without losing its identity and sense of mission? Which of the above possibilities, or combination thereof, was the best one for GCAR? These were the questions that pressed on José Júnior with increasing urgency. Avoiding them was not an option. Without a clear direction, the organization would surely drift and weaken. An answer was needed soon.

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