Title: Cultural Entrepreneurship in the *Favelas* of Rio de Janeiro: Investigating Initiatives in the Santa Marta Community

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ABSTRACT

In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second-largest city, around 22% of the population lives in *favelas*. While these communities are often perceived as areas of poverty and social problems, they are also recognized for their resilience and resourcefulness. This study investigates cultural entrepreneurship in Rio's Santa Marta favela, focusing on the factors that influence the development and sustainability of cultural projects. Using a qualitative approach, the study includes in-depth interviews with 20 organizers and participants from eight different cultural initiatives. The findings highlight that financial resources, training of participants, community support, effective project structuring, and proactive public sector involvement are key to sustaining these cultural projects. The paper offers insights for governments in shaping public policy, private companies supporting cultural entrepreneurship, and cultural entrepreneurs. Additionally, incorporating a local researcher provides an insider perspective, enriching the understanding of Santa Marta's cultural dynamics and ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the local dynamics.

KEYWORDS (up to 5)

Cultural entrepreneurship, Cultural projects, Rio de Janeiro, *Favela*, Santa Marta Community.

1. **Introduction**

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second-largest city with an estimated 6.2 million residents in 2022, sees about 22% of its population living in *favelas*[1] (Data Rio, n.d.). While these communities are often associated with poverty and social problems, it's important to recognize their resilience and resourcefulness. *Favelas* have a diverse cultural history that includes music, dance, art, cuisine, and religious traditions that are often underappreciated. Regrettably, *favelas* face stigmatization, sensationalism, and oversimplification that distort their reality and perpetuate negative stereotypes that hinder understanding of their complex social, cultural, and economic dynamics (Barbosa, 2013).

The *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro often serve as fertile ground for cultural initiatives. These initiatives not only encapsulate a cultural heritage but also serve as a means through which their residents can sustain their families and communities. Social and cultural projects have long been a common feature in Rio's *favelas*, initiated by various stakeholders, including NGOs, institutions, businesses, and residents (Rocha, n.d.). These projects aim to foster social and economic transformations in residents' lives by reducing social inequality and offering opportunities and hope to those who are less privileged. By stimulating a growing social segment, these initiatives create jobs, generate income, professionalize participants, and drive the adoption of new technologies.

The Santa Marta community in Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro, has a history dating back to the 17th century. It was founded when a Catholic priest allowed workers to settle in the area to build a chapel and expand the Santo Inácio School (Carvalho & Silva, 2019). The parish received its name in the 20th century when a devotee of Santa Marta brought her image to the hilltop. In the 1930s, a chapel was built to house the image, and the community was officially named Santa Marta.

The community of Santa Marta stands out as an important hub of arts and culture, not only for its celebrity popularity, but also for its history, tourist attractions, and cultural businesses and events. An important milestone in the *favela*'s history occurred in 1996 when singer Michael Jackson filmed the music video for his hit song "They Don't Care About Us" on one of the hill's rooftops. Other famous names, such as singer Madonna and actor Hugh Jackman, have visited the streets and alleys of the *favela*, as have many others (Rangel, 2020). However, over the years, the number of projects in the Santa Marta community has significantly decreased, and the continuity of these projects is constantly questioned (Regueira, 2018).

This research is nested within the field of cultural entrepreneurship, a relatively new but increasingly prominent area within the broader domain of entrepreneurship studies (Dobreva & Ivanov, 2020; Hausmann & Heinze, 2016). Cultural entrepreneurship serves as a crucial bridge between culture and business, playing a vital role in regional development and planning that enhances both economic growth and the quality of life in urban settings. (Ratten & Ferreira, 2017).

The importance of regional studies in this field is underscored by policies using creativity to drive urban and regional economic development, highlighting cultural entrepreneurship's role in creating vibrant, sustainable communities that balance economic and cultural values (Qian & Liu, 2018).

Building on this foundation, this study aims to investigate the factors influencing the development and sustainability of cultural projects in Santa Marta's *favela*. The findings can be valuable for governments in shaping public policy, for private companies in supporting cultural entrepreneurship initiatives, and for cultural entrepreneurs themselves. The research question that guides this research

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[1] In some English translations, "slums" is the term of choice. In this paper we will use "favela".

is: What are the factors that influence the development and sustainability of cultural projects in the Santa Marta *favela*?

The study benefits from the unique perspective of one of the researchers who is a resident of Santa Marta. This insider's viewpoint is invaluable, providing deep insights that enhance our understanding of the dynamics involved in developing and supporting cultural projects within the community. This perspective helps to ensure a more comprehensive and authentic analysis of the local cultural entrepreneurship landscape.

2. Theoretical development

Over the past few decades, entrepreneurship research has become a well-established discipline, leading to the development of various specialized fields focusing on specific sectors (Hausmann & Heinze, 2016). Within this evolving landscape, cultural entrepreneurship has emerged as a relatively new area within entrepreneurship research (Dobreva & Ivanov, 2020).

note that the field is still developing, particularly in terms of defining a unified concept and establishing consistent metrics. They attempt to distinguish between "artistic," "cultural," and "creative" entrepreneurship and conclude that "cultural entrepreneurship" is the most commonly used term in the academic literature, although clear distinctions between these terms remain elusive. Essig (2017) suggests that "cultural entrepreneurship" has developed in management and leadership studies in Europe and Australia, while "arts entrepreneurship" has emerged from the arts disciplines in the United States. The author observes that higher education in the United States favors "arts entrepreneurship," as opposed to the broader "cultural entrepreneurship" in Europe and Australia. The key difference is Europe's focus on organizational leadership while the U.S. emphasizes individual artistic behavior.

Dobreva & Ivanov (2020, p. 23) defines cultural entrepreneurship as "the specific activity of establishing cultural enterprises and bringing to market cultural and creative products and services that include cultural value but also have the potential to generate financial revenues". Cultural entrepreneurs share common global traits such as passion, vision, innovation, risk-taking, and leadership. Through their efforts, they improve the quality of life in their communities, preserve culture, and create educational opportunities (Aageson, 2008). In general, a cultural entrepreneur is someone who combines existing resources to create something new and valuable in the arts and culture (Swedberg, 2006). In addition, they skillfully create and maintain networks that innovatively connect different stakeholders interested in the cultural project. This is a fundamental skill to ensure good relationships, contracts and even project realization (Vale et al., 2008).

Scholars and policymakers have recognized the vital role that culture and the arts play in the economic growth of cities and regions (Evans, 2009; Gracia Aldaz et al., 2016; Kavaratzis, 2005). The study of cultural entrepreneurship is inextricably linked to the field of public policy. The support provided by local and national governments is crucial to the development of cultural and creative industries. Recognition of their impact on economic growth, social cohesion and everyday life has led to the introduction of new policy initiatives aimed at promoting cultural and creative entrepreneurship worldwide. One of the key challenges for public policy is to manage the complex and sometimes contentious relationship between cultural policies and economic objectives. Arts and culture occupy a unique place in people's lives because of their spiritual, intellectual and emotional significance. As a nexus, cultural entrepreneurship has the potential to contribute to economic growth, but policymakers face a significant challenge in balancing cultural values with economic objectives (Dobreva & Ivanov, 2020).

Cultural entrepreneurs often initiate their projects under very precarious conditions, characterized by limited funds and a lack of prior managerial experience, due to the emphasis on the symbolic aspects of their work. While there is an economic component to the activities of cultural entrepreneurs, it is not their primary focus, as highlighted by Swedberg (2006).

Moore (2003) identifies relationships with funders and diversification of funding as critical factors in creating public value in the cultural sector. In line with this, Van Meerkerk (2022) argues that it is unrealistic for cultural entrepreneurs to rely solely on public funding. Consequently, these entrepreneurs are forced to balance their various sources of income with their respective demands. This balancing act reflects the complex dynamics they must navigate to sustain their initiatives and uphold their cultural objectives.

Dobreva & Ivanov (2020) highlight that research on cultural entrepreneurship includes the field of entrepreneurial education. Aageson (2008) suggests that providing these entrepreneurs with access to management tools, information, and financial support could lead to more successful and sustainable projects. This aspect is recognized as a crucial factor for the competitiveness of cultural and creative industries. This importance is due to the economic impact of these sectors (Rae, 2004), the high proportion of micro and small enterprises (Larso et al., 2012), and the prevalence of self-employment within them (Carey & Naudin, 2006; Küttim et al., 2011).

Cultural entrepreneurship can be viewed as a pivotal intersection between culture and business, playing a crucial role in regional development and planning (Ratten & Ferreira, 2017) as well as in enhancing the quality of life in urban areas. Consequently, the significance of regional studies in cultural entrepreneurship has been amplified by policies that leverage creativity for urban and regional economic development (Qian & Liu, 2018). This growing focus highlights the vital role of cultural entrepreneurship in integrating socio-economic strategies with the dynamic cultural life of cities.

3. **Methodology**

This study employed qualitative exploratory research methods. The analysis focused on eight cultural projects initiated from the 1980s onward, a period selected due to significant socio-economic changes in the community. Notably, during the 1980s, the federal government's initiatives to introduce basic amenities like electricity and water dramatically transformed the living conditions within the *favela*. These infrastructural developments had a profound impact on the community, ensuring that residents had access to essential public services despite the informal nature of their settlements (Vicq, 2016).

The data collection process was organized into two stages to ensure a comprehensive understanding of both the managerial and participatory perspectives.

The first stage involved interviews with cultural producers from the Santa Marta Community. These interviews aimed to understand the management process of eight selected cultural projects, from inception to execution, and to identify variations in the organizers' perspectives. The second stage included interviews with diverse current and former participants of these projects to capture a wide range of viewpoints and enhance data analysis (Table 1).

Participants for this study were chosen using a purposive sampling strategy, which involves choosing individuals for their relevance to the research questions, ensuring they provide rich, relevant, and diverse perspectives needed to address the study's objectives (Yin, 2016).

Table 1: Projects / Interviewees

Project	Interviewee	Involvement with the Project
Rádio Santa Marta	1	Organizer
	2	Participant
	3	Participant
Escola de Artes do Spanta	4	Organizer
	5	Participant
	6	Participant
Hip Hop Santa Marta	7	Organizer
Cinepipoca	8	Organizer
	9	Organizer
	10	Organizer
Colônia de Férias Grupo ECO	11	Organizer
	12	Participant
	13	Participant
ONG Attitude Social	14	Organizer
	15	Participant
PESPC	16	Organizer
	17	Participant
	18	Participant
Toca dos Lobos	19	Organizer
	20	Participant

The data were systematically analyzed to identify both differences and similarities in the perceptions and experiences of the cultural entrepreneurs, current participants, and former participants within their respective projects. This comparative approach was designed to encapsulate multiple perspectives and viewpoints, thereby significantly enhancing the richness of the data analysis and deepening the overall understanding of the topic.

Selected Projects :

Radio Santa Marta

Santa Marta FM Radio, started by residents in 2010, broadcasted for eight months in 2011 before being shut down by the National Telecommunications Agency for unlicensed operation. Despite its brief run, the radio mobilized the community with over 30 volunteers and 20 programs, promoting local culture and community issues.

The Spanta School of Arts

Spanta first strengthened community bonds through "Morro de Alegria," a monthly samba event that attracted around 3,000 attendees. Building on this success, Spanta launched the School of Arts in 2009, initially focusing on music education. By 2016, the school broadened its curriculum to include psychosocial care, singing, choir, and body expression, serving 160 students.

Hip Hop Santa Marta

Since 2006, Hip Hop Santa Marta has been a key cultural event, organized monthly by a local rapper. The event invites artists to impact audiences, especially youth, with meaningful messages and showcases opportunities in the music industry. After pausing during the pandemic, it resumed in April 2023.

Cinepipoca

Initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic to offer cultural activities to children. Initially, the project organized four sessions for 50 children each, using the Santa Marta Samba School's court. Post-pandemic, it expanded to two sessions for up to 100 children, providing free admission, popcorn, and soda.

Eco Group's Holiday Camp

Since 1976, the Eco Group has promoted educational and cultural activities in Santa Marta, particularly through its Holiday Camp, which now serves 250 children aged 6 to 12 with cultural, leisure, and educational activities during school holidays, led by volunteer instructors.

ONG Attitude Social (NGO)

The NGO fosters social inclusion through art and education, creating human development opportunities. Its president started the "Filhos de Marta" choro group in 2004, inspiring the "Aos Pés do Santa Marta" project, a Cultural Point since 2010. The project includes event production, a music school, children's bands, a TV group, a cinema, and a library, offering various artistic and educational workshops.

PESPC - Projeto de Educação Social ao Pensamento Consciente

PESPC began during the pandemic to help locals earn through handmade products like liquid soap made from used cooking oil. Success led to broader initiatives, including free workshops on making eco-friendly household products, enhancing recycling, and environmental awareness. In 2022, the project paused for restructuring under the HUB mentorship program.

Toca dos Lobos

Toca dos Lobos, a jiu-jitsu school since 2019, began as a father-son activity and expanded due to high demand, moving to the Arena's sports court. It focuses on fostering socialization and developing champions, offering future perspectives.

4. **Results**

Interviews with organizers

The interviews with project organizers reveal that among the explored projects, those with the best financial performance achieve sustainability through robust partnerships involving both public and private funding. Additionally, the longest-running cultural project has maintained multiple partners over time.

Most projects use various financing methods, including local partners, networks of friends, individual donations, organizers' funds, grants (editais), incentive laws, and sponsors. For the investigated projects, the financial challenge is ongoing; financial resources enhance other resources and allow for higher-quality activities, as well as the expansion and creation of programs within the projects, according to each one's goals and planning. This underscores the need for organizers to train, structure their projects, and seek funding. Additionally, projects face the challenge of adapting to new markets, changes in public behaviour and desires, and even dealing with unforeseen issues, such as

scheduling conflicts with the project venue. Project adaptability requires an open mindset, a willingness to learn and adjust, and an organizational culture that values innovation and agile responses to environmental changes.

Public sector support emerged as a pivotal factor in the financial sustainability of social projects. Organizers highlighted the importance of not only financial backing from governmental bodies but also the simplification of bureaucratic processes related to project regularization and authorization. This dual form of support from the state plays a critical role in facilitating the operation and increasing the visibility of social initiatives.

Regarding demand, all organizers reported that the projects always have high demand, which has grown over the years or aligned with the availability of material and financial resources and the physical space limits of the project. This sometimes necessitates relocating the project to a larger space. According to the organizers, demand decreases when new projects arrive in the community, but this impact is viewed positively as it increases opportunities for residents. Concerning human resources, all projects noted the presence of a large network of volunteer participants, both local and from other places.

Organizers were asked about their familiarity with project management and social entrepreneurship. Initially, all indicated they did not know these concepts at the start of their projects. Over time, some acquired expertise by participating in courses specifically tailored to their project needs. Others pursued external mentorship. This active pursuit of knowledge enabled the organizers to better comprehend the objectives of their social initiatives, effectively structure their operations, and broaden the scope of their social enterprises. The following testimonial underscores this development:

> In 2022, we had the opportunity to get to know Projeto Hub, which offers mentorship to community micro-entrepreneurs, showing us the potential of our work. This project broadened our perspective on administrative aspects and social impact, demonstrating how our workshops can impact both environmentally and socially. (Interviewee 16)

Interviewee 4 explained that personal interest and the project's development motivated his continuous learning. He actively pursued and participated in various educational programs:

> My interest was genuine. The company needed someone like this, and I pursued this because I was deeply interested in the purposes, so they progressed side by side. I've always sought to improve in this area; now, my next focus is an MBA in ESG. (Interviewee 4)

Organizers were also asked how they communicate their project activities to the public. Apart from Rádio Santa Marta, a social communication project, most use social media, particularly Instagram and WhatsApp, to communicate. Websites are used for external audiences to better understand the project and attract funding. The most effective communication method is word-of-mouth, as information spreads quickly and organically among project participants and through the association, which uses loudspeakers to broadcast information relevant to the community.

> We always ask the president of the Association to announce in the community. We use Instagram, the community group on WhatsApp, and since many don't regularly check the internet or dislike groups, we send direct messages to individuals through a WhatsApp broadcast list. (Interviewee 10)

From these interviews, we can infer that the elements needed for project sustainability are: (a) financial resources, (b) trained personnel, directly linked to the training process of those involved in the project, (c) project structure, and (d) public sector support, not only financially but also in simplifying project regularization and authorization.

Interviews with participants

Participants engage with cultural projects for a variety of reasons. These include the desire to learn new skills, occupy idle time, uphold collective or family traditions, meet new people, support and participate in local initiatives, enhance physical and mental health, earn additional income, or immerse themselves in the local reality for academic research or to contribute to community transformation. The following statements exemplify these motivations:

> *I found it interesting because it's a way to help the community, right? And at that time, photography was lacking here, so I thought: 'Why not? It's an extra income.' I really like it when someone from the community is running a project; I like to be involved. (Interviewee 17)*

> *I became interested in participating because I was, and continue to be, unemployed due to illness. (Interviewee 18)*

> *I was interested because I wanted to learn guitar and engage more with the music world. (Interviewee 6)*

Interviews revealed that the main sources of information about cultural projects are social media and loudspeaker announcements by the Santa Marta Residents' Association. Additionally, word-of-mouth plays a crucial role, with friends, former participants, or family members emphasizing the importance and tradition of these projects across generations. Personal curiosity is another key factor, often sparked when individuals encounter the project venue.

Participants were asked about the positive and negative experiences they had within the projects. On the positive side, key benefits include skill development and learning, along with expanded networking and opportunities to explore new places. Additionally, there is a strong sense of belonging and connection, as participating in these projects allows individuals to connect with others who share similar interests, values, and goals. This fosters significant relationships and strengthens the sense of community. A participant shared:

> *Since joining the project, it has been a world of discoveries, especially within myself. I discovered I could be an actress, singer, interviewer—things I never imagined due to my shyness. (Interviewee 5)*

There is also an increase in social and empathetic awareness regarding social and political issues and a deeper understanding of the community and societal challenges. This strengthens personal, civic, and professional development. Projects can involve diverse profiles, enhancing debates, reflections, and knowledge exchange. A participant noted:

> *The project greatly helped shape me not just personally, but also as a citizen. We are a social group, so in our meetings, we discuss not just the project but social and political issues. This helped me understand my place not just in the community but in society, state, and country. (Interviewee 13)*

Conversely, while diversity is seen as a positive, it is also considered a challenge by participants, as working with different people can lead to conflicts or opinion divergences. Differences in vision, goals, or work methods can create tensions and collaboration difficulties, necessitating learning to give voice and space to others and understanding when to assert oneself. A participant explained:

> *A project involving many people with diverse profiles also ends up having disputes and varied interests. So, while a project that brings together many people with different profiles is incredibly powerful and wonderful, it's also a potential source of problems and issues. (Interviewee 2)*

Additional negative experiences encompass challenges such as resource scarcity, bureaucratic hurdles, and difficulties in implementing activities. These obstacles can lead to frustration and demotivation, particularly when anticipated outcomes are not met or when projects face discontinuity.

Participants connected their personal experiences to the various impacts of the projects on their lives. The most significant effect was the overall enhancement of living conditions. These projects provide access to essential services like education, culture, and leisure, and they create economic opportunities, including employment, training, and social inclusion. Additionally, they offer new experiences and open up life opportunities that might otherwise remain inaccessible.

Another key impact is on social relations, as projects promote social cohesion, solidarity, and mutual respect, strengthening community ties and interactions among different people and groups. Additionally, projects impact empowerment and capability building by providing skills, knowledge, and resources for people to become change agents in their lives and the community :

> *It's always good to have new experiences in our lives; you never know what will happen in the future. I never thought about training, but now I train, compete, and who knows, maybe one day I'll go abroad. It's never too late."*
> *(Interviewee 20)*

Participants were asked if they would recommend the project to others. Given the projects' significant impact on their lives, they strongly endorsed involvement in Santa Marta's cultural projects. They believe participation helps preserve local culture, strengthen the community, foster personal and professional growth, and enhance social integration.

> *I definitely recommend that any youth, adolescent, or even older adult participate. We've had people in their 40s and 50s join the group, seeing it as a way to promote fun, sports, and leisure for the kids, but also for the group itself, which strengthens from sharing information. If I know there's a free public course for someone, I share it in the group; if there's psychological support for one, it's passed to another, so it's also a channel that fosters relevant information within the group and, consequently, within the favela.*
> *(Interviewee 12)*

Interviewees also highlighted the importance of volunteering, especially for those not from the community, from local neighbours to foreign tourists. Involvement of these individuals allows for an exchange of experiences and perspectives, promoting intercultural dialogue and appreciation of cultural diversity. By actively engaging in these initiatives, people demonstrate interest and respect for traditions, strengthening the notion that all cultures have value and deserve to be celebrated and preserved.

> *I recommend volunteering because it's a very interesting experience, especially dealing with children from within communities. It's a totally different experience for those who might not have it, thinking it's the same, but you see there's a very different social weight for those who live in the community and those who don't. So I think everyone should go through this experience.*
> *(Interviewee 15)*

Finally, participants were asked if they would participate in the projects again, excluding those who were still involved but less present due to daily routines. Most responded positively, valuing the worth of re-participating due to the rich experiences, lessons learned, and understanding of the importance of cultural projects. A few responded negatively. One argued they would not participate again due to lack of time and feeling that their time of benefit had passed, giving the chance for new children and adolescents to benefit from what the project offers. Another stated they would not participate due to

their current job, which they truly enjoy, and if they were to participate again, it would only be as moral support to honour the project.

5. **Discussions and Recommendations**

This study investigates the factors influencing the development of cultural projects in the Santa Marta *favela*, aiming to identify strategies to ensure their continuity. Based on our analysis, the following recommendations are proposed:

Seek Partnerships to Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Cultural projects face challenges in securing consistent financial resources. It is crucial to seek partnerships with organizations, businesses, and institutions that share similar cultural values. These partnerships could involve sponsorship agreements, donations, strategic alliances, or the creation of social investment funds, providing financial support and enhancing sustainability. Additionally, collaborative partnerships can stimulate the local creative economy, creating opportunities for mutual development.

Define a Clear Purpose for the Projects

Cultural projects must have a well-defined purpose aligning with the Santa Marta community's needs and desires. Understanding the community's main challenges and how culture can address them will guide the projects' goals, making them more effective. By establishing a clear purpose, cultural projects can become powerful tools for social transformation, addressing inclusion, cultural preservation, education, and empowerment.

Consolidate the Projects' Branding

A strong, recognizable brand is vital for attracting resources and establishing a solid community connection. Investing in the visual identity of the projects, creating clear communication, and maintaining a consistent presence across communication channels are important steps. This recognition will serve as a benchmark within and beyond Santa Marta. Emphasizing communication and promotion will broaden the initiatives' reach and impact.

Effectively Use Communication Media to Attract Resources

Cultural projects should effectively explore communication media for fundraising. This includes using social media strategically, creating visually attractive content, producing impactful videos, and preparing clear reports. By using communication media efficiently, projects can convey their message persuasively, gaining support from financiers, sponsors, donors, and volunteers outside the community. Effective communication is also relevant for spreading local culture, reaching broader audiences, and promoting appreciation for the region's artistic expressions and traditions.

Generate and Showcase Relevant Results for the Community

Cultural projects should strive to produce meaningful outcomes for the Santa Marta community. This can be achieved through social impact metrics, such as the number of beneficiaries, the development of local skills, and the enhancement of community self-esteem. Documenting and sharing these results transparently is crucial so that the community and potential partners can recognize the projects' value. Projects should aim to positively impact the entire Santa Marta community by promoting social inclusion, encouraging intergenerational dialogue, strengthening local cultural identity, and providing opportunities for personal development. By creating an environment that benefits the community holistically, projects become more relevant and sustainable, stimulating economic and social development.

Preserve Local Culture

Cultural projects should aim to value and preserve Santa Marta's local culture. This can be accomplished through workshops, exhibitions, cultural events, and activities promoting the community's traditions, artistic expressions, and history. Highlighting Santa Marta's cultural richness strengthens residents' sense of identity and belonging, while also promoting the appreciation of their roots. Valuing local culture not only preserves traditions but also stimulates the creative economy, creating opportunities for local artists and entrepreneurs.

Seek Knowledge and Training in Project Management and Social Entrepreneurship

Ensuring sustainability requires seeking knowledge and training in project management and social entrepreneurship. This includes specific courses and capacity-building programs providing essential skills for effective management, such as business plan development, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation, financial management, and community mobilization. This pursuit of knowledge strengthens the ability to manage projects efficiently and sustainably.

Demand Public Sector Support

Cultural projects must assert themselves and demand investments from the public sector, particularly in culture. This can be done through advocacy, defending the Santa Marta community's interests, and empowering individuals to influence decisions that affect their lives. Advocacy is crucial for driving change, promoting rights, and seeking solutions to relevant issues. Projects should establish partnerships with government bodies, present proposals demonstrating culture's positive impact, and participate in forums and public hearings to claim more effective resources and policies for culture in favelas.

Structure Projects as Social Enterprises

A sustainable approach is to structure cultural projects as social enterprises, developing business models combining social objectives with financial sustainability. Projects can diversify revenue streams, such as selling artisanal products, hosting paid events, or providing paid cultural services. Partnerships with social enterprises, impact investors, or funding programs valuing the social aspect can also be considered. This approach allows cultural projects to be financially viable and sustainable while generating a positive impact on Santa Marta, promoting the creative economy, and fostering local entrepreneurship.

These proposals aim to enhance the sustainability of cultural projects in Santa Marta by aligning with cultural sustainability and entrepreneurship principles. Adopting these strategies will improve project effectiveness, and financial stability, and contribute to the region's socioeconomic development.

6. **Conclusion**

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the development of cultural projects in the *favela* of Santa Marta, to identify strategies to ensure the continuity and sustainability of these initiatives. The research findings are particularly valuable for guiding public policy development, supporting cultural entrepreneurship initiatives by private companies, and advising cultural entrepreneurs on best practices.

Financial resources, training of participants, family and community support, project structuring, and public sector support emerged as key factors contributing to the success and sustainability of cultural projects. Financial challenges impact project continuity, scalability, quality, and effectiveness while forming partnerships with public and private sectors boosts financial performance and long-term viability. Training enhances founders' management and social entrepreneurship skills, demonstrating education's role in fostering sustainable projects. Moreover, family and community support are

essential, motivating participants and embedding projects within the community. Public sector support is vital, extending beyond funding to reduce bureaucratic barriers, thereby improving project efficiency, increasing visibility, and helping projects to expand and contribute to a more inclusive social framework.

The unique perspective of having a researcher who is a resident of Santa Marta enriches this study, providing an insider's view that contributes significantly to understanding the nuances of cultural development in this *favela*. This perspective helps identify effective strategies that foster culture, create jobs, generate income, and catalyze social change.

Finally, the vibrant cultural landscape of Rio's *favelas*, particularly Santa Marta, reflects the resilience and creativity of these communities. Recognizing and valuing this cultural wealth is essential for dispelling stereotypes and promoting a deeper, more respectful understanding of the *favelas* and their residents. By focusing on the identified key factors, cultural projects can enhance their effectiveness and continue to play a pivotal role in the social and cultural development of urban communities.

Acknowledgement

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