

# METHODOLOGY

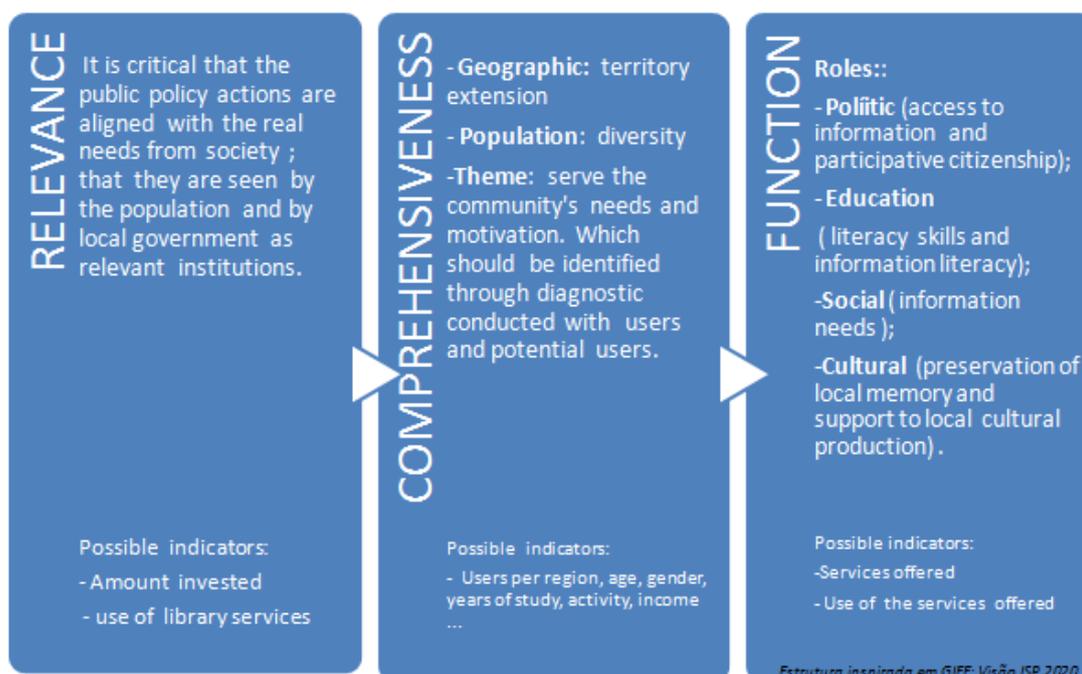
This study was developed as an exploratory research having the methodology built by a researcher from Fundação Pensamento Digital along with National System of Public Libraries (SNBP) coordinators and a representative from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

## 1 SCENARIO ANALYSIS

The research initial steps , in August and September 2012, concentrated on the analysis of publications about public library in Brazil, as well as meetings with the National System of Public Libraries (SNBP) coordination , researchers and leaders in the field of librarianship. The analysis of Brazilian specialists (SUAIDEN; OLYNTHUS; MIRANDA; TARGINO) and official government documents containing descriptions of recent public policy, along with meetings with experts from the government or academic field, substantiated the proposal of three areas for analyzing public library in Brazil: relevance, scope and functions.

Areas to analyze Public Library in Brazil

### PL analysis in Brazil:



Initially, it was explored the possibility to build a research strategy to identify best practices in using technology for the promotion of socio-economic development, or use of

technology regarding the missions of the library described in the IFLA and UNESCO<sup>1</sup> Public Library Manifesto (ANNEX I). The sample was composed by libraries that highlight the integration of technology in functions such as the reading promotion, the local memory preservation, the dissemination of culture, the dissemination of information to improve the quality of life in the served community, etc. The field work would allow the researcher to learn thoroughly these practices and recommend investment in systematization and dissemination of a pilot group of public libraries.

However, the difficulty in finding examples of technology integration in actions related to several library functions, made the initial strategy impossible. We did not identify libraries that encourage participants to use technology in activities that aimed at promotion reading, or in actions to assess or meet the information needs of the local community. We also could not locate (prior to fieldwork) actions that use the technology in promoting literary or cultural production (among others).

The researcher's participation in the XVIII Public Libraries System National Meeting helped the building of this vision, and contributed for a new reflection that resulted in the strategy definition used in field research.

## **2 IMMERSION AT THE XVIII NATIONAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES SYSTEM**

In a second stage, the researcher made an immersion between State leaders and representatives of the main federal government programs that interact with libraries. During five days, in September of 2012, she observed and attended the XVIII National Meeting of the Public Libraries System<sup>2</sup> having the opportunity to watch and interview leaders and decision-makers of public policies that influence the public library in Brazil. The Conference was held at the headquarters of the National Library Foundation in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Amongst the participants, besides the state coordinators, there were coordinators and interns from SNBP, researchers and specialists in public libraries, representatives of the Ministry of Culture and the National Library Foundation, coordinators of federal programs related to libraries (book distribution, promotion of reading) and coordinators of the telecenter programs under management of the Ministry of Communications. The conference also counted with a representative from the Gates Foundation who attended the opening of the Conference and led a section on the last day in along with this study's researcher.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ifla.org/publications/iflaunesco-public-library-manifesto-1994>

<sup>2</sup> <http://snbp.bn.br/?s=GATES&x=0&y=0>

The presentations were distributed in the course of the week alternated with workshops that promoted exchanges between state coordinators and a visit to the newly opened Rocinha<sup>3</sup> Park Library. On the last day, the representative of the Gates Foundation presented about the use of technology in libraries in other countries. In the sequence, a workshop given by this researcher asked participants (representatives of the State systems) to report the activities related to the use of technology for the development in the libraries of their States. The participants formed groups according to the five Brazilian geographic regions and each group was given a laptop with an Excel spreadsheet prepared to receive the requested data.

By observing this meeting and from data reported by the State coordinators, we can see that the integration of technology to public libraries services in Brazil is still limited and also that technology for development (ICT for development) is not very known or explored amongst the protagonists of public policies related to public libraries in Brazil.

The use of technology in these organizations is normally limited to offering access to internet, computerizing library systems (large libraries or networks of large cities) and use of social networks and blogs to advertise the Library activities.

At this stage of the study, the researcher hadn't found the use of technology to motivate or guide information search to improve the people's life quality yet, or the use of technology integrated with cultural activities so frequent in the best Brazilian libraries. The use of technology seemed to be apart from the library functions, limited to administrative support and to provide internet access to a user who is disconnected from the other actions or functions of the library.

The vision and the previously defined issues were revisited. We found that if we kept the strategy to seek for the best practices in using technology, knowing them in detail, systematizing and then disseminating them, we would have problems with the lack of practice in the use of technology for development and the lack of understanding of its concept, as well as the lack of familiarity with the services related to this concept and already developed by libraries abroad.

Such strategy began to prioritize knowing what makes a public library be relevant, even without the use of technology. Understanding how it works, what people seek in it, challenges' perceptions and motivations of their teams and users and then examine the possibilities of integrating technology.

### **3 STRATEGIES FOR FIELD RESEARCH**

---

<sup>3</sup> Bairro popular caracterizado como favela, localizado na zona sul da cidade do Rio de Janeiro.

In order to operate with the research problem, we developed two research questions, six areas of inquiry, or relevance factors, and four development domains outlined below. These elements guide the research activities, which include Libraries' observation, users and staff surveys and interviews with local government representatives.

### 3.1 Research Questions

The "Study on ICT Use in Public Libraries in Brazil" examines two questions related to Public Libraries relevance in Brazil:

*- What makes a Public Library relevant to its community?*

*- How can ICT be used to support or improve the elements that were mentioned in the answer to the question above?*

### 3.2 Relevance factors - areas of inquiry

The survey assumes that the six factors listed below are related one to another and the level of relevance of a public library for the residents of its community and the local government. It is believed that either together or independently, these factors contribute to attract users and make the library an organization which is present in their lives.

- i. **Services** — What are the different services offered to the community? (checking out books, ICT access, cultural events...) Is there an agenda of activities and events? What is the frequency and usage of each service? Who provides financial support for each service? How is ICT used on the provision of each service? How could ICT be used to improve those services and create new ones? How does each service contribute to the relevance of the library for the community and local government?
- ii. **Staff** — How is the Library coordination organized? How many librarians work there and what is the role of each one? Is there a multidisciplinary

team of professionals? What is the staff necessary for each service offered? What is the education degree of the staff? Is there a professional development plan for the staff? How is the staff education related to the services offered? Has the staff received specific PD for ICT integration?

- iii. **Physical Design, Location and infrastructure** — How do physical design, architecture, location and infrastructure (electricity, Internet, building maintenance, furniture) of a Library contribute to attract users? What is the ICT infrastructure available? How do these factors affect long-term sustainability and libraries relevance for their communities?
- iv. **Management** — How is the collection managed? Is there ICT use in the collection management? How is the planning process for collection acquisition? How are the library's activities communicated and registered? Is there a marketing plan to let the community know about the library's activities, services and collection? How does the library communicate with users, local government, SNBP and other libraries? Which indicators are used in the library's report?
- v. **Collection** — How does the size and quality of graphic material collection affect the library's relevance for its community? What are the indicators of collection use? Does the collection meet the specific motivations of local community providing information such as touristic activities, fishing, agriculture, art craft, house and neighborhood improvement especially on poor urban areas and shantytown?
- vi. **ICT access for users** — Does the library offer ICT access to users? How does the access to ICT, or the lack of it, contribute to increase, or decrease, library's relevance? What do users use ICT for? Do users prefer other public places to use ICT? If so, why? From the services offered nowadays, which one depends on the use of ICT? Would a greater availability of ICT (quantity/quality) increase library relevance? How is the maintenance of the existing ICT?

### 3.3.3 Development Domains

The domains of development characterize the different roles that public libraries can play in society. The "Study on ICT Use in Public Libraries in Brazil" focuses its efforts on the four domains described below. While these four areas are central in the investigation of Public Libraries relevance, the study allows for discoveries beyond these domains.

- i. **Political:** universal access to information and citizen participation.
- ii. **Cultural:** Does the library play the role of shelter for the local culture? Does it stimulate local culture? Do people use the library to share cultural information, both traditional and popular? Some people might do this by organizing or attending events, others may create websites or blogs. Is technology used in public libraries to help users maintain or express their cultural identity, support cultural practices or other experiences?
- iii. **Education:** How does the library contribute to develop reading skills and help people make a good use of information? Which services are related to these goals?

*Through computers and Internet availability, people can gain access to information and tools that support learning. Students can use software*

*to complete homework and improve their performance at school. Adolescents and adults might seek out admissions or financial aid information for new educational opportunities or to participate in online workshops. Such uses can support positive educational outcomes that may lead to a range development goals, from economic impacts to enhancing quality of life (GIS, 2011).*

- iv. **Social** : How is the library serving the local population regarding their needs for information? Do the collection and the offered activities meet the needs of local population? Would local business benefit from specific information (fishing, art craft, agriculture, commercial and management techniques)? What about social conditions that would benefit from specific information (household improvement, plumbing, paving, gender or minority issues)? Is the library providing specific information about these conditions? Is ICT used? Are there webinars or videos developed for these purposes, or any other ICT based material? How is the local population using and benefiting from these materials? Can people use ICTs in PLs to find jobs, prepare CVs, or improve their skills to enhance employability? Are there users seen as Entrepreneurs that use the Internet to sell products and services or expand customer bases? Are they allowed to do that in the library? Do users use online information to support their work, whether through pricing decisions, discovering new production techniques, or exploring new ways to generate income?