

FICA

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SELECTING THE TENANT FOR FICA's #1APPARTMENT

Report



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1. Introduction

This report refers to the selection of the first tenant for FICA's # 1 Apartment. It is composed of the decisions that led to the selection of the family profile, and the reporting of the selection process itself, including process evaluations and lessons learned.

The first FICA apartment is located in Julio Mesquita Square, 69, in downtown São Paulo, and has 47 m².

2. The process

The first decisions for the selection process were made in 2017. In July that year the rent price was decided in a FICA general assembly, totalling R\$ 633 including house costs. In November of that year, the associate Tania Christopoulos held a workshop in the FICA apartment, applying a methodology entitled "personification". The workshop was about the progressive construction of a character, in groups, from questions about how this character seizes the world, their desires, fears, experiences. In an interesting convergence, some criteria of the family that the associates thought to inhabit Apartment #1 were defined: a family headed by a woman; any family composition could be accepted; should be a family with two generations, preferably with children; the head of the family should work in the central region.

In the December 2017 assembly, the family profile was also discussed. At the time, the dilemma referred to the place of origin of the resident. For some it should be a person who currently lives in the periphery, because it would avoid long hours of travel. For others, it should be someone who already lived in the center of São Paulo but who was threatened by high rent or eviction values, avoiding gentrification and preserving neighborhood ties. Since we had only one apartment, the choice was not simple. The compromise solution for the criteria was debated and it was decided that it would be a resident who had already lived in the center and also in distant districts, which could, therefore, narrate the different experiences.

At the general assembly of October 2018, the selection process was defined. In order to get in touch with the candidates, the solution proposed at the assembly was to make an indirect selection, through networks and trusted partner institutions that FICA relates to.

With this data in hand, the selection process went forward in January 2019, with the creation of a Working Group (WG) initially formed by the members: Marina Grinover (FICA Director-President), Paula Janovitch and Rodrigo Millan, and coordinated by Marina Sawaya. In the second phase, from May 2019 onwards, FICA's associate and general coordinator Bianca Antunes, also participated.

In the first meetings of the WG, it was decided that the interviews with the shortlisted candidates could not be done only by FICA members, but that it would be necessary to have professionals specialized in interviews and with experience in social projects. It was decided, then, that the interviews would be conducted by a social worker and a psychologist. The names of Marcia Arantes and Fernanda Almeida, a psychologist and social worker, respectively, were reached through associate appointments.

2.1 Contact with partner institutions

The first action of the WG was to consolidate and contact the list of institutions to be contacted, which were suggested at the meeting, and also by FICA's supporters. The institutions are devoted to social assistance (Santa Fé Beneficent Association, Instituto Acaia, the Scalabrinian Sisters), housing (FLM/Ocupação 9 de Julho, Ocupação São João, União dos Movimentos de Moradia, ULC) culture (Lanchonete.org) and a sponsor for racial equality (Fundo Baobá). We made also a call to our associates for suggesting further institutions and the municipal secretary for housing (SEHAB) was included by suggestion.

The institutions were contacted and invited to suggest candidates to participate in the process. Marina Sawaya, then coordinator of the selection process, explained to each of them the proposal of FICA's social rent and sent three forms to each of the institution. The reception was slower and less thorough than we had expected. In the moment of the returning of the forms some institutions expressed no interest in nominating candidates, others said that the rental value proposed by FICA was too high for their networks and beneficiaries. Two partners asked for more time. The deadline was extended so that they could indicate people. Even so, the return, with the exception of Carmen (FLM), was less than three nominations per entity.

With the low response from the entities, a new round was carried out, starting in May 2019. The WG first re-evaluated the selection process, and which roads should be taken. The decision was to follow with the entities - since the process was agreed during the meeting, and changing the methodology would mean making a new meeting and further delaying the process. Thus, contact with the

entities that had already responded was resumed, explaining again the profile sought and trying to understand the reason for the low response.

The WG realized that the subject of the offer of an apartment and a selection process was not organically introduced into the routine of the entities, but that although the theme is fundamental and in tune with the premises of most of them, a preliminary approach is necessary where we can more often explain what FICA is, what the objectives of our association are and what the advantages of a partnership are. We try to change the approach with the entities and open a more frequent contact to raise families possibly interested in the fair rent of the apartment of FICA.

At this stage, the WG contacted a new entity that was not on the initial list: the Gaspar Garcia Center for Human Rights. In a conversation with the Center's advocates and social workers on May 2, the objectives of FICA and the characteristics of the family sought were explained. The group undertook to seek families in the profile among those who attend

2.2 Enrollment Form

An enrollment form was built between January and March 2019, including economic and socio-territorial issues, such as family income, family composition and place of residence, even leisure practices and free time use, such as in the center go and why I would like to live in the center [Annex 01].

The form was reviewed by the FICA board of directors and the consultants Marcia Arantes (psychologist) and Fernanda Almeida (social worker). In May 2019, in the second round of contacts with entity, this form was updated in the introduction text to bring the new schedule.

Even so, the WG suggests that the form be reviewed with the addition of a direct contact with the head of the household. In addition, some surveys were irrelevant, such as the question of previous addresses

2.3 Partner institutions response

The WG expectation was to receive three names per partner institution, building a list of 30 names. The WG would reduce this list to 10 names, which would be interviewed, with the support of the psychologist and social worker.

But the response of the entities, as explained above, was not as intense as one imagined. It was noticed that many entities engaged worked with families that received less than two minimum wages, or who were already in line to receive an apartment through the occupation movements, for example.

Despite not having received as many candidates as expected, the experience was positive: after the two rounds of calls with the entities, 12 forms were received, selecting 6 families for the interviews.

The selection for interview had as main criterion the attendance to the prerequisites defined in the workshops and previous assemblies

The profile of the interviewees ranged from women married to children, single women with children, lesbian couples with daughters, two sisters (one with health problems) and one female candidate with a stable job, but coming out of a street situation. Candidates who were not selected had large families, and with many teenagers / adults, which the WG considered complex due to the size of the apartment and the little division of space. One of the candidates was composed of only two men - an uncle and a nephew.

Below, the general profile of all the candidates, starting with the six candidates interviewed:

Maria Lucia

Appointed by: FLM (Frente de Luta pela Moradia)

Contact person: Carmen Silva

3 people: couple + daughter

Family income: 2100 + 1800 = 3900 reais

Cristina

Appointed by: FLM (Frente de Luta pela Moradia)

Contact person: Carmen Silva

2 people: sisters

Family income: 3600 + 1200 = 4800 reais

Eliana

Appointed by: Secretaria Municipal de Direitos Humanos e Cidadania

Contact person: Giulia Patitucci

3 people (couple + daughter)

Family income: 2000 + 1300 = 3300 reais

Mariana

Appointed by: Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos

Contact person: Kelseny Medeiros

5 people: couple + 3 children - 1-, 4- and 8-years-old

Family income: 4100 reais

Elineide

Appointed by: Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos

Contact person: Kelseny Medeiros

3 people: mother + 2 children (21- and 9-years-old)

Family income: 1650 + 1800 = 3450 reais

Patrícia

Appointed by: Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos

Contact person: Kelseny Medeiros

3 people: 2 women (couple) + baby daughter (1,5-year-old)

Family income: 7500 reais

Obs: *the family income is a bit high, we wanted to understand if it is a real income, and confirm how much each receives monthly.*

not selected

Maria

Appointed by: Lanchonete.org

Contact person: Paula

5 people: 4 adults + 1 baby

Family income: 6000 + 4000 = 10.000 reais

reason for non-selection: many adults

José Eduardo

Appointed by: FLM (Frente de Luta pela Moradia)

Contact person: Carmen Silva

2 people: uncle and nephew

Family income: 3600 + 1200 = 4800 reais

reason for non-selection: two men, no women

Tatiane

Appointed by: FLM (Frente de Luta pela Moradia)

Contact person: Carmen Silva

3 people: grandmother + woman + daughter

Family income: 2600 + 6000 = 8600 reais

non-selection reason: very high income

Maria Eva

Appointed by: Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos

Contact person: Kelseny Medeiros

5 people: 3 adults, 2 children

Family income: 3.340 reais

reason for non-selection: many adults

Maria Ivonete

Appointed by: Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos

Contact person: Kelseny Medeiros

5 people: 3 teenagers + couple

Family income: 2500 + 1700 = 4200 reais

reason for non-selection: many adolescents / adults

Simone

Appointed by: Centro Gaspar Garcia de Direitos Humanos

Contact person: Kelseny Medeiros

5 people: couple + 2 teenagers + 1 children

Family income: 1100 + 432 (bolsa família) = 1532 reais

reason for non-selection: many adolescents / adults + low income

2.4 The interviews

The interviews were held on May 30th and 31st in the FICA apartment, and an interview was held on June 1 at Base Urbana office.

On May 30th four candidates were interviewed, with the presence of Márcia, Fernanda and Bianca Antunes, between 2:00 pm and 5:00 p.m.; On May 31st, an interview was held at 11am in the presence of Márcia, Fernanda and Rodrigo Millan; June 1st, the interview with a candidate was made at 9am with the presence of Márcia, Fernanda and Bianca.

Márcia pointed out the advantage of doing the interviews in the apartment, since the candidate already points questions about the place. The only drawback, in the case of the interviews of Apartment # 1, is that the place was under construction and with a lot of dust. Fernanda agreed, but raised the question of the presence of the children: they may be frustrated in case of non-selection, and this may affect them more than the parents. Because the mother is usually responsible for the children, this issue is not easily resolved

The conversations revolved around the candidates' personal and professional lives, their expectations about the future, why the apartment would be important in their current phase of life. An item raised by Marcia Arantes

[Annex 2] is the desire to live in the inner city of São Paulo expressed by the candidates. "This desire comes anchored in considerations about the next school for the children, proximity to working places, also near leisure options on weekends. Parks and SESC (24 de Maio and Bom Retiro) are frequently mentioned in this question". Fernanda Almeida reinforces this vision of the inner city, stressing a difference of how these families view the neighborhood and how does the middle see it: "These families carry a way of living in the city center that the new residents - the middle class (hipster) - do not necessarily value. There is still neighborhood and community "[Annex 3].

2.5 Final meeting: choosing the family

On June 1st, between 9:30 a.m. and 12 a.m., after the interviews the final meeting was held for the selection of the resident family. Márcia and Fernanda began analyzing the general process and the profiles as a whole. Soon after, they talked about each candidate, their strengths and weaknesses according to the profile sought by FICA.

The selected family responds to the main characteristics of the profile thought by FICA: it has children, works in the center, has income of little more than three minimum wages. "It was not difficult to reach the 'approved candidate', as well as to create a list in order of priority, I believe that this fact is due first of all to the criteria you presented and previously discussed for the "first tenant", regarding the socio-welfare profile", reported Fernanda [Annex 3].

One of the criteria was not accomplished by any of those selected for interviews: that of having experience of living both in the periphery and in the inner city. Many candidates, moreover, were not born in São Paulo, but came from the Northeast, such as Bahia and Paraíba. The selected candidate (Mariana) arrived in São Paulo from Northeastern Brazil, still a child, with her family and always lived in the city center, where she built her whole life: this is where she went to school, where she met her husband, where her children were born and now go to school.

The reason for Mariana's selection was that her family most of the criteria built by FICA. She has a structured family, her husband works for 11 years in the same place, Mariana is a manicurist. Since FICA has no social assistance infrastructure, it was important to choose a family that is functional from the working aspect, but lacks income to live in good conditions.

Mariana takes care of her three children. She is kind of an organizative roll in the ocupação (squat) where she currently lives. Mariana helped to fill out the forms for some candidates to FICA's flat who come also from there. The three children (1, 4 and 8 years old) are in the school / day care center in the area of

the flat. For Mariana, leaving the occupation means ensuring stability for the children. Today the family lives in a windowless room, formerly part of a shop of the small building in Campos Elíseos, which was divided into two parts, one for each family.

In second came Elineide, mother of two children - 21 and 9 years old. She is a cook, works from Monday to Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in a kilo restaurant in Bom Retiro. She cooks alone 36 hot dishes and pilots 24 stove heads simultaneously, with the help of 2 staff who cut and chop vegetables. She separated from the father of her first child, with whom she came to São Paulo from Bahia. The second husband, the father of her 9-year-old daughter, was killed while returning from work, probably by mistake.

Maria Lucia came third. She lives with her daughter in a small room, and wants to leave because the environment is bad for her daughter - she never leaves the child alone at home. She has a complicated relationship with her husband, whom she has been with for 24 years, but who has another wife.

Cristina came fourth. She lives with her sister who has mental health problems, and can not work. She rents a place in Bela Vista, but the rent is very high, and need to find a cheaper place.

In fifth came Patricia. She lives in the same occupation as Mariana, and pays rent (Mariana has “bought” the right to live in her space in the squat). She has a relationship with a woman who lives and works in the neighborhood of Cachoeirinha. The girlfriend has two teenage daughters and a one-year-old daughter.

Finally, Eliana has been in a street situation for almost a year and a half. She could not tell us what led her to the street situation. She has a permanent job and is looking for a place to live, where she can bring up her 18 year old daughter.

3. Lessons learned

We have selected in this report some changes that we suggest can be made for the next selection processes.

3.1 Relationship with partner institutions

As discussed above, the partner institutions’ response was not as intense as first imagined. Typically, social assistance institutions work with families that receive less than two minimum wages, too low for our criteria. People living in organized ocupações (squats) are often already in line to receive an apartment through the housing movements. Other institutions eventually pre-screened the

candidate and indicated only one family, either because they did not want to point out other families or to avoid creating frustrated expectations.

It is important to say that when we received few forms back, we hypothesized that the chosen institutions did not fulfill the profile of what we were looking for, since they did not serve a population inserted in the rental market of the city. This has been true for some of the institutions contacted, such as the Scalabriana Sisters and the Santa Fé Charitable Association, where women are below the income range established by FICA. In other cases, such as the São João occupation, the answer was negative from the beginning, because their expectations were to achieve collective solutions to the housing problem, and not to promote individual housing alternatives for each family - FICA was seen in this case as de-mobilizing. For the next selection processes it is important to have this in mind, and choose partner institutions that can appoint good candidates.

In the second round of contacts with institutions, however, and especially in the working experience with the Gaspar Garcia Center (a NGO devoted to support people living in cortiços and in squats), we learned that the quality of the relationship established between the FICA and these movements was important.

Likewise, it is important to consider as an issue the fact that the occupation contacted by the Gaspar Garcia Center is of a small size, in comparison to other housing movements, in which the indications ended up being almost all of a personal nature.

In this process, it was understood that it is necessary to build mechanisms that better connect the FICA with the entities or interlocutors of the potential residents, finding and strengthening ties, for example, with more entities that have access to the profile of families that FICA seeks

During the final meeting, in June 1st, Márcia and Fernanda suggested the tightening of ties with these entities and actors through conversations, events in which the role of FICA can be discussed and the day-to-day experiences and creating relationships.

Another idea was to run the selection process not through partner institutions, but contacting the immediate neighborhood of the flat, for example in the small businesses in the neighborhood who already employ people who work walking distance from the flat. This could create an opportunity for the selected family to have ties to the neighborhood of the apartment.

3.2 Application Form

There was a simple, but basic, omission in our application form: an item with the candidate's direct contact information was missing. This made contact with the pre-selected candidates confusing and time-consuming, since we had to go through the entities again to get their contact. One of the candidates called us when the interviews scheduled for May 30 and 31 had already ended. Because it was our mistake, we made an exception and did an extra interview on June 1, before the final meeting began.

The form also did not have the "occupation" option in the type of dwelling in which the candidate lives today, which caused some families to not fill this item.

3.3 FICA Narrative

Fernanda and Márcia reported that it would be important for FICA to consolidate its narrative in a way that is simple to explain its objectives and what we are - both had some difficulties in understanding the mission of the association and how to explain it to other people. This is important also for the conversations with the future residents of this and the next apartments.

This comment raises an interesting question: FICA has always been concerned with its discourse towards possible financial supporters, but has taken little care of the discourse for the residents and leaderships that have another experience of the housing issues in the center and little familiarity with innovative actions such as FICA. This shows that we also need to refine a discourse and a way of approaching these communities, and to institutions that will not be FICA's sponsors, but benefitters of its larger purpose, which is to provide affordable housing in the city center.

4. Conclusion

Despite some shortcomings in the process, which ultimately delayed the finalization of the selection, the result was extremely positive - and the setbacks have shown us important points that we should not ignore in the future, such as the question of time for research, relationship with the families applying for fair rent.

The relationship with the entities is very important and must be strengthened, so that the narrative and the FICA mission are well understood among all and we gain more partners. The entry of the Gaspar Garcia Center for Human Rights in the second part of the process was essential, and we can learn a great deal from their way of working: at the time of selecting candidates, for example, they held a meeting with residents of an occupation with whom they work, to explain

the function of FICA, talk about the apartment and the family profile that we are looking for. Our presence in future conversations can enrich the process for both the candidates and our understanding of the profile of the residents.

Although we expected to receive 30 initial forms, we believe it was positive that we received only 12, with a selection of 6 for interviews. It was difficult at the first moment to make a shortlist, and it would be even more so if we had more candidates. The interviews are also intense, and if the criteria are clear, it is not necessary to have a lot more candidates for a position - an opinion shared by the interviewers and the selection WG.

It was essential to count on the experience of Fernanda (social worker) and Márcia (psychologist), who bring different perspectives to the process, and have a more complete view of the candidates. It is worth emphasizing the intense connection between the two professionals, although they had never worked together. The two had always had similar evaluations of the candidates, the interviews had equal participation of the two and both agreed with the final classification for similar reasons.

Finally, the WG is very happy to have fulfilled the task of selecting the resident of FICA Apartment #1 and, thus, helping to write the history of the association. Ready for the next one!

Annex 1: Interview Forms

The interview form can be accessed at the link below (portuguese only):

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1BiVXJqkmw8POVQS-v1WSQPGJJUKCO_rmh

Annex 2: Comments of Marcia Arantes, psychologist

3rd June, 2019

Reflection from interviews with families applying for the lease of the FICA Project

I would like to emphasize here an aspect that seemed to me quite important in the profile of the persons interviewed, and which, in my recollection of our meeting of finalization, did not seem to me to have been properly emphasized.

This is the fact that all the interviewees want to live in the Center. This is worth noting since it is not frequent in the choice of housing in the population with the socioeconomic characteristics of these families, which generally define the choice of the property much more for the financial conditions to assume it, than for the taste for the region.

This desire is anchored in considerations about the next school for the children, proximity to working place, also near leisure option on the weekends. Parks and SESC (24 de maio and Bom Retiro) are frequently cited in this regard.

When there is a match between the tenant's desire and what she gets, there is a stronger commitment. She will much more likely contribute to the conservation, promotion of improvement, engagement with the local community. I believe that a project like FICA has much to gain from this, since to its success depends also on this exercise of citizenship.

As for the other considerations about the interviews, I believe they are duly registered.

Annex 3: Comments from Fernanda Almeida, social worker

5th June, 2019

My thoughts on the Interviews process

I believe that in our meeting on Saturday (June 1) we have been able to explain the main points of this rich selection process, here are some elements that deserve to be highlighted.

Rent X Private Property

I considered the relationship of families with the idea of rent as a modality of access to housing quite interesting. I say this because, in general, there is a culture among low-income families in the search for the property. Except for the last candidate who clearly mentioned aiming to acquire a property, all the others seemed calm with the idea of paying rent with "fair" value. I emphasize this point, insofar as this element can (and should, in my opinion) be worked as a paradigm shift for access and cheapening of housing in the central region of São Paulo, creating opportunities for democratization of access to goods and services in this region.

Gentrification is a reality

Gentrification is a consensus among scholars, however, its concrete determinations (as felt by poor families) are often presented in technical reports with little or no impact on the day-to-day discussion of the city. The report of the inhabitants has a valuable symbolic value. When a mother (Mariana) says, "I need to get out of the occupation because I do not want to expose my children to the risk of eviction," or "I even have some money to pay the rent, but the real estate rules are horrible. They do not accept children ... I can not hide my children, I have three, I can not hide two." That is, there are multiple determinations of this process of expelling poor families, this ranges from the objective marks in their lives - more conditions to pay the exorbitant values and leave - even a type of violence that is symbolic, practiced by several social actors directly and indirectly involved in this process.

The interview process

It was not difficult to reach the "approved candidate", as well as to create a classification among them, I believe that this fact is due in the first place to the criteria FICA presented and previously discussed. It was very clear what the needs of FICA were, both from the point of view of the "first tenant" and the

socio-welfare profile. In addition, the interviews should be detailed, but we can not go much deeper (40 minutes is more than enough), because the contact with these people will be brief and punctual, so that the expectation element and conditions of referrals of the presented questions must be observed. As the social and emotive load are always very impressive, the interviews can not be transformed into a service space and referral of demands (although we have done some).

Finally, I stress the need to build space to give voice to these people. Everything we denounce or claim as a conception of democratization of access to public goods and the right to the city is experienced by them - whether in the denial or affirmation of those rights. The idea of FICA has to be in the speech of these people, they must know how to support the idea of a social rental with fair value and with decent living conditions and build their lives and relationships.

Annex 4: Filled application forms

All completed application forms can be accessed at the link below:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hDB9NHcbnqaRqpbQpm-4b7xE5u7rmddb?usp=sharing>