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# High-level landscape analysis of civil society support ecosystems: Brazil



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# High level landscape analysis of civil society support infrastructure in Brazil

## Executive Summary

This report presents a mapping of the ecosystem of support for the institutional strengthening of CSOs in Brazil. The analysis was conducted considering the current national context, with the growth of right-wing and far-right forces, political polarization, systematic disinformation campaigns, and threats to democracy and civic space, factors that also threaten the operation and sustainability of CSOs.

While no interviewees stated that they perceived an actual ecosystem supporting CSOs, we believe it is possible to affirm that there is an ecosystem of support in Brazil that is slowly evolving. However, it is little perceived, fragmented, concentrated, and with uneven development in terms of actors, relationships, financial flows, and access to opportunities. The main actors in this “quasi-ecosystem” are international organizations, some philanthropic institutions, with an emphasis on those of community philanthropy, and CSOs that provide services and consultancies. Universities, the public sector, and large private companies contribute to a much lesser extent.

There are still other actors who, while not directly offering services aimed at strengthening CSOs institutionally, contribute to improving the legal and political environment in which they operate. Some examples of these institutions will be cited in this document, but they are not the focus of this analysis, which aims to be general and panoramic.

The biggest challenge is to advance the decolonization of international support relationships within the country itself. This means decentralizing power, knowledge, and resources, to value and strengthen organizations, networks, funds, and consultants working in territories of marginalized communities and groups. There is value in centring local, indigenous knowledge, resources, and approaches.

The main actors, relationships, and resources are highly concentrated in São Paulo and the Southeast. There is a lack of data and information about the ecosystem and a lack of interaction, exchange, and learning. There is a prevailing approach to development of CSOs is pragmatic and technocratic. However, there is a growing integral and systemic perspective of the organizational dynamics of CSOs, with discernment about their transformative political role. This field, however, needs greater interaction, visibility and support.

The consulting market is affected by the concentration and the privileging of more experienced consultants from the Southeast, generally white men. Significantly, a whole new generation of Black, Indigenous, Quilombola, traditional communities, peripheral groups, and generally marginalized segment professionals is emerging, which needs greater visibility and support.

Key recommendations:

- Supporting the development of research, systematization of experiences, and production of knowledge about the ecosystem of support for CSOs and about the professional field of consulting; and
- Supporting the creation of a learning community for exchange and reflection on relevant topics in the practice of quality consulting for CSOs, which would contribute greatly to the strengthening of CSOs.

## **1. Summary of target audience and scoping/sampling strategy**

Mapping for this report involved contacting as many key stakeholders as possible in the field. Data was collected between November and December 2024, through documentary research, from academic and non-academic sources, and based on semi-structured and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and a focus group with independent consultants. The documentary research resulted in a set of academic and, especially, non-academic articles on the institutional strengthening. The 20 interviewees represent a diversity of key stakeholders, including international funders, intermediary organizations, platforms and organizations supporting the institutional strengthening of CSOs, and a variety of consultants.

## **2. “Setting the scene”: CSOs’ needs, development, and access to support**

Brazilian civil society has always played a proactive and relevant role in expanding the limits of democracy, denouncing the perverse pattern of national development, structural inequalities, and promoting the rights of marginalized groups, indigenous peoples, quilombolas, traditional populations and marginalized communities. Organizations and social movements committed to rights have exerted political influence both in public debate and in government institutions of a varied set of social groups, enabling important advances in the country during the last 40 years.

The context in Brazil has changed drastically over the last 15 years, with the threats to democracy and civic space, constant since the 2018 electoral campaign, and the environment of political-ideological polarization, in which right-wing and far-right forces develop an intense strategy of disinformation and fake-news, with attempts to broadly criminalize social movements and the restriction of the work of CSOs in peripheral communities, by fundamentalist and conservative evangelical churches.

With some notable exceptions, the Brazilian philanthropic field is traditionally conservative and risk averse. It tends to support its own programs, offering short-term grants with little to no core support. The recent advances in the access to public funding, with the MROSC – Marco Regulatório das Organizações da Sociedade Civil - Regulatory Framework for CSOs (2014), unfortunately, have not meant a significant increase of resources or more favourable conditions for flexible funding and the institutional strengthening of CSOs.

In summary, the current political, social, and financial climate for Brazilian CSOs is significantly more challenging and adverse than in the past. The social and political activism of CSOs is now more important than ever, but their existence, effectiveness and sustainability are threatened. While some new initiatives are underway for the provision of more information, training and support for CSO

development, there is no general perception of the ecosystem itself. This hinders the adequate identification of shortcomings, gaps, and strategic opportunities.

## CSO Needs

The needs and demands for institutional strengthening and development of CSOs in Brazil vary significantly based on factors such as organizational size, location, and area of focus. Medium and large organizations in major urban centers generally have better access to information, opportunities, and resources compared to the vast majority of small organizations, particularly those outside metropolitan areas.

Brazil has an estimated 900,000 CSOs, with over 40% concentrated in the Southeast. A concerning 90% of these organizations lack formal employment relationships. Moreover, the sector has witnessed substantial growth, with a 40% increase in the last 15 years (IPEA, Mapa das CSOs, 2024), with increasing competition for resources. Geographic and social isolation, low visibility, normalisation of shortcomings, limited access to key support sources, and neglect from national and international funders exacerbate these difficulties.

### The Main Needs of Brazilian CSOs:

a. Organizations have difficulty accessing financial resources: They operate on very limited budgets and, in most cases, without formal structures, relying on volunteer or informal labour (93% without formal contracts, Pipa 2024) and often receiving very low remuneration. Funding is scarce, uncertain, and comes primarily from internal resources, grants, and individual donations. Institutional development is rare, depending on occasional opportunities from community philanthropy grants and territorial funds. Recent research on peripheral organizations showed that 90% face barriers to accessing funding, 54% operate solely on their own resources (Iniciativa Pipa, 2021), and 46% survive on less than R\$5,000.00 per year (approximately US\$833.00) (Iniciativa Pipa, 2024).

b. Organizations lack administrative and financial management capacity: This hampers their ability to access funding. Often, there is no one within the organization with management training or experience. Stringent funder requirements create barriers to accessing and maintaining funding.

c. There is a huge lack of leadership training: While many leaders have extensive practical experience, there is a scarcity of opportunities for professional development. Training in political issues, advocacy strategies, management, institutional development and leadership is urgently needed.

d. There are serious limitations to a strategic and reflexive culture: Organizations are often preoccupied with survival. The demands for results and accountability often outweigh available resources, hindering efforts to build a more reflective and innovative culture.

e. Suffering and illness have become common features in Brazilian organizations. There is a huge challenge in promoting a culture of care, listening, dialogue and respect. Suffering represents the aggregate result of political polarization, the Covid-19 pandemic, the strengthening of right-wing forces, the unreasonable demands of many funders and from managing priorities amidst uncertainty.

f. In a context of polarization and misinformation, organizations need more strategic communication.

In a polarized and misinformation-filled environment, organizations need to improve their communication strategies. With limited resources and a lack of communication expertise, organizational communication is often weak.

g. There is a challenge of innovation in political action and training on advocacy: The evolving social and political landscape in Brazil requires new approaches to political action, networking and advocacy. Older, more established organizations are less open to learning from new activist organizations. Continued training for activists is essential, particularly in advocacy.

h. Need to strengthen organizations' own territorial networks: Informal networks and partnerships between organizations are valuable for knowledge sharing and collaborative initiatives. However, these networks often lack visibility and sustained support, despite their potential to facilitate peer learning.

i. In the Amazon, there is a need to protect forest and human rights defenders: Organizations in the Amazon face significant threats to their safety and security due to conflicts with deforestation, agribusiness, mining, and other development projects. Leaders in the Amazon are at high risk, and there is a clear link between climate change and the safety of these individuals.

### **Current State of CSO Development**

Most Brazilian CSOs face significant challenges in accessing regular and flexible funding sources, as well as consulting services crucial for effective institutional development and strengthening. From the point of view of seeking financial resources, the main strategies, especially for small organizations, are to seek individual donations and participate in calls for proposals, especially in the philanthropic field and with independent funds (community philanthropy). These efforts often have limited results. Medium-sized organizations tend to have more experience and some training in fundraising, and can seek higher-value calls for proposals, including from international organizations, with greater success.

In terms of staffing, organizations tend to offer informal contracts and low pay, which leads to limited training and high staff turnover. Medium-sized organizations and/or those with access to leadership training and/or institutional strengthening initiatives tend to have more professional staff.

There is a great need for greater professionalization of the administrative and financial management of organizations. The solution for almost all of them is to seek free online training courses, study manuals, exchange experiences between peers with the support of a donor and/or intermediary organization and, very occasionally, consulting support. In a context of great competition for financial resources and a predominance of short-term projects, organizations tend to implement monitoring and evaluation procedures as required by funders, to the detriment of developing their own systems capable of offering better results.

With the advent and consolidation of digital communications, organizations began to invest in thematic events, webinars and training. Many have access to free virtual training offers, depending on the quality of their internet connection. These initiatives are often fragmented, and do not always translate into useful knowledge in the relevant day-to-day operations of organizations.

The opportunities for most organizations to exchange, reflect and learn about institutional development are still few. One of the good offers available and taken advantage of by many organizations, especially small and peripheral ones, are the spaces for exchange, dialogue and training provided by community philanthropy funds (Rede Comuá) to supported groups. Many organizations also take advantage of the recently created Plataforma Conjunta, a place to gather and share useful information about the institutional development of CSOs. Both, Rede Comuá and Plataforma Conjunta were created and are led by Brazilian organizations.

Access to consulting is relatively abundant and diversified for medium and large organizations and/or those operating in the main metropolitan regions. Small organisations tend only to have access through partnerships with funders and/or through support from intermediary organizations.

The current strength of the climate agenda, including in Brazilian public policies, and the greater flux of international resources to this cause and the proximity of COP 30 in Belém/Pará (Brazil), in November 2025, have meant that many organizations have had greater access to financing, especially those located in the Amazon. Independent community philanthropy funds and territorial funds (indigenous, quilombola, etc.) have played an important role in this. Even social organizations outside the Amazon region have moved themselves to incorporate the climate agenda.

### **Access to Support**

Small and/or marginalized organizations have great difficulty in accessing resources, which tend to be concentrated in well-known medium and large CSOs and/or in large urban centers. Resources, events, training, networking, visibility, consultancies and opportunities in general tend to be traditionally concentrated in the southeast region of the country. Two very welcome and relatively recent countertrends are the broad access to virtual initiatives of all types, and the strengthening of community philanthropy - independent funds, community foundations and territorial funds - as intermediary mechanisms that can ensure that resources and opportunities reach the most marginalised groups.

Another negative trend for Brazilian CSOs is that, as a rule, access to resources occurs through projects, which are generally short-term focused, with demanding goals and expectations of results that are disproportionate to the resources, with no institutional support and with unrealistic administrative and financial requirements based on control and lack of trust. All of this is the result of a limited and pragmatic vision of social development, to the detriment of a complex and process-oriented vision.

A very challenging and complex trend is the predominance of a pragmatic view of institutional development of CSOs, which understands it only as the provision of (technical) capacity building, neglecting its political, methodological, cultural and reflexive dimensions.

The constant threats to human rights and democracy itself are another detrimental trend. The growing strength of right-wing and far-right forces, with strong parliamentary representation has resulted in strong political polarization and disputes over narratives. All of this reduces, complicates and threatens the legitimacy and civic space for the communicative and territorial action of CSOs.

In the Amazon, organizations face a context of threats and violence, largely due to the invasion of indigenous territories, traditional communities, and conservation areas by various exploiters. There is an enormous security challenge for leaders and climate and human rights defenders, with a need to invest increasing efforts and money in the complex linkages between the climate issue and the action of human rights defenders.

“...we are talking about populations that are on the front lines of conflicts. [...] We tried to work in the area of security in response to their demands, headquarters security, field team security, data security, etc. Suddenly, the political context shifted, and we had to look at institutional strengthening and security<sup>1</sup>.” (regranting organization)

There is insufficient data, information and knowledge about the field of civil society organizations and, above all, about the ecosystem itself that supports their strengthening.

Finally, there are also not enough adequate spaces and forums, autonomous and specific to CSOs – collectives, groups, movements and networks – for political reflection on their contexts, aims and challenges. The spaces for articulation, exchange and reflection that exist today are sectoral and very fragmented, or are events organized by philanthropic institutions, useful and important, but which are not from the CSOs themselves.

### **3. The ecosystem of support**

Based on interviews with key stakeholders and a review of relevant documentation, evidence for a fully-fledged ecosystem supporting the strengthening of Brazilian CSOs is limited. While elements of an ecosystem – a vibrant, diverse, and interconnected whole – may exist, it remains unevenly developed and largely imperceptible. This lack of a discernible ecosystem can be attributed to two primary factors:

1. Data and information gaps: A systematic and organized collection of data and information on the subject is lacking, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the ecosystem as a whole.
2. Limited self-awareness: There is a lack of self-perception and awareness within the ecosystem itself, characterized by limited ongoing studies, meetings, exchanges, and collective reflections on CSO institutional development.

While a fully formed ecosystem may not yet exist, certain actors, relationships, and initiatives can be identified as important components. Some interconnections are fragile and evolving. Significant weaknesses and gaps exist, particularly concerning certain types of actors and territories, the flow of financial and relational resources, and the prevailing approaches to institutional strengthening.

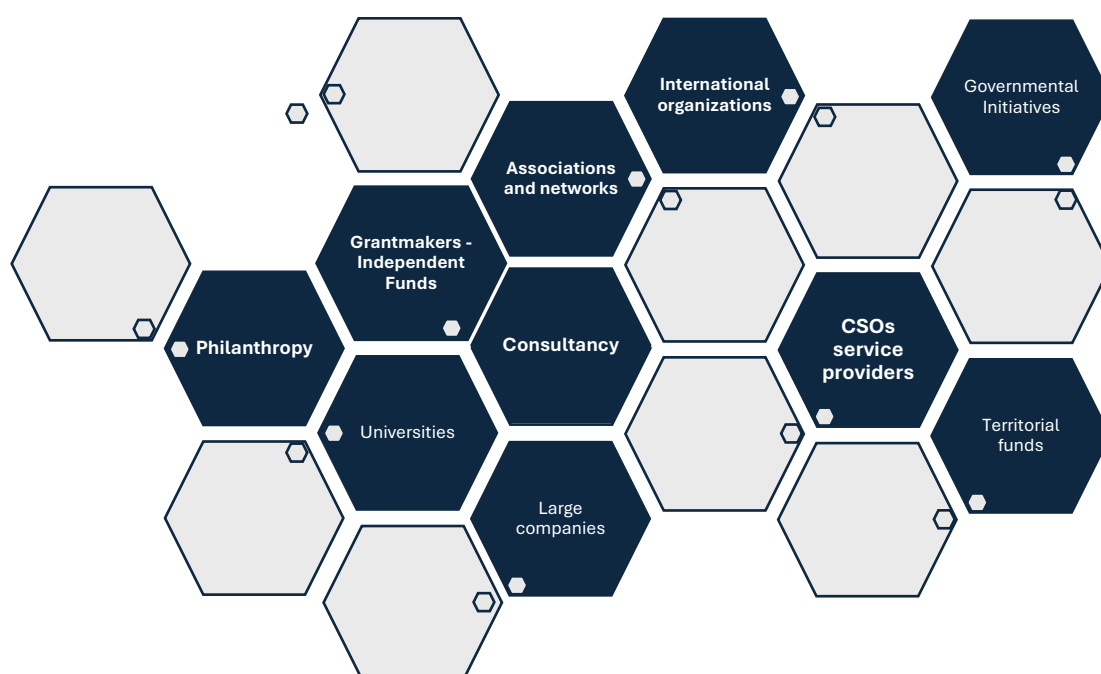
#### **Existing Support, Accessibility and Effectiveness**

The “quasi-ecosystem” of civil society support in Brazil is composed of a variety of actors, with different sizes, scopes of action, and relevance. At the forefront are international organizations, philanthropic institutions, intermediary organizations, civil society organizations providing services and

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes are extracts from the interviews.

consultancies. In a second level, there are territorial funds, universities, large companies, and, to a lesser extent, the public sector.



Amongst the main actors providing direct support, for the institutional development of CSOs are some international organisations, philanthropic institutions, intermediary organisations (grantmakers), and civil society organisations that are membership-based and/or provide services and consultancies. At a second level, there are territorial funds, universities, large businesses, and to a lesser extent, the public sector.

Some institutions contribute directly and also more generally, indirectly, to strengthening CSOs. This is especially true in advocacy efforts concerning their operating conditions and in improving the political and legal environment. Examples include associations like Abong (Brazilian Association of NGOs), ABCR (Brazilian Association of Fundraising Professionals), GIFE (Group of Institutes, Foundations, and Companies), and organisations and networks such as Plataforma MROSC (Platform for a New Regulatory Framework for Civil Society Organisations), the Movement for a Culture of Donation (MCD), the PIPA Initiative, the Igarapé Institute, and several others.

The main source of support for the institutional development of CSOs in Brazil, both financial and non-financial, are some **international organizations** that have institutional development as an intrinsic part of their vision and strategy of action. They are key in the provision of funds. Some of the more relevant are Ford Foundation, Luminate, Heinrich Böll, Porticus, Oak Foundation, Laudes Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Synergos and Open Society Foundations.



The second source of support are those **Brazilian philanthropic institutions** that channel resources and promote and/or support initiatives for the institutional strengthening of CSOs. Family institutes and foundations tend to prioritize institutional development and be more flexible in funding relationships, as well as community philanthropy institutions. Some of them are Instituto ACP, Instituto Ibirapitanga, Fundação Tide Setúbal, Itaú Social-Polo, Instituto Humanize, Instituto Phi, IDIS, Fundação José Luiz Egydio Setúbal, Movimento Bem Maior, Instituto MOL e Instituto Beja.

One source of support for institutional development, especially relevant in the ecosystem, are the **intermediary organizations** – independent funds, community foundations and territorial funds –, due to their reach, flexibility and support for strengthening social actors. The **Comuá Network** ([www.redecomua.org.br](http://www.redecomua.org.br)) brings together 18 of these intermediary organizations, and there are many others, such as territorial funds – indigenous funds, quilombolas, traditional communities, etc. iCS – Instituto Clima e Sociedade, a key player in climate and energy matters, is also part of Rede Comuá, as a regranting organization.

*"Actually, this infrastructure exists in Brazil, but I don't know to what extent or who has access to it. This infrastructure that exists is, perhaps, much more geared towards [...] large NGOs, and much less towards small or informal organizations, which are effectively the ones that need it the most. I think that the work that independent philanthropy, like the Rede Comuá funds, are a super important reference because [...] this support for organizations, which is not only donations, but also always has attached a very important work of capacity building aimed at strengthening these organizations as political actors, in fact." (consultant)*

There are numerous **civil society organizations** that offer a diverse range of training and support services for CSOs, fulfilling a very important role in the ecosystem. Some prioritize a strategic and systemic approach to institutional strengthening, while others focus on more technical and managerial aspects. Despite having a national scope for the most part, their main activities are largely concentrated in São Paulo. Examples include: Abong, Plataforma Conjunta, Ficas, Instituto Fonte, Pacto, Simbiosc, Idis, Cais, Elo, Move, Instituto Phomenta, Iniciativa Pipa, ponteAponte, Escola Aberta do Terceiro Setor, Rede Filantropia, Noetá and Fundação Dom Cabral.

The ecosystem also has a very diverse range of **consultancy services**, both by collectives, companies and independent consultants, which are very important in capacity building and institutional strengthening.

There are Brazilian **universities** with third sector research centers, some of which offer training and mentoring programs, such as NEATS-PUC/SP, FGV/SP, Instituto GESC, FIA-USP. Some **large public and private companies** develop programs to strengthen civil society as part of their ESG strategies, such as Vale do Rio Doce, Itaipu Binacional, Alcoa, Votorantin.

A new and very relevant player in the ecosystem supporting the strengthening of CSOs in Brazil is the **Plataforma Conjunta** ([www.conjunta.org](http://www.conjunta.org)), created in 2023 as “a collaborative initiative, developed by several third sector organizations and professionals, focused on disseminating knowledge, tools, management practices, training, network building and opportunities to access resources”. In just over a year, the Platform has already shared some 816 pieces of content related to institutional development, with over 50,000 active users.

In recent research (2024), Plataforma Conjunta identified a total of 232 initiatives of support to the institutional development of CSOs in Brazil, 145 of which were training initiatives (courses, seminars, mentoring, acceleration programs), and another 87 offered financial support (via public notices and/or invitation letters).

The **most significant challenges** confronting the ecosystem of support for CSOs are:

**1. The ecosystem must enhance its self-awareness to facilitate its own development.** To this end, the ecosystem would benefit from research and knowledge production that generates a continuous stream of data and information on the subject. Regular meetings of the CSO field itself should also be encouraged.

**2. To address the existing concentration of power, resources, and knowledge within the CSO field, a more equitable distribution is crucial.** This means a shift in focus, with events, initiatives, opportunities, and resources migrating towards regions such as the Amazon, the Northeast, and the Central-West.

*" We need plurality, to think about the inclusion of people in spaces of power, [...] thinking about the potential of these peripheries, in the centrality of the debate. [...] It is these people who, when they have representation, are the ones who will look differently when they have to think about the peripheral territory [and] institutional development because these people have this perspective because they have also come from grassroots organizations, because they are the black people who are promoting social transformation in territories, thinking about change." (black activist organization)*

**3. The ecosystem must facilitate coordinated dialogue between funders and civil society organizations.** These dialogues should address key aspects of their relationship, including support mechanisms (such as flexible funding), institutional development needs, and administrative and financial requirements.

**4. The ecosystem should prioritize creating regular spaces and opportunities for exchange, reflection, and training on transformative social action, including initiative/project design and MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning) mechanisms.**

**5. Investing in institutional development training is crucial.** This training should be guided by a complex and systemic perspective, emphasizing a reflective, critical, and learning organizational culture while respecting the autonomy and self-determination of the organizations involved.

*" I miss within this ecosystem consultants who have this ability to deal with the systemic, with this integral view. I also miss the training of consultants, of consultants who have the organizational and systemic reading of institutional strengthening." (International NGO)*

**6. Establishing forums, networks, and learning communities for consultants,** focused on exchanges, reflections on approaches, and peer-to-peer training, to strengthen plurality, expand access, and improve the quality of services, presents significant challenges for the ecosystem.

**7. A significant increase in investment is necessary to strengthen social actors in the Amazon,** with a particular focus on the protection of climate and human rights defenders.

*"I think that the first thing is that you have a discontinuity, sometimes, of the process, when things are not in the hands of the organization itself, which has the motivation and commitment. (...) We have several somewhat discontinuous initiatives, when it comes to organizations of indigenous peoples, quilombolas, traditional communities and small farmers. (Intermediary organization)*

**8.** Finally, it would be very important **to provide opportunities for exchanges between South-South CSOs** on both the institutional development of organizations and how to address threats to civic space in adverse contexts.

### **The Market and Development of Local Consultancy Support**

The consulting market for strengthening civil society organizations (CSOs) in Brazil presents a complex and fragmented landscape. It exhibits low organic growth and limited overall understanding due to a dearth of data and comprehensive information. A notable absence is a unifying body for consultants in this field. There are no overarching associations, dedicated congresses, learning communities or regular meetings for consultants to convene. Research and publications documenting their activities are very limited. A notable exception is the Brazilian Association of Fundraisers (ABCR). With a 25-year history, it boasts over 600 registered members, primarily based in São Paulo. While a significant portion comprises independent professionals, many members also work as staff within CSOs. ABCR organizes prominent annual two-day festivals in São Paulo, attracting over a thousand participants.

The main clients for consulting services are international organizations, philanthropic institutions and, to a lesser extent, non-profit organizations, especially the larger ones. International organizations often have preferred lists of consultants. Philanthropic institutions, the majority based in São Paulo, tend to hire consultants based there, for them and/or for their grantees, making in-person meetings easier and more cost-effective. Consultants can be specialists in one area, generalists, or experts in multiple areas. The quality of consulting services can differ depending on factors such as education, work experience, and a willingness to learn and try innovative approaches and methods. While some consultants work full-time, most are professionals from non-profit organizations, students, professors, or people working in government or businesses who offer consulting services part-time.

**The consulting market for strengthening civil society organizations (CSOs) in Brazil faces several challenges:**

- **Geographical concentration and limited access:** A significant concentration of professionals and firms in the Southeast, particularly around São Paulo, limits accessibility for organizations in other regions due to factors like travel costs, uneven distribution of resources and cultural barriers. Smaller organizations, marginalized groups and those outside of major urban centers face greater barriers to access.
- **Fragmentation and limited collaboration:** The market is characterized by a high proportion of independent consultants and a growing trend towards occasional and part-time consulting engagements. This contributes to fragmentation within the field, hindering collaborative efforts. While informal networks exist, they often remain isolated within their own niches. These dynamics can impact the consistency, quality, and availability of consulting services.

- **Diversity and differentiation:** The consulting field exhibits significant diversity across various dimensions. While earlier generations of consultants, predominantly white men from the South and Southeast, are now reaching senior ages (60-70 years old), a new generation of young professionals has emerged in the last 15 years. This younger generation, often originating from and connected to the activism of Black, feminist, Indigenous, Quilombola, and other marginalized movements, brings a distinct identity and perspective to the field. This diversity, while enriching, can also contribute to further fragmentation.
- **Quality and experience:** While the supply of consultants is growing, concerns exist regarding the quality of services offered. Many young professionals lack the necessary leadership and management experience to effectively contribute to CSO strengthening.
- **Predominance of pragmatic approaches:** There's an emphasis on pragmatic and technical approaches, often neglecting systemic perspectives and the transformative potential of CSOs.
- **Limited learning and training opportunities:** Existing training opportunities are often fragmented, tool-focused, and lack adequate space for reflection on critical issues.
- **Growing importance of workload and mental health:** The increasing significance of workplace burnout and mental health cannot be overstated. CSO staff and consultants often experience work overload, isolation, and mental distress.

**Two key steps to improve the consulting market for CSOs in Brazil would be:**

- Supporting research, systematising experiences and building knowledge about the consulting professional field; and
- Creating a representative learning community where consultants can learn from each other, debate approaches, methods and tools, and discuss important issues in their field.

## 4. Conclusion

Recent political changes in Brazil and the international arena have had adverse effects on the CSO sector, signalling potential challenges in the near future. Political polarization, disinformation strategies, and ongoing threats to human rights and democracy have limited civic space, creating difficulties for the operation, legitimacy and sustainability of CSOs. The recent election of Donald Trump in the United States poses a very clear threat to human rights, activism and democracy.

The departure of several international organizations in recent years, the conservative profile of a significant portion of the Brazilian philanthropic sector and resource mobilization and financial sustainability difficulties pose significant limitations to the development and strengthening of CSOs.

The ecosystem supporting the institutional development of CSOs in Brazil has evolved significantly in recent years, despite the aforementioned limitations. There are various innovative initiatives focused on supporting the development of CSOs, greater support for independent and intermediary funds, and organizations led by indigenous, Quilombola, traditional communities, and marginalised groups, as well as a broader strengthening of the field as a whole. These efforts still require significant advancements to consolidate.

The greatest challenge for the ecosystem is to advance the decolonization of international support relationships and within the country itself, decentralizing power, knowledge, and resources in order to value and strengthen organizations, networks, funds, and consultants working in territories of marginalized communities and groups, and in the North, Northeast, and Central-West regions.

Key challenges for ecosystem development include: (i) fostering greater self-awareness and a deeper understanding of the ecosystem; (ii) creating spaces for dialogue, exchange, and collective learning about the institutional strengthening of CSOs; and (iii) building learning communities and communities of practices for consultants.

## Annexe 1: Case Study

### Rede Comuá - Filantropia que transforma ([www.redecomua.org.br](http://www.redecomua.org.br))

The **Comuá Network**, created in 2012, is a platform that brings together thematic and community foundations, independent grant making organizations that mobilize resources from diverse sources to support groups, collectives, movements, and civil society organizations working in the fields of socioenvironmental justice, human rights, and community development.

The Comuá Network states that "supporting with financial resources civil society initiatives led by political minorities is a key strategy for promoting and building agendas focused on the recognition and defense of rights, and therefore, for strengthening Brazilian democracy. The Network seeks to strengthen the joint action capacity of its members, potentiating their role in social transformation processes, advocacy actions, and giving visibility to their actions both in the field of philanthropy and in the public sphere."

The Comuá Network is composed of 18 funds and foundations, covering a variety of themes: socioenvironmental and climate issues, women's and transgender rights, Black people, people living with HIV/AIDS, human rights, etc. iCS - Instituto Clima e Sociedade, is also part of the Network. Support for institutional development is part of the Network organizations' strategy. By 2024, it is estimated that the set of funds and foundations of the Network will have donated a total of R\$ 1 billion, directly and indirectly.

The funds and foundations of the Comuá Network support small projects of civil society organizations through calls for proposals and letters of invitation and promote regular follow-up and reflection and training meetings.

An innovative and highly relevant initiative was the launch of the Saberes Program, which supports, through the granting of scholarships, researchers, students, community leaders, and civil society members with the aim of promoting the production of updated and innovative knowledge linked to the fields of community philanthropy and socioenvironmental justice.

Given the direct connection and the capillarity of the organizations that make up the Comuá Network with informal groups, social movements, and activist groups in all regions of the country, with special emphasis on informal collectives and small organizations of marginalized groups, they are a key actor in the ecosystem of institutional strengthening of CSOs.

Another advantage of choosing the Comuá Network as a case in this mapping is that it leads the debate in Brazil on decoloniality in international and domestic support and funding relationships.