

Brazilian Community Foundations as Vehicles for Philanthropy: Strategies to Engage Small and Non-Traditional Donors

Anderson Giovanni da Silva, Emerging Leader, International Fellows Program ~ 2009

Abstract

Community foundations are a relatively recent phenomenon for Brazil. An important challenge for these organizations has been to channel local financial resources to build endowments or permanent funds, in light of the fact that local donors and NGOs are not familiar with the activities of the Brazilian third sector.

In this paper, Anderson Giovanni da Silva explores strategies to engage non-traditional donors in giving small amounts of money through community foundations. Da Silva provides an overview of the legal framework of the Brazilian third sector, including the distinction made by the Civil Code between associations and foundations, and how these laws have shaped philanthropic giving in the country. He analyzes the operations of Brazilian community foundations for the last decade, with an eye toward the role that international organizations have played in the financial sustainability of Brazilian foundations.

The success of stimulating small donor giving by foundations in other countries is also discussed, including the Fondazione Cariplo of Italy and the Togliatti Community Foundation in Russia. Drawing on these case studies, Da Silva recommends a series of strategies with the aim of shifting the donor base of Brazilian community foundations to smaller local gifts. These proposals include partnering with local businesses and service organizations, instituting matching grants to provide incentives to giving, mass media campaigns, and periodic events to distribute information to potential donors.

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