

Through the Lens of Brazil: The Changing Dynamics of Human Rights and Global Philanthropy in Emerging Powers

Funder Learning Visit to Rio de Janeiro
20-22 May 2014

Welcome to Brazil

Tuesday, May 20, 10:00-11:30 am

To kick off their visit, participants learned about Brazil and the Latin American context. Following a brief history, they gained an understanding of Brazil's economic and political status, its priority human rights issues, the impact of the upcoming mega-sporting events, and its place and role regionally and globally.

Speakers:

- **Nilcea Freire**, Country Representative, Ford Foundation – Brazil
- **Moema Miranda**, Director, Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE)
- **Maria Amalia Souza**, Executive Director, CASA Socio-Environmental Fund

Facilitator:

- **Leticia Osorio**, Program Officer, Ford Foundation



Nilcea

Brazil is a complex, diverse, country with disparities in wealth. The challenge is to combine Brazil's rapid economic growth with social inclusion, environmental sustainability, reduction of barriers, and respect for rights.

From 1964-1985, Brazil was governed by a dictatorship. The dictatorship was bloody, and there was no public participation in political life. In 1985, Brazil transitioned to a democracy, adopting a new citizen constitution in 1988. The constitution was developed with a lot of input from civil society, including women's groups.

The role of women in the creation of the new constitution marked Brazil's shift from a patriarchal society. Women are now able to participate more fully in public life, as evidenced by Brazil's first women president, but there is still inequity in the Congress, which is comprised 90% of men.

Democracy has achieved drastic reductions in child mortality, illiteracy, and extreme poverty, and has raised the minimum wage. However, this progress has not reached all groups equally, especially Afro-Brazilians, rural communities and traditional peoples, and women. Within urban communities, there is a stark economic divide.

Brazil has recently had more protests in the streets, bringing new actors and voices to policy discussions. Civil society has grown stronger since 1988. Accomplishments include recognition of ESC rights, a legal framework for indigenous land rights, a presence in the fight against HIV, affirmative action in higher education, women's movements, and recognition of same-sex marriage.

Moema

Brazil's strong colonial heritage is the source of much inequality (strong income and land concentration; clear racial and gender divides). The Workers' Party's success in 2002 was part of a historical process of social mobilization. Under Lula and Dilma, the government has regained its capacity to drive growth and poverty reduction.

Economic growth has come from increased trade in the international market. Trade has been based primarily on natural resources rather than manufactured products: agrobusiness and mining have taken over expropriated land at the expense of small farmers.



Brazil has seen increased socio-environmental conflict and more violence towards Afro-Brazilians. With the new government came expectations of quick, radical solutions to long-term social problems.

However, police have criminalized social movements, and there was no public system to support civil society action (though one is now developing). Civil society groups have struggled to fight against a government that was seen as friendly, composed of like-minded social leaders. The Federal Parliament is not representative of Brazil's population. It is dominated by business and landowners.

Challenges include:

- Building bridges between traditional movements and the new generation of activists
- Political reform that guarantees true representation of social diversity
- Long-term critical thinking about Brazil's development processes

Maria Amalia

Environmental conservation is often viewed as separate from human rights and social justice, though the issues are inherently linked.

CASA was founded as a Brazilian-based philanthropic structure, whose aim is to support grassroots groups throughout the South American ecosystems. Groups of activists saw that resources were not reaching the bottom of the pyramid, so CASA work closely with those on the ground that were often overlooked by other institutions, similar to the way other Brazil-based funders—Brazil Human Rights Fund, Baoba Fund for Racial Equity, and other members of the Brazil network of Independent Funds for Social Justice—do. They analyze ecological threats alongside social and human rights issues and make strategic cluster grants to support combined local action. CASA often has to seek out grantees rather than waiting for proposals. CASA created a special program to support work on protecting the rights of poor communities, indigenous, quilombolas (Afro-Brazilian populations), and traditional fisherfolk and their communities and ecosystems that were being impacted by the 2014 World Cup.

Popular support for the World Cup has dropped sharply: billions in public money have been spent, 250,000 have been displaced, and Brazil has ceded sovereignty and rights to FIFA. People are now more comfortable speaking out, and CASA works with them to get their voices out there.



Questions and Answers:

- Can you say something about the pace of changes in Brazil?
- Influence of the Catholic Church in Brazilian politics?
 - The religious caucus blocks proposals to advance human rights, especially women's rights. The rights community needs to think about how to handle fundamentalism
- How does Brazil's justice system work when victims of police brutality (similar to the situation in Turkey) submit pleas?
- How does Brazil see itself on the world stage? Is there pressure to speak out on global issues?
 - Brazil never saw itself as a global player or established strong relationships with its neighbors
 - Brazil cannot follow the same role in the Global South that the US or Europe played in the north. It must build another model of international cooperation
- What are some lessons learned from the "Lula" moment?
 - The government had two objectives when it took power amid high expectations
 - Sustain economic progress
- Moema: These questions don't have black-and-white answers. They are all complex issues. Brazil has achieved democratic and social progress, but it has not changed the broader system. Inequality is deepening around the world, and it is difficult for one country to overcome that alone. International solidarity and networks are key for collaboration. Brazil must work more closely with other emerging countries and strengthen civil society to challenge the system itself.
- Maria Amalia: What is happening today in relation to international funders leaving the country, assuming that Brazilians would pick up the bill of rights and justice reminds many of what happened when big foundations, the main funders of rights during the dictatorship, left when it was over. It almost broke several important organizations like IBASE, for example, which was the very first NGO created in Brazil in 1980. Rights in the constitution are undercut by amendments, and the public has very little say, because Parliament is not representative of the broader public.
- CASA works to give the completely underfunded groups a chance to recognize and advocate for their rights, on the ground all the way up to UN commissions. It starts with those most affected. It is key for funders working in countries with similar situations to work together and share practices.

Panelist Biographies:



Nilcéa Freire
Country Representative, Ford Foundation-Brazil

Nilcéa Freire is the Ford Foundation's representative for the Rio de Janeiro office. She oversees all of the foundation's work in Brazil, where the chief priority is strengthening the rights of the underrepresented, in particular, Afro-Brazilians and

indigenous peoples. Her individual grant making focuses on expanding access to higher education opportunities, racial justice, and governance. Prior to joining the foundation in 2011, Nilcéa was invited by President Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva to be the Minister of the Secretariat of Policies for Women (SPM) of the Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil, where she worked, from 2004 to 2010, on issues related to the advancement of gender equity and policies for the improvement of the conditions of women. In this role, she helped promote greater collaboration between NGOs and government agencies in Brazil and worldwide, and served as the Brazilian delegate to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference of the United Nations and the Interamerican Commission of Women of the Organization of American States, over which she presided for two years. As Minister, Nilcéa also presided over the National Council of the Rights of Women.



Moema de Miranda
Director, Human Rights Initiative, Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE)

Moema de Miranda has worked at IBASE since 1992, directing its Human Rights Initiative and coordinating two other programs: the World Social Forum Process and Democratic Alternatives to Globalization. Between 1998 and 2001, she worked on the issues of favelas (slums) and urbanization in Rio de Janeiro, serving as a member of the steering committee of the National Forum on Urban Reform. She was an active participant of the Citizenship Action against Hunger and for Life, one of the largest popular mobilizations in Brazilian history. She is an anthropologist with a Master's degree from the Graduate Programme in Social Anthropology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where she studied rural labor and politics.



Letícia Osório
Human Rights Programme Officer, Ford Foundation

Letícia Osório works on human rights issues in the Ford Foundation's Rio de Janeiro office. Her grantmaking focuses on strengthening the human rights movement in Brazil to effectively and innovatively respond to human rights challenges faced by underrepresented groups and vulnerable communities especially in urban contexts. Before joining the foundation in 2011, Letícia worked in a variety of capacities with NGOs and governments in the defence of ESC rights of vulnerable groups worldwide. Letícia is a Brazilian lawyer and holds a Master's degree in urban and regional planning, as well as a doctorate in law from the University of Essex, U.K.



Maria Amalia Souza
Executive Director, CASA Socio-Environmental Fund

A graduate in environment and development from World College West, California, Maria Amalia has been Executive Director of CASA since 2000. She has worked for over 20 years as a facilitator in international communications and institutional development, mainly for civil society environmentalist and indigenous organizations. She has worked with numerous national and international organizations, such as Rainforest Action Network, South and Meso-American Indian Information Center, Earth Island Institute, Aboriginal Nations Union, and Alliance of Forest Peoples. She worked for five years with the Association for Progressive Communications as Network Development Director. From 2003-2004, she participated in the first



fellows group from Donella Meadows Leadership Fellows Program in Systemic Thought Methodologies and Apprentice Organizations, offered by the Sustainability Institute in Vermont, USA. She also facilitates workshops based on group dynamics from the “Reconnection Exercise” by Joanna Macy, being responsible for its introduction in Brazil, as well as for translating the author’s guide book, *Coming Back to Life: the Updated Guide to the Work That Reconnects* (Ed. Gaia, 2004).