



Brazil Landscape Scan of the Feedback Field

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Presentation

This document represents a general overview of the feedback practices put in place within the ecosystem of Brazilian philanthropy. The study was sponsored by the *Fund for Shared Insight*, a funder collaborative that seeks to improve philanthropy by promoting high-quality listening and feedback in service of equity and justice, and whose central objective is to conduct a landscape scan of the current state of the “feedback field” in Brazil and to offer recommendations on how it could be leveraged. Stemming from this study, which was also carried out in another 5 countries¹, the *Fund for Shared Insight* will select territories that may subsequently be eligible to receive support for the acceleration and improvement of feedback practices.

Overall, the guiding questions of this exploratory process were:

- What do the feedback processes in place in philanthropic organizations look like?
- What strategic use is given to the information resulting from the feedback processes?
- How do power dynamics operate within the feedback processes?
- How might feedback processes promote equity and justice?
- What are the main needs of organizations in order to leverage feedback processes?

The statements present in this document have been drawn from a set of interviews with 26 professionals from 20 philanthropic organizations, as well as by the study of key documents related to the conceptual approach and the practical experience of feedback. As for the structure of this document, initially, a brief synthesis of the context related to the study’s cutout is presented in order to divide the analyses and reflections that are described as follows into sections, which all open with key messages. The document ends by presenting a concluding look and issuing certain recommendations produced for the *Fund for Shared Insight*, in addition to providing relevant supplementary data as an appendix.

We hope that this material proves thought-provoking.

The Move Social Team

¹ Similar overview studies have been developed in India, Mexico, the Philippines, Tanzania, and Kenya.





The feedback approach

When all is said and done, what does feedback mean? Given the wealth of interpretations that the term can assume, a need was identified for explaining to the interviewees beforehand² the conceptual definition assumed by the *Fund for Shared Insight* approach, what the steps provided within the Feedback Cycle are and what the elements that constitute a high-quality practice.

Despite being widely used within the philanthropic field, as a foreign term³ in Brazil, “feedback” refers to a variety of processes that may be developed within the organization itself, between organizations, and between these and their attendees. Thus, since this is a public document that, in addition to being used internally by the *Fund for Shared Insight*, aims to contribute to leveraging practices within the philanthropic field, certain relevant points are worth highlighting so readers may better understand it. They are as follows:

Through one of its initiatives – Listen4Good – Fund for Shared Insight promotes the practice of feedback as a complement to monitoring and evaluation, the goal being to help nonprofits and foundations alike become more responsive to the needs, preferences, and opinions of grantee individuals and communities.

The concept of feedback has been construed as the systematic practice of listening and responding to the viewpoints, feelings and opinions of people who have direct experience with an organization, program, or service, and it is used to inform and improve the organization’s practices and decision-making.

The Feedback Loop is a multi-stage process that includes designing the data collection instrument, collecting the responses, analyzing the results, assimilating them for decision making and “closing the loop” with those who participated in the process, in order to share what was captured and communicate what is being or what will be done.

The elements that make up a high-quality Feedback Loop are:

- using simple and flexible data collection instruments and approaches.
- capturing a number of voices that are representative of the different demographics, as well as honest, credible feedback.
- identifying strengths and weaknesses, highlighting the demographics’ varied experiences.
- engaging decision makers and stakeholders to learn from feedback and implement changes based on lessons learned.
- committing to share with audiences not only what was learned from the process, but also specific ways in which the organization will act on the feedback received.

² A brief document with the key concepts assumed by the *Fund for Shared Insight*’s *feedback* approach was shared with the organizations participating in this study. In addition, they were projected and read at the beginning of each interview.

³ An ‘anglicism’ is the linguistic process that derives in the incorporation of a word, phrase, or sentence construction from the English language into another language.





This study took the definitions detailed above as references for the process of aligning with the interviewed organizations. However, it did not disregard data that at times extrapolated the exact contours of the concept, but that turned out to be pertinent information to be analyzed and included in the definition of this material. This issue will be addressed in depth later in the **Understanding the concept of feedback** section, located within the **Findings** chapter.





Background

In order to understand the relevance of contextualizing the field in which this study is inserted, prior to presenting its findings, however briefly, it is important to gather and highlight the main information that identifies the scenario of philanthropy and private social investment in the country, in addition to issues related to the current political, economic, and social scenario.

The growth of philanthropy in Brazil is intrinsically linked to the history of the country's democracy. Starting from the period of redemocratization at the end of the 1980s, Brazilian civil society organizations (CSOs)⁴ and the philanthropic sector experienced a cycle of growth and professionalization, characterized by an expressive increase in the number of organizations, as well as by the growth of so-called Private Social Investment⁵.

In Brazil, the Group of Institutes, Foundations and Companies (GIFE)⁶, which was founded in the mid-90s, is one of the spaces that brings together private social investors. The network currently has some 160 members⁷, including corporate, family, community or individual institutes, foundations and companies. According to the 2018 GIFE Census, despite the country's current domestic scenario being characterized by political and economic upheaval, its members managed to mobilize some R\$ 3.25 billion in 2018. Added to the amounts reported by the Corporate Social Investment Benchmarking (BISC)⁸ survey, the amount invested in 2018 reached the R\$ 3.59 billion mark. According to data from both surveys⁹, between 2009 and 2018, the average investment amount stood at R\$ 4.3 billion, which reveals something of a contradiction, namely that while the field underwent an expansion, it also registered a reduction in investments destined to it.

As for the profile of GIFE member organizations, the census shows a diversification of the type of investor. Although mostly composed of institutes or business foundations (52%), there was a 14% growth in the number of family institutes and foundations, which now make up 22% of the member base, according to the latest survey. Among the sources of funding for these organizations, the sponsoring companies as well as funding from other private legal entities stand out. According to the survey, 72% of the total social investor resources comes from corporate sponsorships and endowment funds. As for their location, for the most part, these organizations have their headquarters in the

⁴ After the implementation of the Civil Society Organizations Framework (law 13,019) in 2014, the official terminology changed to "civil society organizations". Informally, however, they are still known as NGOs (non-governmental organizations).

⁵ According to the Brazilian Group of Social Investors – GIFE's definition, Private Social Investment (PSI) means the "voluntary transfer of private resources to social, environmental, cultural and scientific projects of public interest in a planned, monitored and systematic manner".

⁶ In the original: *Grupo de Institutos, Fundações e Empresas*

⁷ For a complete list of members, please go to <https://gife.org.br/associados/>

⁸ In the original: *Benchmarking do Investimento Social Corporativo*

⁹ <https://mosaico.gife.org.br/censo-gife/infograficos/2>





country's Southeast region (86%). Their activities, however, tend to cover other regions, although a higher concentration is observed in the Southeast (71%) and Northeast (41%). In addition, historically speaking, investments have tended to converge in the field of education, with 75% of members financing projects in this sector¹⁰. Finally, with regard to the strategies adopted, investors prioritize institutional strengthening, training/educational actions, and public sector support.

The GIFE Census also provides relevant data on how social investors operate¹¹. While they have observed that the execution of their own projects by the associated investors still prevails, the survey results point to a mixed profile, as well as to a growth of institutional support in favor of CSOs. When dealing specifically with member types, companies, institutes, and corporate foundations have increasingly become more funders than executors, while family institutes and foundations have become more executors. Finally, independent institutes and foundations have become more funders and less hybrid.

The survey also highlights the relationship between members and CSOs¹², identifying that 64% of investors transfer resources to these organizations. Between 2016, the date of the previous census, and 2018, this support increased, boosted mainly by family-run institutes and foundations, who devote about 48% of their resources to civil society organizations.

The report also reveals the funders' views about their partnerships with CSOs. The Census revealed that 62% of respondents indicate having local CSOs as partners in their programs and projects. According to the GIFE, this is partly explained by an important and growing characteristic in the sector of strengthening the development of partnerships and networking. Within this context, CSOs are seen as preferred partners.

However, according to Hopstein & Peres (2021), despite the changes that have been observed within the scope of private social investment and the growing "understanding of strengthening civil society as part of the purpose of private social investment" (GIFE, 2018), there is still a low flow of resources made available to community-based organizations, social movements, and organizations whose themes involve social justice, gender, and racial equality. In other words, these agendas are not yet seen as a priority for private social investment actors. In addition, the authors point out other factors linked to

¹⁰ This predominance of investment in education is also observed in the BISC survey, in which 53% of respondents reported investing in educational programs and projects.

¹¹ According to the GIFE, the "form of action is a classification of respondents adopted by GIFE that seeks to delimit clear social investor profiles so as to identify potential strategies for operating programs or projects from the combination of certain questions" (GIFE, 2019, p. 151). Those that are mainly funders allocate more than 90% of the total volume of investments to third party institutional or project support. As for those who are mainly executors, on the other hand, they allocate more than 90% of the total investment volume to the operation of their own projects. Finally, hybrids present characteristics of the two previous forms of action.

¹² According to data from the Map of Civil Society Organizations, Brazil had 815,676 CSOs in 2020.





low investment in CSOs, namely distrust of CSOs and the lack of a regulatory framework that facilitates donations.

More broadly speaking, the current situation, with thriving conservative groups and attacks being perpetrated against organized civil society and minority groups by representatives of the current administration and even the president himself, should be factored into the analysis. Among the recent attacks, for instance, is the unfounded accusation that non-governmental organizations were somehow behind the 2020 fires in the Amazon. According to the Civic Space GPS bulletin, an Igarapé Institute initiative (2021), attacks on civil society are on the rise. Between April and June 2021, 406 attacks were identified, which represents a 256% increase when compared to the October to December 2020 period, when 114 occurrences were identified.

Finally, just how much the COVID-19 pandemic has complexified the scenario is unquestionable, and this has highlighted the inequalities present in the country, and consequently, also in the sector. Although foundations have mobilized record donations in response to the pandemic¹³, those resources have not been allocated to organizations closest to the collectives presenting the most urgent needs, which tend to be the smaller ones, with funding going to larger organizations instead. The study “The impact of COVID-19 on Brazilian CSOs: from immediate response to resilience”¹⁴ (2020) illustrates the challenges brought about by the pandemic, with 73% of responding organizations asserting that the crisis had weakened them. Thus, increasingly there has been a role to be exerted by social investors in support of those Brazilian organizations who are spearheading the effort to mobilize, articulate and respond to crises in their territories.

¹³ According to the Brazilian Association of Fundraisers (ABCR; Original: *Associação Brasileira de Captadores de Recursos*) Donations Monitor (Original: *Monitor de Doações*), some R\$ 6.8 billion were raised between March 2020 and the first quarter of 2021.

¹⁴ Original: *O impacto do COVID-19 nas OSCs brasileiras: da resposta imediata à resiliência*





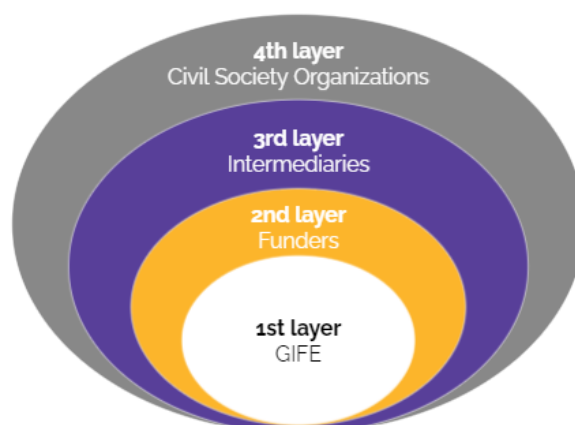
Overview of the Methodology

According to the proposal presented by Move Social and approved by the FSI, this study was divided into 5 stages:

- **Stage 1 - Alignment with the FSI:** Arriving at initial agreements for the work to be carried out, in-depth understanding of FSI initiatives and developing a deeper understanding of key concepts.
- **Stage 2 - Study of secondary data**¹⁵: Identifying and analyzing documents connected to this study's thematic field.
- **Stage 3 - Primary data collection:** Interviewing organizations in the philanthropic field.
- **Stage 4 - Data analysis:** Triangulating all the systematized data.
- **Step 5 - Production of the report:** Producing a document with the study's findings and recommendations to the FSI.

From a methodological viewpoint, the study adopted the qualitative approach and the adaptation of the *snowball sampling*¹⁶ approach for defining the sample of organizations participating in the study. In order to guarantee a reading that is as plural as possible, the organizations were segmented into three layers – funders, intermediaries, and civil society organizations. The data collection process stemmed from the GIFE, assuming that the association has a thorough understanding of the field, and took place based on in-depth interviews¹⁷, the technique selected for data collection.

Image 1. Layer logic for selecting organizations to participate in the study



¹⁵ The list of documents consulted in this study may be found in Annex 1.

¹⁶ Each interviewee was asked to nominate between 3 and 5 other organizations for carrying on with the study.

¹⁷ The interview guidelines may be found in Annex 2.





In this way, a list of 48 suggestions¹⁸ was gathered, of which 20 were interviewed¹⁹ via virtual platforms²⁰, with authorization for recording, an approximate duration of 1h15 and in keeping with the Move Social²¹ Code of Ethical Conduct. The interviews were conducted with professionals who had some connection with the feedback practices within the organization, totaling 26 people, 19 women and 7 men.

In addition to the balance between the aforementioned layers, the selection of organizations to participate in the study considered Brazil's inequalities and continental dimensions. Therefore, it was guided by the following criteria:

- Thematic diversity, considering the areas of education, the environment, gender and racial equality, human rights, and social entrepreneurship.
- Regional diversity, considering organizations headquartered or operating in regions beyond Brazil's South – Southeast axis.

It is worth noting that as part of the process, a thank you gift was acquired from social enterprises operating in the Amazon region and sent to each of the individuals interviewed as a sign of respect for the time dedicated to contributing toward the study and strengthening the local social impact ecosystem.

¹⁸ The list of organizations indicated in the scope of this study, divided by role in the field and thematic agendas, may be found in Annex 3.

¹⁹ The list of organizations participating in this study may be found in Annex 4.

²⁰ This study was conducted entirely virtually due to the limitations posed by the Covid-19 pandemic scenario. It is worth noting that the use of online techniques was able to produce the necessary information.

²¹ To access the Move Social Code of Ethical Conduct (in Portuguese), please click [here](#).





Findings

The main findings of this study will be presented stemming from 6 categories, which have been created based on the guiding questions and organized into sections of this chapter. Each section shall endeavor to present the evaluation statements highlighted in the form of key messages, together with their respective analyses and any evidence gathered.

Understanding the concept of feedback

Key messages 1: The different interpretations of the term feedback have been found to vary among the interviewed organizations, with it mainly being related to human resources practices, organizational development, monitoring and evaluation, territorial diagnoses, and corporate actions.

Key messages 2: The adoption of anglicisms and a lack of consensus about the concept of feedback in the social field constitute an impediment to the wider dissemination of the approach in the Brazilian context.

According to a British Council survey²², just 5% of the Brazilian population is able to communicate in the English language. From among this group, only 1% declared having some degree of fluency, which means that the use and understanding of anglicisms such as “feedback”, may be either unfamiliar or linked to different meanings or practices. This section will showcase how the different perspectives about the term became clear among the organizations interviewed.

The data collection process indicated that as defined by the FSI, the term feedback is actually rarely used by funders, intermediaries, or civil society organizations. The main association made by the participants was with internal processes linked to Human Resources and Organizational Development practices and policies²³. One participant even reported that these spaces would be the only moments in which they would use the term “feedback” in English within their organization.

²² To access the survey, go to:

https://www.britishcouncil.org.br/sites/default/files/demandas_de_aprendizagempesquisacompleta.pdf.

²³ This became evident during the interview referral process. When approached, despite having been introduced to the concept of feedback according to the Fund for Shared Insight, many organizations referred the invitation to those responsible for areas close to human resources and/or organizational development. Even directors brought this perspective when addressing feedback practices in their organizations. Because of this, the research team explored the practice of feedback in all the spheres that made sense for the organization.





The concept was also related to the monitoring and evaluation processes. From this perspective, feedback is seen as part of a set of tools for managing partnerships, monitoring activities, measuring the results and the impact of projects or programs and/or fostering learning processes.

A third use of the term feedback occurs in territorial diagnosis practices or exploratory studies for the development of projects or programs. According to Edouké (2021), this would be the first stage in which it would be possible to collect feedback from the clients or demographics served²⁴. However, the authors also point out that in certain cases, such listening practice may prove something of a departure from the concept of perceptual feedback for two main reasons. The first reason is that such listening practices can happen with a wider audience, who will not necessarily be receiving the planned intervention. In the case of this study, such experience was more common among funders, who usually develop larger-scale studies, including census studies, to carry out diagnoses. The second reason is that the concept of feedback is tied up to the experience of a program, organization, or service. Among the research participants, this listening practice mostly took place before the intervention, thus coming closer to participatory processes of constructing project designs. In the case of CSOs in particular, however, the listening processes were used to engage potential clients or beneficiaries of the initiatives.

Finally, feedback is associated with corporate practices that are linked to consumer experience and satisfaction. This view proved to be more widespread among institutes and foundations with closer ties to their sponsoring companies, as well as in cases of managers of intermediaries or CSOs with experience in the corporate sector. Within this logic, there would be corporate sector practices that could be used to enhance the experience of clients or populations served by social interventions.

In addition to the understanding of the concept, certain alternative terms in Portuguese²⁵ were cited to describe and define feedback practices; they have been listed in Portuguese as well as in English:

- ***Escuta* – Listening**
- ***Escuta contínua* – Continuous listening**
- ***Escuta ativa* – Active listening**
- ***Retorno* – Return**
- ***Devolutiva* – Feedback**
- ***Pesquisa* – Research**
- ***Retroação* – Retroaction**

²⁴ The second stage would be during the intervention, in order to allow for greater response agility. The third would be after participation in the activity/intervention, focusing on the understanding of the client/attendee experience.

²⁵ In addition to the terms mentioned by the interviewees, the Portuguese language also contemplates other possibilities, even if not mentioned by the study's participants, namely *comentários* (Cambridge Dictionary), *reação*, *opinião*, *apreciação*, *parecer*, whose more literal definition could be, respectively, “comments”, “reaction”, “opinion”, “evaluation” and “viewpoint”.





- **Retroalimentação – Feedback**
- **Auscultar – Auscultate**

Because of the association made with collaborative project design and implementation practices, other terms have emerged, such as:

- **Co-construção – Co-construction**
- **Diálogo – Dialogue**
- **Processos participativos – Participatory processes**

Among the civil society organizations interviewed that work in care or direct intervention, the term **attendance** was also recognized as a practice that encompasses feedback.

According to the report *Perceptual Feedback: What's it all about?* (Edouké, 2021), the growth of initiatives aimed at engaging the communities and populations served has highlighted the need to disseminate a common understanding of terms such as feedback in the philanthropic and social sector. Among the different expressions used and that are possible within the Brazilian context, unquestionably there is need for not merely a good translation, but also a collaborative effort to redefine this concept and its practice considering the peculiarities of the Brazilian context. Beyond conceptual issues, arriving at a common understanding and translation could potentially facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable populations whose contact with foreign words may be limited due to socioeconomic barriers inherent to the Brazilian reality.

Feedback practices implemented

Key messages 3: While quality listening and feedback processes are present in project management and funding, they are more closely associated with internal practices with collaborators or by community profile organizations and their target demographics.

Key messages 4: Questionnaires, meetings and continuous dialogue are the tools most used by organizations, all conducted in the Portuguese language.

Key messages 5: Factors such as the establishment of bonds of trust, lack of human and financial resources and scarce dissemination of a culture of listening in Brazil negatively affect the adoption of feedback as a transversal practice within the philanthropic sector.

In addition to the different interpretations of the concept of feedback, the data collection presented a diversity of feedback practices that are being implemented by the study's participants, at different levels of maturity and systematization, at different stages of their interventions, and even internally to





the organizations. The aim of this section, therefore, is to provide an overview of these experiences, based on the definition and competences presented by the FSI. By way of general observations, the following is worth highlighting:

- **Feedback practices at the organizational level are more structured and systematized than those carried out with supported organizations and populations**

As previously mentioned, the main association made by the study's participants about the term feedback was to practices related to people management and organizational development.

Among institutes and foundations, especially those of corporate origin, such practices are more institutionalized, with responsible departments and dedicated tools, such as organizational climate surveys, NPS and Feedback House. In these cases, the feedback mostly involves the collaborator and his/her manager, with some organizations already implementing feedback practices at the team level, such as 360° assessments.

As for civil society organizations, although internal feedback practices are reported, they are not as systematized and usually involve periodic individual meetings. In these organizations, however, internal processes with employees showcased greater potential to impact strategic realignments or the design of new projects. Some examples will be explored in the section **Contribution of practice in service of equity and justice**.

Another dynamic raised by civil society organizations was the relationship with their boards, and in some cases, networks. In addition to periodic reports or systematizations, the organizations also seek to facilitate meetings with counsellors and partners from their networks for exchange. Only one organization reported the use of tools designed specifically to assess the relationship between the organization and its board members.

- **Organizations with more inclusive governance structures exhibit higher quality feedback practices.**

Different organizational cultures and dynamics were identified during the listening sessions conducted. Among those that prized participatory construction and dialogue, the inclusion of community members in decision-making processes and more horizontal governance structures, feedback was more present, although often it was not systematized or called “feedback”. From these governance structures, a fertile space is created for the strengthening of bonds and trust, unanimously considered by the study's participants as elements that are key to performing feedback. Another factor that these structures tend to take more into consideration is the time required to build these bonds,





making use of continuous feedback to understand and respond in an agile manner to the needs and concerns of the territories where they operate as the project is implemented.

For instance, in one of the organizations interviewed, community members are both members of the team and part of board of directors. In addition to holding periodic meetings, such as gatherings and an annual general assembly, such a structure ensures the participation of communities in the different stages of the feedback cycle, from the design of the instruments and the approaches through to the closing of the cycle.

- **Organizations do not tend to have dedicated feedback teams**

From the point of view of the teams responsible for the listening processes, most organizations stated that they did not have a team dedicated to feedback, with responsibility for these processes being distributed among different team members, mainly program and project managers. This is considered a factor that often prevents a quality immersion into the collected data.

In situations where organizations have teams responsible for monitoring and evaluation, they are also responsible for the design, collection, and analysis of feedback. A case was also reported where the Project Management Officer (PMO) was the main person responsible for feedback. In both cases, however, the process takes place in constant dialogue with program managers.

Among the CSOs, the feedback process takes place in a more distributed manner, with participation not only by managers, but also by teams that are on the front-line providing services, such as educators and social workers. By way of example, one organization reported carrying out regular evaluations of its activities, in which they included feedback as part of the process. This process was mainly conducted by the educators, who performed the activities. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing interruption of all face-to-face activities meant that the team had to be reduced, and managers ended up taking over the listening activities.

Additionally, excessive workloads represent a challenge that affects the engagement of these teams in feedback practices. In addition to reduced teams, participants reported intense workflows, a common complaint among the sector's workers, or a lack of financial support for "general operating support areas"²⁶ and for structuring monitoring and evaluation teams. This would thus affect the prioritization of transversal practices such as feedback. In contrast, in organizations that treat the practice of feedback as a process intrinsic to their methodology and daily practices, it is seen as a responsibility to be shared among the entire team.

²⁶ The "general operating support area", commonly referred as "áreas meio" in Portuguese, includes sectors such as administration, finance, and human resources, which are usually considered "overhead" in project budgets or redistributed among the activities.





Regarding the stages of the feedback cycle, the data collected revealed that:

- **The design of the collection instruments is performed by managers or team members, with little involvement by the attendees/clients.**

For the development of the collection instruments, the interviewed entities reported internal processes that involve the participation of the respective teams responsible in collaboration with program managers. They also expressed a degree of concern about the adaptability of the instruments to the contexts and demographics served. However, no structures that captured the perceptions of the instrument by the communities served were observed.

As for the collection, the study revealed that:

- **Organizations make use of a number of tools to capture feedback.**

All the interviewed institutions explore and are open to experimenting with different tools for collecting the perceptions, feelings and experiences of their target demographic or partner organizations.

The most frequently mentioned tools were meetings, periodic gatherings, and questionnaires. The former are perceived as favorable spaces for strengthening ties between the parties, allowing direct and continuous exchanges between the organization and the demographic served. Both institutes/foundations and CSOs also declared a preference for meetings, given that they work with vulnerable groups that include illiterate people²⁷. As such, spoken language and feedback display an aspect of inclusion that is essential to such institutions.

With regard to questionnaires, the interviewed institutions make use of paper or online forms²⁸ (via Google Forms), mixing quantitative and qualitative questions about the participants' experience. In the forms, institutions of corporate origin or whose managers have experience in the private sector include the Net Promoter Score (NPS)²⁹ as one of the questions in the questionnaire. For instance, one private institute reported the implementation of a feedback form on its e-Learning course platform. Respondents would then be invited to fill in the form via the platform upon completion of the course.

Certain intermediary organizations also presented references for their feedback processes. One such organization reported using the Center of Effective Philanthropy's Grantee and Applicant Perception

²⁷ According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE – Original: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*), Brazil had 11.3 million illiterate people (absolute and functional) in 2018. Research has also shown that illiteracy in the country impacts Afro-Brazilian and mestizo populations more than white ones.

²⁸ The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the adoption of online forms.

²⁹ The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a methodology used to analyze the level of customer satisfaction, from a scale of 0 to 10.





Report³⁰ as inspiration for developing their forms, also capturing responses about the funding relationship they establish with grantee partner organizations. Due to the form's complexity, it is implemented every two years as a way of avoiding overloading members, another ongoing concern among the interviewed institutions. Another intermediary implements the Kirkpatrick approach, which is considered a reference in corporate training evaluation³¹.

Other approaches were also mentioned by the participants. In-depth interviews and focus groups are adopted, especially by CSOs and intermediaries working as a network. Moreover, the use of project management tools such as Flux and Prosas to facilitate the feedback process was mentioned, as well as the Feedback House platform for the management of internal feedback. There is also one organization that reported having external facilitators who support mediation with community members.

- **Institutions report challenges in collecting feedback, particularly through online forms**

While they facilitate the collection, storage and analysis of data, feedback processes through online forms bring about difficulties regarding the adhesion of the public served, connectivity problems³² and low response rates. When asked about the reason, the organizations raised a few hypotheses. The first relates to the aforementioned excessive workloads of third sector workers, which discourages participation in feedback processes.

Another possible explanation would be linked to the lack of a culture of evaluation and feedback in the country. Although investment in the dissemination of a culture of evaluation has grown in the sector in recent years, driven by actors such as the GIFE and the growth of social and environmental impact businesses, the same cannot be said about feedback. Participants reported that in Brazilian culture, giving/receiving feedback could be expected to present difficulties. According to interviewees, this feedback would either be interpreted as a personal attack when negative or construed as praise, but without yielding any recommendations for the improvement of the product/service in question, when positive.

Within the dynamics of Brazilian philanthropy, another important factor would be its historical association with charity, volunteerism, and donations³³. Within this perspective, criticism of the

³⁰ For more information about the Grantee and Applicant Perception Report, please visit: <https://cep.org/assessments/grantee-perception-report/>

³¹ For more information on the Kirkpatrick model, please visit: <https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/>

³² According to research conducted by the Regional Center for Studies for the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br), although Internet access in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic has reached 83% of Brazilian households, the inequality between rich and poor households still stands at 36%. For more information about the survey, please go to: <https://cetic.br/pt/pesquisa/domicilios/>

³³ According to the Brazil Donation Survey, 37% of donors declared being religious, and their main motivation for donating would be to "display solidarity towards the needy" (53%). Furthermore, words such as solidarity, donation and charity are positively evaluated by 92%, 89% and 89% of respondents.





product/service/financing being offered by philanthropic institutions would be frowned upon, demanding unquestioning gratitude and no criticism from the clients/populations/organizations served regarding what was being offered. This relationship would be reproduced in the relationship between funders and CSOs, to be explored further in the section **Power relations in feedback practices**.

Organizations, however, have sought alternatives to ensure the participation of their demographics, in addition to raising awareness about the importance of feedback. Upon realizing the low adherence to online forms, and whilst looking for ways to avoid overburdening participants in their training sessions, an intermediary organization created social events in which participants filled out feedback forms (anonymously) during the activity. In addition to ensuring participation, the goal was to create more relaxed environments for gathering feedback.

- **Feedback happens in Portuguese, but other languages need to be considered within the Brazilian context**

While the feedback and exchanges take place in Portuguese, the country's reality must be taken into consideration, given that according to the 2010 Census, five out of the more than 150 indigenous languages spoken in Brazil are more than 10,000 speakers strong. Thus, organizations working with indigenous peoples should consider adopting feedback tools translated into the local languages, especially considering the current climate of increasing attacks on indigenous territories and leaders, as well as the advancing Covid-19 pandemic threatening communities of indigenous peoples.

About the interpretation of the information gathered:

- **The interpretation of results is carried out by the team at the end of the project cycle, without the monitoring of historical series and/or data segmentation**

After the data collection, the information is stored especially in Excel tables, and then treated and interpreted normally by the same team responsible for the design and collection. This process usually takes place at the end of the cycle of activities or in preparation for governance meetings, such as board meetings and assemblies in order to identify points for improvement for the following cycle. Only one organization reported tracking historical data series, and no practices of information segmentation (i.e., race, gender, ethnic group) were reported in the analysis process, with the exception of organizations whose work is already focused on certain groups or territories.

Regarding the response to the demands, feelings and perceptions of the supported demographics and organizations:





- **Response to feedback engages the staff and the demographics served rather than boards and donors.**

The feedback's findings are shared especially among the team involved in the activities and feed into decision-making in the management of all interviewed institutions. Again, organizations whose governance structures value participatory and inclusive practices for project design and implementation also share findings with their demographics served, especially through meetings. In contrast, boards and donors are less involved in the response process, although they are informed of findings through periodic reports and briefings.

Finally, as for the final, closing stage:

- **For the most part, organizations fail to complete the feedback cycle**

Even among the different stages of maturity of their processes, the closure of the feedback cycle (i.e.: informing the demographics served both about findings and the response strategies to be adopted) proved to be a major challenge for participating institutions. Some forms of feedback involved the sharing of systematizations, reports, and briefings to different demographics.

The concern for achieving return grows, however, when negative feedback is identified. In these cases, organizations reported conducting conversations/interviews with the person(s) who reported dissatisfaction with some aspect of the product/service delivery.

Use of feedback

Key messages 6: The information generated from feedback assumes different uses, depending on the type of practice implemented. The following stand out: uses related to the construction of projects aligned to the needs of specific territories and demographics, the adaptation of methodologies and institutional strategies, the improvement of intra- and inter-organizational relationships, organizational learning, and the legitimization of the relevance of the organizations' work.

In order to be able to present what the different ways of using feedback were, it is necessary to resume the different types of feedback considered within the FSI approach. Beforehand, it is possible to state that for each type of practice assumed by the organizations, consequently there is the intention of a certain use. The types assumed as the basis for this analysis are:

- Community or individual needs
- Experience and quality of the project or service





- Relationship with the organization, project, or service
- Satisfaction with the project or service
- Results generated from the experience with the organization, project, or service

Organizations that perform actions whose purpose is to raise demands from specific demographics and communities have declared that the information collected using this process are guiding their strategies and offerings, and that it is at this stage that feedback processes are better structured. This type of feedback, which is also known as “listening to the territory”, “listening stage” or “initial diagnosis”, proved to be present in organizations that operate in a more connected way to a specific territory and that value the offer of actions that respond to the inherent needs of a locality or beneficiary group. This was particularly the case in implementing organizations.

It is worth pointing out that it would be inconsistent to carry out a survey of demands if the organization were not open enough to listen to these and armed with the capacity to respond to them – or indeed with the willingness to do so based on what emerges. The participants who referred to actions connected to this type of strategy have broader thematic agendas and more participatory methodologies, and they were more flexible with regard to the expected results.

One interpretation would be that carrying out a proper listening in the territory can make projects more relevant, and that the organizations that choose this path assume a role of “facilitators” of projects that are genuinely born from the consulted demographics themselves. Cases were cited in which organizations proposed customized courses on their online platform, created projects with exclusive thematic clippings, or even completely changed their programmatic focus to meet the emerging needs of the chosen territories.

During the implementation of projects and services, cases of organizations structuring processes for collecting experience and perception about the quality of the offer were commonplace. Most organizations stated that they are always open to listening to the perception of the demographics with whom they interact, however, few have comprehensive, structured procedures and team availability for the production of an instrument provocative enough for deeper, more critical feedback.

While organizations proved being genuinely interested in understanding and listening to the critical viewpoint of the groups assisted, sometimes this was limited to analyses about the specific points of an offer, based on questions with closed answers that preclude spaces for more comprehensive analyses of the experience. For instance, some organizations cited the use of forms applied after certain activities – such as a session as part of a training course – with questions focused on understanding whether the content presented was interesting or whether the educator who conducted the class did so satisfactorily. This feedback will undoubtedly bring important insight for the organization to look at their offer and even to adapt their methodology, but it also limits a young person’s outlook, for





example, about what ideas were drawn from that content, what their connection with their other daily activities is or how they perceive the formative journey of that course in general.

Feedback processes that lend themselves to gathering information about the beneficiary experience and quality of the offer could benefit from conducting in-depth conversations and duly systematizing the information gathered for a strategic analysis of what is being implemented. Certain organizations reported having had such experiences, however, they pointed out the difficulties of doing so in a consistent and organized enough manner so as to be able to create a database that could be systematically analyzed.

From a relationship standpoint, the organizations interviewed pointed to experiences that are directly influenced by building bonds of trust, environments conducive to respectful dialogue, and spaces open enough to allow them to express themselves and listen to critical viewpoints. Listening to the organizations revealed how stronger relationships provide more honest, and consequently more useful feedback processes.

On this topic, organizations narrated experiences that may be categorized as internal to organizations and between organizations. Cases about feedback experiences focused on the relationship with the demographics served were rare.

In the first category, what stood out were the actions implemented with the employees themselves and that enabled the organizations' teams to have a platform to reveal any needs and discomforts, as well as to get to realize important elements to further their own professional development. Although these practices extrapolate the boundaries of the FSI's feedback approach, it is important to note that certain organizations base the composition of their teams on the premises of diversity, equity, and inclusion, so ensuring internal feedback practices helps to foster equity and fairness among their teams and boost the development of the organization itself – especially for those that have people on their team who had previously been part of the served demographic.

The use of information coming from this type of feedback was linked to behavioral change, conflict mediation, expansion of critical awareness, and professional development. In organizations that have teams formed by volunteers, the process was associated with this group's motivation. As for organizations of a more corporate nature, however, there was an association with certification processes by their sponsoring companies – which occurs, for example, due to the existence of an ombudsman channel for anonymous complaints or 360° feedback processes.

Regarding the second category, the use of information generated from the feedback between organizations focused on the analysis of partnerships. In this case, the central factor cited by the organizations was the disproportionality of power relations, a topic that will be delved into more deeply in the next section. Specifically with regard to the use of the information that this type of





feedback generates, for instance, the lessons learnt, and the institutional empowerment generated from the relationship between funders and civil society organizations were highlighted. There are caveats about the lack of dialogue and feedback from certain organizations in the face of follow-up reports delivered frequently by implementing organizations, material that could be used to trigger feedback conversations between the parties.

When looking at the type of feedback that analyzes target demographic satisfaction, the use of the information relates to tactical-operational changes and adaptations of offerings. Also, in cases of organizations closer to their sponsoring companies, the satisfaction levels reported by community members – who are the focus of social projects – and the teams' collaborators constitute metrics for the renewal of certifications.

Regarding the collection of feedback related to the perception of preliminary results by the beneficiaries, the association of this practice to the evaluation processes stands out. Although the evaluation agenda is widespread and has undergone strengthening actions, it still faces difficulties in gaining consistency within some organizations, especially those with more restricted human and financial resources. Still, the interest in seeking and gathering evidence from the results generated by projects and services is linked to a legitimization of the work carried out by organizations.

When asked about the information related to the perception of results of target demographics, organizations mentioned the use of such information for: raising new funds, providing accountability to funders and society, transparency actions, generation of communication content, mobilization of volunteer work, results evaluation of projects and services, consolidation of strategies and methodologies and generation of institutional learning.

Power relations in feedback practices

Key messages 7: Power asymmetry is present in the field of Brazilian philanthropy and directly interferes in the relationships between organizations – especially between funders and grantees. Despite the Brazilian context being marked by inequality, organizations find it easier to listen to the demographic they serve, especially those that provide direct services or have more inclusive governance structures.

When it comes to the power relations that interfere with feedback practices within the Brazilian philanthropic sector, each of the constituent layers of this ecosystem and the relationship between them must be considered. Thus, the following analysis will be divided into 3 points:

- organizations and their target demographics





- funding organizations and donor organizations
- funding organizations and their sponsoring companies

With regard to the first segment, it should be noted that feedback practices were primarily recognized by organizations that are in charge of projects that have closer contact with the groups in vulnerability for which they intend to generate social transformation. While funding organizations have properly defined agendas, strategies, and demographics, when they rely on partnerships that implement their strategies, they end up further removed from the relationship, and consequently, from listening to the perceptions of these target demographics.

In this regard, just how much intermediary organizations can contribute to mediating dialogue and listening between the two layers mentioned above is clear. The inherent capacity of these organizations in terms of relational knowledge to deal with both funding and implementing organizations and their demographics reaffirms the relevance of considering and strengthening them as important parts of the philanthropic field. Because of its prominence, this point will be further detailed in the next section.

Whilst on the subject of feedback between the organizations and the demographics served, the emphasis on the “trust” factor was recurrent among the interviewees. As presented in the context chapter, faced with a social scenario of extreme inequality, people who are recipients of a given social action oftentimes either don’t allow themselves, or are unable to identify spaces that allow them to offer criticism about the offers received. In a scenario of opportunities that are few and far between, the mindset is that “whatever it is, it’s better than nothing”, which prevents the construction of spaces that stimulate a critical attitude towards projects and services.

However, as a counterpoint, it was possible to observe organizations that found the practice of feedback with their demographics attended easier than when compared to feedback in their relationship with the funders. Even with the challenges pointed out above, in organizations that have in place participatory processes, solid premises of care and openness to listening, the bonds are constituted by strong ties of great trust that have the potential for creating an environment where feedback might be given and received.

An example of this may be illustrated by the contact the research team had with a transgender woman attended by one of the organizations participating in this study. She was asked to talk about her experience with the organization in general and whether she felt a real openness to express her perceptions and feelings about the project she participates in. Even without mentioning the word feedback, her statement evidenced that the organization had in place an ongoing process of listening and feedback that was integral to its work methodology. In other words, the way the organization’s





collaborators relate to the population served is based on the premise that by establishing strong relationships of respect and trust, people will feel at ease to talk and to listen.

In line with this, cases of organizations that integrate the participation of individuals from the territories or groups served even in their governance structure stood out. This creates an environment where relationships become more horizontal and inclusive, which in turn organically forges an environment that is more open to listening and talking. Reinforcing what is advocated by the FSI, albeit with potential for improvement, feedback is capable of prompting a shift of power dynamics between suppliers and clients, so these become more balanced and equitable. Along these lines, the need for paying attention to the inclusion of children and young people in feedback spaces was also brought up, as opposed to the idea that these demographics should be seen only as passive in receiving a given offer.

When it comes to the second segment – funder organizations and grantee organizations – trust was also mentioned as a key factor in feedback processes. Although power relationships are recognized in the relationship between these parties, it was evident that when they actually manage to establish “partnerships” instead of “hierarchical relationships”, exchanges, openness, listening, and learning take place in a more effective manner.

Within the field of philanthropy, relationships between funders and grantees are still influenced by power asymmetries. This is centered around the idea that the one holding the resource to be donated is in a hierarchically superior position, and as such, is able to exercise influence over the other organization. Certainly, the relationships between these layers are affected by many other factors, leading to different positions and behaviors, but be this as it may, the interviewees confirmed that they suffer from the effects of imbalance.

The fact that funded organizations feel fearful about sharing their failures is indicative of how power relations operate, which leads to the question: are funding organizations open to negative feedback? There is a perception that certain organizations are too afraid of criticism, and therefore showcase only the success of their actions. Indirectly, this derives in a process of inhibition of the organizations that are in the territories and that deal with the challenges inherent to this work. This stance was recognized as something that generates a pressure and a reticence to address more sensitive issues for fear of risking having resources cut in the field – which operates within a logic of scarcity of resources.

“We live on donations, on resources, I think organizations are a little afraid to open up negative feedback for fear it might influence sustainability. Should negative feedback be a





criterion for stopping donating to an organization? How do we create a culture of receiving feedback? How do we respond?”

Representative from a civil society organization. Interview.

“Those who are in the front line are terrified of pointing out their weaknesses or vulnerabilities, as these could directly impact financial sustainability. The field of philanthropy is now starting to gain prominence in Brazil”.

Representative from a civil society organization. Interview.

Points related to power relations were also identified in the third and last segment – funder organizations and their sponsoring companies. Despite the autonomous nature of most of the funding organizations that make up the field, each with their own purpose and strategies, many necessarily report their results to boards formed by members of their sponsoring companies. Given the difference between the daily routines and how work environments operate, sometimes the lack of knowledge about the operation, timeframes and contexts of a social project creates a dissonant reading that is scarcely open to the discussion of sensitive issues – such as, for instance, what does the success of a social project mean? Here too, the logic that dictates that power is concentrated in the one who holds the resource manifests itself.

Given what has been presented, it is important to emphasize that the issues presented above do not characterize relationships in a linear and determinant manner. In other words, it is not possible to state that just by looking at power relations, it will be possible to visualize all the complexity of a partnership established between one, two or more organizations. However, clearly these dynamics cut across relationships, and therefore need to be identified and debated, so that change might be leveraged. Facing the cultural challenge that supports the saying *“he or she who can, issues the orders, and he or she who is sensible, obeys”* continues to be a task the field will need to tackle.

Feedback as a mediator of relationships

Key messages 8: There is an interesting role assumed by the organizations that make up the intermediate layer of the field of philanthropy. They are recognized as relationship mediators whose experience allows them to balance the power relations among the other layers and even obtaining financing.





As pointed out in the previous section, power relations cut across the different layers of the field of philanthropy. In Brazil, there are organizations that are considered intermediaries and have proven to be great mediators between their adjacent layers, directly influencing power relations.

Where feedback is concerned, intermediary organizations may be considered actors that are balancing power relations and have a unique ability to connect organizations. In certain cases, they act as bridges, for instance, to enable international investment in community-based organizations. With this, they increase the possibilities of attracting resources to these small organizations whilst enabling a translation of sorts of the institutional and territorial needs to international funders, within a logic of transfer of power.

“It is important to see philanthropy also within a classic power structure dynamic, and at the international level also. By engaging with local communities, local funds act as ‘translators’ from a non-listening, top-down process promoted by international donors into a collaborative, open to listening, bottom-up [process]”.

Representative from an intermediary organization. Interview.

The capacity of these organizations to mediate relationships and to put into practice knowledge connected to the dialogue process was highlighted by the participants and should be taken into consideration. There is an expertise involved in adapting to different institutional contexts that proves efficient and that enables a connection, which was once impossible, were it not for the participation of these organizations in these arrangements.

“Community funds are characterized by the constant process of listening to the members of their community (quilombos³⁴, indigenous people, women, etc.) This is an important point, given that often the funds are seen as mere intermediaries for the transfer of resources, disregarding the community dialogue intelligence involved in the process”.

Representative from an intermediary organization. Interview.

³⁴ Quilombos are communities founded during Brazil's colonial days by refugee enslaved people who escaped from plantations. According to [Fundação Palmares](#), Brazil has over 3,500 quilombos. Due to their historical and cultural value, Quilombos are still seen as a form of resistance by afro brazilian communities,





The case of organizations that work with a focus on institutional strengthening of CSOs and that assume a role similar to that of local funds is also worth highlighting. These are acknowledged as acting as a bridge of sorts between the needs of community-based organizations and the expectations of funding institutes and foundations. Situations like these were similarly referred to as interesting ways to mediate feedback information between organizations of different layers, even if without a structured proposal to such effect.

Contribution of practice in service of equity and justice

Key messages 9: As of 2020, there has been an intensification of debates on equity and justice in the Brazilian context. However, within the philanthropic sector, such agendas, although advancing, still require an effort to confront the reproduction of discriminatory policies and actions. From the point of view of practices, listening is valued by institutions as a tool to create more inclusive and welcoming environments for both their teams and their target demographics.

Key messages 10: Feedback is recognized as a tool with the potential for advancing agendas of equity and justice, with special emphasis on supporting the mobilization of minoritized groups active in the sector. To maximize this potential, however, power logics inherent to the philanthropic sector would also need to be addressed.

As a country, Brazil is affected by structural inequalities that exert a major impact on the lives of minoritized groups. As briefly mentioned above, racism, LGBTQphobia, misogyny, attacks on native peoples' territories and communities and xenophobia make up a scenario of attacks against the life, dignity and rights of minoritized groups and the work of organizations and social movements that fight for human rights and social and environmental justice³⁵. Within this context, there is a clear need to explore how philanthropic institutions can make use of tools such as feedback to challenge dominant structures that privilege certain voices over others.

When asked about issues related to equity and justice, two main groups were identified among the study's participants. The first of these are organizations whose missions and origins are closely linked to issues of equity and/or social and environmental justice. This group encompasses, in particular, civil society organizations that work with traditional and riverine, quilombo, urban periphery and transgender populations. The second group is made up of organizations whose policies and

³⁵ Taking into consideration the context of growing deforestation and attacks on the rights of traditional populations, it makes more sense within the Brazilian context to speak of socio-environmental justice. According to WWF Brasil, "the principles of Socio-Environmental Justice foresee that all social groups, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or social class, should have equal right of access to the natural resources (clean water, fertile soil, clean air, etc.) that are fundamental to a dignified and healthy life. On the other hand, when implementing works, projects or policies, no social group should disproportionately bear the negative environmental consequences resulting therefrom".





approaches towards diversity and inclusion are more recent, and who are restructuring to take a stance regarding the composition of their own teams.

A first space, therefore, to discuss issues related to equity and justice exists within the organizations themselves, where feedback also played an important role. From an internal viewpoint, especially in organizations that have collaborators from the territories where they operate, as mentioned above, feedback is used as a way to promote professional development. In another case, an organization reported that feedback from a young black employee derived in the creation of a new project within the organization that ended up being led by the employee herself. Other reports indicated that the team members who make up the community assume a key role as the direct bridge with the territories, providing management with continuous feedback on the initiatives implemented.

These dynamics, however, are not disconnected from the political, social, and racial tensions that permeate the Brazilian scenario. One interviewed institute that operates in peripheral territories highlighted the challenges of creating organizational management spaces in which groups from opposing social realities coexist and who make decisions together for the sake of the organization's mission.

With regard to equity and justice in their interventions, the different institutions interviewed are concerned with adapting approaches and tools that might better capture feedback from the populations they serve. As mentioned earlier, the prioritization of instruments that stimulate exchange through speech are seen as ways to include illiterate populations, as is the use of symbols, such as happy or sad faces, to facilitate registration. In these spaces, the figure of a facilitator or representative of the organization, who provides assistance for understanding questions and recording answers, proved to be of paramount importance. Another example of the figure of facilitators is the holding of assemblies and public hearings by civil society organizations, in which young people, children and the invited population in general openly debate issues of interest. The adoption of spoken instruments also has great potential in indigenous and quilombo communities, in whose cultures, orality plays a fundamental role.

Despite evident efforts to ensure listening, institutions still encounter challenges regarding access to feedback from the different groups with whom they operate. A first barrier that needs to be overcome is building trust. As mentioned earlier, establishing bonds of trust was cited as key to achieving high-quality feedback by all participants in the study. The viewpoint of a transgender woman who had been welcomed previously by one of the institutions interviewed illustrates the importance of this process of building relationships based on trust:





[When] I arrived here at the [institution], I was afraid of human beings, of society itself. When I realized that they [the institution] offered listening and in fact listened to me, I started to express what I needed, what I felt. All I wanted was a job, but they concentrated on my psyche, my whole self, to then be able to direct me to the employment market. Then they started to listen to me, and I always maintained that I wanted to work, to return to society. It was then that I began to feel like a human being, because I had someone who listened to me, who heard me when I was sad, when I needed a word. We just want to be heard, just a shoulder to be able to cry on. [...] This made me stronger, more secure, because I knew I had someone to count on. [...] When you start listening to others, you start recognizing yourself as a human being too. If you don't listen to anybody, you're not going to get anywhere”.

Transgender woman who attended the foster care program at one of the organizations participating in the study. Interview.

However, according to other reports, in the case of marginalized groups, building such trust would reportedly take longer. One foundation, for example, reported the difficulty they had had whilst attempting to access a quilombo community due to distrust by its members. The strategy adopted was to make use of public facilities, such as schools and healthcare units, for holding periodic meetings with community members. The same foundation also encourages the engagement of solo mothers from one of its projects in one of the city's municipal councils, so as to ensure their participation in decision-making regarding environmental policies in that locality. A civil society organization reported that this trust was built with support from transgender women who had been at the institution. They shared their experiences with the newcomers, fostering the creation of a safe and trusting environment for sincere exchanges between the staff and the women they served. The same organization also carried out important educational work with corporate partners to ensure the best welcome for women in their new workplaces.

Other challenges were also raised by respondents. For instance, one civil society organization reported unsuccessfully having attempted to collaborate with an indigenous community on an income generation program. According to the manager, cultural barriers explained the initiative's lack of success.

Finally, there is a strong regional issue that impacts the dynamics of the philanthropic sector in Brazil. Given the concentration of headquarters and activities in the Southeast of the country, as already mentioned, civil society organizations, institutes, and foundations mainly from the North and Northeast of the country encounter barriers in terms of accessing training, services, funding, and





connection opportunities. One of the institutes interviewed leads a network that aims to increase engagement by private social investors in the Northeast but faces challenges in mobilizing the region's actors.

By acknowledging the challenges faced and the progress that needs to be made, including internally, participants are able to see the potential for approaches such as feedback to bring the voice of minority groups to the center of decision-making in philanthropic institutions. However, two interviewees pointed out that, individually, approaches such as feedback, as advocated by the FSI, cannot change the logic of the system, which continues to reproduce unequal power relations and, ultimately, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination and violence. It would be necessary to address these power dynamics in order to achieve real change. According to them, the potential of feedback would be another:

“If there is a way in which the tools can provide support, it is in the sense that this transfer of power must entail the strengthening of a community’s power – community empowerment. Instruments can help to strengthen territorial and community actions that might eventually require a change of structure, a change of mindset”.

Intermediary organization representative. Interview.

Thus, there is a complex scenario ahead that will require a set of efforts from the different actors operating in the field of philanthropy, acting in coordination with other sectors, in which feedback can work as another mobilizing tool to strengthen the social fabric. It should also be noted that other groups were not mentioned in the context of the data collection, such as people with disabilities and neurodivergent individuals. A holistic look at the various intersectionalities that make up Brazilian diversities would be essential for the design of more humane and efficient tools.





Final considerations

Transversal analysis

Given the findings of this study, the importance of the work carried out by organizations dedicated to strengthening practices that promote a philanthropic field that is stronger and more effective has become clear. The Fund for Shared Insight has proven just how much the work it is involved in extrapolates a logic that could end up defining the outline of an approach and showcases that by strengthening practices for listening and feedback, new paths for more powerful and equitable transformations may be opened.

In the context of modern-day Brazil, a country marked by social inequality and polarization, making room for people to express perceptions and share experiences adds valuable meaning to relationships. Directly, the benefits brought to the management of a project, to the decision making of an organization or to the management of a service have become clear. However, concurrently, there is also a catalyzing effect generated in the people themselves that reinforces how worthy they are of having a space to take a stand and to share their wishes and opinions without fear of retaliation. There is much potential for this effect to reverberate to other spheres, to strengthen social fabric and to qualify spaces for citizen participation and the improvement of public policies.

Within organizations, the importance of feedback by way of supporting institutional development has also become clear. Beyond team member development, a function for which feedback is already more widely used, there is room for its adoption as a facilitator of sorts for creating work environments that are more welcoming, inclusive, and attentive to the needs and aspirations of employees. In addition, feedback can act as a catalyst to emphasize the centrality of the demographics served in the design of organizations' strategies, stimulating the establishment of alternative channels of communication and collaborative decision-making. In other words, in line with the implementation of practices and policies centered around equity and fairness, the dissemination of a culture of feedback has the potential to generate more mature and resilient organizations that are consequently in a position to acknowledge the importance of inclusive and ongoing listening practices. In this way, their projects become more relevant and agile when it comes to correcting their course, and ultimately, they generate more impact.

In general terms, something gradually came to light when looking at the whole picture, namely the fact that feedback will not emerge and become stronger without the input of individuals who are committed to its practice, who recognize its worth and who are dedicated to furthering its development. This requires positioning by the sector's leaders, especially among funders, as well as





resource allocation for team and organization development. This finding is contrasted by the scenario of an ecosystem that still underestimates actions in support of general operating support areas³⁶. With an economic and social crisis that is ravaging the country, made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for supporting the strengthening of organizations, especially civil society organizations, has become even more evident, all in aid of guaranteeing the implementation of transversal agendas such as feedback, but even more significantly, to guarantee their own sustainability.

Recommendations

This study's approach to organizations in the field of philanthropy allowed for raising a series of recommendations. In light of these and the set of findings presented in this document, please find below 6 priority recommendations for the FSI.

Recommendation 1: Resources for the development of actions that disseminate and strengthen the feedback approach could enrich the field of Brazilian philanthropy. There is a need to stimulate a culture of feedback in a structured and comprehensive manner, i.e., among all layers and actors involved in the field of philanthropy.

Given the country's current scenario, with organizations at very different levels of structuring, there is still room for feedback practices to be explored and qualified. In general, organizations are open to this, and in agreement about the fact that starting from a common concept would be of help. While all types of feedback were valued, the possibility of it becoming a more accessible, feasible tool to deal with the results and impacts of organizations, projects, and services, must be highlighted.

For the most part, organizations recognize the need for support in building a culture of listening, feedback, and evaluation. By encouraging and stimulating feedback practices, the trend is for this to consolidate as a lasting culture, that is, even if it takes time, these practices will no longer be seen as personal issues that generate fear among the parties involved and that are shaped by power relations. The need to think about a good translation of the concept into the Portuguese language prevails.

Recommendation 2: The creation of ecosystems of trust and transparency are essential for the development of feedback practices, as is the promotion of spaces for the exchange of experiences.

³⁶ The 2018 GIFE Census points out, for instance, that the institutional strengthening of CSOs appears in fifth place among the thematic areas prioritized by private social investors.





To this end, counting upon organizations that relate to a wide variety of actors in the field has been identified as an asset.

It is necessary to encourage partnerships based on attitudes that are empathetic and attentive to the demands and possibilities of the organizations, valuing constructive, transparent, and honest dialogue. Similarly, spaces where organizations can exchange experiences and address their successes and difficulties could generate more connection between the field's actors and collective knowledge. Intermediary organizations, local funds, consultancies, or networks that transit and work with a variety of other organizations can prove to be strategic parties in pushing this agenda forward.

Recommendation 3: There is a specific need to encourage actions that bring about the dissolution of power asymmetries between funders and grantee organizations. Stimulating change when faced with a hierarchical stance, opening to feedback processes, and investing in institutional strengthening actions are needs that were highlighted.

The power relations between funders and grantee organizations interfere in the constitution of their relationships. Given that it is guided by the common interest of instilling positive social and environmental transformations, the field of philanthropy could benefit from actions that encourage the development of relationships where all parties feel acknowledged, stimulated, and respected in terms of their potential and challenges. The contribution of specific resources to strengthen practices such as feedback sends an important message to the field that this process is relevant, which in turn strengthens organizations and consequently the field of philanthropy as a whole.

Recommendation 4: There is a need for targeted investment in leadership development, team structuring and the expansion of training process offerings, all focused on improving feedback practices.

The leaders of organizations and initiatives were identified as significant actors for the strengthening of feedback practices. Organizations acknowledge the fact that if there is an appreciation of these practices among those making decisions and driving strategies, this is leveraged to the rest of the team, and possibly to other established relationships. Similarly, the possibility of having people within organizations who are dedicated to thinking up, structuring, and applying feedback processes would make feedback a priority – something that is pre-empted in situations of excessive workloads. To this end, training sessions would be fundamental.





Recommendation 5: In order to encourage debates about feedback within the philanthropic sector, the dissemination of tools, approaches, systems and documents in an accessible and adaptable language and formats is essential.

Access to materials on feedback in the philanthropic field – aligned to the FSI perspective – is extremely limited, meaning institutions implementing it need to develop their approaches in-house. This process could be facilitated with the creation and availability of content that is focused on feedback in the Portuguese language, including tools, training sessions and case studies that could serve as a source of inspiration and reference for the different entities that make up the philanthropic sector.

Recommendation 6: There is a need to target investments and intensify debates linked to equity and justice in the feedback and evaluation agenda, the aim being to highlight practices and experiences of organizations led by minority groups and that exist outside the country's Southeast-South axis.

In order to benefit from the growth of the evaluation agenda in the country, it is essential to think of it as a practice that breaks away from the perpetuation of structural violence. To this end, it is key that investments are directed at organizations that work with the themes of rights, equity and socio-environmental justice, especially civil society, and community-based organizations, so they may consolidate and systematize their evaluation and feedback practices. This would enable them to make use of their own experiences and views to influence the debates in these fields more actively.





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Hopstein, G., Peres, M. (2021). The role and protagonism of civil society in the facing of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil. Covid Emergency Studies. GIFE. Available at: <https://wings.issuelab.org/resources/38760/38760.pdf>

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Annex 2. Interview Guidelines

Interview guide¹

0. Interview preparation

A one-pager will be shared with participants before the interview in order to present the feedback concept and the main discussion topics. Besides preparation for the interview, the one-pager aims to stimulate the interviewee to rethink about its feedback practices.

1. Introduction

- Presentation of the research
- Presentation of Move Social
- Presentation of the researcher
- Presentation of the interview's structure and duration
- Presentation of confidentiality and privacy terms
- Oral consent of participation and recording of the interview
- Presentation of main concepts
- Q&A
- Introduction of the interviewee

2. Understanding on feedback and its implementation

Description of ongoing practice

- How does the feedback process currently work in your organization?
 - What tools or infrastructure are used? How are they designed?
 - How common is it?
 - Who are the people and stakeholders involved in this process?
 - How is the data stored and protected?
 - How do you communicate back the gathered insights back to the people and stakeholders involved?

Feedback's strategic role

- What is feedback's role in internal decision making processes and strategic planning of your organization?
- Is there a dedicated person/team for feedback in your organization?
- Has your organization received any funding or other types of support for the development of your feedback practices?

Alignment with Feedback Loop's approach

- Interviewer shares feedback loop's image with interviewee. Jointly, they explore what steps the organization currently implements.
- Presentation of a feedback practice quality thermometer for the organization.

¹ Note: this guide presents a general structure for interviews. The research team will adapt it based on each interviewee





3. Interviewee's view on feedback practice in the field

- What is your view on the feedback practice in the field?
 - What does feedback look like between NGOs and the people they serve?
 - What does feedback look like between funders and the people they ultimately seek to help?
- Has your organization joined any forum/community to exchange and share with others your feedback practices?
- Is there any feedback practice by other organizations that inspires you?

4. Cross-cutting lenses

- How do issues of equity and justice play out in your particular context?
- Does your organization ensure the voices of historically marginalized groups are heard as part of your feedback practice? If so, how?
- Do you identify any challenge in reaching out to certain groups?
- How could high-quality listening and feedback advance equity and justice in your particular context?

5. Recommendations

- How would you describe a high quality feedback practice?
- What would help your organization to improve your current feedback practices?
- In the field, what do those involved say is most needed to accelerate and improve high-quality feedback work?

6. Closure

- Research teams thanks the interviewee for its availability and time
- Request of documents that present the organization's feedback practice (if any) and data collection instruments
- Request of referrals for the subsequent layer of analysis



Annex 3. List of referrals

Organization	Website	Location	Working areas
GIFE - Grupo de Institutos Fundações e Empresas	https://gife.org.br/	São Paulo	Social Investment
Laudes Foundation	https://www.laudesfoundation.org/	São Paulo	Fashion Civil Construction Financial Market
Itaú Social	https://www.itausocial.org.br/	São Paulo	Education Culture
Fundação Tide Setúbal	https://fundacaotidesetubal.org.br/	São Paulo	Community Development Gender Race Leadership Advocacy
Instituto Clima e Sociedade	https://www.climaesociedade.org/	Rio de Janeiro, National	Low Carbon Energy Energy Climate Policy Transport Land Use Climate and Law
Instituto Arapyaú	https://arapyau.org.br/	Bahia, Amazon	Community Development Climate Change
Fundação Alphaville	http://www.fundacaoalphaville.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Citizenship Education Sustainability Culture Employment
Fundação Raizen	https://www.raizen.com.br/fundacao-raizen	São Paulo, Goiás	Education First Childhood Professional Training
Fundação Banco do Brasil	https://fbb.org.br/pt-br/https://fbb.org.br/pt-br/	National	Education Environment Humanitarian aid Volunteerism
CEERT	https://www.ceert.org.br/	National	Racial and Gender Equity Education Professional Training
Fundação Demócrito Rocha	https://gife.org.br/atuacao-em-rede/ris-nordeste/	Northeast	Education Professional Training Entrepreneurship
Fundação Maria Cecília Souto Vidigal	https://www.fmcsv.org.br/pt-BR/	São Paulo, National	First Childhood

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Fundação Roberto Marinho	https://frm.org.br/	Rio de Janeiro, National	Education Culture
Phomenta	https://www.phomenta.com.br/	Campinas, National	Capacity Development Certification
Fundo Brasil de Direitos Humanos	https://www.fundobrasil.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Human Rights Civil Society
Fundo Elas	http://www.fundosocialelas.org/	Rio de Janeiro, National	Gender
Rede de Filantropia para Justiça Social	https://www.redefilantropia.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Social Justice Human Rights Citizenship
Fundo Baobá	https://baoba.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Community Outreach Resources Mobilization
Abong	https://abong.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Democracy and rights Civil Society Organizations Capacity Strengthening
RAPS	https://www.raps.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Democracy and Citizenship Sustainability
Em Movimento	https://www.emmovimento.org.br/	National	Youth
Tabôa	https://taboa.org.br/	Bahia	Civil Society Community Engagement Environment Income Generation
Instituto humanize	https://www.ihumanize.org/	Rio de Janeiro, National	Sustainability Social Entrepreneurship Public Policy Institutional Development and Education
Centro de Inovação do Cacao	https://pctsb.org/cic/	Bahia	Research & Development Agriculture
Casa Florescer	https://casaflorescer.netlify.app/	São Paulo	Gender Trans women rights
Reconnectta	https://www.reconnectta.com/	São Paulo	Sustainability Education
Instituto Peregrum - Coalizão Negra por Direitos	https://coalizaonegrapordireitos.org.br/	National	Racial Equity
Associação Colaborativa Base Capão	https://www.basecolaborativa.org/	São Paulo	Desenvolvimento de projetos sociais
Ação Educativa	https://acaoeducativa.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Education Research Human rights

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Instituto Maria e João Aleixo - IMJA	http://imja.org.br/pt-br/	Rio de Janeiro	Capacity Strengthening
A Banca - Anip	https://www.abanca.org/	São Paulo	Entrepreneurship Income Generation
Instituto Feira Preta - Casa Preta Hub	https://pretahub.com/	São Paulo, Bahia	Entrepreneurship Income Generation Gender Racial Equity Culture
Casa de Vovó Dedé	https://www.cvdd.com.br/	Ceará	Arts Culture Education
Instituto Beatriz e Lauro Fiuza	https://www.iblf.org.br/	Ceará	Capacity Development Knowledge Production Arts & Culture Sports
Instituto Diágeo	https://www.diageo.com/	Ceará	Youth Professional Training Supply Chain
Rede Conhecimento	http://www.conhecimentosocial.org/	São Paulo	Research Youth
Engajamundo	https://www.engajamundo.org/	National	Youth
United Way Brasil	https://unitedwaybrasil.org.br/	São Paulo	First Childhood Youth
Instituto Jatobás	https://institutojatobas.org.br/	São Paulo	Social Innovation Culture Entrepreneurship
Instituto Camargo Correa	https://camargocorreainfra.com/instituto-camargo-correa-2/	São Paulo	Community development Entrepreneurship Volunteerism
Instituto Arcor Brasil	https://www.institutoarcor.org.br/	São Paulo	Children rights
Lar Casa Bela	https://www.larcasabela.org.br/	São Paulo	Childhood Youth Social Care
Passatempo Educativo	https://passatempoeducativo.org.br/	São Paulo	Education Environment
Foco Empreendedor	https://www.focoempreendedor.org.br/	Rio Grande do Sul	Education Entrepreneurship
Instituto Floriano Peçanha dos Santos	https://ifpsorg.wixsite.com/ifps	Rio de Janeiro	Peace Culture
Instituto Comunitário da Grande Florianópolis (ICOM)	https://www.icomfloripa.org.br/	Santa Catarina	Community Engagement Social Investment Capacity Strengthening

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Instituto Baixada	https://institutobaixada.org/	Maranhão	Capacity Strengthening Resource Mobilization Community Engagement
Casa Fluminense	https://casafluminense.org.br/	Rio de Janeiro	Public Policies Community Engagement Resource Mobilization
Fundo Casa Socioambiental	https://casa.org.br/	São Paulo, National	Infrastructure Sustainability Human rights Environment Community Engagement

Annex 3. List of referrals

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Annex 4. List of organizations consulted

1. Casa Florescer
2. Em Movimento
3. Engajamundo
4. Foco Empreendedor
5. Fundação Alphaville
6. Fundação Demócrito Rocha
7. Fundação Raízen
8. Fundação Tide Setubal
9. GIFE
10. Instituto Clima e Sociedade (iCS)
11. Instituto Arapyaú
12. Instituto Baixada
13. Instituto humanize
14. Instituto Maria e João Aleixo
15. Lar Casa Bela
16. Passatempo Educativo
17. Phomenta
18. Rede de Filantropia para a Justiça Social
19. Tabôa
20. United Way Brasil





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