

# TRADITIONAL AND PERIPHERAL YOUTH ACCESSING CLIMATE FINANCE

Community Philanthropy and  
Socio-Environmental Justice in Practice  
Through the Experience of Casa Fund







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# INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW



# Saberes Program

Knowledge exists and is passed down across generations, shaped through lived experience, resilience, and deep connections to place. Sharing this knowledge is the central purpose of this publication.

The **Saberes Program** was created to value, document, and amplify knowledge produced by communities and individuals who have historically been excluded from formal processes of data production and decision-making.

From this perspective, this publication invites readers to explore locally driven solutions led by youth from urban peripheries and traditional communities, recognizing them as producers of knowledge, innovation, and social transformation.

The decision to focus on **Youth and Funding** stems from the need to understand how young people across Brazil access resources and transform financial support into tangible impacts within their territories. The research that underpins this publication draws on the experiences of youth-led organizations supported by the **Casa Socio-Environmental Fund**, whose community philanthropy approach is grounded in a core principle: ensuring that resources reach communities directly, strengthening local initiatives while respecting their autonomy.

Throughout this process, we witnessed the remarkable potential of diverse youth—Black youth, young

women, local leaders, Quilombola and Indigenous youth, and young people from urban peripheries—who, by gaining access to funding, expanded their capacity to take action, make decisions, and transform the realities of their communities. An analysis of projects supported between 2020 and 2025 demonstrates how access to funding, combined with meaningful listening, close accompaniment, and institutional capacity strengthening, contributes to more equitable and sustainable pathways for territorial development.

In this publication, we present a selection of these experiences, highlighting initiatives that bring together ancestral knowledge, technology, and community engagement to address climate, social, and environmental challenges. Among nearly 200 initiatives documented, we feature two projects led by young Black women: "**O Clima é de Quebrada**" (**The Climate Starts in the Neighborhood**), developed by Instituto Perifa Sustentável in Brasilândia, a neighborhood on the outskirts of São Paulo; and "**Elas Aquilombam: Ancestral Technologies and Climate COMMUNICATION**", implemented by **Projeto Perpetuar** in **Quilombo Oxalá de Jacunday**, in the municipality of Moju, in northeastern Pará.

We hope you enjoy this publication and that it contributes to a deeper understanding of the impact that diverse youth can generate when they have access to resources, recognition, and trust to lead solutions rooted in their own territories.



Photo: Researchers from Cohorts 1 and 2 of the Saberes Program

# Youth as Catalysts for Change:

**Cristina Orphêo**  
Executive Director, Casa  
Socio-Environmental Fund

## Knowledge, Territory, and Generational Renewal in Socio-Environmental Organizations

Over the past several decades, Brazil's socio-environmental agenda has been profoundly shaped by civil society organizations born from the struggle for rights, the defense of territories, and the search for alternatives to a development model that has historically produced social inequality and environmental degradation. Throughout this journey, one element has become increasingly central: the role of young people.

At the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund, this presence is not merely acknowledged—it is intentionally cultivated as part of an institutional commitment. Young people have long been a strategic priority, both in the composition of our team and in the selection of the initiatives we support, alongside other core priorities such as strengthening women's leadership and traditional communities. This reflects an important understanding: youth are not simply the next generation of organizations—they are leading innovation, driving knowledge production, and shaping new forms of collective action.

Since its founding in 2005, Casa Fund has focused on supporting grassroots organizations, community-based collectives, and social movements working directly within their territories. Throughout this journey, it has become clear that many of the most creative, mobilizing, and forward-looking initiatives are being led by young people. Across diverse contexts, they have advanced agendas centered on climate justice, community-based communication, anti-racist education, and the defense of the commons.

This leadership takes many forms. In Indigenous, Quilombola, rural, and urban peripheral territories, young people have strengthened frontline efforts to defend their lands and develop locally driven responses to the impacts of climate change. At the same time, they are reshaping the political language and communication strategies of social movements, expanding the reach of long-standing struggles through new digital tools, networks, and cultural practices.





This capacity for innovation does not emerge in isolation. It is cultivated through an ongoing dialogue with previous generations, who carry memories, histories of resistance, and knowledge accumulated over decades. It is through this exchange that one of the greatest strengths of socio-environmental organizations takes shape: the intergenerational sharing of knowledge.

**Within organizations, this exchange takes many forms. More experienced leaders pass on knowledge about organizational development, policy advocacy strategies, mentorship, and institution building. Young people, in turn, bring fresh perspectives, experiment with new forms of communication, and expand approaches to social mobilization. This dynamic is not about replacing one generation with another—it is about continuity, renewal, and reinvention.**

In traditional communities, this process is even more profound. Indigenous, Quilombola, riverine, and family farming youth navigate between different worlds. They learn from their elders the ancestral knowledge of land stewardship, biome conservation, and community organization, while also embracing contemporary tools to communicate these experiences and strengthen the defense of their territories. The result is a powerful combination of tradition and innovation.



Recognizing this potential, **Casa Fund** has sought not only to support youth-led initiatives but also to foster spaces where knowledge can be generated from these experiences. One initiative that reflects this strategy is encouraging young people to participate in research, documentation, and critical reflection on the work being carried out in their territories.

In this context, the participation of members of the **Casa Fund** team in the **Saberes Program**, an initiative of the **Comuá Network**, offers a meaningful example. The program seeks to value, document, and disseminate knowledge on issues that have historically been overlooked in formal data production and decision-making processes, recognizing young people from urban peripheries and traditional communities as producers of knowledge and drivers of social innovation.

This approach is rooted in a fundamental principle: territories are not merely places where problems occur—they are also places where solutions are created. The young people who live in these contexts hold knowledge that weaves together territorial experience, community-based practices, and visions for the future. Transforming these experiences into shared knowledge is an essential step toward building more equitable public policies and more effective strategies for addressing today's socio-environmental challenges.

Over the past several years, this perspective has become even more relevant in the face of the climate emergency. Across Brazil, young people have played a leading role in advancing climate education, community-based communication, grassroots mobilization, and policy advocacy initiatives. Many of these efforts emerge from urban peripheries and traditional territories, where the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change are felt most acutely.

Recognizing the leadership of these young people also requires rethinking how funding and institutional support are designed. Historically, much of the world's climate finance has failed to reach organizations led by youth or local communities directly. In this context, community philanthropy plays a strategic role by creating funding mechanisms that are more accessible, flexible, and responsive to territorial realities.

For **Casa Fund**, strengthening youth leadership is about far more than increasing the number of supported projects. It also means investing in capacity-building, institutional strengthening, and network development to ensure that these initiatives can thrive over the long term. Experience has shown that when young people have access to resources, trust, and opportunities to collaborate, their ability to generate meaningful impact in their territories grows significantly.

At the same time, it is essential to recognize that strengthening youth cannot be separated from the broader dimensions of socio-environmental justice. The young people leading these efforts are predominantly Black, Indigenous, Quilombola, and residents of urban peripheries and other historically marginalized territories. Their leadership is deeply intertwined with struggles for rights, recognition, and the equitable distribution of resources.

Supporting young people therefore means strengthening broader processes of social transformation. It means investing in leaders who are developing new forms of collective organization, expanding democratic participation, and defending territories that are essential to climate stability and biodiversity.

The future of socio-environmental organizations depends, to a large extent, on their ability to combine accumulated experience with generational renewal. The exchange between different generations not only ensures institutional continuity but also strengthens organizations' capacity to adapt in a rapidly changing world.



Today's young people active in organizations, social movements, and local territories are not merely inheritors of past struggles. They are leaders of new agendas, producers of knowledge, and architects of new pathways for addressing today's challenges.

Strengthening this leadership is therefore a strategic choice. It is also an investment in a future that is already taking shape—in territories, communities, and organizations that understand socio-environmental justice as something built through participation, diversity, and the continuous exchange of knowledge.

It is within this context that this publication was developed. It reflects **Casa Fund's** institutional commitment to recognizing young people not merely as beneficiaries of grantmaking, but as producers of strategic knowledge about their own territories. By encouraging young members of its staff and representatives of supported organizations to engage in research, documentation, and critical reflection on their lived experiences, **Casa Fund** reaffirms its commitment to a model of knowledge production rooted in practice, active listening, and the realities of local communities.

Developed as part of the **Saberes Program** of the **Comuá Network**, this publication embodies that commitment by transforming concrete experiences of grantmaking, community mobilization, and climate action into collective learning, while strengthening the broader conversation on climate finance and youth leadership.

The study that forms the foundation of this publication was conducted by **Regilon Matos**, a member of the **Casa Fund** team who, throughout his journey within the organization, has developed professionally through mentorship and institutional support, gradually establishing himself as a young leader in the fields of socio-environmental justice and territory-based knowledge production.

# Youth in Brazil:

## An Overview

Brazil is a country marked by profound social, racial, and territorial inequalities, where the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect young people living in urban peripheries, rural areas, and forest communities. According to the **Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)**, people between the ages of 15 and 29 account for approximately 23% of the country's population—more than 47 million individuals. This population continues to face the lasting effects of the post-pandemic period, during which approximately 10.9 million young people are neither studying nor employed, highlighting a situation of social vulnerability that is further intensified by climate and environmental crises.

Despite these challenges, young people in Brazil have played a central role in defending rights, protecting territories, and developing local responses to global challenges. During the 2022 presidential elections, youth participation was instrumental in the transition from a government that denied the urgency of the climate agenda to one more open to dialogue with civil society. Since then, young people have continued to advocate for effective public policies, participate in decision-making spaces—including UN climate and biodiversity conferences—and implement concrete solutions within their own territories.

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***“We are the generation that makes noise, but also demands change and makes our voices heard. Given the climate emergency we are living through, funding needs to reach young people much more quickly.”***

**Hanna Balieiro – Climate and Society Institute (ICS)**

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Yet this leadership stands in stark contrast to the historical exclusion of young people from public policies and funding mechanisms. The report *Where Are Youth in Federal Public Policies?*, published by **Engajamundo**, argues that the formal recognition of youth rights has not been sufficient to ensure their effective implementation. Although Brazil's **Youth Statute (Law No. 12,852/2013)** guarantees rights related to social participation, education, territory, sustainability, and the environment, these rights have yet to fully reach the diverse realities experienced by Brazilian youth.

The socio-environmental injustices that cut across the country affect traditional communities even more severely, including Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola communities, **forest dwellers**, artisanal fishing communities, and family farmers. These groups, whose livelihoods depend directly on healthy ecosystems, are among the primary stewards of Brazil's biomes. Yet they continue to bear the greatest burden of environmental racism and the lack of effective structural public policies.

Within this context, youth organizations working on the frontlines of climate justice face significant challenges. Operational overload, limited access to ongoing technical support, and barriers to technology undermine their capacity for strategic planning, communication, and policy advocacy. Geographic isolation and logistical constraints further hinder collaboration and the exchange of knowledge among young people from different territories.

Against this backdrop, it becomes increasingly urgent to understand how access to funding—particularly through **community philanthropy** and **socio-environmental justice** approaches—can strengthen youth leadership, expand the impact of locally led initiatives, and create fairer conditions for young people to continue protecting their territories while developing solutions to the climate crisis.

# Beyond Funding:

## The Invisible Barriers to Youth Climate Finance

An analysis of the proposals and experiences of youth organizations supported over the past several years reveals a range of structural and contextual challenges that directly affect the effectiveness, continuity, and autonomy of their work. These challenges do not occur in isolation; rather, they are deeply interconnected, highlighting the complexity of the ecosystem in which young people operate.

One of the first barriers identified concerns infrastructure and logistics, particularly in urban peripheries, rural areas, and hard-to-reach territories. Poor road conditions, recurring floods, and inadequate transportation systems hinder the movement of people, materials, and project teams, disrupting implementation timelines and requiring improvised solutions that increase operational costs. These constraints also limit organizations' ability to participate in training opportunities, convenings, and collaborative networks.

Logistical barriers are often compounded by a second challenge: community engagement. In territories shaped by a history of institutional neglect, mistrust, and unequal access to information, locally led initiatives—even those spearheaded by young people from the communities themselves—may encounter resistance. Furthermore, engaging specific groups, such as women, LGBTQIAPN+ youth, and traditional communities, requires culturally sensitive approaches and inclusive strategies that ensure participation is safe, meaningful, and sustained.



Even when they successfully mobilize their communities, many youth organizations continue to face the persistent challenge of accessing financial resources. Fragile organizational structures, the absence of permanent technical staff, and limited familiarity with the formal requirements of grant applications often make fundraising difficult. As a result, the continuity of their work is frequently jeopardized by the lack of funding for essential needs such as equipment, the maintenance of community spaces, staff compensation, and basic operational expenses, including food and transportation.

These challenges are further exacerbated by limited access to reliable connectivity and communication tools. In many territories, unstable or nonexistent internet and mobile phone services prevent organizations from participating in funding opportunities, hinder regular communication with funders, and restrict access to online learning and capacity-building opportunities. Weak institutional communication also reduces the public visibility of these initiatives, limiting their ability to build partnerships, influence public policy, and engage effectively in institutional decision-making spaces.



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## Structural barriers become even more complex as climate-related emergencies become more frequent.

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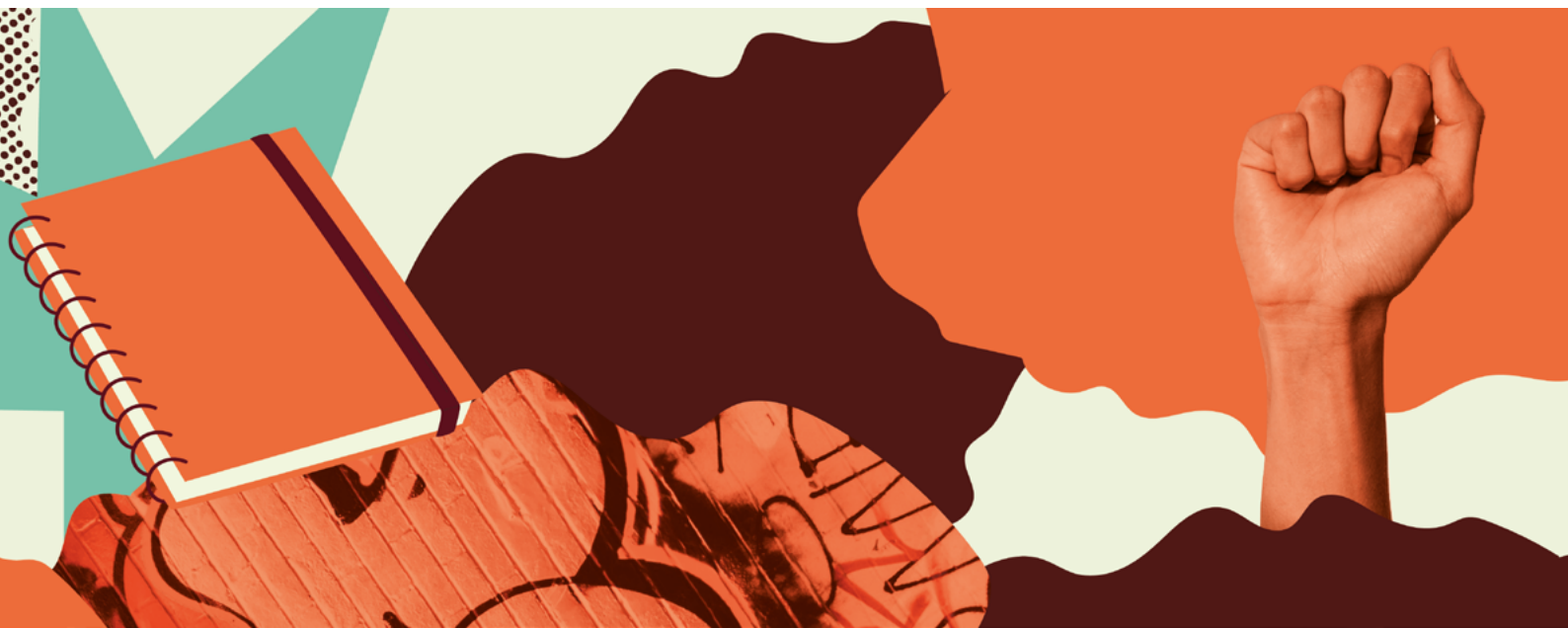
Intense rainfall, prolonged droughts, and other extreme weather events directly affect project implementation, forcing organizations to revise plans, cancel activities, or respond to emergencies—often without additional support. At the same time, violence and conflict remain constant threats to young people working to defend human rights and the environment, particularly in territories affected by land disputes, large-scale development projects, or illegal activities.

Underlying all of these challenges is the limited access to ongoing technical training and opportunities for institutional strengthening. Without capacity-building opportunities tailored to their realities, many organizations struggle to establish sound management practices, develop strong project proposals, plan for the long term, and secure additional funding.

This gap limits the autonomy of these initiatives and reinforces their dependence on short-term support, undermining their long-term sustainability.

In light of this reality, it is clear that supporting young people must go beyond simply transferring financial resources. It is essential to invest in integrated strategies that address structural barriers, strengthen networks of learning and solidarity, expand access to technology and training, and help protect community leaders.

Only through this broader approach will it be possible to achieve lasting, territory-based impact capable of addressing the structural inequalities that continue to shape access to climate finance.



# Community Philanthropy and Socio-Environmental Justice

Philanthropy takes many forms in Brazil and around the world, including family, corporate, and climate philanthropy. However, these models do not all engage with civil society and grassroots organizations in the same way.

Historically, much of Brazil's traditional philanthropic sector has not been structured to provide direct funding to civil society organizations as a primary strategy. As a result, its ability to respond to the specific needs of local communities—particularly those that have been historically marginalized—has often been limited. Highly competitive funding calls, complex technical requirements, and hierarchical relationships between funders and grantees frequently create barriers for initiatives led by young people from urban peripheries and traditional communities.

Within this model, support is typically provided through isolated, short-term grants, with limited

budget flexibility and little certainty regarding future funding. This approach constrains the institutional development of organizations and leaves them with fragile structures that are increasingly ill-equipped to address complex challenges such as climate emergencies and territorial conflicts.

In response to these limitations, **community philanthropy and socio-environmental justice philanthropy** have emerged as strategic alternatives. In Brazil, this field has become increasingly established as an approach that seeks to democratize access to funding, decentralize resources, and strengthen the capacities that already exist within local communities. Recent studies on community philanthropy in the country indicate that this approach helps shift power dynamics by supporting organizations working to defend rights and advance community development, while promoting grant-making practices that are more responsive to the realities and priorities of the communities they serve.

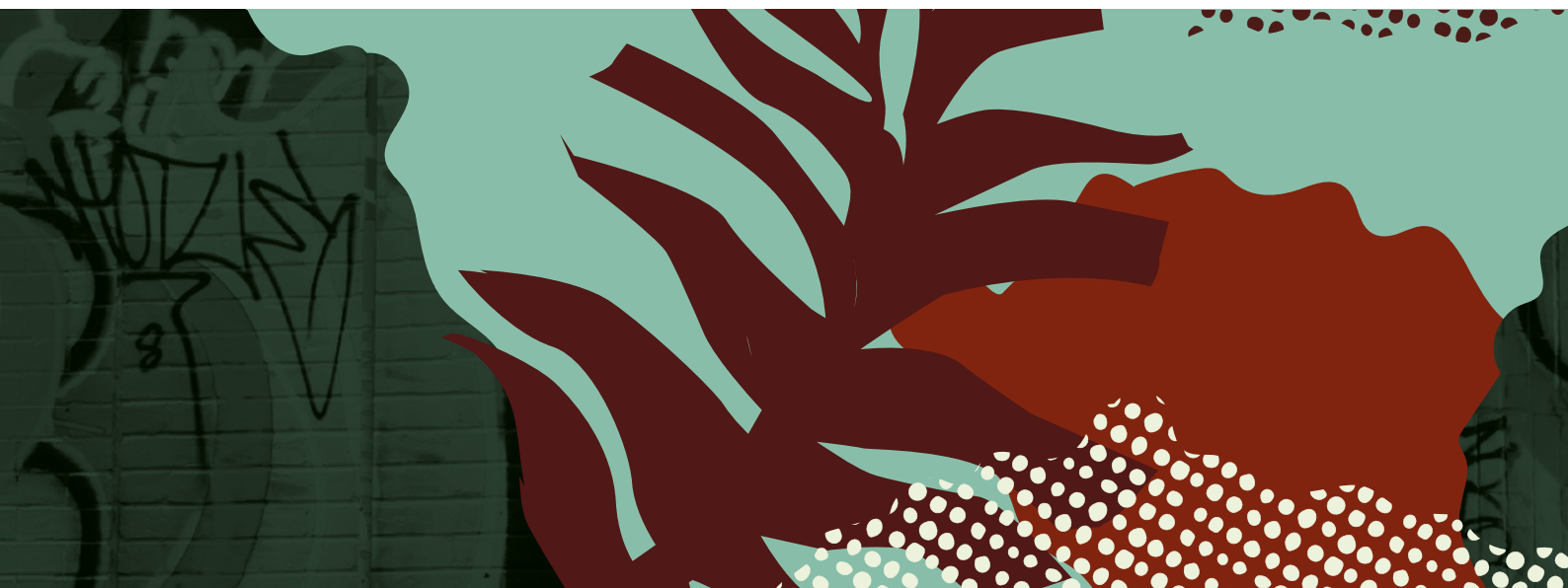
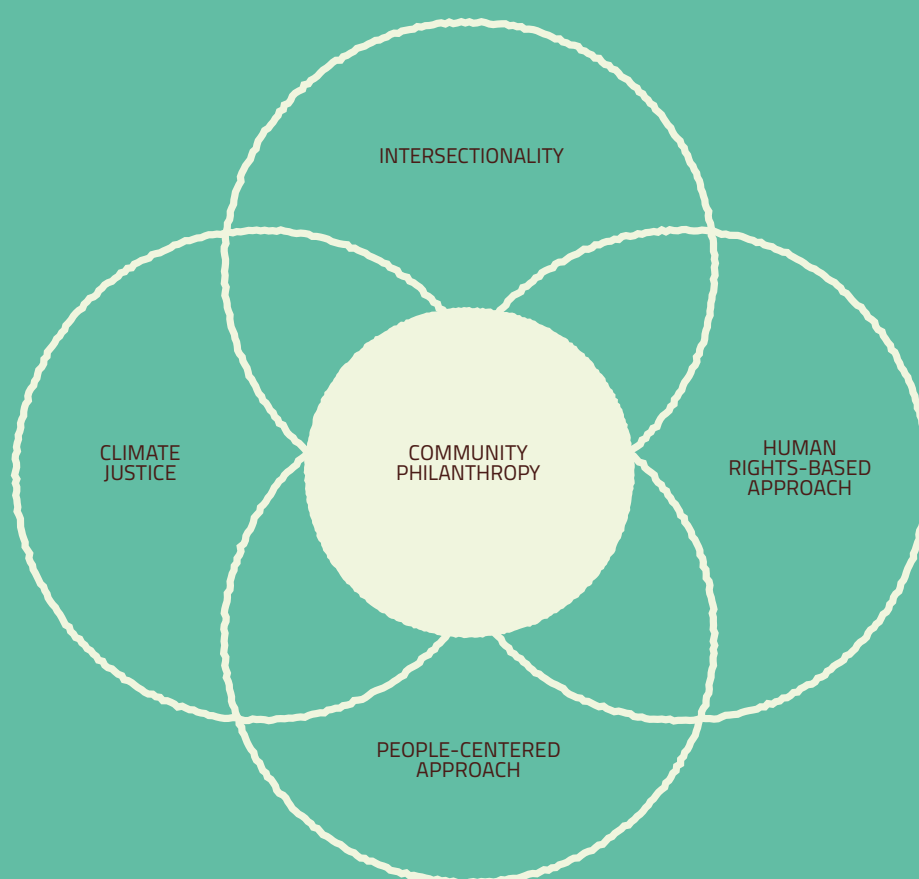


Figure 1. Key Concepts Framework



Source: Survey of member organizations, April–May 2024.

This perspective is grounded in a fundamental principle: our understanding of territory must move beyond narratives of scarcity and instead recognize the strengths and capacities that already exist within communities. Sustainable solutions emerge from the people who experience local challenges firsthand, and the redistribution of resources must be accompanied by trust, proximity, and long-term commitment.

Within this context, the **Comuá Network** has established itself as one of Brazil's leading examples of **community philanthropy** and **independent philanthropy** dedicated to advancing socio-environmental justice. Bringing together independent philanthropic funds, the network works to decentralize funding and strengthen local organizations across Brazil's diverse biomes and territories. Its approach is rooted in the understanding that philanthropy can play a decisive role in reducing inequalities and advancing climate justice by supporting groups that have historically been excluded from major funding flows.

The publication **Comuá for Climate: Financing Local Climate Solutions and the Philanthropy Landscape**, released in 2024, illustrates this movement. The assessment conducted among the network's members found that their work extends across the country, with a strong presence in multiple regions and significant engagement in implementing **Local Climate Solutions**. The study also shows that every member organization contributes to the climate agenda to some degree, although with varying levels of emphasis, demonstrating a shared commitment to addressing the climate crisis.

The approach adopted by Comuá Network members is **intersectional**, taking into account dimensions such as gender, race, territory, and generation when defining their funding priorities. More than **70%** of member organizations prioritize initiatives led by or benefiting women, Black communities, and young people. In addition, **81%** reported expanding their investments in climate action and climate justice, representing a total of approximately **R\$390 million** invested in this agenda.



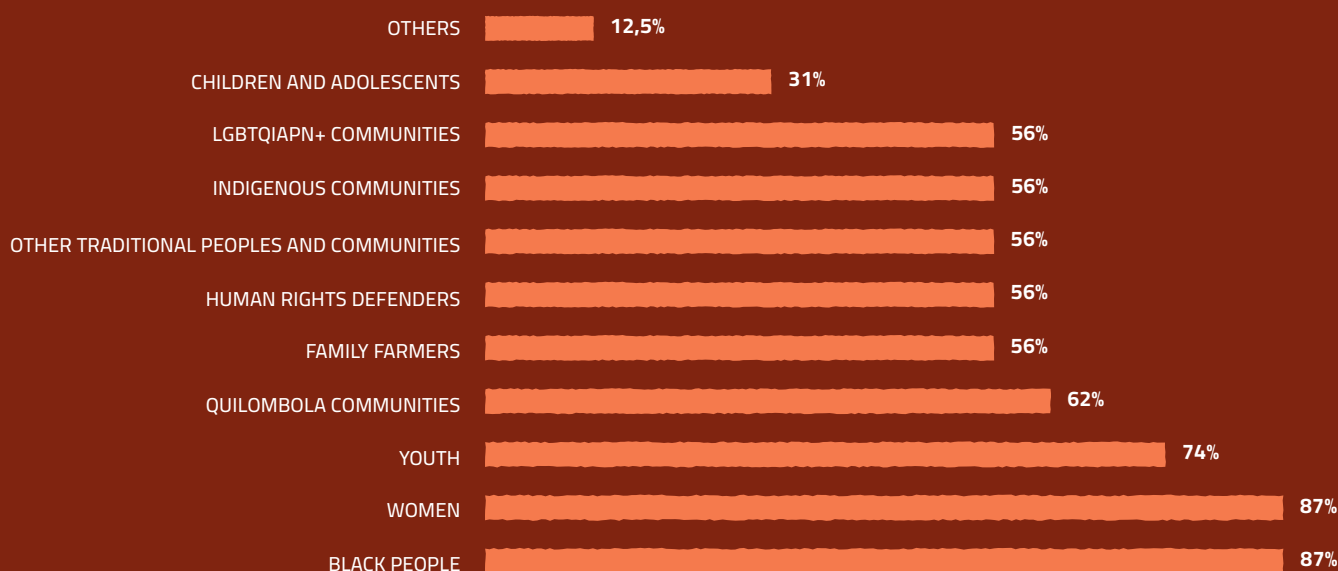
Half or more of the organizations within the network direct their funding toward Quilombola communities, Indigenous Peoples, and family farmers, recognizing that these groups are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Other constituencies—including LGBTQIAPN+ communities and local grassroots collectives—are also supported, reflecting the network's commitment to inclusive strategies and to advancing climate justice.

With regard specifically to youth, the publication reports that **74%** of the organizations supported by Comuá Network members between **2018 and 2022** worked with young people, while **62%** of the funds stated that

they prioritize youth-led organizations. These figures reinforce that community philanthropy and socio-environmental justice philanthropy recognize the central role of young people in developing climate solutions that are deeply rooted in their territories.

At the same time, the findings of the **Comuá for Climate Initiative** highlight the strategic role played by network members in producing knowledge, strengthening institutional capacities, and advancing policy advocacy on climate finance. Their work goes beyond simply providing financial support; it seeks to influence the broader philanthropic sector to rethink its grantmaking practices and expand direct access to funding for organizations working in local communities.

**Figure 2. Distribution of Target Audiences Across the Comuá Network's Climate Action Portfolio**





**Yet significant challenges remain.** Globally, climate finance directed toward Indigenous Peoples and local and traditional communities continues to fall far short of reflecting their essential role in environmental conservation and climate stability. Between **2020 and 2023**, the funding allocated to these groups was disproportionately low compared to their contribution to protecting forests and other critical ecosystems. Most climate finance continues to flow through multilateral institutions and large intermediary organizations, limiting communities' direct access to resources.

This reality underscores that the debate around climate finance is not merely technical—it is fundamentally political. The challenge is not only to increase the volume of available resources, but also to transform how those resources are distributed, who makes decisions about their allocation, and which organizations are considered eligible to receive funding.

It is within this context that the experience of the **Casa Socio-Environmental Fund** becomes particularly relevant. As a member of the **Comuá Network**, **Casa Fund** has spent the past two decades providing direct support to grassroots organizations through accessible grantmaking practices, continuous listening processes, and institutional strengthening initiatives. Its experience demonstrates, in practical terms, how community philanthropy can reduce long-standing barriers to accessing funding while expanding the leadership of young people from traditional communities and urban peripheries within the climate agenda.

The following chapters explore this experience through an analysis of the funding requests received by **Casa Fund** over the past five years. By examining the data, challenges, and lessons learned, we seek to better understand how climate finance can become more equitable, accessible, and responsive to the realities of the young people working on the frontlines of socio-environmental justice.



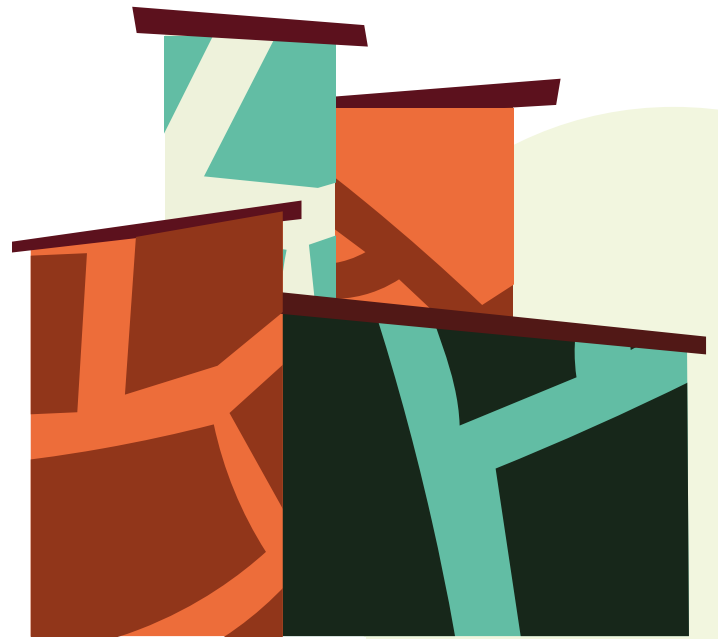
# Building More Inclusive Funding Architectures

In light of the structural barriers that limit young people's access to funding, it is essential to advance funding models that combine **socio-environmental justice**, intersectionality, and a commitment to **territory-based leadership**. The experience accumulated through community philanthropy, together with international initiatives promoting **trust-based philanthropy**, demonstrates that it is possible to build funding approaches that are more inclusive, accessible, and effective.

One of the first necessary shifts is to make access criteria more flexible. Many young people organize through informal collectives, autonomous networks, and community-based initiatives that do not have legal registration or well-established institutional structures. Nevertheless, they carry out deeply rooted work within their territories and generate meaningful impact. Recognizing these forms of organization requires reducing bureaucratic barriers, adapting the language used in funding calls, and providing continuous guidance throughout the application, selection, and grant management processes.

Another fundamental principle is the intentional decentralization of funding. The historical concentration of resources in major urban centers and well-established organizations has reinforced existing inequalities. Directing investments toward historically marginalized regions and biomes—such as the Amazon, the Cerrado, and Brazil's Semi-Arid region—broadens the diversity of voices shaping climate action while strengthening solutions developed by communities themselves.

This strategy challenges the concentration of resources that characterizes traditional philanthropy and recognizes that innovation also emerges from urban peripheries and rural territories.



Beyond decentralization, the experience of community foundations and philanthropic funds demonstrates that funding must become more flexible and rooted in trust.

International **trust-based philanthropy** models emphasize that simplifying application and reporting processes, reducing excessive administrative requirements, and fostering horizontal relationships between funders and grantees significantly increase the effectiveness of philanthropic support. In this approach, trust is no longer an abstract principle—it becomes a guiding methodology.

When funders recognize the decision-making capacity of the organizations they support, funding becomes a tool for institutional strengthening rather than simply financing isolated activities.

Another key lesson is that financial resources alone are not enough. Effective support should combine grant funding with technical capacity building, public visibility, and opportunities for network building. Capacity-strengthening programs tailored to the



realities of different territories and offered through accessible formats help young leaders develop skills in financial management, project design, institutional development, and strategic communications. This integrated approach strengthens organizational autonomy and reduces dependence on sporadic, short-term funding opportunities.

Youth participation in the design of funding mechanisms is also essential. Recent experiences with active listening and participatory processes demonstrate that involving young people in defining funding priorities, eligibility criteria, and grant-making formats increases both the legitimacy and the effectiveness of funding initiatives. When young people move beyond being merely beneficiaries and become active contributors to strategic decision-making, funding becomes more responsive to local realities and better equipped to address territorial priorities.

The establishment of **emergency funds** is another important strategic instrument. In contexts of environmental disasters, threats against human rights defenders, or socio-economic crises, the speed with which resources can be disbursed is often critical. Simplified funding processes, decentralized decision-making, and trust-based relationships enable rapid responses without compromising transparency or accountability.

These practices point toward a funding model that goes beyond isolated, short-term support. It is an approach that combines trust, flexibility, institutional strengthening, and the active participation of young people. This model recognizes that supporting organizations means more than simply transferring financial resources—it means creating the conditions for long-term continuity, policy engagement, and the sustainability of locally led initiatives.

Climate and social justice require that young people be recognized as strategic partners in shaping the present. They are not merely the promise of the future; they are already developing concrete solutions to today's most pressing challenges.

In the following chapters, we examine how these principles have been put into practice in the Brazilian context through an analysis of the proposals submitted to the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund over the past five years and the evidence generated through this experience.



# Grantmaking Methodology and Institutional Strengthening

Before examining the grant call designed specifically for young people, it is important to understand the core methodology that underpins the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund's grantmaking model.

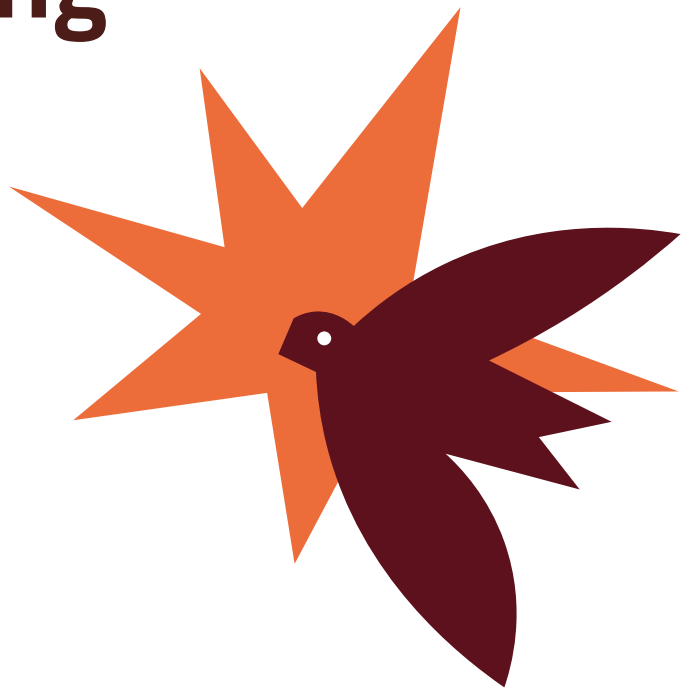
Founded in 2005, Casa Fund is a Brazilian organization dedicated to advancing environmental conservation, sustainability, and socio-environmental justice by providing direct support to civil society initiatives. Over the past two decades, it has established itself as a leading force in community philanthropy in South America, investing more than **R\$160 million** in over **5,000 projects** across **10 countries** in the region. Its primary focus is strengthening grassroots organizations, community-based collectives, and social movements working on the frontlines of territorial defense.

Casa Fund's institutional strategy is built on a fundamental principle: resources should reach the organizations confronting socio-environmental challenges in their own territories **directly and with minimal bureaucracy**. This means designing accessible grant calls, using clear language, adapting eligibility criteria to the realities of grassroots organizations, and providing technical guidance throughout the application process.

The Fund's support model extends beyond financial assistance. It combines two complementary pillars:

1. **Direct grant funding for project implementation.**
2. **Institutional strengthening through technical capacity building and ongoing support.**

This methodology recognizes that many supported organizations face structural challenges related to legal registration, administrative management, communications, and strategic planning.



For this reason, Casa Fund provides structured learning opportunities covering topics such as financial management, institutional compliance, organizational governance, reporting, and strategic communications.

Support does not end with financial reporting. Instead, it is guided by **active listening**, continuous dialogue, and the cultivation of trust. This approach positions funding as a tool for institutional strengthening rather than simply a means of financing isolated activities.

Between **2020 and 2025**, this methodology proved particularly valuable in supporting youth-led initiatives. Although Casa Fund's grant calls were not exclusively targeted at young people, initiatives led by individuals between **18 and 29 years of age** accounted for **30%** of all projects supported during this period—a remarkable figure when compared with the global landscape of climate philanthropy.



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## A study conducted by the Youth Climate Justice Fund in partnership with the ClimateWorks Foundation found that only 0.96% of global climate finance reaches youth-led organizations.

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During the same period covered by the international study, 2022 to 2024,

**Casa Fund provided R\$ 6,594,567.08 in direct funding to youth-led initiatives.**

Converted to U.S. dollars, this amounts to approximately US\$1.3 million, representing roughly:

**1.5% of the total global funding identified by the Youth Climate Justice Fund and the ClimateWorks Foundation**

which estimated that major philanthropic foundations mobilized US\$85.9 million in support of youth-led climate action. This achievement becomes even more significant considering that the global figure reflects the combined efforts of dozens of major philanthropic institutions, while Casa Fund's contribution comes from a single community philanthropy fund focused on the Global South. This comparison highlights the relative impact of the Fund's investment: despite operating on a much smaller scale, Casa Fund has made a meaningful

contribution to expanding direct access to funding for youth-led organizations, particularly in historically underfunded territories.

This contrast demonstrates that democratizing access to funding does not happen by chance. It requires clear institutional choices, a coherent grantmaking methodology, and a strong political commitment to the equitable redistribution of resources.

In recent years, Casa Fund has also expanded its investments in the institutional strengthening of youth-led organizations, with a focus on building capacities in organizational management, communications, and policy advocacy. By recognizing the barriers faced by young people living in vulnerable territories, the Fund reaffirms its commitment to a philanthropic approach that challenges historical inequalities and invests in solutions rooted in local communities.

It is through this well-established methodology that the youth-focused grant call presented in the following chapters should be understood. Rather than an isolated initiative, it represents the continued evolution of an institutional model that Casa Fund has been refining over the past two decades.





# From Listening to Action: Building the Youth Grant Call



## Listening

November 2023 –  
COP28, Dubai



## Grant Call

April 2024



## Selection

May–June  
2024



## Implementation

October 2024 –  
October 2025



## Institutional Strengthening

October 2024 –  
October 2025



## Completion

Late 2025

The principles outlined in the previous chapter are not derived solely from theoretical frameworks or technical recommendations. They emerge from concrete experiences of listening, dialogue, and collaboration with young people working on the frontlines of socio-environmental struggles.

At the heart of this process lies an unavoidable issue: **environmental racism**. Climate change does not affect all territories equally. Urban peripheral communities, Quilombola communities, Indigenous Peoples, and other traditional communities—who have historically contributed the least to the climate crisis—are among those most severely affected by its impacts. They are also the communities that have safeguarded ecosystems essential to environmental balance for generations.

This raises a fundamental question: **Are these bodies of knowledge being considered when decisions are made about the future of these territories?**

The **Conference of the Parties (COP)** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the world's leading forum for climate negotiations. Although youth participation in these meetings has grown significantly, inequalities in representation and the distance between civil society and decision-making spaces remain persistent challenges.

This reality became particularly evident during the **28th Conference of the Parties (COP28)**, held in Dubai. On the conference's thematic day dedicated to youth, discussions at the Brazilian Pavilion were limited. In response, **Casa Fund** convened a listening session with Brazilian young people attending the conference.

On **November 8, 2023**, approximately **30 young participants**, representing **more than 35 movements and organizations**, gathered for a dialogue circle dedicated to focused exclusively on climate finance. The objective was straightforward: to understand why funding fails to reach those working on the frontlines.

FUNDO CASA CONVIDA  
PARA

# CONVERSA COM A JUVENTUDE

DIA 8  
ÀS 17H30  
PAVILHÃO DO BRASIL

VAMOS FALAR DE FINANCIAMENTO CLIMÁTICO



The discussion was guided by three key questions:

- What are the main barriers preventing climate finance from reaching youth-led organizations?
- What needs to change in the design of grant calls?
- What criteria should be considered in a funding opportunity specifically designed for young people?

The listening session revealed a consistent pattern: **climate funding rarely reaches young people directly.** Bureaucratic barriers, funding requirements disconnected from territorial realities, and the geographic concentration of resources all limit access and deepen existing inequalities.

The participants identified three primary barriers:

- **Bureaucracy as a barrier to entry, particularly for informal collectives that lack legal registration**
- **Insufficient funding and inflexible funding models that fail to support institutional strengthening.**
- **Geographic concentration of investments, with funding heavily concentrated in Brazil's South and Southeast regions, while biomes such as the Cerrado and the Pantanal remain largely overlooked.**

These findings closely align with the diagnosis presented in the previous chapters. The key difference, however, lies in the methodology. Here, the starting point was not an external assessment, **but the direct voices of those experiencing these challenges firsthand.**





Building on the listening process conducted during COP28 in November 2023, Casa Fund designed and launched its first grant call dedicated exclusively to young people in April 2024. The initiative was shaped directly by the priorities identified by youth leaders, particularly regarding the barriers to accessing climate finance and the need to strengthen grassroots organizations within their own territories

In response, the grant call allocated R\$1.75 million in direct funding to 35 youth-led socio-environmental organizations and movements across Brazil. The call was structured around four strategic pillars: Institutional strengthening, advocacy and network building, community-based communications, environmental education

These priorities reflect the key areas identified by young people as essential for expanding their leadership in confronting environmental racism and advancing just climate solutions.

The initiative therefore stands not only as a funding mechanism, but as the outcome of a participatory process that connects listening, strategy, and territorial action.

Another defining feature of the grant call was the project selection process itself, which included a review committee composed of young people. Involving youth at this strategic stage reinforces the understanding that they should not be viewed solely as beneficiaries, but also as active



## CHAMADA DE PROJETOS

# Fortalecendo juventudes no enfrentamento ao racismo ambiental

## INSCRIÇÕES ATÉ XX/XX

Fortalecimento de coletivos de comunicação, apoio institucionais, trabalho em rede + outras temáticas.

Área de abrangência:  
Nacional

decision-makers shaping the future of climate finance. By incorporating diverse territorial perspectives and By bringing together diverse territorial perspectives and practical, lived experience, the review committee contributed to an evaluation process that was more responsive to local realities and the unique dynamics of grassroots initiatives.

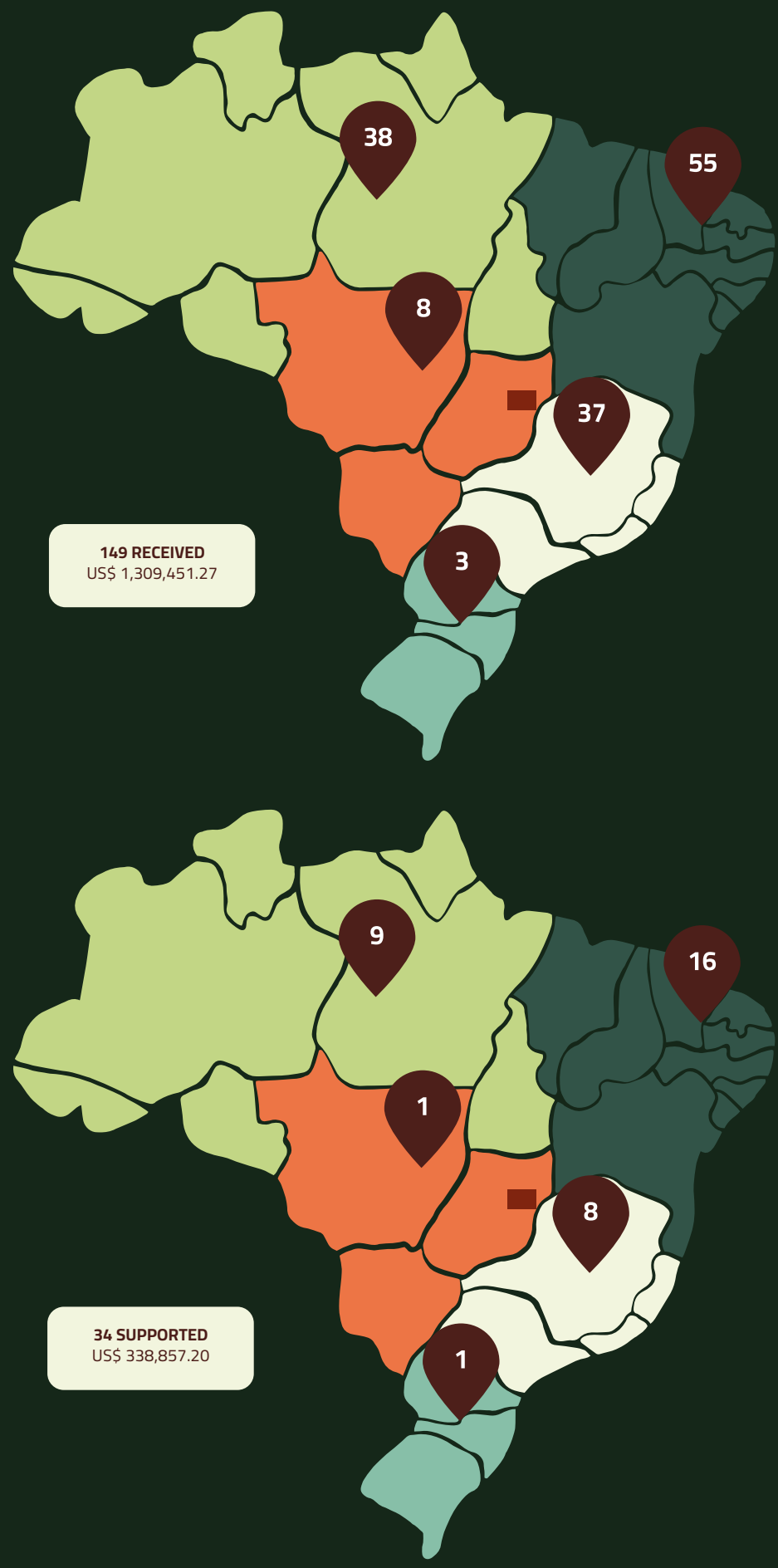
This methodological choice reinforces Casa Fund's commitment to participatory philanthropy, recognizing young people not merely as beneficiaries, but as partners in shaping funding criteria, setting priorities, and designing pathways for support.

| ORGANIZATION NAME                                                                                     | PROJECT TITLE                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SANKOFA                                                                                               | Weaving Seeds – 1st Training Circle                                                                                                           |
| Coletivo de Comunicadores da Rede dos Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais                                | Sowing Roots and Harvesting Fruits: Strengthening the Collective of Young Communicators of the Network of Traditional Peoples and Communities |
| Coalizão O Clima é de Mudança                                                                         | Rio Is Not Disney: It's Time for a Climate Adaptation Plan                                                                                    |
| Muxirum Jovem                                                                                         | Muxirum Jovem                                                                                                                                 |
| Fórum de Juventudes do Cabo (FOJUCA)                                                                  | Youth United for a Better Cabo: Building Climate Justice                                                                                      |
| Associação de Estudos Socioambientais e Comunicação Raízes do Baixo Amazonas                          | Young Sowers of Territorial Resistance                                                                                                        |
| Coletivo Varadouro                                                                                    | Roots of Resistance: Young Forest Dwellers in Action                                                                                          |
| Mãos Solidárias/RN                                                                                    | Popular Communication for Transformation                                                                                                      |
| Juventude Terrazul                                                                                    | Hope for a Better World: Youth from Rio's Suburban Communities Combating Structural Racism                                                    |
| Coletivo Maranhense da Rede Brasileira de Jovens pela Biodiversidade                                  | Strengthening the Capacities of Youth from the Amazon and Cerrado Toward CBD COP16                                                            |
| Coletivo Regional da Juventude do Movimento dos Pequenos e Pequenas Agricultoras do Estado de Sergipe | Young Guardians of the Atlantic Forest                                                                                                        |
| Coletivo Encrespades                                                                                  | Untangling the Climate: Environmental Education for Children and Adolescents on Bororé Island                                                 |
| Instituto Águas Resilientes                                                                           | Young Water Ambassadors                                                                                                                       |
| Juventude do Movimento dos Pescadores e Pescadoras Artesanais em Pernambuco (MPP)                     | Fishing Communities Youth: From the Coast to the Sertão, Promoting Communication on Climate Impacts and Environmental Racism                  |
| UPIITTA                                                                                               | Revolutionary Youth in the Tupé Sustainable Development Reserve                                                                               |
| Coletivo Jovem de Meio Ambiente do Recife                                                             | Youth Climate Circles: A Perspective on Environmental Racism in the Recife Metropolitan Region                                                |
| Central de SLAM – Coletivo de Produção Independente e Campeonato de Poesia Estadual do Acre           | Seeds in Verse: Poetry for Climate Justice                                                                                                    |

| ORGANIZATION NAME                                                                                     | PROJECT TITLE                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Associação Quilombola de Produtores Agroecológico do Angelim II                                       | Young Quilombolas in Action Against Environmental Racism                                                                                                                                   |
| Projeto Iretí                                                                                         | Living Youth: Social Participation in Advancing Solutions to Environmental Racism and Climate Change                                                                                       |
| Na Cuaia                                                                                              | Training Program for a Collective of Popular Communicators from the Peripheries of Belém: The Importance of Public Participation in Combating Environmental Racism                         |
| Rede de Jovens da Reserva da Biosfera da Mata Atlântica                                               | Biosphere Guardians Project: Promoting Environmental Awareness and Education to Combat Environmental Racism in Public Schools and the Territories of the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve |
| Associação Cultural e Agrícola dos Jovens Ambientalistas da Paraíba                                   | Transforming Realities: Youth of Agreste and Curimataú, Paraíba, Caring for Biodiversity                                                                                                   |
| Associação Tururukari-Uka dos Índios Kambeba                                                          | Usuraseta: A Network for Communication, Leadership, and the Autonomy of Indigenous Youth in Amazonas                                                                                       |
| Rede Jovem da Reserva da Biosfera da Caatinga (Programa MaB/UNESCO)                                   | Coopera Flora Azul                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Coletivo de Mídia Independente e Popular Sargento Perifa                                              | LAB PERIFA                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Movimento da Juventude Indígena de Rondônia, Sul do Amazonas e Noroeste do Mato Grosso                | Strengthening Indigenous Youth from Rondônia, Southern Amazonas, and Northwestern Mato Grosso in the Fight Against Climate Emergencies                                                     |
| Associação de Jovens Araucária (AJA)                                                                  | 3rd State Youth Camp for Rural and Urban Youth                                                                                                                                             |
| Juventude Indígena Conectada (JIC)                                                                    | Indigenous Peoples of Ceará: Communicating to Live, Resisting to Exist                                                                                                                     |
| Favela Jovem                                                                                          | Sowing Visions                                                                                                                                                                             |
| CPP Juventude MG                                                                                      | Exchange Among Youth from Fishing Communities: Communicating Their Perceptions of Climate Change and Environmental Racism Within Their Collectives and Traditional Spaces                  |
| Articulação Jovem Anacé                                                                               | KAETEMÃ: Strategies to Confront Environmental Racism in the Tabá dos Anacé Indigenous Territory                                                                                            |
| Coletivo Regional da Juventude do Movimento dos Pequenos e Pequenas Agricultoras do Estado de Sergipe | Young Guardians of the Atlantic Forest                                                                                                                                                     |
| Coletivo Utopia Negra Amapaense                                                                       | IBEJIS: Quilombola Youth Connecting Community Knowledge in the Fight Against Environmental Racism                                                                                          |
| Rede Minha Jampa                                                                                      | Municipal Climate Observatory                                                                                                                                                              |
| Cicloglog                                                                                             | Favela Radio Environmental Cycle                                                                                                                                                           |
| Rede de Jovens da Reserva da Biosfera da Mata Atlântica                                               | Training Program for a Collective of Popular Communicators from the Peripheries of Belém: The Importance of Public Participation in Combating Environmental Racism                         |
| Movimenta Caxias                                                                                      | Peripheries in Action: Climate Education for Territorial Advocacy                                                                                                                          |



Figure 3: Funding Applications Received and Grants Awarded by the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund for Youth-Led Organizations (2020–2025)



A regional analysis of the submitted and funded proposals highlights the nationwide reach of the grant call while revealing important patterns in young people's access to climate finance. In total, **149 proposals** were submitted, of which **35 received funding**, reflecting both strong demand and significant competition among initiatives from diverse territories across Brazil.

The **Northeast** accounted for the largest number of submissions, with **55 proposals**, 16 of which were funded (29.1%). This demonstrates the strong mobilization of youth-led organizations responding to the region's socio-environmental challenges. The **North** followed with **38 proposals**, including **9 funded projects (23.7%)**, reaffirming the leadership of Amazonian territories and traditional communities in advancing climate justice.

The **Central-West** and **Southeast** recorded similar levels of participation, each submitting **37 proposals**, with **8 projects funded** in each region (21.6%). In the Central-West, many initiatives were rooted in territories of significant socio-environmental importance, while participation in the Southeast was concentrated primarily in the states of **Minas Gerais** and **São Paulo**. The **South** recorded the lowest number of submissions, with **3 proposals** and **1 funded project (33.3%)**, highlighting regional differences in both access to and engagement with the grant opportunity.

Overall, these results demonstrate that the grant call reached organizations across all regions of Brazil and engaged a diverse range of young people from urban peripheries and traditional communities. At the same time, they underscore the substantial demand for **direct, accessible climate finance** in territories that have historically been underserved.



**Figure 04 and 05: Profile of Organizations and Projects Submitted Through the Grant Call**

#### LEGAL STATUS OF ORGANIZATIONS

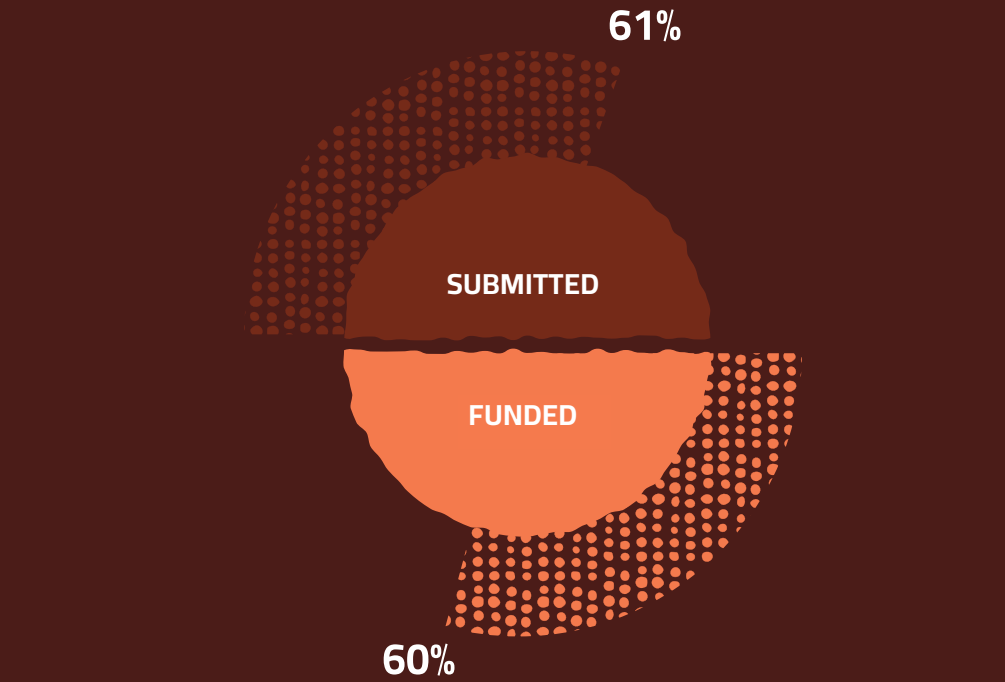
##### SUBMITTED PROJECTS



##### FUNDED PROJECTS



LOCAL OR TERRITORY-BASED ACTION



ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP

SUBMITTED PROJECTS



ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP

FUNDED PROJECTS



# Capacity Strengthening and Collective Learning

Beyond financial support, **capacity strengthening** has been one of the most consistent pillars of the **Casa Socio-Environmental Fund's** work. This commitment is reflected in an ongoing learning program designed to enhance the technical, institutional, and strategic capacities of supported organizations, with a focus on autonomy, long-term sustainability, and effective resource management.

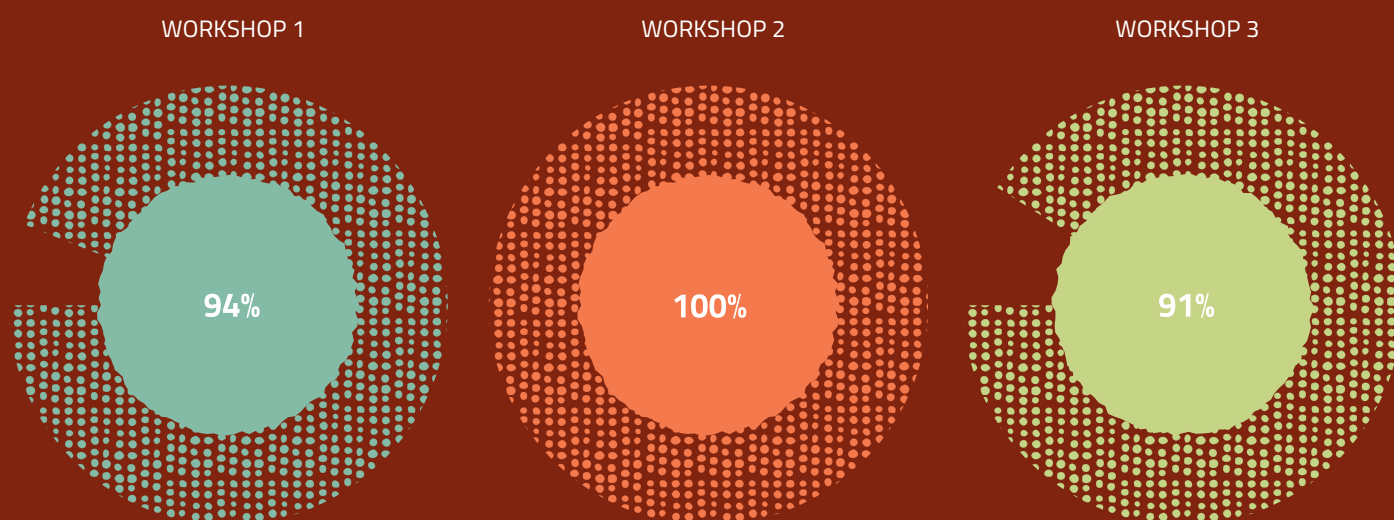
Since **2020**, driven by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this program has been delivered primarily through virtual formats. This shift significantly expanded participation, allowing workshop content to reach additional leaders and organizations across different territories, fostering knowledge exchange and multiplying learning throughout local networks.

The learning journey begins with a **Welcome Session** that goes well beyond institutional introductions. It serves as a space for projects to connect with one another while sharing essential guidance on grant management, implementation timelines, financial reporting, and documentation requirements. Presenting key resources—such as the **Grantee Handbook**, the **Code of Conduct**, and reporting templates—establishes a shared foundation of organization, transparency, and accountability from the very beginning of project implementation.





**Figure 6. Participation in the Capacity Strengthening Workshops**



The learning journey then progresses to topics that are central to strengthening participating organizations. One of the most highly valued components is the **financial management** module, delivered in partnership with specialized organizations. This session covers practical aspects such as budget planning, payment management, procurement of services, and document organization, providing participants with accessible tools to ensure sound grant management and compliance with funder requirements. These skills also enable organizations to pursue additional funding opportunities in the future.

Institutional strengthening continues with a workshop dedicated to the **administrative and legal development** of organizations. Participants explore strategies for updating bylaws, obtaining legal certifications, drafting contracts, and strengthening governance and transparency practices. This content is particularly valuable for groups undergoing formalization or seeking to access new funding opportunities, demonstrating how institutional capacity is directly linked to expanding organizational opportunities.

More than a series of workshops, the **Capacity Strengthening Program** accompanies organizations throughout the implementation of their projects, creating the conditions for young leaders and their organizations to build greater confidence in organizational management, strengthen their strategies for action, and deepen their presence within their territories. In this way, funding becomes more than a financial transfer—it serves as a catalyst for both institutional development and long-term civic and political engagement.



# Where Funding Reaches, Change Happens

Beyond the design of the grant call and the institutional strengthening process, the impact of the support becomes evident in the journeys of the organizations selected through the youth grant call. These experiences demonstrate how access to funding—when combined with active listening, capacity building, and networked collaboration—can generate tangible transformations within communities.

The stories that follow highlight some of the results achieved by these projects, illustrating how funding, when designed around the realities and priorities of young people, is transformed into action, mobilization, and advocacy.

## Coopera Flora Azul — Curaçá (BA)

The **Coopera Flora Azul** project expanded its impact well beyond the activities originally envisioned. In partnership with the **Municipality of Curaçá** and the **Municipal Department of Education**, the initiative became integrated into the local public school system, incorporating the biodiversity of the Caatinga into educational curricula and strengthening environmental awareness among students and educators.

Its partnership with **Blue Sky Caatinga** fostered new environmental conservation and community education initiatives, while participation in UNESCO Brazil's and UNESCO Paris's **Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme** led to the production of an institutional video about the **Caatinga Biosphere Reserve**. The video was widely shared on social media and was also broadcast on local television.

More than successfully implementing a project, the collective has established itself as a regional reference in environmental education and the promotion of the Caatinga biome.

### Coletivo Jovem — Recife, Pernambuco

During the workshops held in **Recife**, many participants shared that they had never before taken part in discussions about the relationship between environmental impacts and racism in their communities.

These conversations led the group to identify the lack of green spaces surrounding their school, inspiring them to collectively propose the creation of a **community garden**. The initiative mobilized students, teachers, families, and local community leaders.

What began as a process of critical reflection evolved into concrete action. The project strengthened environmental awareness, expanded dialogue on social justice, and established a network of young environmental leaders within the community.

### Ciclolog — São Paulo, São Paulo

In the eastern zone of **São Paulo**, the grant enabled the expansion of **Ciclo Ambiental Rádio Favela**, strengthening community-based communications while creating income-generating opportunities for women from the city's urban peripheries who were involved in the project.

The initiative disseminated information on the climate crisis and environmental racism, built connections with collectives from other urban peripheries, and significantly increased its national visibility. As an outcome of the capacity-strengthening process, the group developed a **board game on environmental racism**, an educational tool that has since been used in communities across different territories.

The visibility gained through the project also enabled members of the collective to participate in **COP30** in **Belém**, expanding the group's policy advocacy and influence within national and international climate discussions.



# A Structural Analysis of Funding Demand (2020–2025)

Between **2020 and 2025**, the **Casa Socio-Environmental Fund** received proposals from a wide range of regions, biomes, and territorial contexts across Brazil. Together, these submissions reflect the vitality of the country's socio-environmental movement and the growing leadership of young people, women, Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola communities, and grassroots collectives from urban peripheries in developing locally driven solutions.

The period analyzed reveals important trends in the evolution of funding demand, the geographic distribution of projects, the profile of applicant organizations, and funding patterns. More than a collection of statistics, these data provide valuable insights into how climate finance has been distributed and highlight the challenges that remain in making it more accessible, equitable, and decentralized.

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**The following sections present a structured analysis of these indicators, organized around the scale of demand, territorial distribution, the profile of youth-led initiatives, and the key challenges organizations continue to face in accessing climate finance.**

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# The Scale of Demand and the Reach of Support

**Table 1. Funding Applications Received and Grants Awarded by the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund for Youth-Led Organizations (2020–2025)**

| YEAR         | FUNDING REQUESTED (USD)  | AMOUNT AWARDED (USD)     | % FUNDED PER YEAR |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 2020         | US\$ 476,851.60          | US\$ 159,083.25          | 33%               |
| 2021         | US\$ 369,253.05          | US\$ 189,139.71          | 51%               |
| 2022         | US\$ 306,303.08          | US\$ 158,272.57          | 52%               |
| 2023         | US\$ 767,807.02          | US\$ 295,506.06          | 38%               |
| 2024         | US\$ 2,039,006.81        | US\$ 873,307.22          | 43%               |
| 2025         | US\$ 2,904,054.28        | US\$ 414,568.42          | 14%               |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>US\$ 6,863,275.83</b> | <b>US\$ 2,089,877.33</b> | <b>30%</b>        |

The data covering the **2020–2025** period reveal significant changes in both the volume of proposals submitted to **Casa Fund** and the organization's funding capacity each year. Over these six years, **664 project proposals** were received, of which **213 were funded**, highlighting both the vitality of territorial mobilization and the structural limitations of the funding available.

Between **2020 and 2022**, the data show a period of relative stability. The number of proposals submitted ranged from **68 to 47**, while the number of funded initiatives varied between **28 and 21**. Annual funding requests ranged from **R\$1.5 million to R\$2.4 million**, with the highest funding rate recorded in **2022**, when **52%** of the requested funding was awarded.

Beginning in **2023**, however, a clear shift emerged. The number of proposals increased rapidly, culminating in **2024**, which marked the highest level recorded during the period analyzed: **215 proposals submitted** and **86 projects funded**. This surge was directly linked to the **Youth Grant Call**, which expanded territorial mobilization and attracted new organizations to the application process. The substantial increase in demand demonstrates both the organizational strength of young people and their growing interest in accessing funding to address socio-environmental injustices within their communities.



Figure 7. Projects Submitted and Funded (2020–2025)

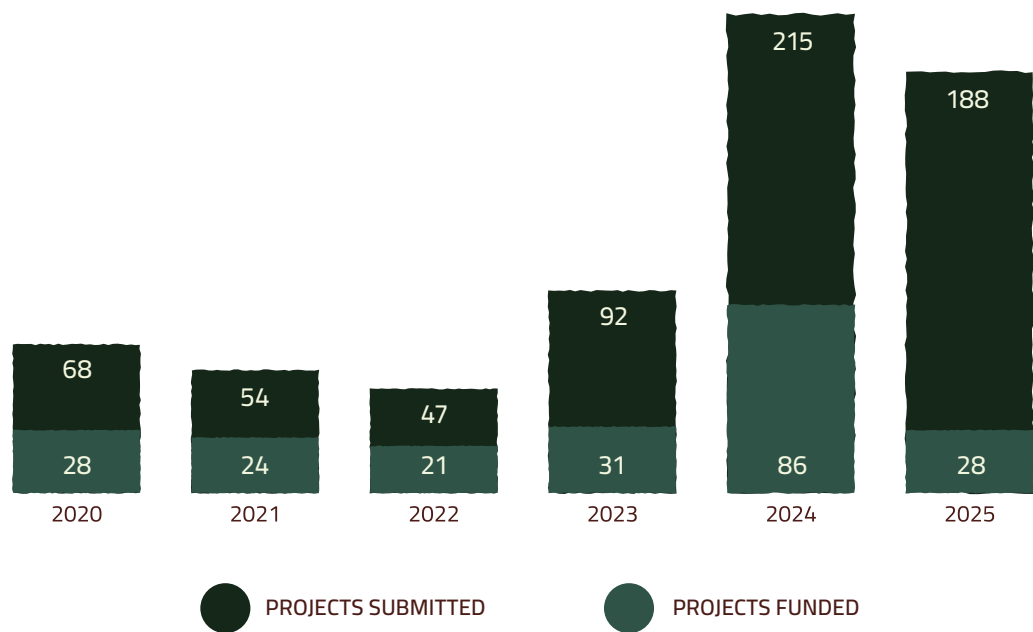
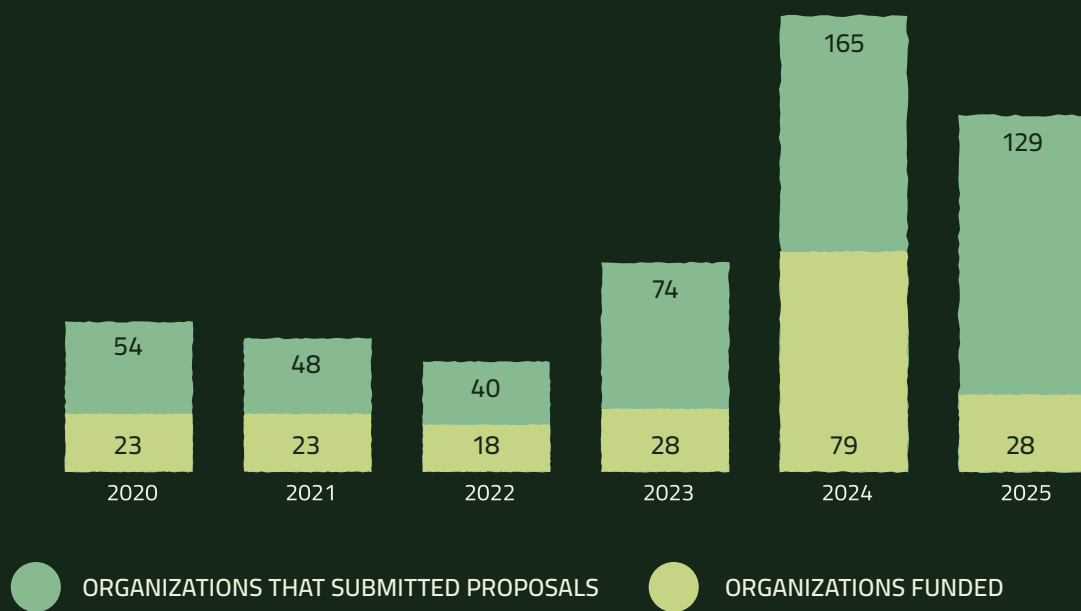


Figure 8. Organizations Applying and Organizations Funded (2020–2025)



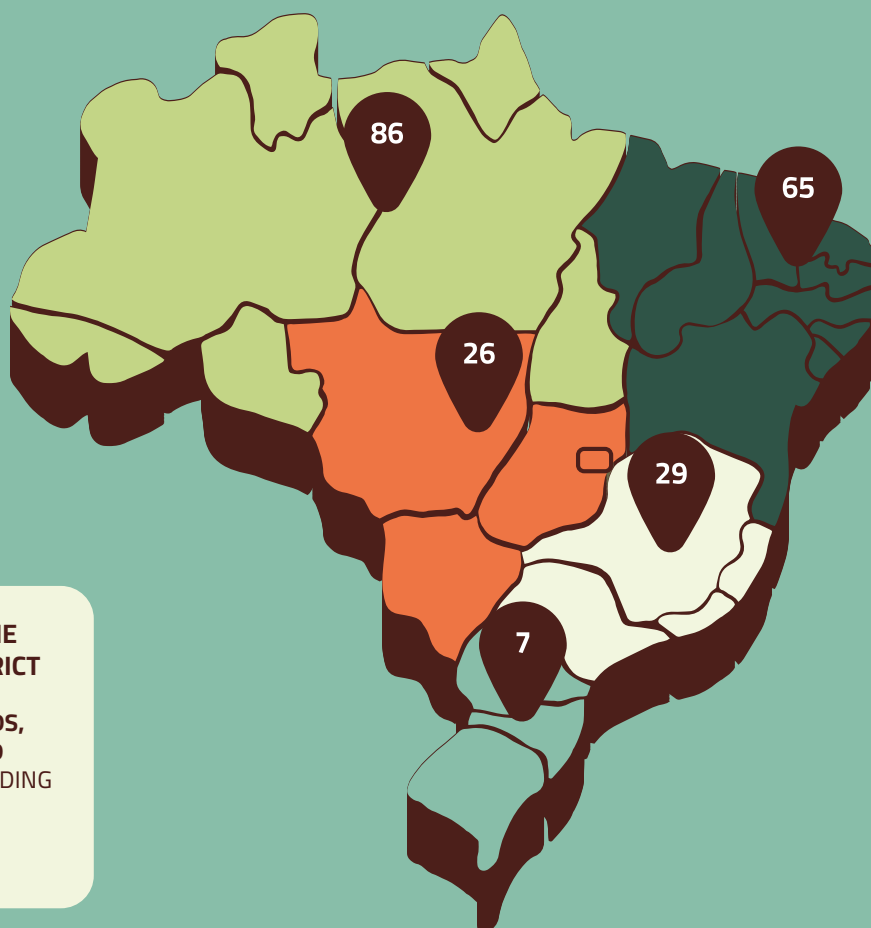
On the financial side, the expansion is even more striking. Annual funding requests exceeded **R\$10 million** in **2024** and reached nearly **R\$15 million** in **2025**, the highest level recorded during the period analyzed. Although the total amount awarded increased—particularly in 2024—the Fund's capacity to respond did not keep pace with the rapid growth in demand. In **2025**, only **14%** of the requested funding could be awarded, highlighting the widening gap between the scale of territorial mobilization and the resources available.

Between **2020 and 2025**, organizations requested **more than R\$35 million** in funding, while approximately **R\$10.5 million** was ultimately awarded to the selected initiatives.

This gap illustrates the structural pressure facing climate finance directed toward young people and grassroots organizations.

Taken together, these findings point to two simultaneous and interconnected trends. On the one hand, they reflect the growing leadership of **young people, women, Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola communities, and grassroots collectives from urban peripheries**. On the other, they underscore the urgent need to strengthen funding mechanisms capable of keeping pace with this expansion by providing greater **predictability, scale, and long-term sustainability** for initiatives that have already demonstrated their ability to drive meaningful territorial transformation.

# Territories and Biomes: Where Young People Are Mobilizing



**23 STATES + THE  
FEDERAL DISTRICT**

**THE NORTH LEADS,  
WITH 86 FUNDED  
PROJECTS, INCLUDING  
36 IN THE STATE  
OF PARÁ.**

The territorial analysis of proposals submitted between **2020 and 2025** highlights the broad geographic reach of youth mobilization and the diversity of socio-environmental contexts represented. The initiatives supported by **Casa Fund** span all regions of Brazil, with particularly strong representation in the states of the **Legal Amazon** and the **Northeast**, alongside significant engagement in the **Atlantic Forest** and the **Cerrado biomes**.

## North Region

The **North Region** accounts for the largest number of initiatives supported during the period, with particularly strong representation from the states of **Pará (36 projects)**, **Amazonas (29)**, and **Rondônia (12)**. This significant concentration confirms the central role of the Amazon in socio-environmental and climate agendas while highlighting the strong organizational capacity of local youth-led organizations and community collectives.

The high concentration of projects in the North also reflects the longstanding prioritization of the Amazon within international climate agendas. At the same time, the region's leadership cannot be explained solely by external interest, but also by the organizational strength of young people and grassroots collectives working directly within Amazonian territories.

The North has established itself as the country's leading region in terms of the number of supported initiatives, reinforcing its strategic role in advancing climate justice.



## Northeast Region

The Northeast Region shows broad territorial coverage, with supported initiatives present in nearly every state. The highest numbers are found in Bahia (19 projects), Pernambuco (13), and Maranhão (12).

The region's strong representation reflects the consolidation of youth networks working in territories shaped by long-standing socio-environmental inequalities, including water scarcity, environmental racism, and urban vulnerability.

The diversity of states represented demonstrates the initiative's broad territorial reach and the continued strengthening of socio-environmental mobilization throughout the Northeast.



## Southeast Region

In the **Southeast Region**, supported projects are concentrated primarily in the states of **Rio de Janeiro (14)**, **São Paulo (8)**, and **Minas Gerais (6)**. The region is characterized by a strong presence of **urban and peri-urban initiatives**, particularly those connected to the **Atlantic Forest** biome and metropolitan areas.

Although the Southeast is one of Brazil's most economically developed regions, it accounts for a proportionally smaller share of supported initiatives than the North and Northeast. This reflects the longstanding prioritization of territories considered strategically important for environmental conservation and climate justice.

Even so, the region's participation underscores the diversity of contexts in which young people are engaged, ranging from urban peripheries to rural communities.



## Central-West Region

In the **Central-West Region**, the state of **Mato Grosso (17)** stands out as the primary area of activity, followed by the **Federal District (7)** and **Goiás (2)**. The region is closely connected to the Cerrado biome and to territorial conflicts associated with agribusiness expansion and deforestation.

The presence of initiatives in the **Federal District** also reflects efforts focused on **national-level policy advocacy**, expanding the strategic reach of the supported projects.

Although the Central-West accounts for fewer initiatives than the North and Northeast in absolute numbers, it holds considerable territorial and political significance.



## South Region

The **South Region** recorded the lowest number of supported initiatives, with the largest concentrations in **Rio Grande do Sul (4)** and **Paraná (3)**. **Santa Catarina** did not have projects directly supported within the state, although some initiatives were linked to national advocacy efforts.

Despite its more limited representation, the region demonstrates that youth-led socio-environmental mobilization is also present in the **Pampa** biome and across southern Brazil. The lower number of supported initiatives may be associated with the region's historically lower participation in place-based socio-environmental funding opportunities.

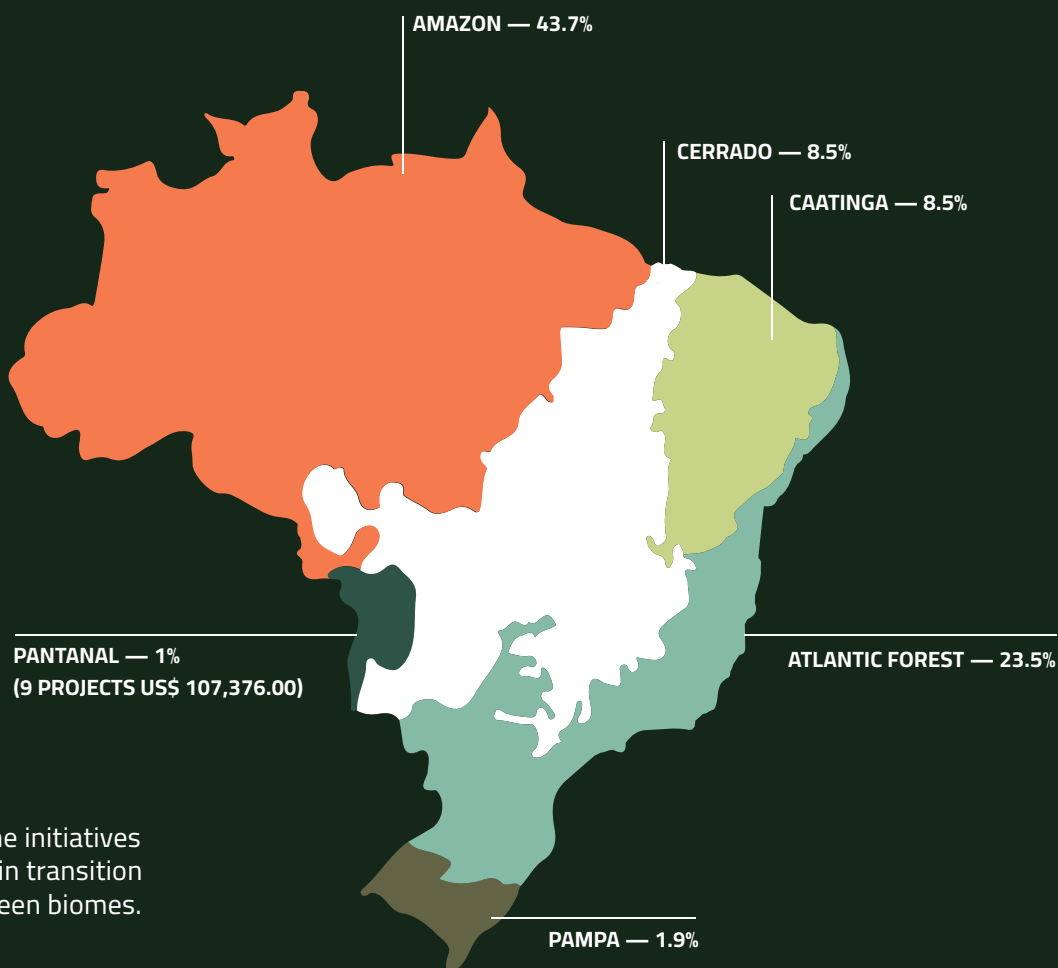


# The Biome Dimension

An analysis by biome highlights the central role of the **Amazon** in youth mobilization, accounting for **43.7%** of all initiatives supported during the period analyzed. The **Atlantic Forest** follows with **23.5%** of supported projects, reflecting the strong presence of grassroots collectives operating in urban and peri-urban contexts.

The **Cerrado** and the **Caatinga** each account for **8.5%** of the initiatives, indicating growing mobilization in territories that have historically been underfunded within global climate finance agendas. **The Pampa (1.9%)** and the **Pantanal(0.5%)** are also represented, although on a smaller scale.

One particularly significant finding is that **13.6%** of the initiatives operate in **ecotones**—transition zones between biomes, such as the **Amazon–Cerrado** and **Atlantic Forest–Caatinga**. This underscores the territorial complexity of youth-led action, which is often rooted in areas characterized by overlapping ecosystems and intense socio-environmental pressures.





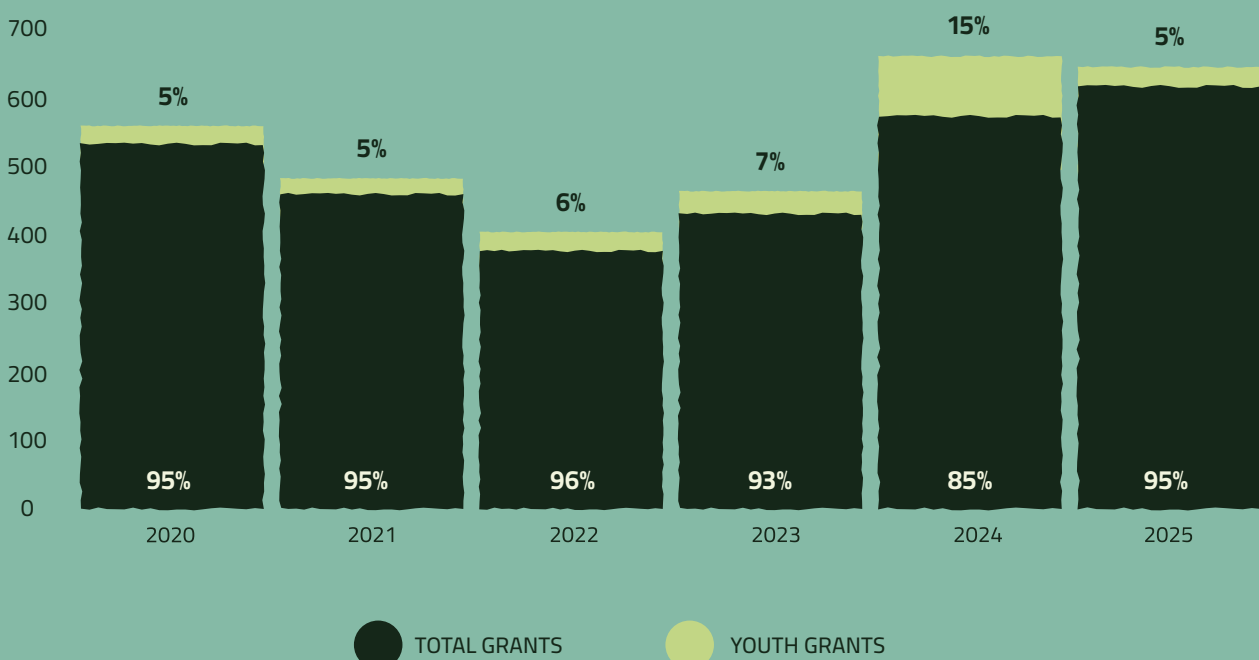
# Who Are the Young People Supported?

The data show that young people do not occupy a peripheral place in **Casa Fund's** grantmaking strategy. Even in years when there were no grant calls specifically dedicated to youth, **youth-led organizations** accounted for a significant share of the initiatives supported during the period analyzed.

This finding stands in sharp contrast to the global climate finance landscape, where **only 0.76%** of funding reaches youth-led organizations. It demonstrates that **community philanthropy** and **place-based funding models** can fundamentally reshape this pattern of exclusion.

Beyond their numerical representation, the data reveal the **territorial, organizational, and cultural diversity** of the supported initiatives, showing that the young people supported by **Casa Fund** are leading action across a wide range of socio-environmental contexts.

**Figure 9. Percentage of Total Casa Fund Grants Awarded to Youth-Led Initiatives**



Organizations led by young people between the ages of **18 and 29** accounted for a significant share of the projects supported between **2020 and 2025**.

Although not every grant call was exclusively dedicated to youth, the proportion of support awarded to **youth-led organizations** remained consistently high, far exceeding the global average of climate finance directed to this group.

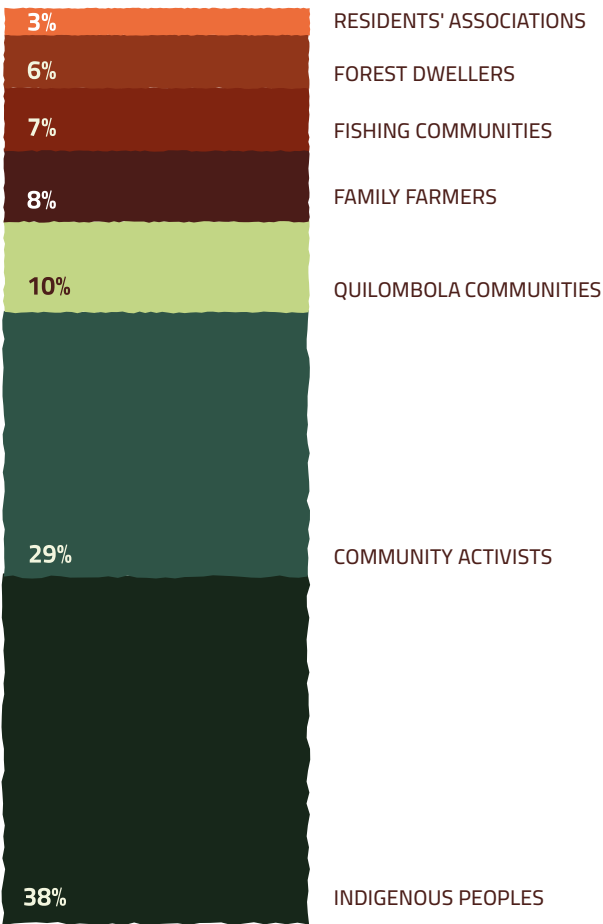
**This finding demonstrates that youth leadership is neither episodic nor confined to a single funding opportunity. Rather, it is a core component of Casa Fund's institutional grantmaking strategy.**

The data also show that youth leadership is deeply rooted in **traditional territories** and in contexts shaped by socio-environmental conflict. The supported organizations are not limited to urban youth groups; they include **young Indigenous leaders, Quilombola youth, riverine communities, and family farmers**, who bring together **ancestral knowledge** and contemporary climate action.

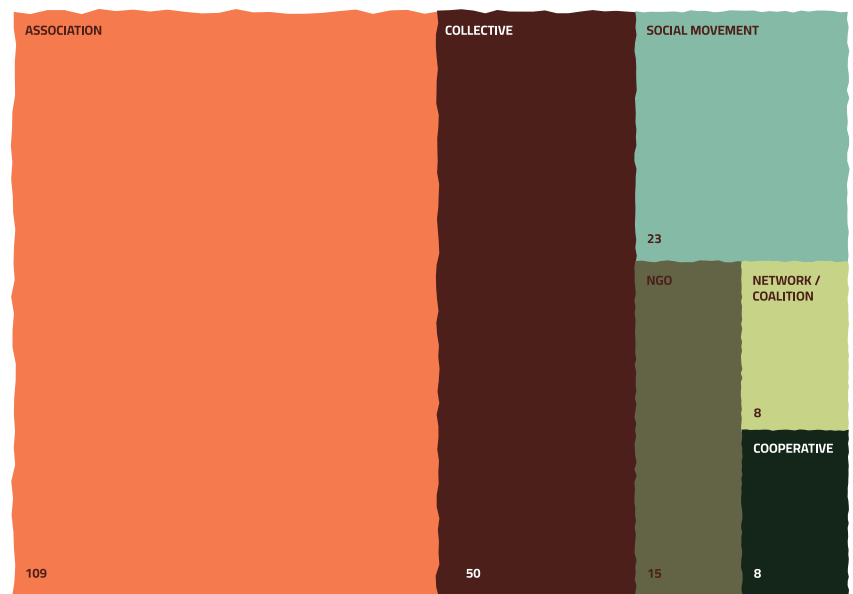
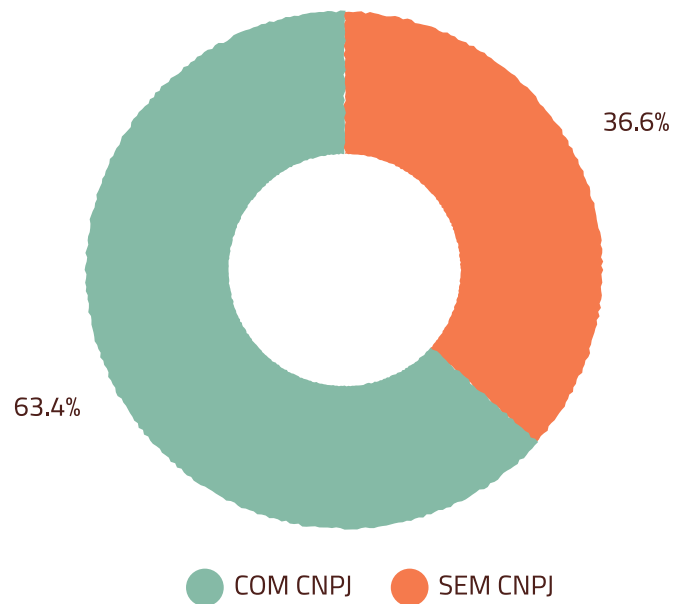
The strong representation of **Indigenous youth (38%)** underscores the central role that territorial defense and the protection of collective rights play within the youth agenda supported by **Casa Fund**.



**Figure 10. Profile of Supported Beneficiaries**



**Figures 11 and 12. Legal Registration Status of Organizations (With and Without Legal Registration Number) / Types of Supported Organizations**



This landscape demonstrates that **Casa Fund's** support reaches both formally established organizations and autonomous grassroots collectives, highlighting the flexibility of its grant-making methodology. The significant presence of organizations without legal registration underscores the importance of funding mechanisms that are tailored to the organizational realities of youth-led initiatives.

Figure 13. Geographic Scope of Activities

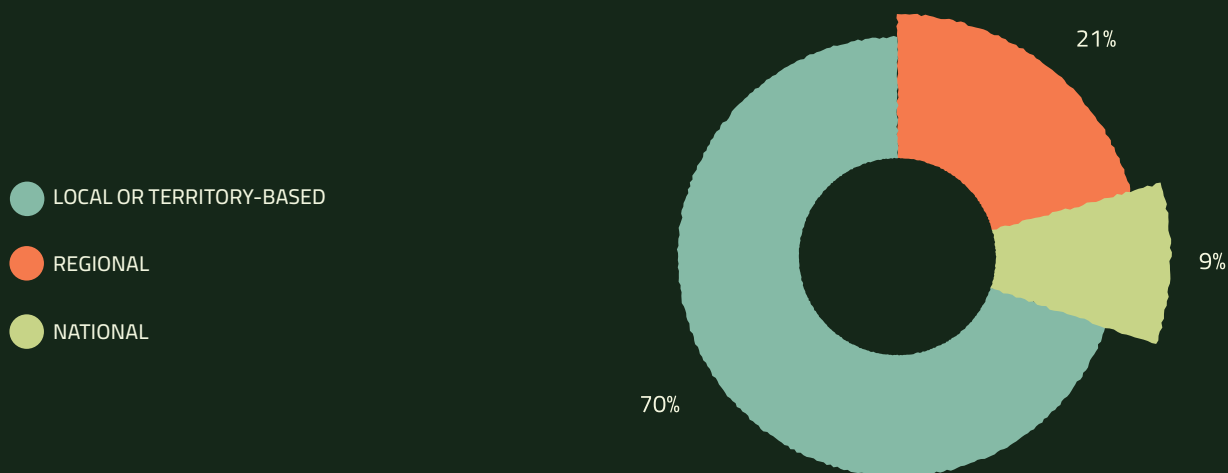
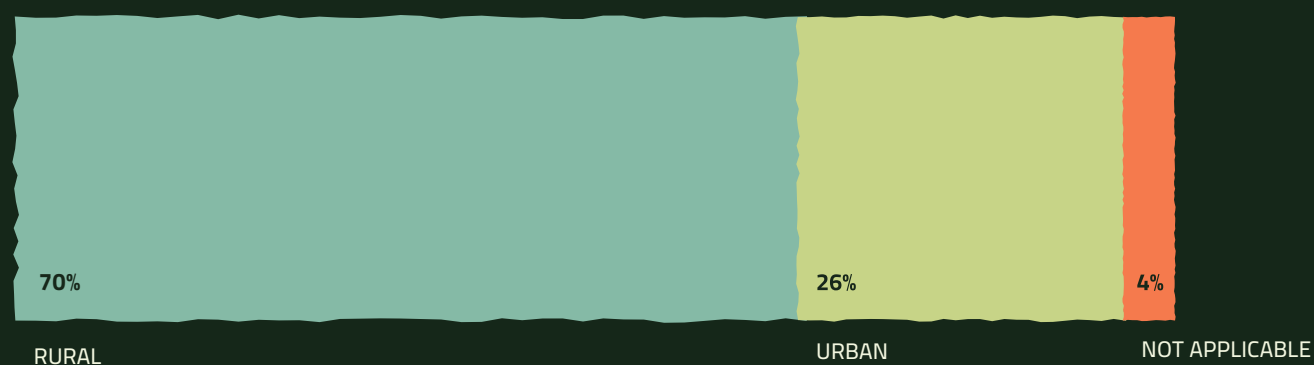


Figure 14. Distribution by Geographic Setting



Most of the supported initiatives operate in **rural settings (69%)**, while **26%** are implemented in **urban territories**, and **4%** do not fall within either category.

These findings show that youth leadership is deeply rooted in territories where climate impacts directly affect **livelihoods, food production, and the stewardship of the commons**. At the same time, the strong urban presence highlights the connections between the climate crisis, **environmental racism**, and the inequalities experienced in urban peripheries.

This distribution demonstrates that youth-led action spans a wide range of territorial realities, linking **climate justice** with **social transformation** through locally grounded initiatives.

# Stories That Bring the Data to Life

The data presented in the previous chapters help us understand the scale of youth mobilization, the profiles of the young people supported, and the structural challenges surrounding climate finance. Yet no statistical analysis alone can fully capture the tangible transformations taking place within communities.

The stories that follow are narratives written by the supported communities themselves and are presented in **their original form**. They have not been abridged or reinterpreted. By preserving their authorship, we recognize young people as producers of knowledge, keepers of memory, and architects of political strategy.

More than accounts of project implementation, these narratives reveal collective journeys, lessons learned, challenges overcome, and achievements made possible when funding is delivered in an accessible way—combining financial resources, capacity building, and trust. Together, they demonstrate how **just climate solutions** are built from the ground up, rooted in the knowledge, leadership, and lived realities of local communities.

## Clima de Quebrada: A Climate Education Initiative by Instituto Perifa Sustentável





## In Life, Everything Begins with a Dream

That was true when **Instituto Perifa Sustentável** was founded, and it continues to be true with the development of each of our projects. Every initiative goes through multiple stages—from approval and planning to implementation and monitoring—but they all begin with the same purpose: democratizing the climate agenda in urban peripheries, underserved communities, and favelas.

**#ClimaDeQuebrada** was born in exactly that way, through **Casa Fund's Women Leading Climate Action** grant call. As soon as we learned about the opportunity, our team came together and asked ourselves: "**How can we strengthen the climate agenda in our community?**"

After many conversations, reflections, and brainstorming sessions, it became clear that we wanted to focus on **environmental education in schools**. From that shared vision, **#ClimaDeQuebrada** came to life

with the goal of supporting the education of young students and educators on the intersections between environmental racism and **climate change**, strengthening the engagement of agents of positive change within marginalized communities.

It was certainly an ambitious idea—and we could feel that from the very beginning. But that ambition became the driving force behind our project. Our **Theory of Change** was ultimately distilled into a single statement:

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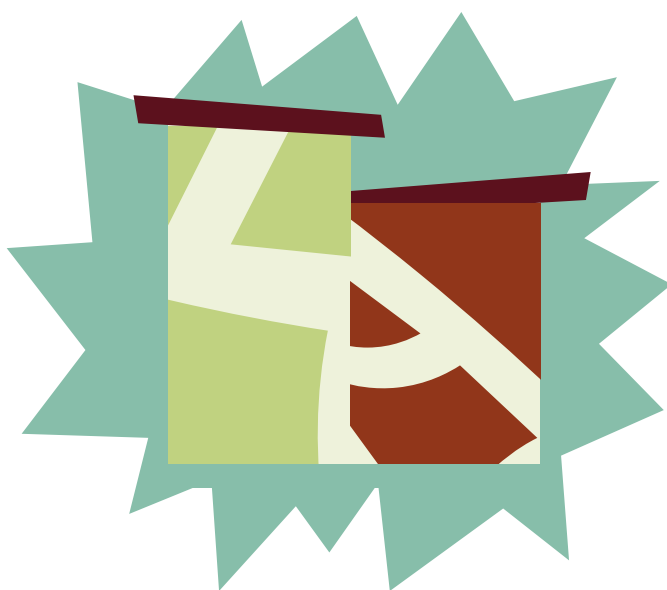
***"To empower young people to become leaders in civic action in response to the climate crisis, enabling them to become active voices in defending their rights and their territories while generating positive change within their communities."***

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Our practical goal was to train **200 public school students** and **50 teachers**. To make this possible, we partnered with the **Regional Directorate of Education (DRE)**, which connected us with the principal of **Teotônio Vilela Municipal Elementary School**, located within **CEU Paz**. The school is part of one of the area's main hubs for culture, recreation, and education, in the **Jardim Paraná** neighborhood of **Brasilândia**, in the northern zone of São Paulo.

To launch the program, we developed a comprehensive curriculum aligned with the **São Paulo City Curriculum**, integrating **Environmental Education** and **Anti-Racist Education** while drawing on the City's **Knowledge Framework** (Matriz de Saberes) and the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. It was a tremendous amount of work, but in the end we succeeded in building a solid theoretical



and methodological foundation for an anti-racist approach to environmental and climate education—one centered on both reflection and action.

Our project consisted of four learning modules:

- **Climate Change and Environmental Racism**
- **Educommunication and Territorial Knowledge**
- **Youth Leadership and Civic Participation**
- **Community Action in Brasilândia**

And we certainly weren't alone in making it happen. The school's **student council** partnered closely with us and contributed a wide range of ideas for engaging students, including broadcasts on the school radio station, the distribution of informational flyers, classroom activities with science, history, and geography teachers, the creation of a **community garden** on the school grounds, and the inclusion of climate issues in the next edition of the **CEU Paz newspaper**.





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## It was incredible to see the students dreaming big and imagining the possibility of building a truly SUSTAINABLE PERIPHERY!

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After completing all four workshops, we concluded the project with a community action in the neighborhood. Together with students and teachers, we organized a collective cleanup of the street in front of the school. We removed litter, washed the sidewalks, painted a mural, and spread hope, joy, and climate justice throughout the community.

At the heart of our work is the desire to build new horizons, foster active citizenship among young people, and encourage critical reflection on our territory. By addressing environmental racism and climate change, we promoted educommunication tools, youth participation practices, and the development of community-based projects, focusing on our own community—Black people and residents of urban peripheries, who are among those most affected by extreme climate events.

This was only the first step. There is still much work to be done. To ensure the continuity of the project, we need to hold decision-makers accountable and advocate for public policies that respond to the

needs of our territory. And that's exactly what we did. In January 2024, we convened a meeting with City Councilor Sandra Santana and Sérgio Gonelli, the Subprefect of Brasília/Freguesia do Ó.

We presented the #ClimaDeQuebrada project and discussed opportunities to expand it to other schools in the region. We also formally submitted a petition calling for concrete action on the issue of waste management, one of the greatest challenges facing Brasília.

It is time for public officials to support civil society leaders so that, together, we can build a planet that is truly inclusive, collaborative, and sustainable.

Ultimately, our goal is simple: to promote meaningful and lasting change, generate knowledge and collective memory about our community, develop locally rooted solutions, strengthen political advocacy, and, in doing so, **democratize the climate agenda in our neighborhood.**



# Experience Narrative

by Samilly (Elas Aquilombam,  
Jacundá Quilombo – Moju, Pará)

My name is **Samilly**. I am a young Black Quilombola woman from the Amazon and a community communicator. I live in **Jacundá Quilombo**, in the municipality of **Moju**, Pará, and together with other women from my community, I founded **Elas Aquilombam**. This initiative grew out of our daily experiences and the urgent need to create a space where we could strengthen ourselves as Black Quilombola women, confront our struggles, and celebrate our existence through listening, art, and communication.

Our journey began with dialogue circles and workshops on writing, photography, and memory. We wanted girls and women in our community to have access to tools that would enable us to tell our own stories in our own voices. For us, communication is also a way of caring, healing, and resisting. We created a physical, symbolic, and political space where we could share our experiences, support one another, and collectively build pathways toward transformation.

When funding arrived, everything changed. Financial support was essential to sustaining work that we had previously carried out on a voluntary basis and with our own limited resources. With the grant, we were able to expand our activities, purchase materials, provide small stipends for participants, maintain our community space, and strengthen the way we organized our work. Beyond the funding itself, we also received technical assistance and training that greatly improved our project planning, proposal writing, and institutional development. It helped us recognize our own strength and see ourselves as part of a broader network of young people and social movements working toward change.

The support we received marked a turning point. We became more confident, more autonomous, and more courageous in imagining what was possible. Connecting with other initiatives and participating in training and networking opportunities also helped us realize that our struggles are not isolated—they are shared. And together, we can create new ways of existing, resisting, and thriving.

Today, **Elas Aquilombam** continues to be a space for care, solidarity, learning, and collective action. We remain convinced that when a Quilombola woman is empowered, the entire community rises with her. Our experience shows that when funding is delivered with **trust, respect, and genuine listening**, it has the power to transform entire realities.



# Practical Recommendations for Transforming Climate Finance

The experiences presented in this chapter are not isolated cases. They reflect a consistent pattern identified throughout this research: when funding is designed with **listening, flexibility, and a commitment to socio-environmental justice**, it strengthens young people's capacity to act and reinforces place-based responses to the climate crisis.

The data revealed the scale of the demand. The analysis exposed the structural barriers. The stories made the real-world impact of funding decisions visible. The challenge now is to translate these lessons into practical guidance for the philanthropic sector.

The recommendations that follow are grounded in the evidence, insights, and lived experiences of the young people supported through these initiatives. They are intended to guide funders and organizations seeking to increase the reach, coherence, and effectiveness of their grantmaking.

The findings of this research align with a growing consensus across the international philanthropic community: **it is not enough to increase funding for young people and grassroots organizations—there must also be a transformation in the structures that determine how resources are distributed, monitored, and evaluated.**

Recent studies on **trust-based philanthropy, youth participation, and community-led development consistently** show that the greatest bottleneck is not the absence of solutions within communities. Rather, it is the limited access to **adequate, flexible, and sustained funding.**



The recommendations below emerge from the intersection of the evidence presented in this publication and the lessons drawn from international experiences advocating for a more horizontal, participatory, and trust-based approach to philanthropy.

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**Transforming climate finance begins with redistributing power.**

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# Recommendations for Funders

## Simplify Access and Remove Structural Barriers

Youth-led organizations often face eligibility requirements that are incompatible with their realities: complex legal registration, costly audits, lengthy institutional track records, robust administrative structures, and highly technical reporting requirements.

As highlighted in international discussions on **community-led funding**, these requirements act as filters that favor well-established organizations, often at the expense of those working closest to the communities most affected by climate and social inequalities.

Funders should:

- Review eligibility criteria that exclude informal collectives and emerging networks.
- Align due diligence and reporting requirements with the size of the grant.
- Develop grant calls and guidance using clear, accessible language.
- Recognize diverse organizational models, including collectives, networks, social movements, and territorial coalitions.
- Create funding mechanisms for groups that do not yet have legal registration, particularly where formalization is neither safe nor feasible.

Expanding access is a political choice—and a critical step toward democratizing climate finance.



## Fund Trust and Strengthen Institutions

One of the central lessons from the trust-based philanthropy movement is that overly restricted funding weakens organizations. When grants cover only specific project activities but fail to invest in institutional capacity, organizations remain fragile and dependent.

**Flexible funding makes it possible to:**

- **Invest in essential organizational infrastructure.**
- **Support organizational well-being and staff care.**
- **Strengthen management and administrative systems.**
- **Respond rapidly to emergencies affecting local communities.**
- **Foster innovation and strategic adaptation.**

**Rather than funding isolated projects, funders should:**

- **Increase the availability of unrestricted institutional support.**
- **Cover the real costs of organizational operations.**
- **Allow budget adjustments without imposing unnecessarily burdensome administrative procedures.**

**Trust is not the absence of accountability—it is a more mature and effective form of partnership.**

## Support Long-Term Processes and Learning

Climate action and socio-environmental transformation do not unfold within 12-month funding cycles. An exclusive focus on short-term results can create distortions, increase organizational strain, and lead to superficial interventions.

**Funders can strengthen impact by:**

- **Prioritizing medium- and long-term partnerships.**
- **Valuing learning processes alongside quantitative outcomes.**
- **Aligning evaluation expectations with the actual capacities of supported organizations.**
- **Recognizing stories, narratives, and qualitative evidence as legitimate components of evaluation.**
- **Investing in participatory approaches to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.**

Measuring impact should not be about extracting data, it should be about generating knowledge



# Recommendations for Grassroots Organizations

## Strengthen Organizational Capacity Without Losing Community Roots

Youth-led organizations face the challenge of growing institutionally without becoming disconnected from the communities they serve. Professionalization may be necessary, but it should never come at the expense of their community identity and grassroots character.

### Organizations are encouraged to:

- **Develop simple financial management practices tailored to their realities.**
- **Establish transparent internal accountability mechanisms.**
- **Document lessons learned, methodologies, and good practices.**
- **Invest in participatory strategic planning.**
- **Build processes for leadership succession and renewal.**

**Institutional strengthening is a tool for autonomy—not an end in itself.**

## Embed Care, Protection, and Human Sustainability

The data and narratives analyzed in this study highlight the emotional burden, territorial risks, and precarious conditions experienced by young people working on the frontlines of climate justice.

### Organizations can strengthen their resilience by:

- **Embedding care practices into their internal policies.**
- **Establishing physical and digital security protocols.**
- **Recognizing mental health as an organizational priority.**
- **Distributing responsibilities more equitably across teams.**
- **Valuing rest, recovery, and collective regeneration as essential components of long-term sustainability.**

**Organizational sustainability ultimately depends on human sustainability.**



# Recommendations for Young People

## Build Networks and Strengthen Collective Advocacy

National and international experience shows that when young people organize through networks, they increase their visibility, expand access to funding, and strengthen their ability to influence public policy and decision-making.

Young people can:

- **Strengthen regional and thematic alliances.**
- **Share opportunities, knowledge, and lessons learned.**
- **Build intergenerational partnerships.**
- **Participate in decision-making spaces related to climate finance.**
- **Develop strategies for collective protection and mutual support.**

**Working in isolation weakens movements. Collective action builds power.**

## Strengthen Strategic Capacity to Access Funding

While the responsibility for transforming the funding system rests primarily with funders, young people can also strengthen their ability to engage effectively with philanthropy by:

- **Improving project proposal writing without sacrificing their political voice or community perspective.**
- **Mapping national and international funding opportunities.**
- **Investing in the documentation of their impacts and achievements.**
- **Building a collective reputation grounded in sustained territorial action.**

Access to funding is also a field of political contestation.

## A Shared Agenda for the Future

The evidence presented in this research, together with lessons emerging from international practice, points to a common conclusion: **effective climate finance depends on trust, flexibility, meaningful listening, and the redistribution of power.**

Young people are not occasional beneficiaries of climate finance—they are creators of local solutions, drivers of social innovation, and leaders of territorial transformation.

**A philanthropic sector that seeks to respond effectively to the climate crisis must:**

- **Fund relationships, not just deliverables.**
- **Support long-term processes, not only measurable outputs.**
- **Listen to communities, not only to indicators.**
- **Recognize that lasting impact grows from community autonomy.**

The future of climate finance will be more just to the extent that it becomes more community-led, **more accessible, and more deeply rooted in mutual trust.**

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**And that transformation is already underway.**

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# Redesigning the Flow of Resources

Throughout this publication, we have explored data, territories, listening processes, and lived experiences. What emerges from this body of evidence is more than a diagnosis of climate finance—it is a political reality: **young people are already developing the structural solutions needed to address the socio-environmental crisis.**

They do not occupy a peripheral place in the climate debate. **They are at the center of the solutions**

Our analysis demonstrates that, even in the face of institutional, bureaucratic, and territorial barriers, youth-led collectives and organizations continue to respond with creativity, community organizing, and a deep commitment to environmental justice. The stories presented throughout this publication show that when funding is delivered with genuine listening and flexibility, it strengthens capacities that already exist within communities.

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**Young people are not merely the "future" of the climate agenda—they are its present-day leaders.**

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They are far more than recipients of grant funding. They are strategists, producers of knowledge, and stewards of their territories. Recognizing this leadership requires a fundamental shift in the way philanthropy understands youth—from viewing them primarily as beneficiaries of support to recognizing them as essential partners in building the solutions.



In this context, funding ceases to be merely an administrative mechanism. It becomes an instrument of **justice**: justice in the distribution of resources; justice in determining priorities; and justice in the way relationships are built between funders and the communities they seek to support.

Likewise, the knowledge produced by young people cannot remain on the margins of decision-making spaces. Documenting, systematizing, and sharing these experiences is itself a strategy for political advocacy. It is a way of reshaping the narrative about who generates solutions and who has the authority to define the direction of the climate agenda.

The journey presented throughout this publication points to a clear path forward: strengthening funding models grounded in **trust, territorial decentralization**, and the recognition of **locally led initiatives**. The challenge facing philanthropy and public institutions is not to discover new solutions, but to create the structural conditions that allow the solutions already emerging from communities to flourish with autonomy and continuity.

If there is a path ahead, it lies in deepening dialogue between funders and young people, advancing more accessible funding practices, and recognizing that addressing the climate crisis also requires transforming the systems that govern access to resources.



# About the Saberes Program

The **Saberes Program** was created to systematize learning, generate strategic knowledge, and strengthen advocacy by drawing on the experiences supported by the **Casa Socio-Environmental Fund**.

More than an editorial initiative, **Saberes** is a knowledge generation and dissemination program committed to **socio-environmental justice**. Its purpose is to document practices, analyze data, and transform place-based experiences into valuable references for the fields of **community philanthropy, public policy, and climate action**.

The methodology behind this publication combines three core dimensions:

1. **Institutional Data Analysis – Collecting and systematizing information on funding applications, grants awarded, and the profiles of supported organizations.**
2. **Meaningful Listening – Incorporating the narratives and lived experiences of communities and young people themselves, recognizing them as producers of knowledge.**
3. **Field Engagement – Drawing on dialogue with national and international reports, research, and initiatives focused on climate finance and community philanthropy.**



This integrated approach enables the production of publications that go beyond describing realities—they contribute to strengthening public debate on financing, territorial inequalities, and youth leadership.

This edition reaffirms the **Saberes Program's** commitment to making visible the contributions of **traditional and peripheral youth** to the development of **just climate solutions**. By systematizing data and lived experiences, the program strengthens the advocacy capacity of supported organizations while increasing transparency around the approaches and strategies adopted by the **Casa Socio-Environmental Fund**.

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