

# Activism and Pandemic in Brazil

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on civil society  
organizations led by women and trans people in Brazil

# Activism and Pandemic

# Acknowledgments



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# The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on civil society organizations led by women and trans people in Brazil

## Activism and Pandemic

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# Activism and Pandemic in Brazil



## ELAS+ Brazilian Women's Fund invites you to find out how Brazilian women's and LBTI (lesbians, bisexuals, trans and intersex) groups and organizations have been affected by and have been reacting to the Covid-19 pandemic.

You will see how the socio political and economic context in Brazil has led to the **loss of rights and to insecurity**, the difficult situation created by the pandemic, and how the presence of social movements led by women and by LBTIs has been important in the face of these new challenges.

**We were the first fund led by women to mobilize resources to promote and support the empowerment of women and LBTI organizations in Brazil.** An analysis of the national and international scenario led to the conclusion that the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic will reverberate for 10 years, and this will be the time needed to regain rights and reinstall public policies lost or suspended as a result, creating challenges for society with social crises and the intensification of inequalities.

In response to this situation, in 2020 and in 2021, **with flexible grants, ELAS+ made it easier for formal and informal groups to access resources**, so that they could meet emergency humanitarian needs and keep the organizations active in the ongoing battle for rights. ELAS+, because of its knowledge of the history, presence and importance of social movements, knew that they were there and sought to guarantee their survival and adapt their work to the new protocols. When the women's and LBTI groups were called on to act, whether due to specific demands related to the pandemic or to social deterioration resulting from poor management on the part of the State, they answered the call. **This research revealed that:**



**they were fast, creative and resilient. With little or no resources, they have made a positive impact in their territories and communities. They are fighting to overcome all challenges and need more support.**

There have been very few studies conducted in Brazil on feminist and LGBTQI+ (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans, queer, intersex) activism and its relationship with philanthropy, and even fewer in the current context of the pandemic. Now, with support from researchers from Brazilian public universities, ELAS+ is presenting the results of this research.

In this publication we present a summary of the research **"The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on civil society organizations led by women and trans people in Brazil. Activism and Pandemic"**.



The data was collected during the months of July through August of 2020, supplied by women's and LGBTI groups and organizations that submitted the registration form to participate in the online grant application **Women in Movement 2020: strengthening solidarity and confidence**.<sup>PORT</sup> The research study presents a portrait of 953 Civil Society Organizations (CSO), formal and informal, led by women and by trans people from all over Brazil.

This publication provides information on the characteristics of the CSOs that participated in the study. You will learn about their leadership, their activism, and their territories. You will see how Black, Indigenous, and LGBTIs women led groups, groups from urban and rural areas, based in the rainforests, reacted to the Covid-19 pandemic.

From the universe of activist leaders, we present data on domestic workers, sex workers, Black women, social entrepreneurs, women with disabilities, young women, rural women, Black traditional communities formed by freed enslaved people, and activists from the world of art and culture. The research study even includes information that has never been published about organizations led by Indigenous women.

And, among their activist activities, run the themes of confronting racism, fighting for climate justice and sustainable development, the elimination of violence and digital and technological inequality, of political participation for women, of LGBTQI+ rights, of land rights, of reproductive justice, and of the right to access and mobility in cities, among other subjects.

This research also presents information on how activists fought the pandemic at the beginning of 2020, and we include direct quotes from activists. We end this document with a conclusion that includes proposals and ideas for cooperation and for the strengthening of activism in Brazil.



### The social solidarity and confidence bonds of these groups generated communitarian and horizontal philanthropy

Our research revealed that the organizations and groups chose the path of confidence, empathy, and altruism and worked together, stimulating solidarity, and philanthropy for social justice in a collaborative, communitarian and horizontal perspective.

“

We carried out donation programs in the periferias (urban fringe areas) of [city], donations of products for affected families originating from settlements. We made donations to houses that shelter women who are victims of violence; we donated to Indigenous people [ethnicity], we donated to pregnant Indigenous women [ethnicity]. We donated more than 15 thousand tons of foodstuffs to the population of the disadvantaged areas affected by the pandemic. The collective actively participated in the campaign and the distribution of food. Solidarity is the pillar we have built on in order to overcome the pandemic. We are overcoming the consequences of the pandemic through study, work, unity and solidarity.

Leadership: Black and LBT. State of Ceará

As formalization is the mechanism that makes the collection of data on entities of civil society possible, **the difference with this research study by ELAS+ is its pioneering contribution regarding informal organizations** that are not included in research databases. The research data was collected just three months after the declaration of the propagation of the Covid-19 virus and the pandemic decree. Little was known about the virus, and there were still no public health policies and no social measures for battling the problems, which later became a state of public calamity.

In the face of so much adversity, there is no shortage of stories related to the reinvention of organizational formats and activism on the part of women. They were very fast, dimensioning their actions, and reorganizing and diversifying their strategies and alliances to benefit the populations in their territories.

A large part of the organizations and groups analyzed **self-financed** their activism through their own activities. **51%** used the production of events as a secondary source of financing. The sale of products was a source of financing for **36,6%** of the organizations. Both these activities were extremely affected by the social isolation measures that were adopted.



**In Brazil, the organizations hit by the pandemic invested in qualification, in equipment, and in infrastructure, establishing connections and making the transition of their businesses to the online environment.**





The development of projects, actions, campaigns, litigation, institutional communication, and network mobilization deserves to be mentioned as well as the incidence of advocacy on a local, national and international levels and the qualification of activism. The systematization of means and strategies adopted brings with it elements for the articulation of collective efforts and human and financial resources.

ELAS+ wants to thank all the groups, organizations and networks that participated in the research for their significant contributions and making it possible to dig deeper and qualify the diagnoses for operating with even more assertiveness and collective social impact. The results of this research are for all the people who believe that the action of women and LGBTIs also contributes to building a more just and equal world. Investing in these organizations, that transform our society, should be seen as a priority.



### ELAS+ adjusted the lenses to understand how women's and LGBTIs organizations operated during the pandemic

Through the registration **forms for the Women in Movement 2020–Grant Application**,<sup>[PDF]</sup> done from the 25th of July through the 21st of August of 2020, a database was created that allowed for the performance of a research study like no other.

In order for the organizations and groups to participate in the research study, an invitation and an **Informed Consent Statement (TCLE)**<sup>[PDF]</sup> was sent to a total of **1.188** organizations that were eligible in accordance with the grant application criteria. We obtained the consent of 953 organizations, which became the universe for this research

The form was structured in blocks:

- ① **General information:** name of the organization, contact, address for correspondence and identification of leadership;
- ② **Data on the organization/group:** structure of positions, deliberative meetings, history (year established; began with how many people; how many people are involved now; CNPJ-registration number), is it considered to be a feminist group?; objective of its creation and history of the group; financial situation and beneficiaries;
- ③ **Operational strategies:** activities and projects developed for handling closed questions, organization of a database was done in the SPSS program, version *IBM SPSS Statistics Subscription*, and the findings were worked on as follows: descriptive analyses were done for characterization of the organizations and the groups inscribed using statistical techniques for incorporation of official data. **247** variables were constructed from questions in the application form.

All sensitive information on organizations and groups that could be used to identify them was omitted from the database and will not be used in any product derived from this research. The confidentiality policy extends to the data and the information related to members of the organizations and groups.

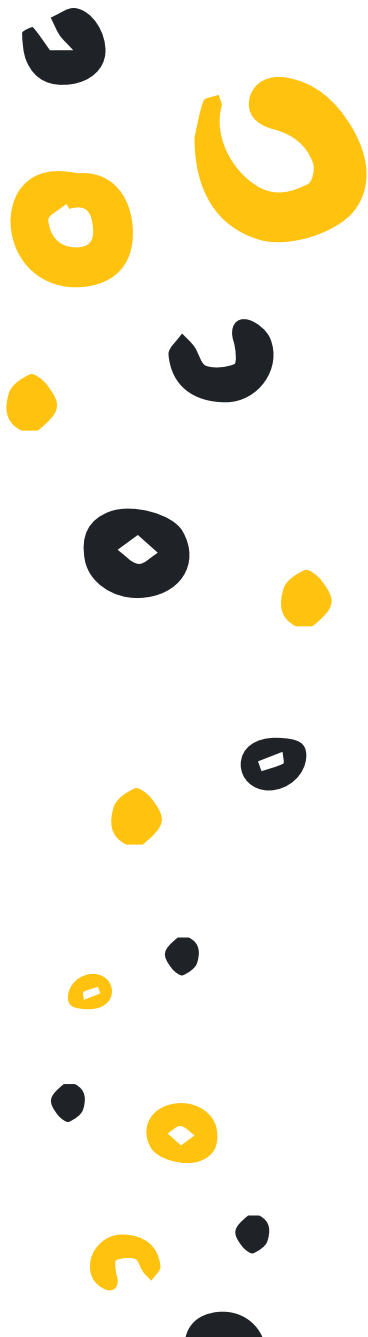
For performing the quantitative analysis, two typologies were created for leadership profiles, considering the requirements for insertion as a priority group in accordance with the demands of the grant. Of these, typology 1 includes the categories: LBT Leadership; Indigenous Leadership and Black Leadership.

And for typology 2, the technique of interaction, which is used in studies of intersectional perspectives, was applied. These are groups whose identity markers are also social and generate inequalities from a critical perspective with the hierarchization of one marker in detriment to another. This resulted in eight categories: Black Leadership; Indigenous Leadership; LBT Leadership; Black and LBT Leadership; Black, Indigenous and LBT Leadership; Black and Indigenous Leadership; Indigenous and LBT Leadership; and Leadership that does not identify with any of the previous categories. This last profile joins together the organizations and groups of women that do not declare that they have LBT, Black or Indigenous Leadership.

The submission of answers to the open questions related to the impact of and the response to Covid-19 was done using multiple methodologies. All the content provided was read by three researchers who first identified the central themes in the answers to each of the three questions about the pandemic. This process allowed for the identification of key words and recurring themes. With these findings, it was possible to develop a matrix of macro-categories for analysis, for which specific descriptors were created.

The qualitative methodology consisted of verification of the answers to the questions on the impact of the pandemic with the help of the mixed analysis software *Dedoose* (version 8.3.47b). Thus, it was possible to determine the frequencies in accordance with the categories and select excerpts of verbalizations.

Based on the intersectional perspective, the procedure for categorization considered the structural and contextual dimensions that have had an impact on the realities of the organizations, groups and their communities. It is important to point out that the macro-categories coincide with the findings from the bibliographical review in terms of the contexts experienced in the communities and by the social movements in Brazil today. It is also important to understand that the macro-categories help us gain a systematic perspective of the affectations and the actions of civil society in the context of the pandemic, allowing for understanding of multiple fronts for engagement and operation. This categorization, with the help of *Dedoose*, also allowed for the production of 'word clouds'.





**The macro-categories for analysis were organized into three major questions:**

**① How was the community/territory affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?**

According to the research, the communities were primarily affected in the following categories: access to digital tools and technologies; access to information about Covid-19; social vulnerabilities due to the context of the pandemic; increase in incidences of violence; mental illness; food insecurity; work, job and income; mobility; and socio environmental justice.

**② How was the organization/group affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?**

The infrastructure of the organizations was affected, as well as the implementation of their activities and the operation of their teams. The following categories were widely affected: access to digital tools and technologies; mental health of their members; vulnerability of their members; work, jobs and income of their members; mobilization of financial resources; increase of demand; the challenge of not being physically present in their territories.

**③ How are the organizations and groups overcoming the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic?**

**In order to overcome the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the organizations and groups were proactive, operated on the front lines, facilitated dialogue between the community and the State; expanded and strengthened networks; provided shelter and counseling; carried out actions to improve digital equality; and reinvented their activism activities.**



## Bibliographical review

A bibliographical review was carried out that defined the **theoretical references** for the research, considering themes such as: philanthropy; social movements in Brazil; gender studies; traditional populations; LGBTQI+ population; socio-economic-political-culture questions and the Covid-19 pandemic; social movements and the Covid-19 pandemic; and quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This review was done using scientific data found in academic articles, reports, theses papers and dissertations, as well as from productions released by social movements, foundations, networks, agencies of the United Nations, and reports produced by institutes and governments and, finally, by productions in mass media periodicals and independent media.



## Data protection

Due to a context of political persecution of social movements, preserving the identity of the organizations and groups became a methodological choice. Therefore, we removed project names, websites, names of members, names of groups, or the neighborhoods where they are active from citations, as well as other information that could reveal the identity of the organizations. In this document, such information has been replaced in square brackets: [Group name], [Ethnicity], [City] etc.

We highlighted information on the profile of their leadership and the state within the country. Nevertheless, the depth of the data collected allowed for an understanding of the potential these organizations and groups of women and LBTIs fighting against the pandemic have for the transformation of civil society.

# Meet the organizations and their activism!





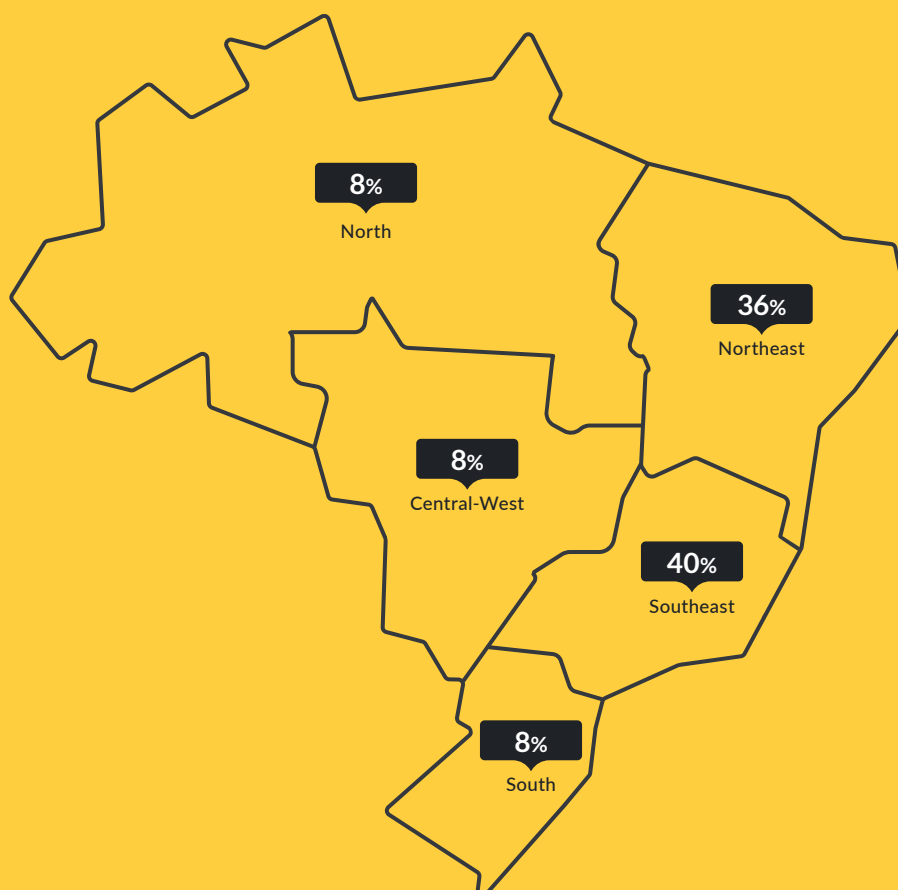
## Where are they located?

Brazil is a country that is divided into 5 geographic regions: North, Northeast, Central-West, South and Southeast. The regions represent diversity in both population distribution and racial and ethnic composition, as well as socioeconomic inequalities. The study's universe contains organizations and groups of all Brazilian regions and ratifies the ample presence of women's and LGBTI's movements and activism in different parts of the country.

Map 1

### Distribution of organizations/groups by region (%).

(Source: ELAS+,2020)



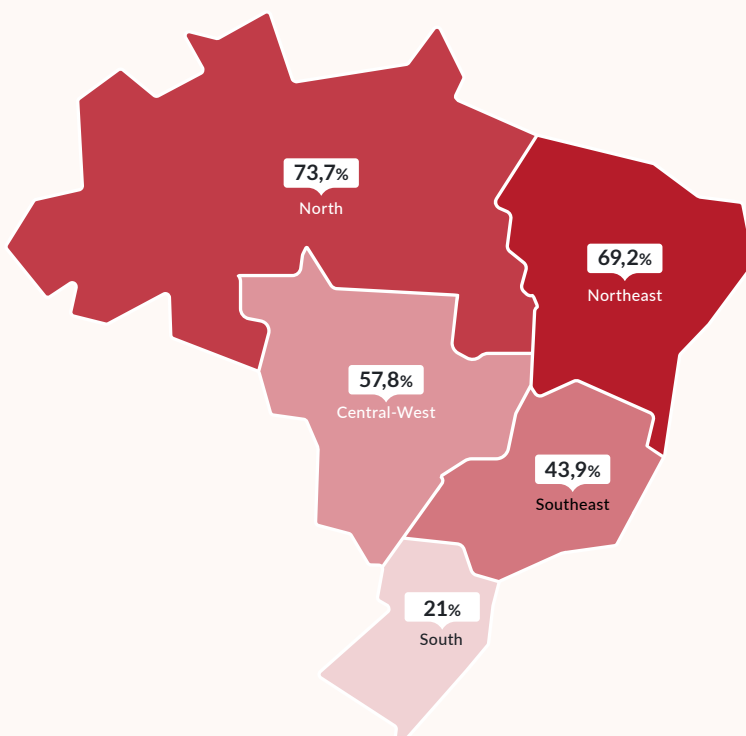


More than half of the Brazilian population is Black (IBGE, 2019), and according to data from the Instituto de *Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* [Applied Economics Research Institute] (IPEA, 2016), this population, together with Indigenous peoples, are concentrated in the regions with lower human development index (HDI, 2010) and the greatest levels of inequality in the country, in the North (73,7%) and Northeast (69,2%) regions. On the other hand, we have the South (28,3%) and Southwest (54,9%) regions where the majority of the population is self-declared as white and has higher HDI, as well as the lowest inequality indices.

Map 2

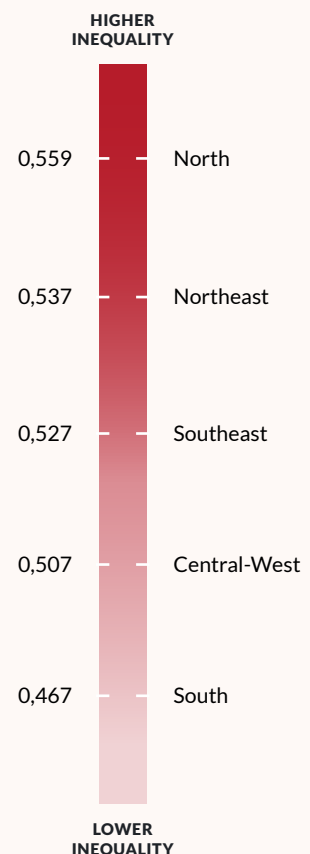
**The map shows the percentage of black and indigenous population in the regions of Brazil.**

(Source: IBGE, 2019. IPEA, 2016)



**Thermometer of inequality in the income concentration of the regions.**

(Source: Índice de Gini, IBGE, 2020)





### When were they founded?

The majority of the organizations and groups, 44,1%, declared that they were founded within the quadrennium of 2016–2020, a period marked by the aggravation of the country's political crisis, culminating in the impeachment of the country's first female president, Dilma Rousseff, in 2016. This period saw the establishment of a policy to devalue labor relations and remove previously consolidated worker's rights through labor and social security reforms, as well as a profound economic crisis that elevated rates of unemployment and lack of social assistance to the highest levels in the available historical data. Plus, cuts to education, public health policies and social assistance programs. The average age of the organizations and groups was 9,6 years; the newest organization was 1 year old in 2020, while the oldest was founded 73 years ago.

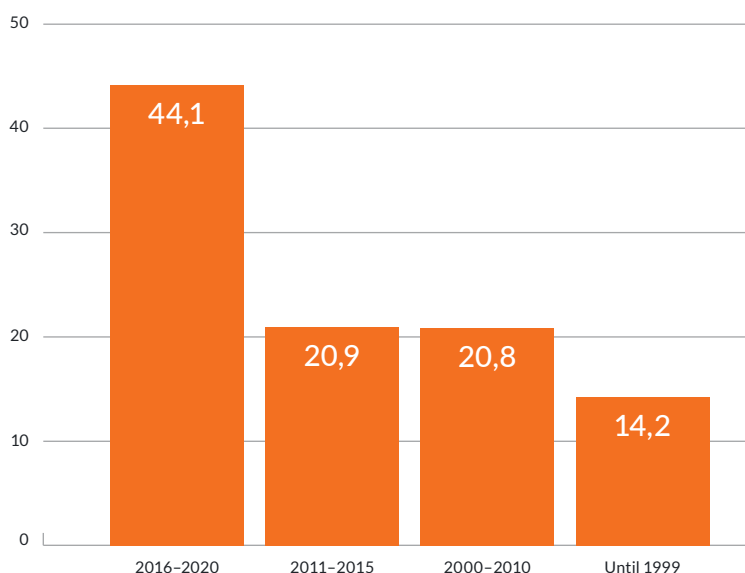


**The aggravation of the political, social and economic crisis, in 2016, marked the foundation of the majority of the women's and LGBTI+ organizations. The percentage of organizations founded in this period is greater than that of the ones founded in the first fifteen years of the 2000s.**

Figure 1

#### Organizations/groups per year of foundation (%).

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)

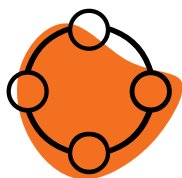






**The number of participants in the organizations and groups more than quadrupled since their founding.**

The number of members in most of the organizations and groups has increased. On average, the organizations started their activities with 23 participants and, in the most recent period, showed an expressive increase, reaching 102 members. Some began their activities with one or two people, while others started with 10.000 members. Currently, the highest number of participants in any of the organizations and groups is 10.000.



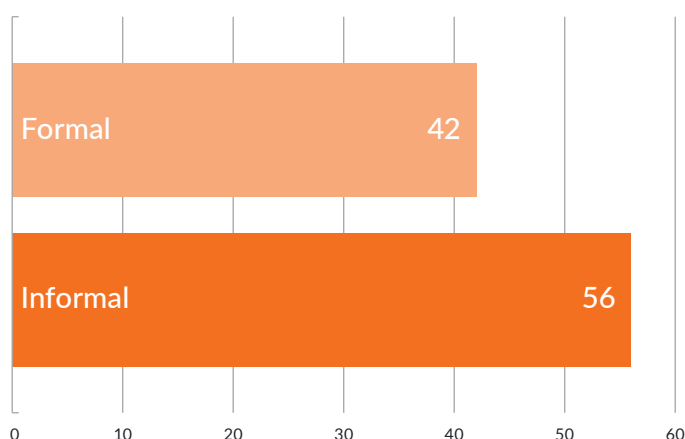
## Organizational structure

**Formalization:** Within the set of organizations and groups included in the study, the majority did not have an official registration (CNPJ). This fact reiterates the singularity of the findings of this research related to activism and social movements led by women and LGBTI+ that structures themselves through other organizational forms than the official registry. This multiplicity of organizational forms is not considered in official surveys, whose conception of Civil Society Organizations restricts them to institutions that are tied to an official registry. Formalization, in exchange links organizations to the *Mapa das Organizações da Sociedade Civil* [Map of Civil Society Organizations], a transparent collaborative platform with data on Brazilian civil society organizations developed by the IPEA, 2016.

Figure 2

### Percentage of organizations/groups and formalization.

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



**56% of women and LGBTI movements in Brazil are informal.**

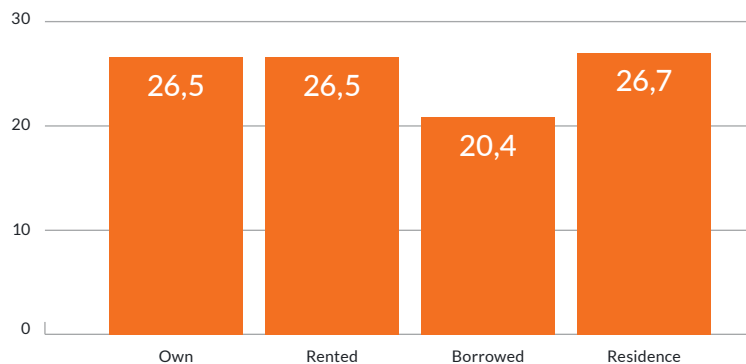
**73,6% of women and trans movements base their activism in their own residences, in rented spaces or in borrowed properties.**

**Organizational infrastructure:** 73,6% do not have their own headquarters: they are based in rented or loaned addresses or use the founder's own residence to exercise their activities and meetings. Only 26,5% declared that they had their own address, in other words, the great majority of the organizations and groups do not have security in regard to the properties in which they establish their activities.

Figure 3

#### Address types of the organizations/groups (%).

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



An expressive number of the organizations and groups declare themselves as feminist, 93,7%. Within this set, there are a myriad of definitions and forms of organization that reveal the plurality of these activists, whose classification and types of organization were signaled in more than one form of classification for their activism. This reveals the different forms of women's organizations and the diversity of social engagements in which they are inserted and active in.



#### How much is invested in their activism?

The budgets of the organizations and groups in the years of 2019 and 2020 point towards a **large disparity**.

**13% spent up to one-half of Brazilian minimum wage (522,50 BRL) throughout one year, a total of 98 U. S. dollar;** 16% spent between 196 USD and 980 USD; 25% spent between 981 USD and 3.921 USD; 19% spent between 3.922 USD and 9.803 USD; 12% spent between 9.804 USD and 19.606 USD; and 14% had expenses that exceeded 19.607 USD.

With this disparity, it can be seen that the development of their actions relied on very different financial contributions, most of them suffering institutional losses due to the low budget, more than half of the organizations (54%) were able to invest no more than 3.921 USD in their activism in a whole year.

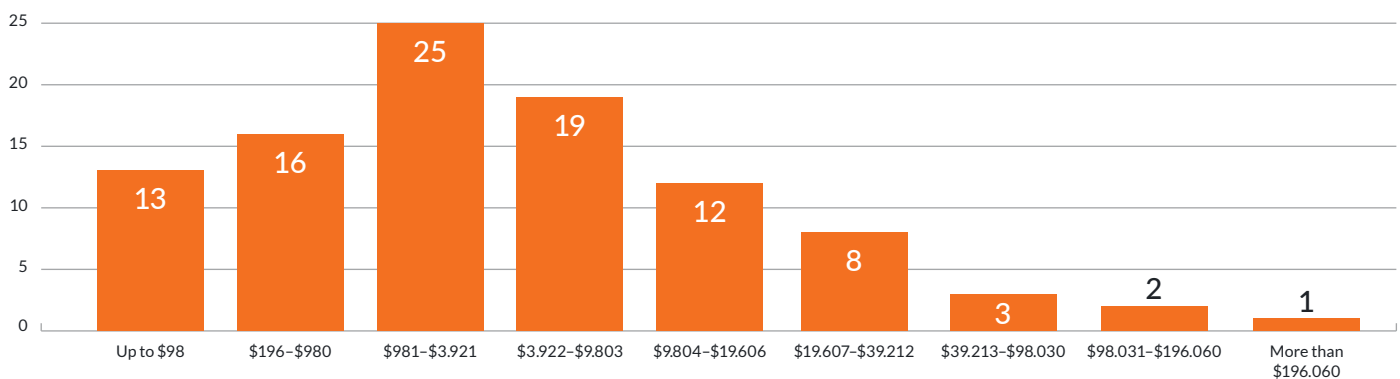


**Even today, very little is invested in women-led organizations in Brazil.**

Figure 4

**Organizations/groups by resources between 2019 and 2020 (%).**

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



**Base for conversion:** Rate: 1 U.S. Dollar/USD (220)=5,33 Real/BRL (790). Date: August 4th, 2020.  
Source: The Banco Central do Brasil (bcb.gov.br)



### What are the sources of their financing?

The most cited financing sources were individual donations, events, volunteering, and sales. They refer to strategies developed by the organizations and groups themselves, that, given the context of economic recession, suspension of grant application calls, imposition of social isolation and demand for emergency actions in the communities that they are active in, were profoundly affected. Are also identified financing coming from national civil society organizations, independent national funds and private national foundations. Governmental and private company spheres account for the minimum standards of national financing.

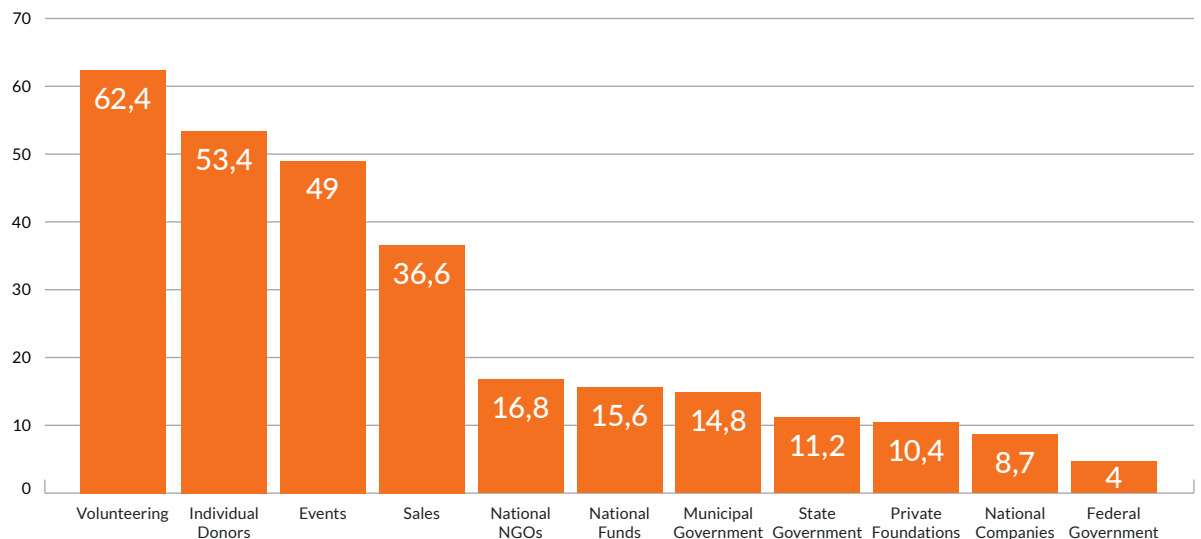
**Private companies are among those that least finance women-led organizations in Brazil.**



Figure 5

**Financing sources of the organizations/groups (%).**

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



In the scope of international resources, there was financing from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international private foundations and multilateral bodies. Funds, companies and foreign governments did not finance any OSCs in this study. We point out that there were challenges in terms of access to information about these sources of financing and barriers due to knowledge of foreign languages, since, according to a survey by the British Council, in 2019, only 5% of the Brazilian population knew how to communicate in English.

**Minimal international participation in financing organizations and groups of women and LBTs in Brazil.**

**6,5%**Internacional  
NGOs**6%**Private  
Foundations**3,8%**Multilateral  
Agencies

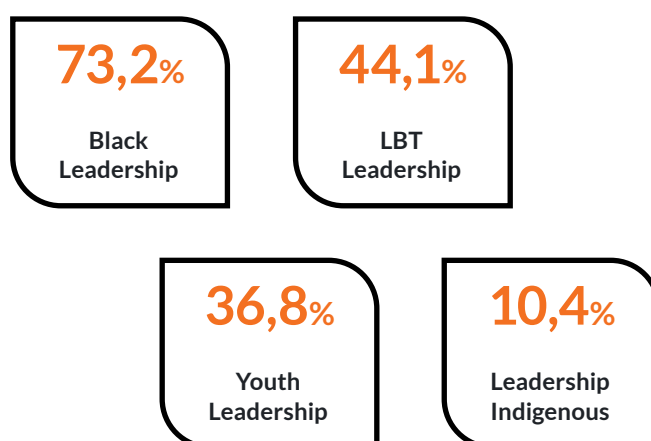


## Leadership

The historic political activism of Black women in Brazil reveals itself by a predominance of 73,2% in organizations and groups. There is also a significant representation in leadership, given that the proportion of Blacks in group leadership is still larger than the relative proportion of Blacks in the country's population, which corresponds to 51% of the total.

Indigenous women lead 10,4% of the organizations and groups, a large percentage when compared to the proportion of Indigenous people in Brazil, corresponding to about 0,47% of the country's total population, according to data from the 2010 census (IBGE).

The participation of LBTs in the leadership of organizations and groups has proven to be quite robust, representing almost half the universe, at 44,1%.



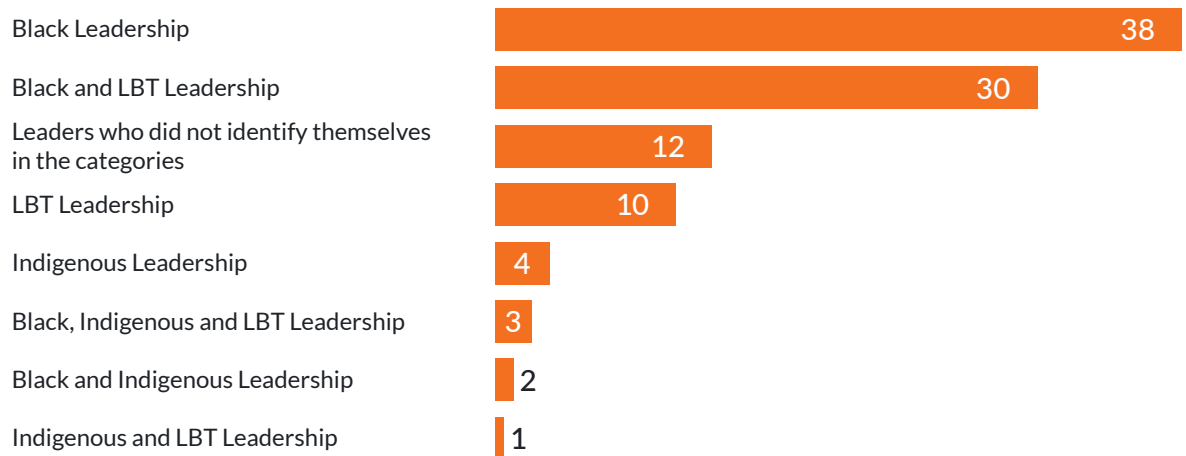
While there are organizations and groups with only one leadership profile, on the other hand there are others corroborating the central argument of racial, ethnic, gender and sexual diversity present in women's and LBTI's movements, through new leadership faces. With this, when looking at these movements we can identify a subset in which the leadership profiles bring to the forefront the markings of race/ethnicity (Black leadership and Indigenous leadership) and gender/sexuality (LBT leadership), comprising a total of 52% of the groups. Regarding more diversified leadership profiles, such as those with mixes of race/sexuality/gender (Black and LBT leadership), race/ethnicity/gender/sexuality (Black, Indigenous and LBT leadership), race/ethnicity (Black and Indigenous leadership) and ethnicity/LBT (Indigenous and LBT leadership), these form 48% of groups.

**The social movements of women and LBTIs of Brazil are intersectional.**

Figure 6

**Groups by intersectional leadership profile (%).**

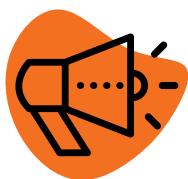
(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



**It's important to emphasize the participation of Indigenous women leadership, of Black-Indigenous leadership or of the Indigenous-LBT leadership, who perform a fundamental part in producing such activism, giving visibility to the actions of Indigenous movements in the face of the pandemic, be it in their communities or urban contexts.**

**How do women's and LBTs organization work?**

The distinct fronts of activism ratify the commitment of these organizations and groups to collective demands, and to the promotion of actions in the areas in which they reside, which are, at times, neglected by state authorities and public policies. These include strategies for the planning of activities, collective action or network activity, social mobilization, direct service to their communities, promotion of public debate, social control and participation and advocacy. In these interventions, strategies contemplating the public interest are employed that seek social justice and direct dialogue with the population, exercising, in that sense, the right of participation, control over public decision making and public policy implementation. These are being developed by different leadership profiles, be they Black, Indigenous or LBTI.

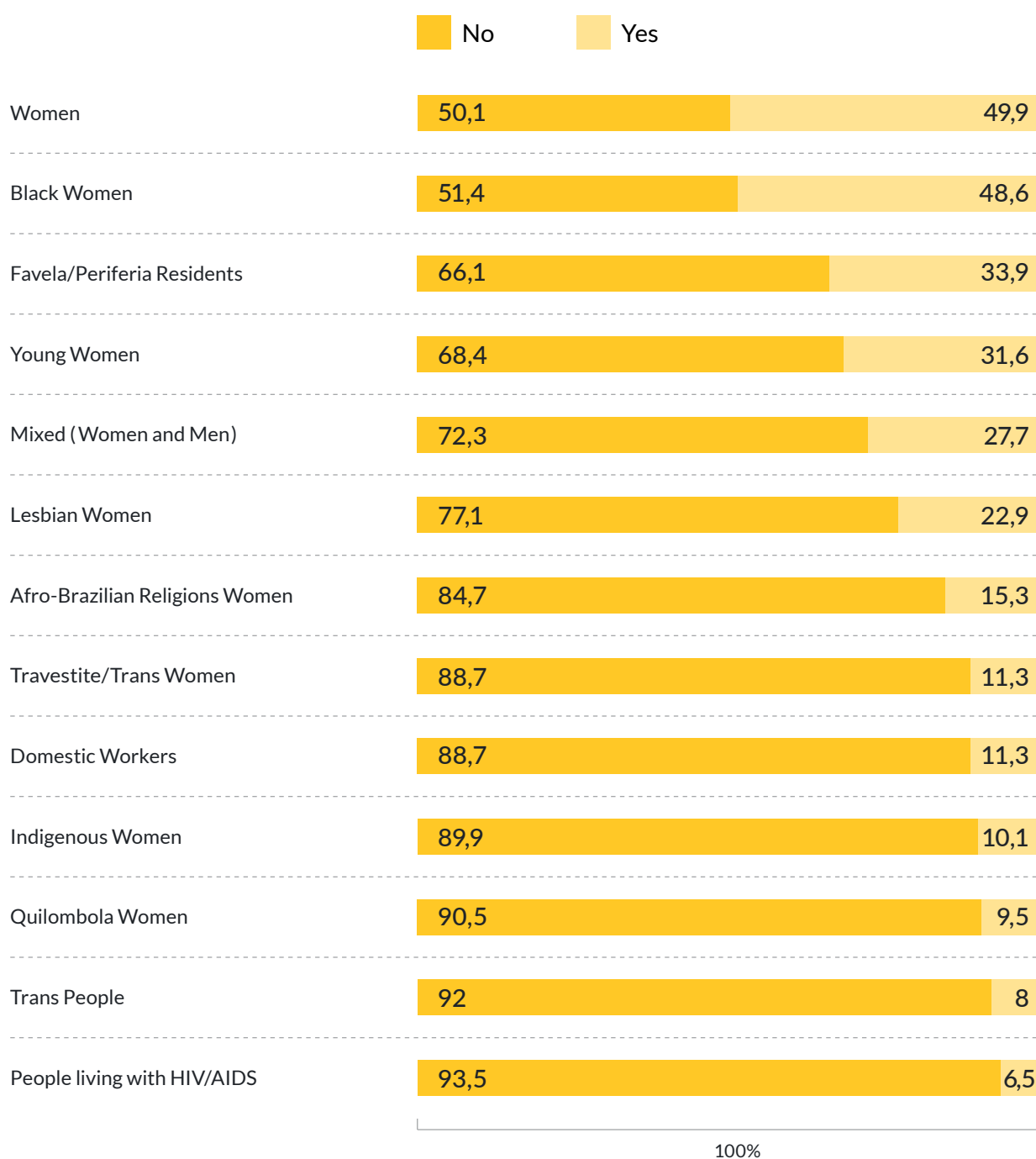


## Women's and LBT activism: from identity to territorial groups

Figure 7

### Forms of organization of civil society movements (%).

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



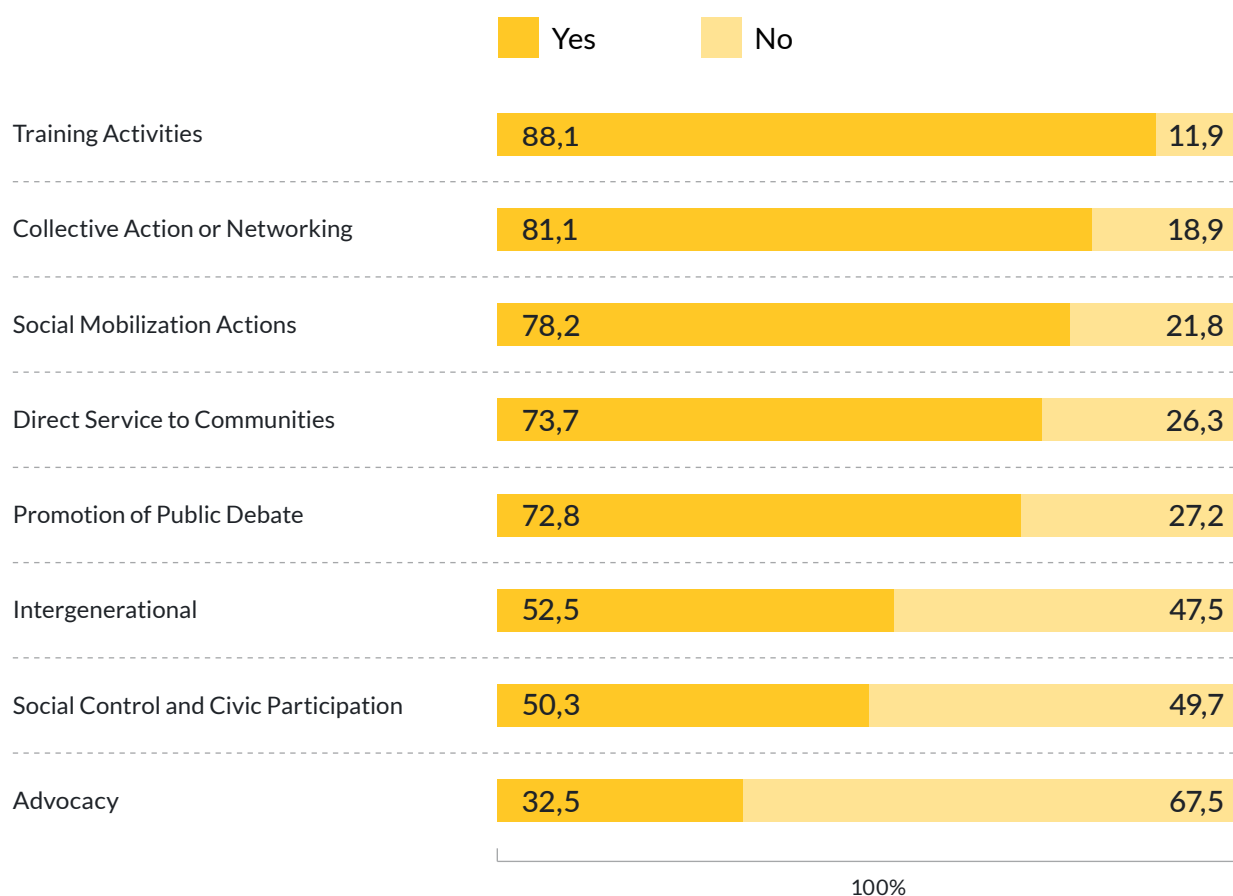


## The diversity of women and LBT activism: from actions to advocacy

Figure 8

### Forms of action of organizations/groups (%).

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



In regard to the level of activism, the number of organizations and groups with network participation is evident. In other words, they participate in alliances, coalitions, activism fronts and joint or collective strategies. Group actions are noticeable in all categories of leadership, be they LBT, Black or Indigenous, and present themselves recurrently cross-movements and inter-generational groups.

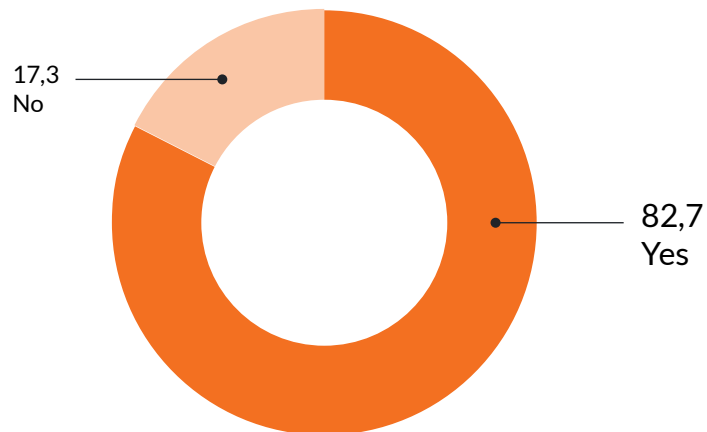




Figure 9

### Organizations/groups operating in a network (%).

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)



**Network actions are a predominant strategy of groups and organizations.**



### Beneficiary profile of organizations led by women

The beneficiaries represent the portion of the population for which the activism organizations studied directed their efforts. The research shows that these are sets of women of distinct generations, racial profiles, ethnicities, sexualities, genders, professional and academic affiliation and conditions of vulnerability.

The causes of note are: **gender and sexuality**—ranging from Black women, transgender people, intersexual, bisexual and lesbians; **generational**—with adults and elders; **vulnerability**—residents of favelas [slums] and periferias, women suffering from domestic violence, those suffering from sexual violence, people with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS; **students**—university and high school students; and **professional**—healthcare workers, educators, domestic workers, artists, culture and fashion professionals, sex workers and public officials.



**Contexts of inequality and vulnerability characterize those benefited by women's and Brazilian LBT led movements.**

Figure 10

**Percentage of beneficiaries.**

(Source: ELAS+, 2020)

**Organization Benefits (%):**



**The pandemic  
through the  
voices of women  
and LBTs**



**The objective** of this research was to contribute to an understanding of the social, political and economic context in Brazil in which democratic social movements led by women and trans people have operated in response to the initial consequences generated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Organizations all over the country have responded rapidly and over a broad area to the many challenges created by the pandemic.** Here you can get a taste of these experiences from the voices of the activists themselves.



### How was the community/territory affected by the pandemic?

The lack of information about the Covid-19 virus, together with social isolation measures without support from the government, contributed to the advance of unemployment and a significant increase in food insecurity in the communities and territories, while the unequal access to digital and technological tools became more evident. In addition, socio environmental injustices intensified, which directly affected the mental health of the population. Staying at home, for many people, translated into an increased risk of suffering from physical, sexual, and psychological violence, as well as LGBTQI-phobia.

“

(...) women (many illiterate, or semi-literate), became overwhelmed with household chores, helping their children with remote schooling activities, children who were becoming depressed because they had to remain distant from their friends and, as if this weren't enough, many became victims of domestic violence as they were forced to live in confinement with their aggressors.

Activist from the state of Bahia

“

The pandemic came like a spotlight to show the world the periferias, the Black traditional communities, the Indigenous peoples, the people of the terreiro [Afro Brazilian religion communities], the rural population, women, Black women, children and adolescents in vulnerable conditions (...) the fragility of survival in the communities, villages, our parents going hungry and suffering from diseases, the lack of work and basic sanitation, sharing of Internet so that youths can have access to remote classes, study for ENEM [college entrance exam], emergency assistance, the lack of public policies, was made explicit to society.

Black and Indigenous Leadership.  
State of Rio Grande do Norte

“

Digital inequalities, which are increasingly more socially determined, make communication during periods of social isolation fragile and dependent on credits for smartphones, diminishing contact with family and loved ones, and making it difficult to access government assistance and specific programs for getting relief from the consequences of the pandemic, especially the emergency assistance from the Federal government.

Indigenous, LBT, and Youth Leadership. State of Rio de Janeiro

Misinformation on Covid-19 prevention and fake news contributed to the increase in the number of infections. The false narratives on social networks reinforced inefficient policies and ineffective treatments and the spread of hate speech.

“

(...) there is a phenomenon that is worth noting, which is a sort of denial of the gravity of the new coronavirus, causing people to ignore the calls for isolation and social distancing.

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Bahia

“

As a result, we had difficulty with access to information on basic rights and access to channels for reporting incidences of violence were inefficient, which directly affected the exercise of those rights, both from the aspect of health, as well as for combatting violations against gender/race/sexuality. These violations, in addition, occurred at the level of the State, since police violence increased by three times in the poor periferias in our state.

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Pará

“

(...) a significant increase in the number of undesired pregnancies, and recurring doubts related to women's health. Impossibility of being able to go to a gynecologist or a health clinic. Various women were without access to contraceptive methods or any safe source for information, which led many of them to contract STDs or become pregnant.

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership.  
State of São Paulo

The pandemic revealed the lack of a socioeconomic infrastructure that affects a large part of the Brazilian population and the lack of basic public services for dealing with it.



**How to protect yourself from the virus without even being able to wash hands?**

“

How do you deal with trying to control the pandemic in a state lacking infrastructure that, historically, has denied its people the minimum conditions to live in dignity, with access to water, sanitation, healthcare, work or a minimum wage?

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Maranhão



“

There are a lot of people who live on shacks, on stilts in the alleyways and back lanes of poor neighborhoods that don't have access to running water, or extra money to buy overpriced alcohol in gel and cleaning materials to disinfect their homes.

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Pernambuco



**Food insecurity is more prevalent in the regions of the north and the northeast, where much of the Black population and families live in places where there is no guarantee of access to water.**

In the context of the pandemic, overall food insecurity increased by 62,2%. Moderate food insecurity increased by 76,1% and grave food insecurity by 43,7% as compared to 2013 (IBGE, 2020).

“

One of the greatest problems has been the impossibility of meeting emergency needs, such as hunger. Some families really have nothing to eat, because the breadwinners lost their informal jobs because of the pandemic.

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Piauí

“

(...) it has profoundly affected the lives and routines of women in Xingu (Amazon region), mainly, those that are the providers in these family structures, who are in the majority. This is because, generally, they provide the financial security, and the emotional and psychological equilibrium for their families (...)

Indigenous, Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Mato Grosso



**Loss of work. Job insecurity. The danger of contamination**

“

We have some women who work as day laborers who were the first to be affected by the pandemic. Their employers didn't want them coming into their homes anymore, afraid that they would be carriers of the virus (...)

Indigenous, Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Espírito Santo

“

The main impact was the drying up of work due to isolation and the closing of retail. Everyone works under informal contracts and is vulnerable, without any employee rights guaranteed. Suddenly, you have no food, no money and rent and a lot of bills to pay (...) The anxiety, insecurity, fear, and neediness grow.

Indigenous and Black Leadership. State of São Paulo

One of the consequences of the pandemic on the economy was the devaluation of the currency. Inflation increased the prices of food and cooking gas, also hurting small business people who work in the informal market with the production of finger foods, lunches, sweets etc.

“

There are about 700 *Baianas* on the beaches of Salvador who could no longer sell their food and they didn't get any relief from the municipal government because they didn't have food licenses or registration. 80% of them had no second way to support themselves; all of their income came from their food carts (...)

Black Leadership. State of Bahia

“

The context of the pandemic has been very difficult for workers in the area of culture, because shows, performances and concerts were canceled.

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Pará

“

The difficulty in mobility, due to the reduction of public transport, made it so that many family-farmers had no access to seeds and to selling what they could produce.

Black and Youth Leadership. State of Alagoas

Participants in the research related losses of rights, radicalization of social distances between the rich and poor and the maintenance of structural racism.

“

(...) the territory covered by the [organization] has a culture of informal work imposed by racial prejudice and the lack of public policies that foster the generation of jobs and income. Whether in the city or the country, we work in communities where the majority of people do not have formal work; the majority are street vendors, domestic workers, manicures, day laborers, unemployed and discouraged (,) living on the street, people that abuse alcohol and drugs, sex workers and victims of domestic violence.

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Bahia



## A battle to preserve health! The pandemic just made it worse

The Black population had a greater rate of deaths as compared to the white population, with 172 deaths for each one hundred thousand Blacks versus 115 for the same number of the white population in the municipality of São Paulo (PÓLIS, 2020).

“

**Here in Rio de Janeiro, the number of deaths has increased precipitously. The population that has been hardest hit is brown/Black, poor and living in the favelas. There is a question of race and class that during the pandemic and the crisis has had a direct impact on our bodies.**

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Rio de Janeiro

According to the data assembled by the Consortium of Press Vehicles, registered from collating information from the State Secretaries of Health (G1, 2021), it is estimated that in July of 2020, Brazil registered more than 1500 deaths per day from Covid-19. In March of 2021, this number grew to 2300 deaths per day.



## Work, jobs and income

Some segments of workers suffer more severely from the impact of the pandemic that is affecting the economy of this country: the number of domestic workers, for example, fell 27% in relation to the same quarter of the year 2019 (IBGE, 2020). Women were the group that suffered the greatest number of layoffs from work: in May, 15% of men versus 23,5% of women.

The activists that participated in this research mentioned that, among those most affected, were day laborers, sex workers, collectors of recyclable material and informal vendors. The financial losses of traditional populations, located in rural areas, were exacerbated by prohibition of touristic activities and with the limitation in the distribution of family agriculture harvests or production of handicrafts.

“

**In regard to sex workers, we point out that the possibility of carrying out their work has been seriously compromised, affecting their income and their ability to survive..**

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. Federal District



“

...They are all vulnerable and work in informal jobs, without any guaranteed rights. Suddenly, they find themselves without food or money and with rent and lots of bills to pay... They also find it extremely difficult to register for emergency assistance from the government, due to problems with the language, absence of documents, the lack of ability with technological tools, and incomplete information, and therefore, unable to receive assistance.

Indigenous and Black Leadership.  
State of São Paulo

“

Just like with other marginalized communities, LGBTQI+ people, especially cis and trans women, have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Research has indicated that the unemployment level of LGBTQI+ people is almost twice that of the general population (UFMG and Unicamp, 2020).

LBT and Youth Leadership.  
State of Rio de Janeiro

In the cloud below, the category “Work, Job and Income of members” appears most prominently among organizations and groups with the profile of Black Leadership and LBT (281 times). It is worth noting that the “impact on operation” is frequently mentioned in the comments, as well as in the profile of Black leaders (366 times).

Aumento da Demanda  
Insegurança alimentar  
Apoio para acessar o auxílio emergencial  
Letramento digital  
Saúde Mental das Integrantes  
Desigualdade Digital  
Replanejamento das atividades  
Trabalho, Emprego e Renda  
Paralisação das atividades (temporária)  
Impacto na Atuação  
Vulnerabilidade das Integrantes  
Infraestrutura digital - Depressão  
Adoecimento de pessoas do coletivo (Covid-19)  
Diminuição da renda  
Cancelamento das atividades  
Redução de Recursos  
Impossibilidade de gerar renda  
Financiadores sem recursos  
Tecnologia Digital  
Sobrecarga de trabalho como mulheres



## How were the organizations and groups affected?

The pandemic also had an impact on the activists' organizations and the groups, affecting infrastructure, internal work dynamics and their external social actions.

**Many dreams were put on hold or transformed. The activists tell of the plans they had for making their collective dreams a reality, but how these were reconsidered due to the pandemic.**

The organizations and groups relate that the initial reactions were shock, fright and paralysis. We identified three situations that exemplified changes due to the pandemic in the organizations studied: they adapted their activism toward emergency actions and humanitarian assistance; they stopped their activities for a brief period in order to develop new methods of activism; a minority stopped what they had been doing because their methods were unviable amid the pandemic.



## Social distancing and activism, remote activism

“

The culture of on-site and collective work (...) was historically the methodological basis for the socio environmental and sociocultural movements in the Xingu territory. The strategy of face-to-face communication and interaction was still predominant (...) the interconnection through social media was still little used as a principal tool for social communication.

Indigenous, Black and LBT Leadership. State of Pará

“

Because it limited our circulation around the city, the pandemic affected our actions directly, since the majority of the women who participate in our actions are living in a context of profound vulnerability; they have little or no access to the Internet (...)

Black Leadership.  
State of São Paulo



“

With the arrival of the pandemic, we had to totally suspend our on-site activities, such as the workshops and the fairs we conduct. Our leaders (inside the organization), are also self-employed professionals, who needed to look for assistance in a variety of places in order to feed themselves and their families and so the project was seriously affected, and were temporarily suspended..

Indigenous, Black and LBT Leadership. State of São Paulo

“

One of the problems that affects us during the pandemic is the impossibility of carrying out our activities in public and in the streets of the city, because our mobilizations in the streets keep our group united, raising our battle flags, creating partnerships and bringing diverse forms of art and poetry to different communities..

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership.  
State of Pernambuco



### Digital inequality

The lack of access to digital tools and technologies had consequences for the organizations and groups. The activist activities that increasingly depended on access to digital devices and the Internet suffered from the lack of equipment and education in technology in order to overcome this digital inequality.

“

The question of access was not restricted solely to the participation of women in the network, but also made the articulation of the management team impracticable, given that not all of them have the right type of cellular phone, or because they live in remote areas that doesn't receive an Internet signal or where Internet access is provided at too high of a cost.

Black Leadership. State of São Paulo

“

50% of the women in the network live in poverty in the periferias, and they don't have sophisticated cellular phones or proper Internet to allow them to participate in online activities.

Black and LBT Leadership. Federal District

“

The pandemic showed us that we need to be connected by other means that include access to technologies that were previously not a part of our reality, but which today are seen as essential for mobilization and political articulation.

Indigenous and Black Leadership. State of Rio Grande do Sul



## Mental illness among activists

Sensations of fear, uncertainty, and insecurity, coupled with personal losses and feelings of impotence, in addition to suffering from overwork, being unable to perform on-site activities, an increase in demands as well as fear of catching the virus were some of the elements highlighted that correlated activism with mental health problems among the members.

“

**(...) mental illness in members as a result of a sensation of impotence in the face of so many demands. We held weekly workshops on self-care because it was getting so serious that we realized that if we weren't well, we couldn't help other people..**

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Piauí

Some groups were directly affected by sickness or loss of members from Covid-19. In addition to suffering from grief, it increased fear of new contamination among the members, as well as anxiety and greater emotional vulnerability.

“

**(...) the increase in the number of cases of depression. Many of the Indigenous people are depressed from the isolation or from having lost a relative who they were not even able to say goodbye to. (...) The number of psychologists available to care for the Indigenous is insufficient. One youth committed suicide this week due to severe depression.**

Indigenous Leadership.  
State of Mato Grosso do Sul

“

**(...) we stopped our work and went into social isolation, following the orientation of the health agencies, but even so, many colleagues in the collective were infected.**

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Ceará

“

**In general, we are women, some of us mothers, juggling home office, maternity and militancy; others are reinventing their lives after having lost their jobs. Overall, the demand for psycho-social appointments and support to keep centered and reinvent our lives and deal with the socio-economic impact has increased in traditional communities.**

Black Leadership. State of Bahia

“

**In the month of March, with the arrival of the pandemic, our coordination experienced a moment of desperation as we started to receive moans and cries for help from women who were lacking food and facing hunger.**

Black and LBT Leadership.  
State of Pernambuco



## Reduction in financing

With the policies of social distancing and quarantine for the prevention of contagion from Covid-19, and the surprise and shortage of answers on how to administer the crisis brought on by the pandemic, we experienced weeks of paralysis. **Financing for social organizations fell during the first months of the pandemic.** Public and private financiers cut off support with the paralyzation of on-site activities or put off new investments and contracts with civil social organizations.

“

(...) one of our principal projects under negotiation suffered a cut of about 70%, which led to the reduction of resources for other activities.

Black and LBT Leadership.  
State of Rio de Janeiro

“

We haven't been able to renew the financing from our donors for projects that fund the institution and allow for constant updating of our vehicle of communication and the teams that work on it. Many of these donors have turned the focus of their resources to institutions and actions that directly combat and promote the prevention of Covid-19.

Black Leadership. State of Bahia

“

With the pandemic, the group lost the financial support of the municipal government and isn't working at the moment.

Youth, not Black, not Indigenous, not LBT  
Leadership. State of Minas Gerais

One of the main sources of financing for the organizations and groups that participated in the research are individual donations, with 53,4% of the groups receiving this type of donation. There were many who related that their partners (individual or institutional) had no resources, and that this had a direct impact on their budgets.

“

Financial resources and donations diminished significantly; the donors suspended their funding and both individuals and entities found it difficult to maintain donations.

Black Leadership. State of Sergipe

“

Our principal source of income, which was donations from individuals, went down to practically zero with the pandemic.

LBT Leadership. State of Amazonas

Activities like events and sales were directly impacted by the social distancing measures, as the online activities weren't the principal focus of the majority of the organizations and groups. **51%** of the organizations and groups that are a part of this research use the staging of events as a second source of financing. **36,6%** gave sales as one of their sources of financing. And a greater part of the organizations and groups made the best of the challenge by performing actions related to social protection on the front lines with more vulnerable groups and adapted their activism, even with scarce financial resources.

“

**We were seriously affected by the interruption of the sale of the women's handiwork (currently our principal source of income) in the tourist cities near the Indigenous lands.**

Indigenous Leadership. State of São Paulo

“

**Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we weren't able to start our cutting and sewing workshop, which we still intend to have as soon as it is safe. However, all of the resources raised for the startup of this workshop were used to buy basic food supplies for families in our community, so we still don't know how we are going to manage it.**

Black Leadership. State of Rio de Janeiro

“

**The positions of leadership and coordination in our collective are currently held by us, Black trans women from the river and forest areas. This has caused the activities of the movement to be reduced by about 95%, given that the fight for basic survival has become more intense for us, stopping a lot of our colleagues from returning to their activities in promoting empowerment and strengthening our collective struggle.**

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Pará

Many organizations and groups haven't been able to hold on to their whole teams, not even the volunteers, without any individual or institutional donations. Scarce or limited investments for payment of personnel and for social security contributions illustrate the reality of the **lack of importance given to activist workforce.**



### The actions of the State have been worse than insufficient; many times they have been damaging

The Federal Government was slow to develop and implement public policies for combating the pandemic and its consequences. Activists had to develop and implement their own measures for mitigating the crisis in order to guarantee their own survival and to support their communities and their territories. They were called to action, especially the groups and organizations with Black, LBTIs and Indigenous leadership.

“

(...) as a result of the pandemic of coronavirus, the community sought us out requesting help in combating Covid-19 and its consequences. Due to the lack of concrete actions from municipal, state and federal governments to deal with the pandemic in the favelas, it was urgent for us to take action.

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Rio de Janeiro

“

Therefore, we, as a center (inside the community), found ourselves directly involved in the demands that arose in this context. (...) So, the pandemic affected us directly with the flow of these demands for guarantees of fundamental rights.

Indigenous, Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Pará

## The pandemic intensified incidences of violence and human rights violations.



The National Association of Travestis and Transsexuals (ANTRA) points out that 175 trans people were murdered in Brazil in 2020, representing an increase of 40% as compared to the previous year. In 2020, one Brazilian transsexual or travesti was murdered every 2 days. Additionally, the lethality of the pandemic increased throughout the year of 2020, reaching a peak in 2021.

With less access to public services in social assistance and health, and in situations of no job security and social marginalization, the LBTI population was an easy target in the crisis caused by the pandemic.

30,4% of the participants in this research have projects that benefit bisexual women, 30,1% transsexuals, 23% lesbians, 11,3% intersex people, while, as to the leadership profiles, 44,1% declare that they have LBTI leadership.

“

(...) for many LBT people, access to housing and establishment of a home involve long years of trying a variety of strategies of resistance and survival. (...) Furthermore, there are many other factors and reports that indicate the urgency for keeping a close and empathetic eye on LBT lives in the face of the pandemic, because we are increasingly challenged by unemployment, violence, a lack of access to health and housing, as well as psychological illness and suicide.

LBT Leadership. State of Amazonas

“

Immediately, in the first few months, violence against LGBTQI+ showed its cruel face with hate crimes, the type carried out with blatant cruelty and with the resurgence of suicides.

Black and LBT Leadership.  
State of Pernambuco

Reports and information coming from civil society denounced the increase in conflicts over land, and cases of invasion of Indigenous territories, former Black traditional communities and environmental preservation. There was an increase in the number of judicial suits, threats, arrests, murders and the disappearance of Indigenous leaders (APIB, 2020). In addition, there was an increase in police violence in poor areas of large urban centers, whose principal victims are among the Black population.

“

In order to overcome these difficulties many of these women who live in the capital returned to the Black traditional communities and their small plots of land, so what we are seeing now is a return to the traditional activities undertaken by us, the *quilombola* women.

Black and Youth Leadership. State of Maranhão

Gasto de recursos humanos e financeiros pra adaptação das atividades à virtualidade  
Adoecimento de pessoas do Coletivo (Covid-19)  
Atividades emergenciais  
Replanejamento das atividades  
Saúde Mental das Integrantes  
Diminuição da renda  
Trabalho, Emprego e Renda  
Insegurança alimentar  
Demissão  
Infraestrutura Tecnológica  
Impacto na Atuação  
Medo  
Tecnologia Digital  
Letramento Digital  
Redução de Recursos  
Tentativa suicídio  
Cancelamento das atividades  
Aumento da Demanda  
Impossibilidade de gerar renda  
Vulnerabilidade das Integrantes  
Paralisação das atividades (temporária)  
Desigualdade Digital  
Sobrecarga de trabalho como mulheres  
Cancelamento de editais, contratos, programas institucionais, parcerias  
Aumento do acolhimento por violência doméstica

The cloud indicates a greater prevalence of narratives related to the cases of people catching Covid-19 in organizations and groups with Indigenous leadership, (37 organizations/groups of the complete sample).





## How are activists overcoming the consequences of the pandemic?



**Listening to the voice of activists is listening to acts of resistance.**

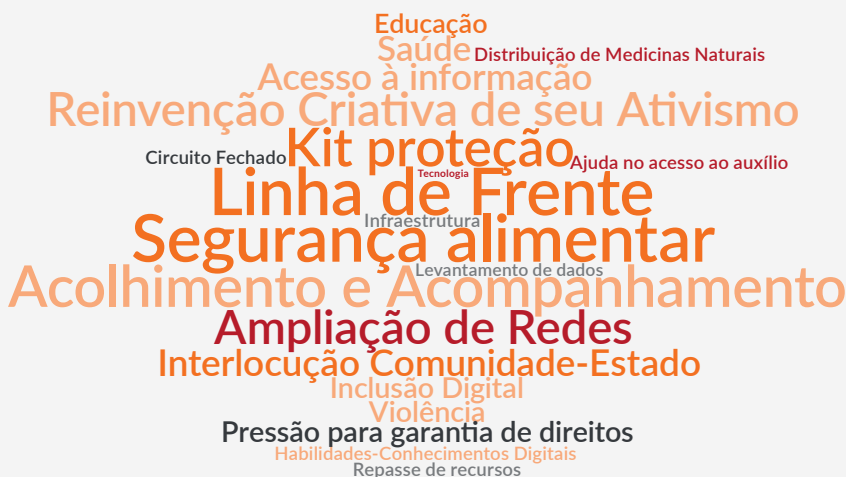
With an incredible capacity for articulation, the built answers from these social movements came quickly and were varied. The activists mobilized on multiple fronts: food security; actions aimed at controlling the spread of the virus; distribution of natural medicines; emotional, psychological and legal support; intermediation of access to programs and public policies; generation of income; production of data; circulation of quality information; actions aimed at promoting digital equality; passing on resources and other strategies adapted to the specific needs of the communities being helped.

Operating on the front lines, the organizations managed a creative reinvention of activism, creating collective and communitarian care. With these strategies, the organizations and groups recreated their models of activism to confront the crisis.

“

**Little by little, we start to build new ways to operate and to overcome the impact of the pandemic. (...) Care and solidarity, understood here as sharing what we have and not sharing what is left over, has been the call of our Collective and of the women in the territories.**

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Maranhão



In the cloud, we can see the importance of three categories: the front lines, food security and expansion of networks. Food security is a subcategory under the front lines that was the most frequently mentioned. One thing that was clear is that many organizations and groups expanded their networks and developed virtual mechanisms for receipt of donations to guarantee food security for the communities in which they operated. They used their prior knowledge and learned new tools in a short space of time.



## Solidarity and Resistance

“

We operated supporting collectives, networks, groups, associations, forums, with these actions: collection of materials for hygiene; collection of food supply; collection of clothes for victims of torrential rains; help with emergency aid registration in communities with no Internet access; articulation with transportation unions for the removal of people in situations of risk; orientation and elaboration of a project for raising resources to fight Covid-19; support for the reporting of cases of enticement of minors to the Social Services bureaus and police stations; mechanisms for protection of communities to provide aid to victims of violence; orientations for legal remedies to suspend the collection of debts and its negotiation; relocation in the job market; installation of routers for free Internet; shelter for women and youths, natural gas to provide more cooking fuel to the community during actions aimed at combating Covid-19. We identified women in the communities acting on a variety of fronts in the defense of human rights, who, at the moment, are also suffering from the impact of the pandemic but continue to work tirelessly to “transform reality”. At these times, it becomes obvious that those who have the least, help the most. We expanded the connections between our networks, inter-networks and, beyond the networks, the interiorization of the actions and the exchanges with women in other states and countries..

Black Leadership. State of Bahia

Given this context, the organizations and groups whose activism activities normally didn't involve direct assistance (humanitarian), such as the distribution of food, found themselves faced with the urgent need to supply these more basic needs for survival, because hunger was once again a reality for many of these populations.

“

It is important to prioritize actions that deal with the collateral damages caused by it [Covid-19], among these, hunger being the main and most urgent one, since low-income families are the ones that most frequently suffer losses of formal jobs and the pandemic made it impossible to perform informal jobs, the greatest source of income for the population of *favelas* and poor communities.

Black and Youth Leadership.  
State of Rio de Janeiro



“

We had the support of the Teacher's Union [...] with donations of 10 food baskets and money that was converted into the purchase of 5 gas vouchers, because without canisters of natural gas these families couldn't cook in their homes and just a food basket would be wasted.

Black Leadership. State of Bahia

“

(...) the collective became more united; campaigns for collection of foodstuffs, alcohol, and cleaning materials were carried out within the territory and the village. The territory felt solidarity from the collective, as we formed teams of volunteers to help the mothers who had to go to work and didn't have anyone to leave their children with, or elderly who needed attention. We also helped some people to register for emergency assistance.

Indigenous and Black Leadership.  
State of Rio Grande do Norte

“

(...) we were trying to survive through voluntary actions between friends. With donations of some food baskets, we purchased material for basic hygiene that was manufactured by the community itself to strengthen ourselves. We assembled hygiene kits for distribution, made fabric masks to distribute to the community making use of leftover cloth.

Black Leadership. State of Ceará

“

(...) we know that hunger doesn't wait. The strategy worked out was to offer social assistance, promoting food and nutritional security with the distribution of soup and corn meal, donating 300 portions every Thursday..

Black Leadership. State of Sergipe



## Strategies for collective and communitarian care

With the **increase in domestic violence**, the demand for shelter grew for many organizations and groups, especially for the 37,7% that already work in this area. The activists made use of various strategies to adapt the manner in which they operate.

“

We need to pay even more attention to the conditions that people are experiencing in indigenous lands, such as hunger and an increase in domestic violence. We, who manage the network, have to make ourselves more available to the women in the communities who need orientation and support and those that need help. Unfortunately, there aren't many of us with the right background and who are able to perform this work on a volunteer basis (...)

LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Bahia

**Structural racism has hit the Black and Indigenous populations more severely.** The emotional and mental aspect was widely touched on by the groups. For Indigenous peoples, the history of pandemics and the fear of becoming extinct intensified a trauma that has never healed.

“

For our people [ethnicity], this pandemic of the coronavirus is one more battle among other battles that the Indigenous peoples of the world have had to fight, difficult battles in which billions of Indigenous people have died.

Indigenous, Black and LBT Leadership. State of Alagoas



### Strategies for inclusion and digital access

The pandemic surprised the groups who could no longer work in person and didn't have the equipment to move to a virtual environment.

“

(...) and we had to learn how to use other methodologies, previously unfamiliar to many of us and our communities.

Black Leadership. State of Bahia

“

By raising financial donations, we were able to buy cellular phones, contract for Internet services, and, most importantly, establish interactions through digital communication channels with the participants, mostly, elderly people without familiarity with new technologies.

Youth Leadership. State of Minas Gerais

“

The formative process will get restarted this month and we've resolved the question of Internet access with Solidary PC. One woman with good Internet service in her home will receive visits from two or three without access, so that they can watch the classes together (...) we have to reinvent ourselves in this scenario.

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership.  
State of Ceará

“

We reinvented ourselves with remote assistance, with mentorship in application groups, live meetings carried out with the partnership of organizations on Instagram and online assistance to solve doubts.

LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Goiás



A variety of organizations and groups developed digital mechanisms for mobilizing resources and for income generation. A lot of them ran crowdfunding initiatives and campaigns online to raise money, whether for emergency actions related to the consequences of Covid-19 in the communities, or to maintain the continuity of their efforts in activism. This crowdfunding initiatives many times were done together with an expansion of their network of partners. Activists invested quickly and creatively to confront the challenge of adapting their activities to remote channels.

“

We brought our colleagues and their work to Instagram, offered promotion, creation of art and logos free of charge and, in the future, we want to create what will be the first collaborative virtual store designed just by independent women from the *periferias*.

Indigenous, Black and LBT Leadership. State of São Paulo



### Network activism, quick answers and innovation

The data in the study confirms the **tendency of Brazilian social movements to act collectively**: 72,1% act in partnership with other social movements and 80% of the organizations operate in networks.

“

(...) in addition to strengthening ourselves by raising donations, we are creating a strong network for mutual support, in which these women have a writer's workshop and everything is in a format that places importance on the values of digital inclusion, affection, thoughtfulness and autonomy.

Indigenous, Black, LBT and Youth Leadership.  
State of Rio de Janeiro

“

One example of this exchange, was when we looked for support for Afro-entrepreneurship for the Black women of the collective, seeking to acquire and facilitate the delivery of products and foodstuffs produced in quilombos and Indigenous communities to sympathetic-sustainable consumers, and requesting donations of fabrics so that the women could produce masks in our quilombo, and always maintain dialogue and popular communication with society, primarily where access to information is limited.

LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Mato Grosso

“

The collective developed a plan for production of community gardens in houses with yards and a lot of people, in order to help lower expenses and have a healthier food supply.

Black and LBT Leadership.  
State of Espírito Santo

“

In the *sertão* [backwoods] region, we were also able to carry out the distribution of seeds to women farmers. This distribution benefitted 52 women.

Black and Youth Leadership. State of Alagoas

The research showed that the organizations had a great capacity for self-management, as well as to quickly respond to challenges. They were the ones who entered into action against malnutrition, sub-nutrition, hunger, unemployment and a variety of incidences of violence that was heightened during the pandemic. They offered emotional, legal and psychological support for women, LBTIs and Black and Indigenous women.

“

We looked for entities that could provide psychological support, job groups, information and referrals in the case of domestic violence, information on grant calls for proposals, creation of a site for online sales, and promotion of products made by the Afro-entrepreneurs. We encouraged Black Money among the groups in the social networks, to practice Afro-consumerism.

Black Leadership. State of Paraná

“

We created a poster with orientations on how to avoid contagion and with the numbers that people could call with complaints or to seek help. While delivering food baskets and masks, which is done individually, we talked to people about how to deal with domestic violence, reporting it and asking for help. The poster is hung outside the houses of women to whom we are providing support. We organized an online circle of sharing and emotional support, but participation is weak because most of the women don't have computers.

Black Leadership and LBT. Federal District

“

We organized an online pool using the catarse platform, in order to raise funds to try to guarantee safer quarantines for migrants and LGBTQI+ refugees through donations of non-perishable foodstuffs, legumes and fruits, as well as hygiene products, transportation to healthcare appointments, gas canisters for cooking food, and access to communication, medicine and housing social assistance.

Indigenous, LBT and Youth Leadership.  
State of Rio de Janeiro

14,2% of the organizations that participated in the research study include sex workers as beneficiaries of their actions. These organizations developed strategies for support for this population.

“

the [organization] created a committee for prevention and combat of Covid-19, and tried to negotiate with the management of hotels to find a place for the sex workers who work in the region to stay. We started a campaign to raise donations and support for these sex workers during the pandemic. The sex workers, abandoned by the State and left without any options, went to work on the streets of downtown [city], making them more vulnerable to Covid-19 and incidences of violence.

Black, LBT and Youth Leadership. State of Minas Gerais



The flexibility of the support given by some institutions and donors was fundamental for organizations and groups, so those who had already received or were about to receive resources earmarked for specific projects, were able to make changes in the use of funds. This flexibility allowed for actions to be taken to ensure food security for people and communities that were extremely vulnerable.

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We were able to get around the problem because we received a lot of donations of foodstuffs and support in the form of resources for two projects, [donor A and donor B], who allowed for the diversion of funds for the purchase of food baskets for the population.

Indigenous and LBT Leadership. State of Roraima

**Women and LBTI organizations strategically faced each challenge that arose.**

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We are strengthening virtual and remote actions through our research into oral traditions, building up our *YouTube* channel that features narratives of women of resistance.

Black and LBT Leadership.  
State of São Paulo

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Given all of these circumstances, the context didn't paralyze us and, understanding our place in the defense of Black lives, we changed our operating tactics to get together with the local leaders and Black families to plan direct action for local mobilization for the production and diffusion of information related to the prevention of Covid-19 (through the voices of the women in the communities) (...) The effects of the pandemic continue and so does our fight. Now we are putting pressure on the local authorities to get their support and we continue to move forward with our work against structural racism that is putting people in a situation of greater vulnerability.

Black and LBT Leadership. State of Paraíba

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The loss of ancestral memory in terms of food and diet, and the lack of public policies has led us to create audiovisual strategies for making complaints and for promoting forms of prevention and care related to traditional knowledge, because we believe that audiovisual elements contribute to the democratization of information between children and elders, people who are literate and illiterate... this type of language makes communication easier for everyone.

Indigenous, Black and LBT Leadership.  
State of Alagoas

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In the face of all of the adversities, in addition to discussions, the women have been selling their handicrafts (crochet, homemade masks) and food (snacks, pizzas, cakes, finger food etc.) by promoting them on social networks and offering delivery (...) Other women of the organization learned how to plant vegetables while others intensified their cultivation.

Black and Youth Leadership. State of Bahia

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Our strategy for overcoming and for inclusion for Black women will be to invest in knowledge, in Afro-entrepreneurship with alternatives to deal with the inequalities aggravated by Covid-19. Autonomy, empowerment and the generation of income for Black women are the foundations of our proposal.

Black Leadership. State of Mato Grosso

After listening to the voices of the leaders of the organizations and groups led by women and LGBTI, most of those informal organizations, **one question remained:** If they've done so much, with such confidence and creativity with so few resources, **what would they be capable of doing with more support for their activism?**



# **Brazil and the activism of women and LGBTI people during the pandemic**



The analysis of the research demonstrated the diligence with which the organizations and groups of women and LGBTI organized themselves to engage in actions of solidarity and resistance to the pandemic.

This research study reflects the necessity for the flexibilization of the resources provided to organizations and groups led by women and by LGBTI that make real social impact.

**The actions on the front lines demonstrate the capacity for transformation, adaptation and innovation of these organizations led by women in Brazil**, as they worked on the production and distribution of masks, kits for hygiene, food baskets, distributing emergency resources and confronting the challenges of digital activism in contexts with limited or nonexistent Internet access.

Brazil has very particular characteristics. In addition to its territorial diversity, **most organizations or groups of activists have no legal structure**. Our research points out that more than 50% are informal. **This reality demands new formats and new modalities for investment**, as well as actions of flexibilization of resources.

Self-financing showed its importance in the volume of investment from the activists themselves toward the construction of a just and sustainable society. The women, with their entrepreneurship, mobilized resources through events, the sale of handicraft products, family agriculture, crowdfunding and a lot of volunteer work. They didn't stop investing even in the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic. The research verified that self-financing isn't enough to maintain these organizations and these groups, and that it can even contribute to undermining the work of the activists.

The data indicates that the **organizations have little access to the philanthropic ecosystem**. In addition to all the challenges inherent in the territories where they work, they are also faced with the inequality of access to resources, primarily in the north, in the Amazon, and in the northeast part of the country.

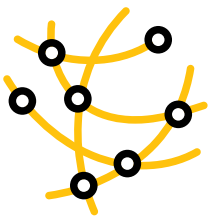
**How is it possible to fight racism, all forms of violence and fight for the preservation of our natural resources, without a planned support from the philanthropy ecosystem?**

The digital poverty in which women-led organizations are inserted has become evident, especially in the case of those led by Black, Indigenous and young women. Access to technology (computers, cell phones and Internet) is precarious. How can these organizations maintain their activism, especially with the migration to virtual environments brought about by the pandemic, without access to technology? The social justice philanthropy ecosystem must urgently direct investment to increase access to technology and digital equity.



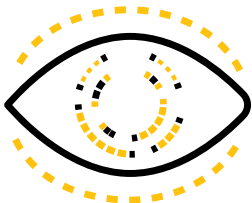
This study has proven that informal organizations led by Indigenous, Black, Quilombola and riverside communities, are at the front lines and need investment for institutional strengthening, infrastructure and teams.

Brazil is gigantic and has very diverse regions. These organizations know their territories and, therefore, **it is necessary to trust their diagnoses and the way they choose to act**. Some specific aspects deserve attention: the informality, the horizontal nature of their structures, the precariousness of the organizations and groups and the fact that most organizations do not have their own headquarters.



**The survey highlights a strong tendency in Brazilian activism: working in a network. It is essential to take advantage of, stimulate and support these movements.**

These organizations act collectively and on a variety of themes, such as: digital access and autonomy; food security; work, income generation; mental health; precautions against the increase of violence; protection of land, territories and environment. They are social entrepreneurs and were able to generate income from it.



**Why did ELAS+ make the decision to look at the data from our grant application process, systematize it and transform it into research?**

Because, in these two decades, ELAS+ deeply respect and has been touched by the diversity and resistance of women and LGBTI, acting as an independent fund, whose intention is to donate in order to transform.

This research offers consolidated data for investors and partners on the importance and the protagonism of organizations led by women and trans people for social transformation in Brazil.

CSOs, the majority led by Black people, that even with little financial resources are able to build empathetic bonds of trust, and surprise with their capacity for self-management, all in the face of the pandemic and the negligence and abuse of the State.

The responses of these activists to the pandemic were fast, with a capacity for innovation and articulation of networks. The philanthropic ecosystem needs to recognize and value this activism, and it is indispensable to recognize that

they are agents that cause profound transformations in their territories and communities. There is potential to further develop this activism, which is in the interest of philanthropy for social justice.

This research data and findings wish to inspire new philanthropic and social justice partnerships, collaborations, donor alliances to enable more resources for global south women & LGBTI led activism.



## Have they done a lot with almost nothing?

**Imagine if these organizations received all the support they needed** to implement their initiatives and their solutions for social transformation?

The power of action revealed in the strategies devised to combat inequalities, structural racism, and the pandemic, proves the importance of civil society in building the path to social justice.

Providing material and immaterial resources so that they can carry out their initiatives and fulfill their collective dreams is to enable the continuity of the actions and to ensure the accomplishment of their potential.

**We need to listen to the voices of the resistance to advance.**



# Activism and Pandemic in Brazil



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