Interactive and Collaborative Civil Society Organizations Map in Brazil

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Introduction

Civil society organizations are critical actors in the advancement of universal values around human rights, the environment, labour standards and anti-corruption. As global market integration has advanced, their role has gained particular importance in aligning economic activities with social and environmental priorities. In Brazil, there are about 303,000 organizations mapped in research in 2013. In addition, this research produced a platform to turn this information accessible to the wider populations. This tool is an interactive internet geoportal where is possible to localize geographically an organization, nearby streets, points of interests, and other interactive functions using an internet browser.

Actually, this geoportal shows a lot of information about social civil organizations as a transparency portal in a map perspective. We can search for organizations by regions, states or cities, or simply by the name of the organization. Indeed, the platform stores a large number of variables of organizations, which are presented in a popup resumed way or in a more detailed view segmented by groupsof information. Furthermore, the geoportal is completely accessible to people with special needs, following recommendations of W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). Finally, it is intended to be collaborative, allowing organizations to update their data and the public in general to evaluate them.

Motivation

There are three major motivations behind this project. Firstly, to improve research about social organizations in Brazil. There was already some research into this area in Brazil called FASFIL, which studied private non-profit foundations and organizations. However, there was a need to greater understand the specific sector of social organizations, where these organizations are and their relationship with federal government, which was the second major motivation.

The third major motivation was “The Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for Social Organizations”. The federal government of Brazil, who conceived this project, were producing a proposal for the framework. This law establishes general standards for voluntary partnerships established by the federal government, states,
cities and other institutions in the public sector with civil society organizations. In fact, the law covers the cooperation arrangements to meet public interest purposes. The framework sets guidelines for development policy and cooperation with civil society organizations and establishes terms for collaboration and funding them. This map and the research help to construct the proposal that resulted in the Brazilian law 13.019 in effect from July 31st, 2014.

Methodology

The major design challenge was to merge several databases, which had never been aggregated before, in one unified spatial database. Actually, eighteen sparse databases by fourteen departments were aggregated in a relational, geospatial and analytical database used in the geoportal. In fact, the research has mapped all Civil Social Organizations (CSO) registered in Brazil and CSOs that had some relationship with the federal government during the period between 2008 to 2012, enabling the analysis of this data and consolidation of it into a dynamic and collaborative map accessed online (available on the internet) by any citizen.

Two large databases are at the core of this work. Firstly the SICONV, the Cooperation System of Federal Government sustained by the Planning Department, where all data from agreements firmed with central government are aggregated. The second one is RAIS, an annual report made by all companies in Brazil, profit-making or non-profit-making, sustained by the Labour Department. Indeed, this database allowed the identification and classification of all CSOs regularly registered on the National Register of Companies and the identification of some labour relations used in organizations. In addition, the approximately 303,000 CSOs registered in Brazil were classified using similar methodology to that used by the FASFIL 2012 research. To be more precise, from the basic dataset all other bases were added to the geoportal database.

The geoportal database aggregated other databases from different departments. Therefore, a variety of new variables was included with information about several ways of interaction between CSOs and the federal government. As a result, it was possible to make a broader analysis of this sector nationally. In the map, the variables were segmented into five great information groups: General Data, Funding, Labour Relations, Certifications and Commissions & Boards. More specifically, in the General Data group we can find CSO registration information such as name, address, email, website address, economic activity and representative information. In the Funding group, financial resources spent by government with CSO are detailed. The source of this information comes from three databases: SICONV, the main agreement system; SALICWEB, which stores
information about cultural incentives; and FINEP, which stores information about funding for projects for research and development. The Labour Relations group shows information about the types of labour relationships in CSOs and the quantity of people working in them. In addition, the certification group brings information about which certification an organization has. In Brazil, there are some official documents issued by the government to certify an organization as health care organizations, social care organizations, educational organizations, public utility organizations or public interest organizations. Finally, in the Commissions & Boards group we can identify organizations with social participation within committees. These democratic spaces discuss specific themes such as the environment, water use, the protection of children amongst others due to formulate public policies.

The map presents three important and innovative features: accessibility, collaboration and transparency. First, the platform is completely accessible since it does not have any access restrictions to information, even to people with special needs. It is true that the citizen has to register in the map to access information that is more detailed. However, anyone can do this with a little personal information and effort. Indeed, the platform follows completely all recommendations from the W3C consortium, which is responsible for defining and developing standards for leading the Web to its full potential. Furthermore, the map is a collaborative tool, allowing its users to recommend an organization to other users. In the future, some other collaboration aspects will be included in the map such as the update of CSO localization in the map or the organization page, which will allow a CSO representative to update their registration with extra information other than that from the official institutions. Finally, using the map it is possible to access information about relationships between the federal government and a CSO, fulfilling some requirements from the freedom of Information Access Law of Brazil.

Results

The Map of the Civil Society Organizations of Brazil is one of the results achieved by the research carried out by the Getulio Vargas Foundation called “Civil Society Organizations and their partnerships with the Federal Government”. This map was launched at the end of 2014 and is currently in a beta version available at https://mapaosc.ipea.gov.br. Actually, now the Institute of Applied Economy Research (IPEA) is responsible for continuing to develop and maintain the geoportal.
As a result, in the map it is possible to access consolidated information about the research in infographics. In addition, the platform has an indicator matrix where initially four indicators for analysis can be found: Organization quantity, Value of Funding, Partnership quantity and Labour position quantity. We can aggregate these indicators by city, state and regions of Brazil. As a consequence, it is possible to analyse the universe of a CSO from a geographic distribution perspective. In addition, as the database concentrates a vast number of variables, it is possible to generate new analysis indicators. From another perspective, the organizations quantity indicator can be seen in clusters in the map. These clusters show another geospatial analysis perspective of the same data, grouping CSOs in a non-specific territory delimitation.

The research is a snapshot of 4 years, from 2008 until 2012. During this period, about 303,000 social organizations in Brazil were identified. The vast majority (44%) can be found in the Southeast. There is a large concentration in the Northeast (23%) and the South (22%). In the North, where the Amazon is located, and in the Central-West, concentrates only 11% of all social organizations.
There are about 2.1 million people working on social organizations. However, 74% of organizations do not have any paid workers, only volunteers and associated people. Only 4% of social organizations have more than 20 people working for them.

As you can see on the chart below, throughout the study period, from the 7.3 million reais public funding allocated to social organizations in Brazil, half was allocated in the Southeast. Following that, the South received 25% of federal funding and the Northeast received 15% of total public funding. In other words, 90% of total federal funding was concentrated in these three regions. Only 10% of total funding was allocated to other regions.
all funding was allocated to Northern and Central-West regions, of this only 3% in the Amazon territory.

In conclusion, this map is an initiative from the Federal Government of Brazil, supported by the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV) and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) that from now on will continue to maintain and develop the platform. The geoportal is a relevant initiative towards the increase of a more clear and open view of the civil society organizations in Brazil.

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