



Collective Declaration from the WINGS Latin America and the Caribbean Affinity Group¹

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São Paulo, October 30, 2019

We are a group of 46 associations, networks, academic centers, community foundations, intermediary funds, civil society representatives, among other support organizations representing the diversity of the philanthropic sector across Latin America and the Caribbean gathered in Sao Paulo to develop a common vision for a thriving philanthropic and civil society sector in the region. We represent thousands of foundations, families, corporations, high-net-worth individuals (HNWI), individual donors, and organized communities who are working to advance human welfare across the continent.

There is a huge potential to grow the volume and improve the effectiveness and positive impact of giving and private social investment at all levels of society in the region – middle class, communities, families, businesses, investors, as well as common citizens. These actors are already playing a critical role in contributing to the common good and building democratic fabric, and much more could be achieved with the right incentives and enabling environment.

The limited data that is available shows us that the region needs to improve in terms of the culture of giving and the enabling environment for the sector. According to the [CIVICUS Monitor](#), civic freedoms are under significant attack in 14 countries of the region. Over half of people (54%) in the Americas live in countries with serious civic space restrictions. Studies like the [CAF World Giving Index](#) shows the culture of giving in Latin America is still low compared to other regions. Also, according to the [Lilly Family School of Philanthropy](#) from Indiana University, Latin America occupies the ninth place, out of eleven positions, in the enabling conditions of a region's philanthropic environment.

Public authorities and decision-makers should recognize the importance of the philanthropic sector and actively promote an enabling regulatory and policy environment to unlock more and better private capital which can help achieve the SDGs in the region and build stable societies and economies.

On the contrary, we observe with growing concern a global and regional trend to target and vilify philanthropic and civil society actors through heightened restrictions on their operations.

¹ The group is comprised of 46 members from 29 organizations in 12 countries. For more information visit: <https://www.wingsweb.org/page/AffinityLAC>

The attacks and restrictions currently imposed are wildly out of proportion when weighed against the societal benefits of an active, engaged civil sector. In particular, the benefits of responsible, innovative philanthropy are threatened by current trends.

We express our will to harness our collective power in order to help civil society addressing these pressing issues and to develop a culture of giving and solidarity in Latin America. We commit to strengthen our collaboration and dialogue among ourselves, with other civil society networks and other stakeholders, and with governments to build a favorable environment for our sector to thrive. The enabling environment that underpins the work of philanthropy includes many components like bank de-risking, crossborder giving, burdensome reporting/registration, tax incentives, civic space, the right of association, funding mechanisms, advocacy, amongst many others.

We will continue strengthening regional coordination and articulation of our respective initiatives to promote an enabling environment and to be a constructive interlocutor for authorities at regional level to discuss policies that affect the sector, including financial and private policies.

We also seek to improve the practice of philanthropy itself, so that funders are more equitable and inclusive in their practices, leading to greater effectiveness of their giving, but also to greater accountability and transparency, at times in which people become more distrustful of established institutions.

We value differences within civil society and believe new partnerships should be built based on each actor's specific value-added. We agree on the need to develop a new positive narrative about philanthropy and civil society, one that will win back the hearts and minds of citizens, and to engage in processes that create new knowledge and a more accessible, inspiring language. Also we need to speak louder about the role of philanthropy in systems change that requires a long term strategy and a steadfast funding commitment to that strategy.

We are calling all interested actors to join us in this effort to promote a strong, diverse, sustainable, effective, accountable and independent philanthropic sector in the region. If you would like to be a part of the discussion and help our call, consider joining the WINGS Latin America and the Caribbean Affinity Group and help to bring this conversation and the coming actions further.

For further information, please contact [Nadya Hernández](#), WINGS Programs Coordinator.