



BRAZIL SIGNALS SPOTLIGHT 2025

A Collective Commitment to Transform Brazil's Future

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INTRODUCING THE BRAZIL SIGNALS SPOTLIGHT



Esther Dweck
Minister of Management and
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Why should we care about the future when the present feels so urgent? Why should we invest time and resources in considering the next decades? In times of polycrisis, is it still possible to imagine meaningful alternative futures—and to do so without turning away from the challenges we face today? What can futures exercises offer to politicians, business leaders, social movements and—above all—to young people who are inheriting this world?

Brazil has gone through turbulent times over the past decade. The country has faced multiple shocks—political, economic, technological, institutional, cultural and others. Similar processes have unfolded in other parts of the world during the same period. To a certain extent, some of these phenomena—such as the rise of the far right, political polarisation, the collapse of mainstream media and the dismantling of the administrative state—have been interconnected.

The past is no longer a reliable compass for understanding the present. People are scarcely recognising their own countries. Social cognitive dissonance has been magnified by the rise of social media. The meaning of belonging has been disrupted. Inequality has reached unprecedented levels. The impressive achievements in reducing deforestation—crucial for combating climate change both nationally and globally—were reversed in just a few years under denialist governments. Several areas of government were severely affected by discontinuity, dismantling and collapse, driven by processes of institutional entropy.

At the same time, powerful counter-movements are emerging. Under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's leadership, Brazil has chosen a path of democratic strengthening, social inclusion, environmental responsibility and active international engagement. Rebuilding the State—its institutions and its capacity to plan, coordinate and deliver—is a central part of this choice.

Generation gaps are emerging dramatically in different ways. The generation that experienced the authoritarian regime, democratisation and hyperinflation in Brazil is leaving the stage. Digital transformation has upended the power hierarchy in modern organisations: young people at the bottom often know more about the core business than the managers

and business owners at the top. Millions of young adults fall into the “neither-nor” category: neither working nor studying. The advent of AI is forcing national institutions to rethink their operations and their futures.

Brazil is experiencing multiple dawns and twilights across various dimensions. The interregnum between the old and the new has become more intense and complex due to the simultaneous nature of multiple transitions—demographic, climatic, energy, digital, ecological, epidemiological, educational, labour-related, financial and others.

At the Ministry of Management and Innovation in Public Services (MGI), our mandate is precisely to help rebuild and transform the State: valuing public servants, modernising management, expanding digital public infrastructure, and using tools such as public procurement to foster innovation, sustainable development, and industrial policy. We know that institutions that only react to crises will always arrive late. To serve society well, the State must learn to anticipate, to read “signals” of change and to translate them into concrete missions and policies.

The future is open and it is up for grabs. It is being shaped now, in the choices we make, the alliances we build and the narratives we believe. While we cannot control it, we can influence its direction. And there are reasons for hope—not naïve but grounded in evidence across different areas and agendas. This publication brings together such signals: weak and strong indications of emerging practices, technologies, behaviours and policies that can help us imagine and build fairer, greener and more innovative futures for Brazil.

Hope is not passive. It is a combination of compass, direction and commitment. It is a decision to act based on possibilities. Betting on the future means cultivating the present with responsibility, imagination and the willingness to shape new paths—even amidst uncertainty. It means building a coalition of people determined to act within their sphere of influence, from local communities to State institutions, to promote a more just, supportive and enabling Brazilian society.

FOREWORD FROM THE UNDP BRAZIL COUNTRY OFFICE



Claudio Providas
Resident Representative
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In an era defined by rapid change and unprecedented challenges, **the Brazil Signals Spotlight emerges as a critical tool for navigating the complexities of the future.** This document, a collaborative effort between the Government of Brazil and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), offers a forward-looking perspective on the trends and signals shaping Brazil's development landscape. It is not merely a collection of data, but a conversation starter designed to provoke reflection and inspire action towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all Brazilians.

The core of the Brazil Signals Spotlight lies in its unique methodology. It draws on the observations of a global network of "signal scanners": UNDP staff on the ground who are attuned to subtle shifts and emerging patterns that may indicate significant future developments. This approach enables the Spotlight to capture a nuanced and dynamic view of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead—from the persistent trauma of conflict and disaster to the transformative potential of digital technologies and the evolving nature of democratic engagement.

Central to the Spotlight's narrative is the concept of Radical Optimism, which recognises Brazil's immense potential despite persistent challenges. It suggests that overcoming the nation's sense of being "stuck in place" requires not an escape from the present, but a bold reimagining of power, participation and possibility. This optimism underpins the exploration of a renewed social contract, acknowledging that, while progressive policies exist, systemic

inequalities persist. **The Spotlight highlights Brazil's powerful assets, such as universal healthcare and digital financial inclusion, and emphasises the need for structural reform and genuine political accountability to unlock its full potential, fostering a fairer system for all.**

The Spotlight's value is multifaceted. For policymakers, it provides a vital evidence base for crafting forward-thinking strategies that are resilient to change and uncertainty. For civil society, it offers a platform for dialogue and advocacy, empowering communities to participate in shaping their own futures. For the private sector, it highlights emerging markets and investment opportunities aligned with sustainable development goals. And for the public, it fosters a deeper understanding of the forces shaping their lives and the choices that can help create a better tomorrow.

The Brazil Signals Spotlight is more than a report; it is a testament to the power of partnership and the importance of foresight in an increasingly interconnected world. **It is a call to action, urging us to look beyond the immediate horizon and consider the long-term implications of our decisions.** As we stand at a critical juncture in Brazil's development journey, the Spotlight offers an invaluable compass, guiding us towards a future that is not only prosperous, but also just, inclusive and sustainable for generations to come—helping Brazil not merely to react to the future, but to actively shape it.

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WHAT THE BRAZIL SIGNALS SPOTLIGHT IS

Purpose

The Brazil Signals Spotlight (*Spotlight*) presents selected signals and trends that UNDP anticipates will emerge over the next five to ten years (2030–2035), and which we consider significant for Brazil’s development.

The aim of the *Spotlight* is to foster conversations about Brazil’s future among people from all walks of life and across all levels of society. Our intentions are to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of thinking about the future;
- Support readers to reflect on changes on the horizon that they may not yet have noticed, or may have previously considered only from a limited perspective;
- Encourage dialogue on the future of Brazil; and
- Inspire actions to co-create inclusive futures for the country.

By promoting future-focused conversations, the people of Brazil can begin to consider the legacy they wish to leave for coming generations, and the decisions that must be taken today to guide the country towards a shared and inclusive future that benefits all Brazilians.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPOTLIGHT

Here is a question that all Brazilians should consider: *What kind of future do you want to leave for your children? And for your children’s children?*

The question of what Brazil we wish to leave for future generations concerns us all. The Spotlight identifies areas where this legacy may raise concerns and invites us to reflect on what actions we can take today to guide our country and communities towards a different future.

The Spotlight is grounded in observations from the UNDP Strategy & Futures Team, the UNDP Country Office in Brazil, officials from several ministries of the Government of Brazil, and extensive consultations with civil society, academics, and community leaders. The signals identified in this report also draw on a global network of “signal scanners” who monitor emerging signs of change.

These signals of change are conversation starters. As you read the Spotlight, we encourage you to ask yourself: “Are these signals new to me, or are they already familiar? What might they mean for Brazil’s future development?”

Exploring Brazil’s future is a substantial undertaking. There were countless possible areas to examine, so the team focused on 16 themes, grouped into three clusters. The Spotlight explores each theme in depth and then offers four scenarios for the future based on this analysis. The clusters and themes are:

- **Hope for Fair Futures**—This cluster focuses on social justice issues:
1) Equity, Equality and Poverty; 2) Education; 3) Health; 4) Youth; 5) Diversity; and 6) Values.
- **Courage for Responsible Futures**—This cluster focuses on structures and systems:
7) Employment; 8) Business/Private Sector; 9) Sustainable Finance; 10) Infrastructure; and 11) Energy.
- **Agency for Adaptable Futures**—This cluster focuses on the fabric that connects communities, states, and the federal government:
12) Governance; 13) Public Safety and Security; 14) Urbanisation; 15) Climate; and 16) Biodiversity.

What links these clusters is **Hope, Courage** and **Agency**. These concepts surfaced consistently throughout the research process and during numerous workshops, both in person and online.

It can be difficult to feel optimistic when confronted daily with negative news and the suffering experienced in many communities. There is a temptation to postpone tomorrow's challenges in order to address today's urgent demands—and to believe that nothing we do can influence the future. This is the essence of fatalism: the belief that our actions make no difference.

Foresight, however, is grounded in possibility. It offers an alternative path—one defined by Hope, Courage and Agency. Human imagination, combined with empathy and curiosity, and guided by questions such as “What if...?”, “Why not?”, and “How can we make this happen?”, allows us to inhabit a world of infinite potential. We may not know what future generations will need, but we can leave them a legacy of positive choices. What we require most is the hope to keep looking forward, the courage to expect more of ourselves, and the agency to act—even in small ways—to lay the foundations for a better future.

This Spotlight demonstrates that, every day, people can make smarter, kinder choices that lead us towards a better future—within our lifetimes and for generations to come.

CRAFTING THE SPOTLIGHT

The *Brazil Signals Spotlight* was developed over six months, from May to October 2025. The process comprised:

Theme Identification—Sixteen major themes related to Brazil's future were identified, including equality, education, health, infrastructure, public safety, and climate. These themes were approved by government representatives before the UNDP Strategy & Futures Team began its research.

Horizon Scanning—More than 500 signals of change linked to the 16 themes were identified, offering early indications of what may be emerging on Brazil's horizon.

TIPPOs Research (Trends, Insights, Plans, Projections and Obstacles)—The team consulted respected reports, research papers, forecasts, statistics, and other sources that provided further insights into Brazil's future across the 16 themes. Topics not explicitly covered within these themes may have been addressed implicitly in the analyses or may be included in a future edition.

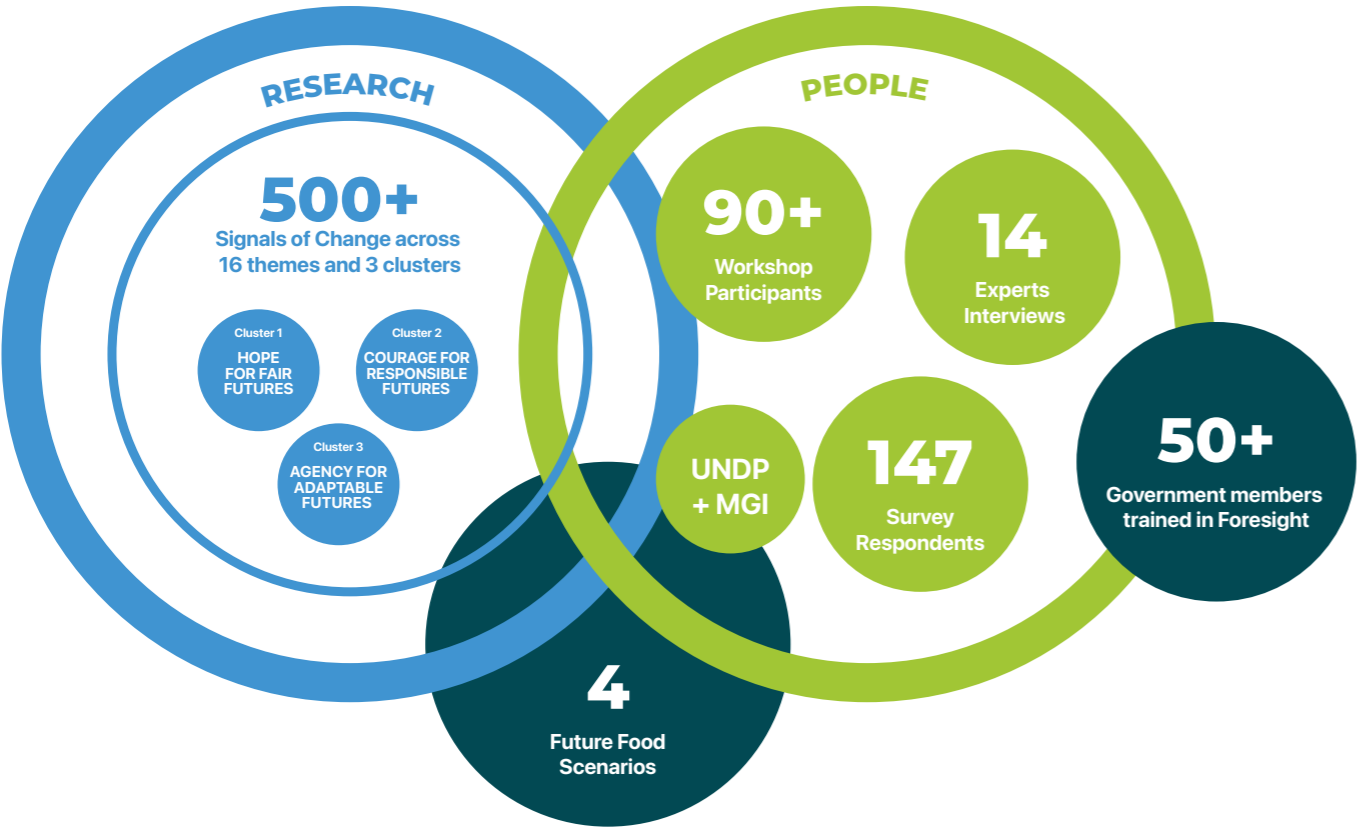
Expert Interviews—Fourteen experts, identified by the UNDP Brazil Country Office and government officials, were interviewed to provide in-depth perspectives on the selected themes. All interviews were conducted virtually, recorded, and transcribed. They generally lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. AI tools were used to summarise the interview content.

Futures Literacy Training—The UNDP Strategy & Futures Team delivered a two-day foresight training, developed by the University of Houston Foresight Program in collaboration with UNDP, to more than 50 members of the Brazilian government. The training aimed to build understanding of the foresight process and strengthen internal foresight capacity.

Sensemaking Workshops—The UNDP Strategy & Futures Team held eight two-hour online workshops in which participants reviewed and discussed signals of change to identify notable patterns and drivers. More than 90 people across Brazil took part. These individuals, identified by the UNDP Brazil Country Office, government representatives, and the Strategy & Futures Team, represented groups such as youth, community leaders, workers, business leaders, and citizens.

Scenario Development—Drawing on the sensemaking workshops, the UNDP Strategy & Futures Team developed four narratives illustrating possible futures for Brazil over the next five to ten years. The team used the metaphor of a Brazilian lunch to frame these scenarios.

Surveys—Two surveys were conducted to gather additional perspectives. The first, linked to a workshop exploring Brazil's future through the metaphor of a Brazilian lunch, was sent to more than 100 people and received 25 responses. The second survey, focused on hope and optimism about Brazil's future, was sent to 500 experts, yielding 122 responses from UNDP Brazil Country Office staff, government ministers, members of the Brazilian Political Science Association, members of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Social Sciences, members of the National Front of Mayors, and Brazilian members of the International Science Council.



A note on consent: All participants in this study (interviews, workshops, surveys) were informed that their participation was being recorded, that any quotes they shared might be used in the Spotlight, and that they could choose whether to identify themselves or remain anonymous. For youth participants, written consent forms were required and signed both by the young person and by a parent or guardian.

EXPLORING THE THEMES: TIME TO GATHER FOR LUNCH

Join us for a Brazilian lunch—a special moment that takes place every day.

The themes explored for the *Spotlight* do not exist in isolation. They are interconnected and reflect the systems that Brazilians rely on to live their lives. When one system shifts, that change inevitably affects one or more other systems—and the people who depend on them, directly or indirectly.

What better way to visualise this than through a typical Brazilian lunch? Every day, tens of millions of Brazilians pause what they are doing. They set aside their work, put away their phones, and come together in their homes, their schools, or as colleagues in restaurants near their workplaces—to eat. Often for at least an hour, sometimes two.

Across states and regions, the dishes on the table may vary, but one thing remains constant: it is a special time to come together and focus on the meal and the people around the table.

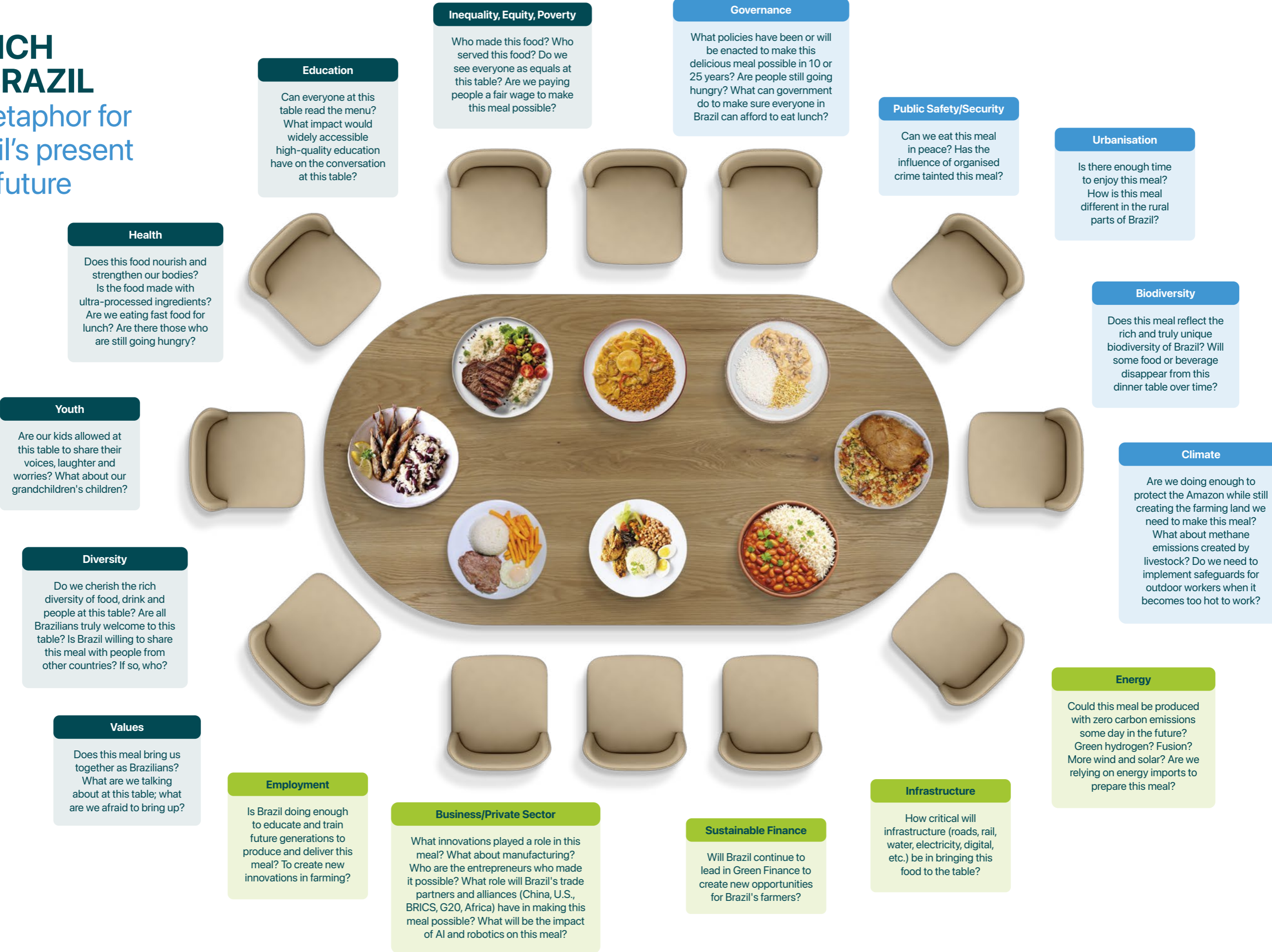
Consider themes such as education, youth, governance, energy, or climate through the lens of the table and those gathered around it:

- Who grew and harvested the food on the table?
- How much, and what type, of energy was required to grow and transport it?
- Where was the equipment used in agriculture produced?
- Did scientists develop innovations that made it possible to cultivate these crops or livestock?
- What government policies helped make this meal possible?
- Will climate change affect the availability of some foods or beverages on future tables?
- Who has been invited to this table—and who has not?

What appears to be a simple meal becomes layered with complexity when we reflect on what it represents today and what it may look like in the future.

LUNCH IN BRAZIL

A metaphor for
Brazil's present
and future



Lunch is what connects Brazilians—to each other and to their land and water

We asked 122 Brazilians from different backgrounds and regions what lunch means to them. Our questionnaire explored four questions:

- Why is lunch a special moment? What do you most enjoy eating?
- What is your idea for creating a better Brazil?
- What makes you most optimistic when you think about the country's future?
- How do you work with, or contribute to, your community?

Here is a “taste” of the responses we received. Dear reader, how would you have responded?

Communion with Others: “Lunch is a sign of communion. It’s a gathering. Brazilians enjoy lunch because life is not only about work. The energy for work comes from a table full of food and people. I am a child of the Coast. A good lunch is fluffy rice, pirão, and grilled fish.”

Christiano Hagemann Pozzer, Porto Alegre, RS

A Pause in Our Lives: “Lunch is special in Brazil because it brings together family, friends, and affection around the table—a moment of pause, connection, and culture. What I enjoy most at this time is rice, beans, fresh salad, farofa, and roasted chicken: simple, tasty, and full of emotional memory.”

Rejane Evangelista da Silva, Itacarambi, MG

Giving Thanks: “It is a moment to bring the family together and give thanks for the sacred food, recognising the richness that comes from the land—cultivated, cared for, and harvested by other hands. It is about expressing gratitude to everyone who took part in the cycle until the food reached our table, and understanding that not all families in Brazil have this privilege. I like to eat grains such as our classic rice and beans, as well as vegetables, roots, and greens. I am vegetarian and try to keep a varied diet, which I consider the main meal of the day. Having different colours on the plate is a sign of food full of life—and, for me, a celebration of health, flavour, and connection to the earth.”

Yasmin da Nóbrega Formiga, Santa Luzia, PB

Food as a Story: “I like a dish that also tells a story: well-seasoned black beans, fluffy rice, garlic-sautéed collard greens, farofa, and a generous portion of roasted pumpkin—flavours that evoke Afro-Brazilian cuisine and the memory of those who cooked to nourish not only bodies, but entire communities. It is a lunch that sustains and also connects with a living ancestry.”

Vinicius Santiago, Brasília, DF

Lunch is Sacred; Understanding the Journey: “Lunch is a time to nourish our bodies and generate energy, to be silent and reflect on the journey food takes before it reaches our plate. Lunch is sacred. I like to eat green beans, rice, roasted free-range chicken, flour, and cold soda.”

Maria Clara Freire Gonçalves (Clara Potiguara), Território Potiguara, Baía da Traição, PB

Connecting with Others: “Lunch is special because it creates a pause in the day to recharge, share moments with family or friends, and take care of ourselves. It is a warm, connecting moment that strengthens bonds and helps us reflect on what we’ve experienced so far. What I most enjoy is a comforting and nourishing meal such as well-seasoned rice, beans, a tasty protein, and a fresh salad.”

Alberto Aleixo de Souza, Favela da Maré, Rio de Janeiro, RJ

Turn off the Phone: “Rice, beans, flour, peppers, and green leaves, both cooked and raw. A special moment to turn off the phone and try to talk to those beside you.”

Marina da Silva Kahn, São Paulo, SP

Traditional Communities: “Food produced in traditional communities—it is hard to list them all, but there is nothing better to eat.”

Maria Antonia Teixeira Dias, Quilombo Cariongo, Santa Rita, MA

Collective Spirit: “Lunch is special because it goes beyond a simple meal. It is inclusive, creates empathy, and brings people together to celebrate and relax—and it can even open space to discuss topics that might be difficult in other contexts. The conversation around the table can strengthen bonds, build trust, and broaden dialogue. What I enjoy most is food made by many hands, or when everyone brings a dish and adds their touch to someone else’s plate—that collective spirit matters. P.S.: mobile phones can stay off the table.”

Gabriela Miyuki Shimabukuro Katto, Brasília, DF

Prepared with Love: “For me, lunch is a sacred moment—a time when we receive food prepared with care by the person who cooks it. I like to eat any dish made with love, from my culture—I especially enjoy any type of fish preparation.”

Moara Brasil Xavier da Silva (Moara Tupinambá), Campinas, SP

A banquet of ideas about the future of Brazil

As you read and reflect upon the clusters and themes in this Spotlight, keep the image of a Brazilian lunch in your mind. Towards the end, we will return to this image with four scenarios about the future of lunch in Brazil, ten years from now.

For each cluster and theme, we offer:

- **Overview:** A high-level summary that paints an image of the cluster or theme.
- **What to Watch:** Short viewpoints that highlight blind spots, breakthroughs and possible breakdowns in the future of each theme.
- **Now What?:** Implications and policy provocations to ponder and act upon.
- **Observations:** Insights shared by those interviewed or surveyed for the Spotlight.
- **Wishes for Brazil’s Future:** Ideas to consider in addressing thorny problems and issues—what Brazilians would like to see in the year 2035.
- **Essays:** Thoughts shared by invited guests that offer additional context or different perspectives.

Take your time to read and reflect on the *Spotlight*. Put down your phone. Share it with others.

SURVEY: WOULD YOU BRING A CHILD INTO THIS WORLD?

Taking a pulse of what Brazilians are thinking—and talking about at the table.

So, what might Brazilians be discussing over lunch with family and friends? How might people feel about what is happening in their country or in the wider world? Would they express pessimism, optimism, or something in between? Would they wonder whether things are improving, not only who to vote for, but whether their vote truly matters? What they might do if they were in charge, even for a single day? Or whether they would bring a child into the world?

To take a pulse of how Brazilians are feeling about the future, more than 500 experts across the country were invited to respond to a survey. More than 120 responses revealed a tension between optimism and pessimism.

Better or worse in 2035? When asked whether their lives would be better or worse by 2035 compared to today, 63 per cent said they believed their own lives would be better or much better in 10 years. But when asked about all Brazilians, that figure dropped to 40 per cent.

Collective optimism? When asked, “Do you think it is important for Brazilians to be optimistic to achieve a better future for the country and its people?”, 79 per cent said “Yes.” This raises an intriguing question: can collective optimism influence a country’s trajectory or shape the direction of communities?

Agency: On a scale of 1 to 10, we asked whether participants felt they had the autonomy to influence Brazil’s future over the next decade. This is where optimism faded: the average score was 5.38.

Does your vote matter? When asked whether their vote made a difference in shaping a better future for Brazil, 78 per cent said yes.

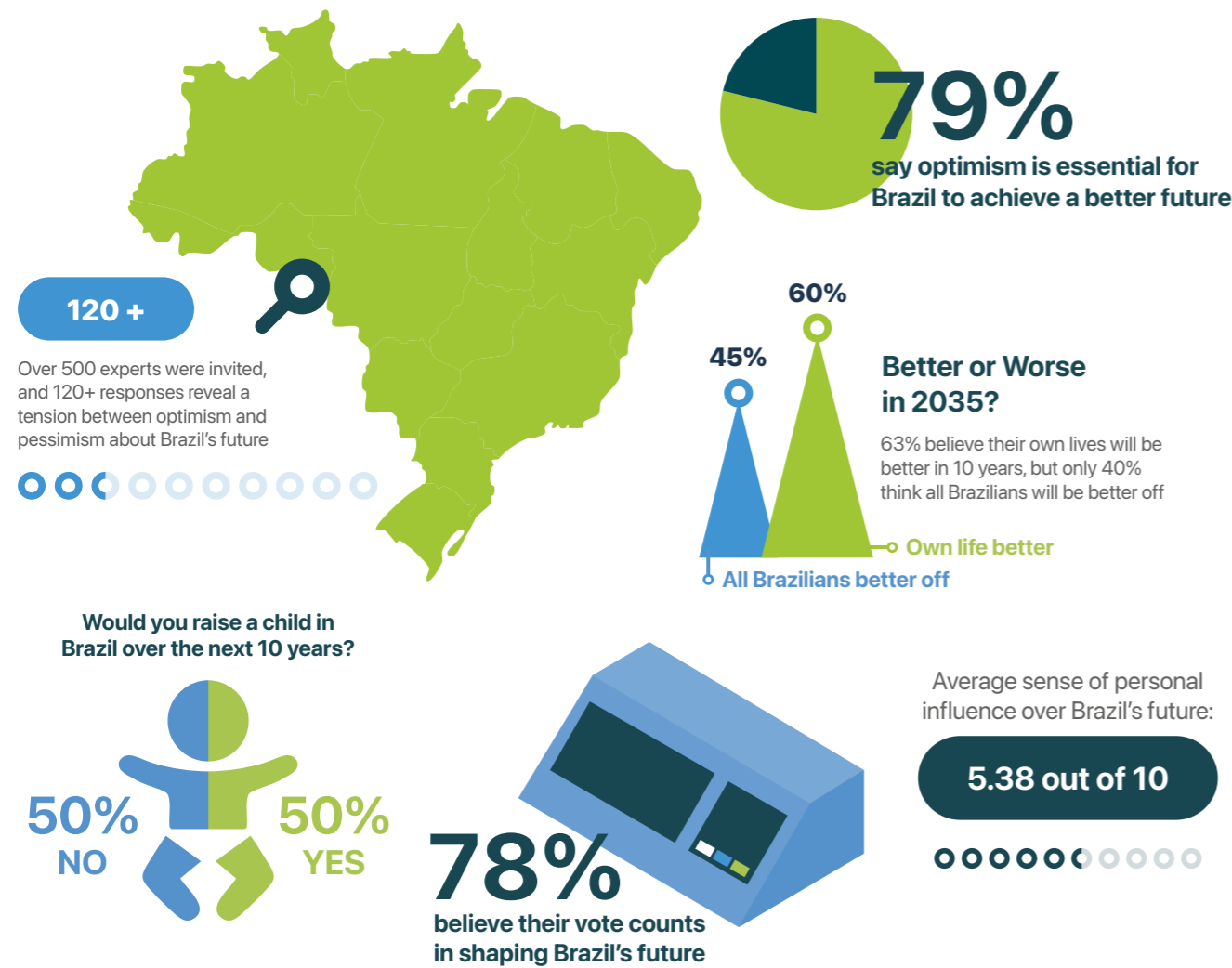
Bringing a child into the world: Yet when asked, “Do you think it is a good idea to have or raise a child in Brazil in the next 10 years?”, the responses were evenly split: 50 per cent said yes, 50 per cent said no.

So, what would you change if you could? Respondents were asked what they would change if they were President of Brazil for one day—and what they hoped to see for the country 10 years from now.

- **Economic Opportunity and Employment:** Respondents called for job security, decent wages, career opportunities, and economic stability. Many emphasised dignified work and the ability to “live with dignity” rather than simply survive.

- **Quality Education for All:** Highlighted repeatedly as transformative, inclusive across race and class, and capable of creating “conscious citizens.” Many viewed education as essential to breaking cycles of inequality.
- **Reduced Inequality and More Equitable Income Distribution:** A dominant theme. Respondents expressed a deep desire for a “more egalitarian country,” “income equality,” “social and economic equality,” and “better income distribution.” Inequality was consistently identified as Brazil’s fundamental challenge.

Although limited in scale, the survey offers insights into how Brazilians may be feeling about the future. The findings suggest a nuanced message for leaders: there is a desire for optimism, but it must be grounded and authentic rather than superficial. People want real change to address real problems—a kind of pragmatic hopefulness. The responses portray a vision of Brazil as a just, sustainable, and prosperous society where everyone’s basic human needs are met.



LOOKING BEYOND THE HORIZON OF HOPE: A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATION

The Editors of the Brazil Signals Spotlight

“The optimist is a fool. The pessimist, a bore. It is best to be a hopeful realist.”
Ariano Suassuna

This Spotlight was created for Brazilians and by Brazilians. Dozens of leaders and young people participated in intensive workshops exploring the country’s future. Groups of Brazilians responded to questionnaires. In total, hundreds of people shared their hopes and aspirations for a brighter future.

A match has been struck.

Will thinking about—and exploring—the future inspire the imaginations of all Brazilians? Or will it fade, resisting every attempt to ignite a lasting spark?

Brazil is a country of immense potential. Its diverse natural resources are renowned. Its people are among the most vibrant in the world. Its social movements—from landless workers’ collectives to Indigenous defenders of territory—have long pioneered alternative visions of justice, economy, and care.

And yet, many Brazilians carry a heavy truth: despite all this potential, they feel stuck, like a spring unable to release its energy.

Brazilians speak of “*estar travado*”—being stuck in place, revisiting old problems under new headlines. In our workshops, this sentiment was tangible: “*a gente sonha, mas não aposta*”—we dream, but we do not bet on it.

But beneath this fatigue lies a hope that refuses to disappear.

From the many conversations held, one message is clear: Brazilians hunger for something better.

But are they ready to commit to the kind of action needed to drive meaningful transformation? Or are they simply engaging in wishful thinking?

To move forward, Brazil—all Brazilians—must do something different. Because what has been done so far, while significant, is not delivering the level of change people desire.

So, what is that “something”?

Consider this idea: a collective commitment among all Brazilians to work together towards a brighter future. Are Brazilians ready to dive in headfirst (“*entrar de cabeça*”) into this journey of transformation?

We are calling for belief not only in better days ahead, but in Brazil’s ability to create them. This means recognising that the future is not something to be inherited passively, but something we actively build. It is the courage to stand in the middle of the storm and plant something anyway. *Trying* is no longer enough.

Persisting in “trying” has generated frustration and anger at development models that exclude; at policies that fail to reach the margins; at histories that still reverberate through race, class, and territory.

Doing is found in youth-led climate campaigns; in favela collectives reclaiming data, dignity and green space; in Brazilians embracing Indigenous knowledge and wisdom to reshape environmental governance.

These are not isolated sparks. They are signals of something deeper: the re-emergence of collective agency.

Commitment is the connective tissue that turns these signals into momentum. It is not only about feeling better—it is about doing better together. It asks: Are we committed to leaving no Brazilian behind? Are we committed to defending the dignity of every person who inhabits this land? Are we committed to claiming the sovereignty of our future, rather than leaving it to external forces to determine the fate of our natural resources and our people?

“Are we willing to commit to Brazil’s vision for the future?” is the question at the heart of the country’s next chapter. Equitable futures in Brazil are not only about redistribution—they are about reimagining who holds power, and how we move from potential to possibility.

Across the country, the seeds of action—the *doing*—are being planted:

- From Recife to the Pitaguary Indigenous Land—and everywhere in between—youth influencers¹ are raising their voices about climate change and their futures.
- In Pará, regenerative agroforestry² is restoring ecosystems and reshaping livelihoods.
- In São Paulo, Black women collectives³ are building solidarity economies rooted in justice and joy.
- Across Indigenous communities in the Amazon, where traditional knowledge⁴ is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of climate resilience.

These efforts reflect what our research and interviews made clear: **Brazil’s ability and capacity to navigate the future will not be built solely on recovery from crisis—but through concrete commitments to act now on a vision that may only be realised in five, ten or even 20 years.**

That is why the *Spotlight* highlights not only problems but also pressure points—those cracks in the system where light is already breaking through. These are areas where investing in belief and boldness can generate outsized impact.

Committing to hope and action is not an escape from the present. It is a form of insurgency within it. Hope moves through pathways built with *espaço e abundância para todos à mesa*—with ample space and shared bounty for everyone at the table.

“It is hope, above all, which gives the strength to live and continually try new things,” said Vaclav Havel.

Brazil has everything it needs to become a lighthouse for 21st-century regeneration. But potential alone is not enough.

The leap—from potential to possibility, from vision to velocity—requires belief. It requires not just hope or courage, but commitment.

Brazil, let us do.

ESSAY: WHY I AM RADICALLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BRAZIL'S FUTURE



By **Moara Tupinambá**

Visual artist and activist for Indigenous causes of the Tupinambá Nation
Campinas, SP

I am Tupinambá, born in Belém, and have lived much of my life in an urbanised context. However, my family is from the Baixo Tapajós. I am the daughter and granddaughter of a people who survived the violence of colonisation, the systematic attempt at cultural erasure, and the expropriation of our lands. I grew up hearing that Brazil was “discovered”—yet we, Indigenous Peoples, have always known that nothing can be discovered in a land already full of life, culture, and spirituality. We survived because we have always been more than resistance: we are reinvention, and we are the future.

When I speak of the future, I am not referring to an abstract idea of progress. I speak of a time that, for us, is not linear. In the Tupinambá worldview, past, present, and future flow together like the waters of the Tapajós River—waters that mix and separate without ceasing to be the same river. **The future I see is woven by the hands of those who came before us, sustained by our collective memory and by the certainty that life—human and non-human—is sacred.**

This is why I am radically optimistic. Not because I ignore the climate crisis, violence, or structural racism, but because I know that we have always carried ancestral tools to heal these wounds. Our ways of life already offer solutions that the world is only now beginning to seek: caring for the land as an extension of ourselves, building an economy based on reciprocity, and understanding that well-being is not measured solely in material wealth.

Brazil is a country built on diversity. We are more than 300 Indigenous Peoples, each with its own language, territory, and way of understanding the world. When our voices are

heard and our practices respected, the country reconnects with its deepest foundations: our ancestry. This reconnection is urgent, but it is also possible—and it is already happening in land reclamations, Indigenous cultural movements, universities opening space for our millennia-old knowledge, and youth proudly affirming their identities.

I see Brazil as a great village under construction. A village that still needs to dismantle the invisible walls of prejudice and inequality, but that has the potential to become an example of harmonious coexistence between humans and non-humans. I believe in this future because I see Indigenous girls and boys dancing Carimbó in their villages; because I see women reclaiming the Tupinambá mantle; because I see artists and leaders occupying spaces once denied to us.

Being radically optimistic is, for me, a political act. It is believing that we can regenerate what was destroyed. It is understanding that the forest is not a resource, but our home. It is having the courage to dream, as our ancestors dreamed, of a land where we can live with dignity, beauty, and abundance—a land without evils.

Brazil's future is not distant: it already pulses in the villages, rivers, and forests, and in the hearts of those who believe that another world is not only possible—it is already being built, day by day, with our hands and our songs.



CLUSTER 1: HOPE FOR FAIR FUTURES

From redistribution to representation—reimagining who belongs, who decides, and whose knowledge counts.

Equitable futures in Brazil are not only about **sharing resources**—they are about redefining **who belongs, who decides, and whose knowledge shapes collective life** in an era marked by platform power, plural identities, and deepening political polarisation.

Across the country, people are not merely demanding better services; they are asserting their **right to co-create systems they can trust**. From **youth movements in São Paulo** to **Indigenous land defenders in Roraima**, **favela-led technology hubs in Rio**, and **Afro-Brazilian cultural leadership in Salvador**, new forms of agency are challenging exclusionary structures in government, education, media, and the economy.

The next decade will determine whether Brazil can transform its strengths—universal health care, cultural and genetic diversity, technological adaptability, and community resilience—into a credible, **future-ready social contract**. Achieving this will require bridging representation gaps, addressing structural racism and inequality, and creating participatory spaces where **equity is not symbolic, but systemic**. Fair futures will not be built through technical solutions alone, but through **shared ownership, emotional connection, and structural transformation**.

By these expressions, we commit to:

- Ownership in Brazil's future that is shared by everyone who calls Brazil home.
- Real, authentic emotional connections to one another, to the land, water and skies of this diverse country, and to Brazil's democratic vision.
- Structures that are not only functional, but that can positively transform the lives Brazilians and help them individually and collectively, as one people, create a future where everyone belongs and is accepted for who they are.

THEME 1

EQUITY, EQUALITY, POVERTY: A RENEWED SOCIAL CONTRACT

Unlocking Brazil's potential beyond policy promises.

Brazil's equity paradox lies not in the absence of policies but in the persistent **power structures** that blunt their impact.

Progressive frameworks such as the country's universal health system, SUS (Sistema Único de Saúde), Bolsa Família, and the Pix instant payment system—admired worldwide—coexist with deep inequalities maintained by systemic design. Racial, gender, regional, and digital divides intersect to reproduce marginalisation, while governance often remains opaque and vulnerable to **elite capture**.⁵ Continued efforts to reform formal and informal systems, structures, and institutions are essential to address the mechanisms that perpetuate inequality and the status quo.

Brazil is working towards creating better structures that dismantle racial, gender, regional, and digital divides. Universal health care, universal education, digital financial inclusion, and the world's **largest conditional cash transfer programme**⁶ have helped lift millions out of poverty and reduce hunger to the point that Brazil has **exited the world hunger map**.⁷ Brazil's youthful energy, technological adaptability, and cultural resilience can drive the next leap—if matched with reforms and leadership committed to accountability, thereby rebuilding trust with the Brazilian people.

Universal access to health care⁸ and education is an important first step, but more is needed to ensure that all Brazilians have access to **high-quality** services. Closing the gap between rich and poor will require a strong focus on quality—quality health care, quality food, quality education, quality infrastructure, quality technology, and quality information.

A deeper examination shows that inequality is linked to institutional mechanisms, including land concentration; unequal access to basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation, internet, and electricity; unequal access to credit; police violence; and regressive taxation, among others.

The next stage could bring a mix of developments—from formalising the grey economy (estimated at **34.5 per cent of GDP**)⁹ and taxing wealth to fund climate and social justice, to local equity innovations such as racial equity councils in Salvador.¹⁰

Brazil has the experience and the will to make progress. Its pioneering efforts in participatory budgeting began more than 20 years ago and continue across more than 435 municipalities.¹¹ Today, more than 11,000 cities around the world—large and small—use participatory budgeting to give citizens a greater say in the allocation of their public resources.¹²

These elements could converge to shape a fairer and more inclusive social contract for Brazil and its people.

▶ What to Watch

- Inequalities persist: Despite structural reforms, the inequality gap between **Black, Indigenous**¹³ and female **Brazilians**¹⁴ persists when compared to white men, **undermining social stability**¹⁵ and **limiting economic potential**.¹⁶
- Gig-worker rights may become a flashpoint as workers with precarious incomes, dependent on international big-tech platforms, begin to **organise against digital-economy**¹⁷ labour models that obscure exploitation.¹⁸ Worker-owned platforms in other parts of the world **show promise**¹⁹ in democratising the sector.
- Growing pressure to confront Brazil's "ghost" of slavery. The Bank of Brazil's (Banco do Brasil) apology to Black Brazilians for its historical link to **slavery**²⁰ signals an emerging appetite for truth and reconciliation.
- Measures by the government of Brazil such as reserving **8 per cent of public-sector jobs**²¹ for women facing domestic violence offer hope for improved economic security for survivors. However, addressing the underlying causes of violence—which **affects one in three women**²²—remains the larger policy issue. **Many Brazilian women**,²³ particularly in low-income urban areas, lack access even to a **private toilet**²⁴ at home and must rely on shared pit latrines.
- Brazil is leading a global call to address gross wealth inequality with a proposal for the international **super-rich**²⁵ to pay their fair share in taxes—yet the top 1 per cent of Brazilian taxpayers pay a lower effective tax²⁶ than lower-income earners. Recent **income tax reforms**²⁷ focused on middle-class relief aim to narrow this gap.
- Indigenous peoples are resisting corporate agribusiness and attempts to restrict **local land rights**²⁸—raising important questions about trade-offs between economic growth and its human and planetary consequences.
- Around 8 per cent of Brazil's school-age population lacks access to internet at speeds suitable to e-learning. The digital divide²⁹ risks deepening and entrenching social inequalities as digital connectivity becomes essential for economic advancement. Expanding affordable access and improving digital literacy are key to closing these gaps.

Now What?

As progress on tackling [inequality](#)³⁰ falters, will Brazil find the courage to commit to a more equitable future?

- **From land rights to the gig economy—can Brazil reduce exploitation** of its most marginalised communities in pursuit of gross domestic product (GDP) growth? Can Brazil “prioritise policies that are both pro-growth and reduce inequality?”³¹
- **Can Brazil redesign its economy to value all forms of labor—visible and invisible?** Much of Brazil's economy is powered by informal, underpaid, and unrecognised work. From app-based gig workers to unpaid caregivers (mostly women), many laborers remain outside the protections of the formal system.
- **Can Brazil embed equity-by-design into the very fabric of its public services,** platforms, and innovation policies to ensure that inaccessible platforms, opaque language, or biased algorithms do not perpetuate poverty and inequality?
- **Can policy be built with—not merely for—those at the margins?** Residents of favelas, *quilombos*, and Indigenous territories face the harshest inequalities yet have the least influence. Top-down policy design often overlooks lived experience, local innovation, and cultural knowledge. Can Brazil move from inclusive consultations to genuine power-sharing in policymaking and budgeting?

Observations

“What makes me most optimistic about the country’s future is recognising the strength, creativity, and capacity for mobilisation within Brazil’s favelas and peripheral communities. Despite numerous challenges, these communities have demonstrated their ability to develop innovative solutions, build solidarity networks, and transmute adversity into opportunity.”

Alberto Aleixo de Souza, Favela da Maré, Rio de Janeiro, RJ

Wishes for Brazil’s Future

“A better Brazil requires simultaneously confronting structural racism, patriarchy, and socioeconomic inequalities. This involves public policies that recognise and value the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and Quilombola women—historically, made invisible, yet central to the country’s development. It means ensuring access to land, anti-racist education, healthcare that considers gender and race, and dignified work, while also combating state violence, such as police lethality in marginalised areas. My idea is a development model that places life—not profit—at the center, respecting territories, cultures, and ancestral knowledge.”

Vinícius Santiago, Brasília, DF

“We cannot allow anyone to be left behind, can we? In the future I imagine, we direct our attention to those who need it most. In building this future, we do not start from scratch—we must draw on, respect, and uphold the culture and values of our society.”

Mariana Pincovsky, Recife, PE

“I am optimistic when I think about the fact that people from low-income backgrounds now have the opportunity to enter university and improve their lives.”

Erly Teixeira Dias, Quilombo Cariongo, Santa Rita, MA

THEME 2

EDUCATION: FROM SURVIVAL TO SOLIDARITY

Overcoming gaps and embracing digital transformation

Education in Brazil stands at a crossroads. For many—especially marginalised youth—it remains a pathway to dignity and economic survival, yet [systemic inequalities](#)³² rooted in geography, class, race, and digital access continue to block opportunity. Only [31 per cent of young people](#)³³ aged 18 to 28 feel that school prepares them for the future, and 78 per cent do not believe that classroom content reflects the realities they face.

Structural gaps, from [hunger in rural schools](#)³⁴ to [poor internet access](#)³⁵ in rural Amazonas, make learning a daily struggle. The need to survive, together with the temptations of fame and fortune through social media, quick wealth through sports betting, or involvement in crime, drive many young people to leave school early.

We should not underestimate the current and future [impact of AI](#)³⁶ and digitalisation on Brazil's education system—already shaping curricula, pedagogy, and even the purpose of education itself. AI and digitalization represent a true paradigm shift, which will reverberate throughout Brazil's systems. It cannot be ignored, and it will require a robust response, beginning with how Brazil will introduce AI to [its children](#).³⁷ Special consideration must be given to its impact on young people's [critical thinking skills](#).³⁸

But there is hope: according to a national survey by Teach the Future, [66 per cent of young Brazilians](#)³⁹ say they want to work with purpose. Across the country, promising examples are emerging, including [full-day schooling models](#)⁴⁰ in Ceará that boost literacy rates; community-run [agroecology schools in Paraná](#)⁴¹ that promote sustainable farming; ocean literacy programmes⁴² in coastal Bahia that connect science to local livelihoods; and [civic tech initiatives in São Paulo](#)⁴³ that use open data to teach problem-solving and accountability.

A national conversation is needed. Should nations provide education solely to prepare young people for work in an AI-driven world? Or can education equip future generations with the critical thinking skills needed to become happier, better-informed, and more engaged citizens—ready to navigate a complex future?

▶ What to Watch

- The UAE is negotiating [free ChatGPT access for its citizens](#),⁴⁴ and the UK is considering [a similar nationwide agreement](#).⁴⁵ Amid increasingly competitive AI nationalism, countries that do not provide Universal Basic AI for all may see their comparative productivity decline. Yet embedding AI into work and education also carries [cognitive risks](#).⁴⁶
- As essential as [closing the digital divide](#)⁴⁷ is to democratising education, the [engineered](#)⁴⁸ addictiveness of smartphones and social media continues to distract from learning. Digital misinformation can undermine social cohesion. [Digital citizenship curricula](#)⁴⁹ are being developed to teach children (and adults) how to navigate digital society responsibly.
- Brazil has enacted the Digital Child and Adolescent Statute ("[ECA Digital](#)"),⁵⁰ the country's first law to protect children and adolescents online. Passed with broad political support, the law expands on the protections established for Brazil's children established by the 1990 Statute of the Child and Adolescent. It represents an important first step that may serve as a model for other nations seeking stronger boundaries between tech interests and children.
- Socio-economic inequality begins at birth, with childhood stunting still affecting [11 per cent of children](#)⁵¹ growing up in favelas. Expansion of [early-childhood education](#),⁵² ideally paired with [feeding schemes](#),⁵³ has proven effective in mitigating disparities in health, social, educational, and occupational outcomes between poorer and more privileged children. Recife, which opened [3,500 new creches](#)⁵⁴—more than any other capital city—offers a compelling example.
- Nearly [half a million Brazilian students](#)⁵⁵ drop out of secondary school every year. Youths leave school early in search of riches as [digital influencers](#),⁵⁶ and gambling addictions now delay higher education for [34 per cent of students](#),⁵⁷ as [online sports-betting](#) expenses disrupt their educational trajectories. The [Pé-de-Meia \("Piggy Bank"\) Programme](#),⁵⁸ which deposits monthly stipends into savings accounts for vulnerable students if they attend at least 80 per cent of their classes, shows promise in reversing this trend.
- [Violent conflict is keeping children out of school](#),⁵⁹ including those experiencing in-person and online bullying. Social media is increasingly being used to exacerbate these harmful environments, including by encouraging students to [bring weapons to school](#).⁶⁰
- [Teacher burnout](#)⁶¹ is a growing concern. Nearly one in five Brazilian secondary school teachers serves over 400 students yearly,⁶² and many are overwhelmed by the unmet basic needs of their students. Temporary hiring is increasingly being used to avoid creating permanent posts. Today, more than 50 per cent of Brazil's teachers are on temporary contracts,⁶³ many without the labour rights and benefits afforded to permanent staff. Brazil is exploring new regulations to create a national standard guaranteeing minimum rights for temporary teachers—one of several measures needed to reduce turnover, improve contract attractiveness and meet fiscal targets.

- **Reforming Brazil's education system**⁶⁴ could be the key to addressing bigger socio-economic inequalities and accelerating development. Embedding **Ocean Literacy**⁶⁵ ("Blue Curriculum") into the national education curricula—a world first—demonstrates how education can cultivate economic independence alongside civic and environmental responsibility. Young Brazilian gain not only understand the science of oceans but also insight into how the ocean connects Brazil to the rest of the world politically, economically and environmentally.

Now What?

- **Can Brazil protect education spending**⁶⁶ through economic ups and downs? Continued investment in children, from offering early childhood education to providing free meals, remains a critical social investment.
- **Can educational reform align with youth aspirations in the age of digital fame?** Today's learners are digital creators as much as consumers. Many young people seek relevance, self-expression, and purpose—yet formal education often lags behind. Could hybrid models integrate media literacy, content creation, and civic ethics into schooling without compromising core competencies?
- **How can AI and digital tools be used to personalise learning without deepening inequity or eroding trust?** Digital expansion brings significant promise, but also risks such as online gambling, algorithmic manipulation, and surveillance-based educational technologies.
- **Can Brazil institutionalise continuous, future-oriented teacher support and professional development?** Education reform is only as effective as the teachers who deliver it. Yet many public-school teachers lack resources, support, and access to updated, ongoing training—particularly in digital, civic, and environmental literacies.
- **Is Brazil willing to support grassroots educational innovation to transform its national education system** and redefine what—and who—education is for? From **youth-led coding clubs in favelas**⁶⁷ to **Indigenous knowledge networks**,⁶⁸ **community-driven initiatives** are shaping futures from the ground up, but remain underfunded and under-recognised.

Observations

"Sometimes we are so focused on the act of teaching that we forget the reality our students live in. At times, their main concern is not studying, but whether they will have something to eat at school—often their only guaranteed meal."

Ana Rita Nascimento, Natal, RN

"There is a prevailing narrative that discourages socially vulnerable young people from pursuing higher education. They are led to believe that spending four years at university is a waste of time because it means learning 'only one thing', while the labour market demands a thousand different skills."

Diogo Montechiari Barbosa Campos, Macuco, RJ

"In schools, we are seeing a growing need to work on digital citizenship so that students can reflect—within the classroom—on building critical thinking skills based on what is happening around them. We are witnessing an increasing number of cases of cybercrime and other issues, including offences linked to betting. The urgency of bringing this discussion into the classroom has therefore intensified. This demand comes both from government and from families, who often do not know how to mediate these issues at home and expect schools to play this role. A trend I foresee for the coming years is that schools will place far greater emphasis on strengthening students' critical thinking skills, rather than maintaining a predominantly content-centred approach. We need far more people capable of understanding reality and acting on it with critical thinking, rather than simply absorbing information."

Kátia Vielitz Almeida, Porto Alegre, RS

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"Other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the Nordic nations, are introducing digital literacy into public-school systems. This may also become a trend for Brazil. Looking ahead to elections, we know that disinformation will have a significant impact. Regulation in this area may become necessary."

Gabriela Toso de Oliveira, Cascavel, PR

"What makes me most optimistic when I think about the country's future are our children and education—the belief that they can make a difference based on what we teach them, and with the awareness that they can safeguard part of our country. The differentiated early childhood education of Indigenous Peoples holds great promise for Brazil's future."

Maria Clara Freire Gonçalves (Clara Potiguara), Território Potiguara, Baía da Traição, PB

THEME 3

HEALTH: HEALING A STRAINED HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Democratising quality healthcare, from birth through dignified dying

Brazil's universal public health system (SUS) is globally admired—yet childhood stunting, hunger, and malnutrition persist, particularly in favelas and rural areas, alongside stark disparities between public and private care. A deepening [mental health crisis](#),⁶⁹ the public health and safety risks posed by growing political polarisation, declining trust in science, and vaccine misinformation all cut across socio-economic divides.

Youth face [climate anxiety](#),⁷⁰ [financial stress](#),⁷¹ and [rising gambling addiction](#).⁷² In Rio Grande do Sul, [vaccination coverage is falling](#),⁷³ heightening risks for a rapidly aging population and undermining national efforts to increase vaccination rates. In Rondônia, women report health impacts linked to [pesticide exposure](#),⁷⁴ while psychological and specialist care remains scarce [outside major cities](#).⁷⁵

Central to addressing these challenges is the imperative not only to guarantee basic healthcare, but to ensure **quality** care for all Brazilians through the public system. Yet this aspiration confronts a difficult reality: new treatments, medicines, and technologies are increasingly [costly](#),⁷⁶ placing mounting pressure on a universal system funded through limited tax revenues.

Even so, there are encouraging signs. Healthcare outcomes are improving. Tax systems that fund healthcare are [becoming fairer](#),⁷⁷ albeit not as rapidly as many Brazilians would hope. Innovation is helping: [Piauí's Saúde Digital](#)⁷⁸ is expanding telemedicine; [Recife is linking early childhood education to health through digital child health booklets](#),⁷⁹ [Embrapa's Sisteminha](#)⁸⁰ is improving nutrition and incomes in remote Marajó Island; and [Indigenous-led healing models](#)⁸¹ are strengthening culturally grounded care.

The next decade will reveal whether Brazil can close the public/private divide, invest in prevention, and build a **just, inclusive, and climate-adaptive health system**⁸² that treats care as a [shared societal responsibility](#).⁸³

▶ What to Watch

- Sick leave due to mental health issues has [doubled over the last decade](#),⁸⁴ with 30 per cent of Brazilian workers experiencing [burnout from work](#)⁸⁵—second only to Japan. Mental health is an economic issue, not only a public health concern.
- Multinational companies and brands have been [found selling lower-quality](#),⁸⁶ higher-sugar, less nutritious products in Brazil and other Global South nations compared to those sold under the same brands in their domestic markets. One global food company, for example, has been accused of selling baby formula [designed to get children hooked on sugar](#)⁸⁷ and other processed foods. Citizens depend on regulators to safeguard their health and well-being.
- [Brazil's gambling 'pandemic'](#)⁸⁸ is a public health crisis. The rise in [gambling addiction](#)⁸⁹—and its financial and especially mental health impacts—require a much stronger response.
- Death with dignity is a public health concern. From birth to death, [racism persists in Brazil's healthcare system](#).⁹⁰ Curative and palliative services that bring [end-of-life care](#)⁹¹ into favelas can help ensure the most vulnerable do not “die badly.” Brazil's [expanded grief-support services for parents](#)⁹² who have lost a child offer a glimpse into a future in which public healing extends beyond physical health.
- [Antivaxxers](#)⁹³ represent a growing public health challenge. Yet [childhood vaccination rates](#)⁹⁴ are rising again after years of decline, due largely to municipal government interventions. Newly approved, genetically engineered “[good](#)” [mosquitos](#)⁹⁵ are also helping to combat Dengue fever.
- Although Indigenous health outcomes continue to [trail those of the general population](#),⁹⁶ community-level interventions show promise. New [commitments aim to integrate healthcare](#)⁹⁷ into Brazil's Indigenous village culture. Other initiatives encourage the revival of the [traditional medical practices](#)⁹⁸ of the Pataxó people. Collaboration between Brazil and UNESCO promotes the use of Indigenous languages in health education to improve local-level services.
- Brazil has approved the use of [semaglutide \(Wegovy\)](#)⁹⁹ to treat the growing number of people living with obesity—raising social and economic questions over the cost-benefit trade-offs of funding next-generation treatments.

Now What?

- **Brazil's public health service offers expands universal coverage but still falls short¹⁰⁰ of providing equal access** to the full spectrum of quality, whole-of-life care across racial, geographic, and socio-economic lines.
- **How can Brazil embed environmental and climate-related health risks into everyday health services and prioritise prevention over crisis response?** Environmental degradation is already a [public health issue](#).¹⁰¹ Air pollution, contaminated water, and rising temperatures are driving respiratory illness, vector-borne diseases, and food insecurity. Yet environmental health remains largely siloed from public health planning.
- Can Brazil build a public health system fit for a polycrisis context, where multiple, distinct crises interact and amplify one another, generating impacts greater than the sum of their parts? **Health can no longer be understood solely as the treatment of illness—it must also be about fostering resilience in the face of interconnected crises: climate disasters, digital overload, economic inequality, and social unrest.** Can Brazil reimagine the SUS as a network of care that supports emotional, environmental, and digital well-being, not only physical health?
- **Should mental health become a national priority?** Access to care remains uneven. Vulnerable communities—especially young people—often lack services, stigma-free environments, or culturally relevant approaches. Mental health supports must be embedded where people live, learn, and work: in homes, schools, and communities.
- **Can digital healthcare expand access without compromising quality?** Equity in digital health requires more than internet connectivity—it also depends on trust, data governance, cultural relevance, dignity, and justice.
- **What if more people lived to be 120 years old, or even 150?** [Medical technology](#)¹⁰² is progressing to the point that humans could enjoy longer—and possibly much longer—healthy lives. How would this reshape Brazil's systems and institutions, including healthcare, social security, and education? Could the first Brazilian to live to 150 already have been born?

Observations

"If Brazil has a high rate of police lethality, if state violence is striking and persistent, this means that such lethality will affect public health. It results in more peripheral, Black youth dying, with a direct impact on public health. But there is also a less visible impact: the psychological suffering experienced by families who are victims of violence. When a young person from a peripheral community dies, an entire community becomes unwell, an entire family becomes unwell. And this is a public health issue."

Vinícius Santiago, Brasília, DF

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"In the future, it will be essential to mitigate hunger, particularly among Indigenous peoples and in the most remote inland areas. EMBRAPA's "Sisteminha" brings together a range of small-scale solutions that can be implemented even in a backyard, enabling people to meet their own needs and even generate income. This may involve, for example, raising chickens, producing eggs, using a biodigester, maintaining a fish tank, and ensuring that all these elements are interconnected."

Afonso Cardoso, Belém, PA

"If I were president, I would propose a week of popular mobilisation, at the national level, in support of housing, food, health, and education. A week of mobilisation to deliver as many benefits as possible to the population, with resources made available to clear waiting lists for examinations, consultations, and treatments, as well as for tutoring, home renovations, and improvements to schools, public squares, and hospitals. A week in which everyone can eat well, with three meals a day. A week in which everyone can feel part of society and an agent of their own causes."

Erica (last name withheld), São Paulo, SP

THEME 4

DIVERSITY: UNTAPPED ASSETS

A global competitive advantage, yet to be unleashed.

Brazil's diversity is a global asset, yet structural inequities and concentrated power limit its full potential. Gains in inclusion—from [Indigenous resurgence in Roraima](#)¹⁰³ to [Afro-Brazilian cultural leadership](#)¹⁰⁴ in Salvador—are real but fragile, overshadowed by [systemic racism](#),¹⁰⁵ economic instability, and [tokenistic](#)¹⁰⁶ approaches. In government, corporate leadership, and media ownership, representation still lags far behind Brazil's reality—with decision-making power concentrated in a narrow demographic.

As one of the most culturally and genetically [diverse countries in the world](#),¹⁰⁷ Brazil's diversity must be structurally embedded in policy, education, and innovation systems. This means valuing Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian cultures, recognising the economic role of [care](#)¹⁰⁸ and informal labour, and addressing [geographic disparities](#)¹⁰⁹ from the Amazon to the South. Diversity goes beyond being a human rights issue. Brazil pays a social and [economic cost](#)¹¹⁰ by not tapping the rich reserve of its diverse human talent. In other words, diversity can be a competitive advantage, too.

Threats to Brazil's progress on diversity are real. Political [polarisation](#)¹¹¹ is dividing the country. The fusion of conservative [Evangelical Christianity into politics](#)¹¹² threatens the LGBTQ+ community along with others whose views diverge from the notions of the "traditional family." The rise of [far-right movements](#)¹¹³ (including white supremacy) represents risks to Afro-Brazilians, Indigenous populations and the LGBTQ+ community through inflammatory rhetoric, discrimination and even [violence](#).¹¹⁴ [Legacy beliefs](#)¹¹⁵ rooted in racism and misogyny—with [inequality for women](#)¹¹⁶ persisting as a global challenge, not only in Brazil) call for more than a re-examination of values; they demand real, tangible change.

Yet Brazilians are "finding a way." Advances in inclusion, from LGBTQIA+ visibility in São Paulo's Pride Parade¹¹⁷ to funk balls (*bailes funk*)¹¹⁸ creating safe spaces for marginalised youth, and the historic recognition of Brazil's first transgender congresswoman,¹¹⁹ offer signals of growing momentum towards a more inclusive future. But even these "celebrations" must be tempered by the reality that violence—both physical and emotional—against women,¹²⁰ Black Brazilians,¹²¹ LGBTQIA+ people,¹²² and others continues.

Looking ahead, Brazil could become a model of representative democracy and inclusive development, where women, Black, Brown, and Indigenous people hold seats in Congress in proportion to their share of the population (53 per cent Black and Brown, 52 per cent women, at least 1 per cent Indigenous). Realistically, this vision requires a fundamental social shift, beginning with attitudes to cultural inclusion in [schools](#).¹²³

▶ What to Watch

- Nations that avoid addressing racism pay an [economic cost](#)¹²⁴ by failing to realise the potential of their people. Brazil could become more globally [competitive](#)¹²⁵ if it tapped the talent of Black Brazilians and women.
- New genomic research highlights Brazil as the [most genetically diverse country](#)¹²⁶ in the world. In recognition of its value, Brazil proposed [social diversity](#)¹²⁷ as a global criterion for defining sustainable investments at COP30.
- Brazil's cities are a [melting pot of diversity](#),¹²⁸ reflecting the rich cultures of Afro-Brazilians. Yet national surveys show that 84 per cent of Black Brazilians have [experienced discrimination](#).¹²⁹ Even more concerning, Brazil is facing the rise of white supremacist and [neo-Nazi groups](#)¹³⁰ who target Black Brazilians and immigrants. Rio Grande do Norte has [banned the appointment of individuals](#)¹³¹ convicted of racism, homophobia, or transphobia to public offices and public administration.
- Diversity can also be exploited by external actors. Investigations show that "[diverse and peaceful](#)"¹³² countries such as Brazil risk becoming targets for foreign espionage, especially where systems for issuing and controlling identity documents are weak.
- Gender quotas created to increase women's representation in Congress are being defrauded through "[phantom candidacies](#),"¹³³ highlighting the unintended consequences and vulnerabilities of progressive policies without sufficient monitoring and oversight.

Now What?

- **Can Brazil embed cultural sovereignty into its national development model?** Amid globalization and digital homogenisation, Brazil risks losing the unique cultural expressions that define its identity. What would it look like to treat cultural diversity as strategic infrastructure in which to invest?
- **Can Brazil’s migration system reflect intersectional realities?** Rising migration flows—internal and international—require policies that address race, gender, and sexuality. Yet many public institutions remain ill-equipped to serve diverse communities. How can Brazil design governance systems that are not just inclusive in rhetoric, but truly representative in practice?
- **Can Brazil protect its cultural diversity while addressing systemic exclusion?** Brazil is shaped by Afro-Brazilian, Indigenous, migrant, and LGBTQIA+ communities. Yet national narratives and policy frameworks often fail to reflect this diversity. How can Brazil shift from symbolic multiculturalism to structural inclusion and equity?

Observations

“Brazil is one of the most diverse countries in the world and yet one of the most prejudiced against its own people. I want to nurture a more respectful future, in which everyone can be valued for who they are and how they are. I believe that when people are able to express and reveal their full selves—without judging or being judged—they have the capacity to reach their fullest potential, and all of society benefits.”

Jonn Tsu Kuo, Imbituba, SC

Wishes for Brazil’s Future

“The values of Indigenous peoples, Afro-Brazilians, traditional communities, and riverine populations are fundamental for driving environmental transformation in the country.”

Moara Brasil Xavier da Silva (Moara Tupinambá), Campinas, SP

“A Brazil committed to human rights must recognise diversity as a democratic value and ensure that every person can fully exist in, and resist through, their identity.”

Louise Ariane da Campo, Uruguaiana, RS

“I wish that by 2035 families can better educate men on how to treat women, so that femicide becomes a thing of the past... And I hope that by 2035 we no longer discuss anyone’s sexuality. Society needs to move forward in that sense.”

Afonso Cardoso, Belém, PA

THEME 5

YOUTH: POTENTIAL AT RISK

Rising protagonism in a time of demographic change

Brazil's youth are both at [risk](#)¹³⁴ and feeling left behind, not realising their [potential](#)¹³⁵ partly because they are not receiving the education and training needed to secure decent jobs. Their frustrations are visible in [climate strikes in São Paulo](#)¹³⁶, the Indigenous land defence in [Roraima](#), rural development programmes in Quilombola communities in Maranhão and Pará, and [favela-led tech hubs in Rio de Janeiro](#).¹³⁷ Yet [economic precarity](#),¹³⁸ [digital addiction](#)¹³⁹ (including [online gambling](#)¹⁴⁰), and [political disengagement](#)¹⁴¹ persist across the population, with more than 30 per cent of 18–24 year olds abstaining from voting in the last election as their [share of the electorate shrinks](#).¹⁴²

Living in a VUCA world—volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous—many Brazilian youths [struggle](#)¹⁴³ to look to the future with hope as they navigate a “survival economy,” focused on meeting basic needs. A large share of young people (78 per cent) experience “[futurephobia](#)”.¹⁴⁴ They aspire of purpose-driven careers but fear the impacts of AI. They feel pressure to get rich quickly; some turn to “[digital entrepreneurship](#)”¹⁴⁵ and the [informal economy](#)¹⁴⁶ to survive, others to sports betting (“[bets](#)”¹⁴⁷), or even organised crime. Many question the value of [schooling](#),¹⁴⁸ while those who succeed academically often see opportunities abroad, contributing to [brain drain](#).¹⁴⁹

This raises sharper questions: Why is “youth” a policy priority? To unlock their agency—or keep them compliant? As their numbers and voting power declines, will political attention shift elsewhere? Globally, [Kenya's tax revolts](#)¹⁵⁰ show how disillusioned youth—especially generation Z—can disrupt political systems. Will [political polarisation](#)¹⁵¹ continue to divide Brazil's youth as they enter adulthood, shaping an even more fragmented future?

Brazil must look further ahead to the long-term impacts of a [declining birth rate](#),¹⁵² now at an all-time low. With the population projected to [peak at 219 million around 2040](#),¹⁵³ fewer younger people will be available to fuel the innovation needed for Brazil to compete in an accelerated digital world. At the same time, the country will face a demographic bulge of people aged 65 and older.

“Youth” is not a single bloc. From Recife activists to organisers in the Cerrado, Indigenous leaders in Amazonas to coders in Florianópolis, young people are already shaping myriad alternative futures. [Futures thinking is a learnable skill](#),¹⁵⁴ as is teaching youth about how [participate meaningfully in policymaking](#).¹⁵⁵ The next decade will show whether Brazil treats them as symbolic stakeholders or invests in them as co-architects of a fair and sustainable future.

▶ What to Watch

- Much of [Gen Z](#)¹⁵⁶ in Brazil struggles with low wages, informal work, and limited opportunities to gain work experience. As a decent job—with essential benefits—in the formal job market appears increasingly out of reach, many young people turn to gig work or self-employment as a survival strategy, while still strongly desiring the security and stability that come with a regular paycheck.
- [Illegal child labour persists](#)¹⁵⁷ throughout Brazil, with long-term consequences. Child labour also intersects with online culture as the lines between social media, the creator economy, and [child labour](#)¹⁵⁸ are increasingly blurred. [Child influencers promoting gambling](#)¹⁵⁹ and sports betting products to other children is a growing concern. The state of Piauí has introduced a program for schools (Fim de Jogo) to highlight the harms of online gambling.
- [Half of Black boys](#)¹⁶⁰ in Brazil aged 13–17 dream of growing up to be internet influencers or football players. Policymakers are starting to go after [social media sites](#) that seek to exploit children who dream of being influencers.
- With 80 per cent of Brazilian children living in cities, a proposed piece of legislation seeks to ensure a [child's right to nature](#)¹⁶¹—an important move to enshrine the rights of future generations to our shared natural endowments. The [National Integrated Policy for Early Childhood](#)¹⁶² programme that seeks to transform children's lives through investments in early childhood development and health care also points to the understanding of the long-term return on investment in children.
- Efforts to include youth in politics and policymaking are gaining momentum, city planners are unlocking the potential of [youth councils](#)¹⁶³ for inclusive sustainable governance, and over 40,000 Brazilian youth participate in [Futures Week](#)¹⁶⁴—imagining alternative futures for youth in Brazil.

Now What?

- **Could investments in youth be understood as a long-term driver for strengthening the bonds across generations?** Can Brazil balance the demands of an ageing population with those of its children—where its future potential lies?
- **Can youth leadership in climate and tech be scaled and supported—rather than siloed and symbolic?** From community-driven innovation in favelas to grassroots climate organising, young people are not waiting for permission to act. Yet funding, mentorship, and institutional partnerships remain fragmented. How can Brazil build youth-led pathways into formal decision-making, innovation ecosystems, and climate action?
- **Can Brazil balance opportunity and protection in the digital age?** Young people are digital natives, yet the online ecosystem is filled with misinformation, monetisation pressures, and emotional overload. While digital platforms can enable learning and entrepreneurship, they can also fuel disengagement from formal education and burnout among activists. How can Brazil support digital literacy, civic resilience, and youth mental health in a hyperconnected world?
- **Can Brazil's public institutions shift from designing *for* youth to designing *with* youth?** Across education, health, and employment, policies often assume what young people need rather than asking them. Co-designed processes—especially at the municipal level—remain limited but are growing. What would a future-proofed Brazilian State look like if youth co-governed it?

Observations

"The young person in a situation of vulnerability, with no money in their pocket, is focused on how to put food on the table. They are not thinking about whether the sun is hotter than it was five years ago. That young person will only think about political, climate or technology issues if these affect their income."

Diogo Montechiari Barbosa Campos, Macuco, RJ

"To my mind, Brazil's young people are the most creative in the world—because they are reinventing their lives in exceptionally challenging circumstances."

Felipe Gonzalez, UNICEF, São Paulo, SP

"Today's youth experience very intense climate anxiety. Many of us do not have access to psychological support and cannot afford it. This makes it much harder for us to cope with such a heavy emotional burden."

Renata Padilha, Porto Alegre, RS

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"I am radically optimistic about the power of Black, Indigenous, and peripheral youth who, even in the face of so many barriers, have been reinventing ways of existing, resisting, and creating. There is an entire generation articulating agendas around race, gender, sexuality, and political ecology that no longer accepts being excluded from decision-making. Brazil's future is strong when these voices are at the centre—not the margins—of politics, culture, and the economy."

Vinícius Santiago, Brasília, DF

"We need to engage young people with a compelling vision and build trust, perhaps through a circle of friends that includes us, the UN. We need a vision that brings them back into a relationship with evidence, with data, with reality. Yet we seem to be losing them more and more to fakeness, hype, and hot air."

Claudio Providas, UNDP Brazil, Brasília, DF

THEME 6

VALUES: TRUST IN TRANSITION

Negotiating belonging in a fractured, multifaceted society

Brazilian society is undergoing a profound transformation—overlapping [crises of trust](#),¹⁶⁵ identity, and representation are creating space for both solidarity and polarisation. Traditional institutions are losing legitimacy,¹⁶⁶ while evangelical [churches](#),¹⁶⁷ local [collectives](#),¹⁶⁸ and digital cultural [platforms](#)¹⁶⁹ are stepping in to fill moral and social gaps—often pulling in divergent directions.

Values may experience further change in the years to come as Brazil's demographics evolve. Birthrates are falling in Brazil and across the region as women gain greater access to education ([with higher schooling rates than boys](#)),¹⁷⁰ economic opportunity and access to contraception,¹⁷¹ and as [child marriages decline](#).¹⁷² Meanwhile, Brazil's older populations increase in size.

This moment reveals a deeper struggle over the soul of Brazil:

- On the one hand, grassroots and [community-led movements](#)¹⁷³ reclaim values through care, land rights, and lived justice—from [Indigenous defenders of the Amazon](#)¹⁷⁴ to solidarity kitchens in São Paulo.¹⁷⁵
- On the other hand, [rising religiosity](#),¹⁷⁶ [far-right movements](#), and [distrust in global agendas](#)¹⁷⁷ are emboldening conservative and [nationalist narratives](#).¹⁷⁸

Amid this friction, [Afro-Brazilian cultural movements](#),¹⁷⁹ [climate-justice youth](#),¹⁸⁰ and [feminist networks](#)¹⁸¹ are offering seeds of shared values that can bridge divides.

But sustaining them will require deliberate efforts in policy, culture, and civic life. It may require a big, nationwide moment of awareness that breaks through all the lines of division—a “[Me Too](#)”¹⁸² moment where Brazilians are collectively united to address systemic problems. The future of values in Brazil is not about imposing consensus—it is about negotiating belonging in a plural society, making diversity a source of shared strength rather than deepening division.

▶ What to Watch

- 63 per cent of Brazilians [do not trust others in their own community](#),¹⁸³ and trust in institutions is even lower, driven largely by political polarisation and persistent [corruption](#)¹⁸⁴ that continue to erode trust and integrity.
- Yet even as polarisation increases and distrust prevails, when it comes to values, more unites Brazilians than divides them—starting with the strong belief that [family comes first](#).¹⁸⁵ Leveraging cherished family ties in an increasingly digital world is essential to building robust, connected local communities working towards collective commitments.
- [Evangelical Christianity is growing](#)¹⁸⁶—the movement attracts migrants in large cities who feel lost and isolated. The religious revival extends beyond the spiritual; churches are [reshaping Brazil's politics](#) and [influencing education](#).¹⁸⁷ The blurring of boundaries between church and state threatens to undermine democracy, yet care is needed to avoid oversimplification. Not all Evangelical Brazilians (or those of other faith traditions) seek a [theocracy](#).¹⁸⁸
- Conservatism is also permeating culture. The rise of “[Agronejo](#)” [music](#)¹⁸⁹ amplifies rural identity and values, agribusiness pride, and conservative ideas, blending pop culture with ideological narratives.
- Soft power is also being deployed by Brazil, projecting its values globally through [exported pop culture](#).¹⁹⁰
- [Multinational corporate tech giants](#)¹⁹¹ are attempting to shape political views in Brazil—undermining national sovereignty and voter independence. Countries are not helpless in the face of such commercial and political influence; Brazil is actively taking a stand against [far-right disinformation](#).¹⁹²
- There is growing social resistance to cut-throat capitalism and pushback against valuing profits over life.¹⁹³ Grounded movements¹⁹⁴ such as the Landless Workers' Movement (Movimento Sem Terra—MST) are reclaiming values through lived alternatives rooted in land, care, and justice.

Now What?

- **Can Brazil shape a digital future that centres human connection and cultural authenticity?** As AI-generated content proliferates, there is concern about eroding human storytelling and relational values. Youth, artists, and educators are calling for intentional uses of technology that [do not erase lived experience](#).¹⁹⁵
- **Can ancestral and spiritual value systems be recognised as assets in innovation and governance?** From [Indigenous cosmologies](#)¹⁹⁶ to Afro-Brazilian spiritual practices, Brazil is rich in worldviews that challenge extractive and linear models of progress. These perspectives offer alternative logics of time, responsibility, and interdependence. How might Brazil create policies that value [ancestral technologies](#)¹⁹⁷ and worldviews as sources of innovation?
- **Amid deepening polarization, how can Brazil embed empathy, care, and pluralism into public service delivery and democratic design?** Brazil's political and cultural polarisation is hindering collective progress and trust in institutions. Bridging divides will require intentional spaces for dialogue, shared national narratives, and emotional literacy as a civic skill. Can Brazil find common ground amid pervasive suspicion and distrust?
- **Can Brazilian national identity be reimaged to celebrate pluralism and historical truth, helping to build a future in which all Brazilians see themselves reflected in the nation's story?** Brazil's diversity is a strength—but it is often erased or tokenised in dominant narratives. What public campaigns and institutional reforms can cultivate pride in pluralism without flattening its complexity?

Observations

"There is a growing sense of individualism among young people, perhaps exacerbated by the pandemic, leading to a 'loss of collective meaning.'"

Kátia Vielitz Almeida, Porto Alegre, RS

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"My idea for creating a better Brazil is to promote a true revolution in love and empathy."

Jeck Neco Araújo, Aldeia Umariacú, Tabatinga, AM

"My idea for creating a better Brazil is to move away from the lifestyle model imposed by capitalism as the only possible alternative—and to create viable paths for living in harmony with the Earth, learning from Indigenous peoples who have always practised this care."

Yasmin da Nóbrega Formiga, Santa Luzia, PB

"I seek civic education for women and girls that speaks about human rights, social participation, and civic leadership."

Gabriela Toso de Oliveira, Cascavel, PR

ESSAY: REDISCOVERING EDUCATION AS A PATH TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION



Maria Eduarda do Canto Menezes
Student
Porto Alegre, RS

Amid a period of social and political instability, it becomes easy to lose faith in the education system as a whole and to look at the future with suspicion or even indifference, as though the path towards a more just and developed country were blocked by insurmountable obstacles. Yet abandoning the pursuit of knowledge does not lead to a prosperous future or to collective development. In this context, the opposite and reassuring attitude of Brazilian youth stands out as they rediscover education as a legitimate pathway for personal and social transformation and, in doing so, choose to flourish.

Brazilian youth should not be understood as a homogeneous group, but rather as the convergence of multiple identities and experiences. Their renewed thirst for education strengthens their transformative role across different parts of society.

Consider the process through which a plant blooms: a single seed, placed in fertile soil and given water and sunlight, germinates and transforms into a tree that feeds and sustains a community while generating new seeds. The same is true for young people who, when placed in a favourable environment and nourished with opportunities and knowledge, become adults committed to change and contribute to Brazil's progress, sowing their experiences into future generations, who will continue this cycle.

It is natural that pessimism and resignation persist amid a national context marked by complex challenges. **Yet what sustains my hopeful outlook on Brazil's future is precisely the**

way young people have risen in the face of adversity: with courage, creativity, and a genuine desire for transformation. This generation, diverse in its origins and experiences, has shown willingness to take up space, seek knowledge, and reimagine pathways.

Contrary to narratives portraying youth as alienated or unmotivated, I see a generation that organises, claims its right to education, transforms scarcity into innovation, and turns resistance into potential. This movement, even if at times quiet, is underway—and **it is what enables me to believe in a country still in the making, imperfect yet full of possibility.**

To remain optimistic about Brazil's future does not mean ignoring its historical or current problems. It means recognising that there is sufficient collective strength—especially among young people—to confront them with responsibility and imagination. In many ways, Brazilian youth are the seed of a new culture: more participatory, critical, inclusive, and aware of their social role.

I hope future generations do not inherit a finished country, but rather a living one, constantly reinventing itself, where they can continue to build—with freedom and dignity—what we begin today. And it is this sense of continuity, movement, and hope cultivated in the present that convinces me: Brazil's future is fertile, and it has already begun to bloom.

ESSAY: BELIEVING IN BRAZIL IS COURAGEOUS



Diogo Montechiari Barbosa Campos

Student

Social Entrepreneur, Macuco, RJ

Believing in Brazil is not naïve—it is courageous. Believing, even knowing that so many times efforts were made to keep young people from dreaming. But in this new Brazil, to silence our dreams, they will have to confront a youth that is no longer synonymous with incapacity. I once heard that no one dreams of what they do not know. Since then, I have sought knowledge and returned it with the same strength and courage with which Brazil is repositioning itself to shape its future.

Amid inequalities, in favelas and rural towns, there is always a young person dreaming of learning, mobilizing, and developing. And when Brazil listens to this young person, both are transformed. Development focused on rural youth has gained prominence, especially with the recent **Law 15.178/25**, which establishes the **National Policy on Youth and Rural Succession**. This legislation aims to encourage young people aged 15 to 29 to remain in rural areas through integrated solutions that strengthen family farming.

In a context where rural youth have historically faced exclusion and been pushed towards urban migration due to the lack of educational, economic, and social opportunities, this policy marks a turning point. **Brazil is beginning to build its future from the ground up,**

creating cooperatives and associations of young farmers, expanding educational offerings in rural areas, providing dedicated credit lines with differentiated conditions, and promoting integrated action across governments and technical support institutions.

This is why it is both possible and necessary to hold a radical optimism regarding Brazil's future. Initiatives like this reinforce what will define our trajectory: youth. The seeds we plant today will become the harvest of the next generation. And today, at 21 years old, I can say that the courage to dream has become my greatest gift. It is what drives me forward in the **Movimento Voa**, a tech-based social enterprise that brings Science, Technology, and Innovation (ST&I) closer to young people in rural Brazil.

In 10, 20, or 30 years, I envision a Brazil that leads its own transformation—more sovereign, more technologically and educationally developed, investing in its foundations, in income generation, and in social justice. My optimism comes not only from what Brazil is, but from what it can, and will, become **when every young person believes in the power of dreaming** and transforming their surroundings.

THEME 7

EMPLOYMENT: INVESTMENT IN RESILIENCE

Today's skills gap is tomorrow's lost competitive advantage

Brazil faces a critical **mismatch**¹⁹⁸ between the capabilities of its **current workforce**¹⁹⁹ and the demands of a **rapidly transforming economy**.²⁰⁰ As the country advances in **agritech, fintech, and renewable energy innovation**,²⁰¹ a glaring skills gap threatens its ability to sustain momentum. Falling birthrates mean a **shrinking future labour force**²⁰² must **become more productive**.²⁰³

Yet strong signals point to a different future. **Public-private investment**²⁰⁴ is growing through **socio-bioeconomy**²⁰⁵ and **socio-environmental entrepreneurship**.²⁰⁶ Digital agriculture is boosting **productivity and sustainability**.²⁰⁷ Large corporations are aligning around a new social ethic—**ESG 4.0**²⁰⁸—that could modernise employer-worker relations and create **lasting layers of transparency**²⁰⁹ within organisations. On the ground, **Periphery-led Impact Enterprises (Negócios de Impacto Periféricos)**²¹⁰ are tackling local socio-environmental challenges, showing inclusive growth can emerge from the margins—if supported by policy and capital.

Within this dynamic picture is another concern—the steady celebration of entrepreneurship. While encouraging people to start businesses can be a good thing, it takes a precarious turn when workers are **pressured to become**²¹¹ “entrepreneurs” (contract workers, freelancers, gig workers) not by choice, but by necessity, effectively trading their rights as registered workers for the **precarity of self-employment**.²¹² At the same time, some gig workers prefer not to be covered by formal labour legislation, choosing to be recognised as entrepreneurs rather than employees.

The path forward is to treat employment not as a by-product of growth, but as a strategic investment in national resilience. This means scaling innovation, modernising labour models such as CLT (Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho), supporting Brazil's efforts to consolidate labour laws²¹³ to protect gig workers, and enabling all Brazilians—from corporate boardrooms to community entrepreneurs—to contribute to a resilient, future-ready economy.

CLUSTER 2: COURAGE FOR RESPONSIBLE FUTURES

From resource wealth to resilient prosperity: balancing growth, equity and the planet

With vast natural assets, a dynamic private sector, and growing global influence, Brazil has the means to drive a **new era of prosperity**. The question is not whether it can grow—but **how**: whether growth will strengthen the well-being of its people, protect its ecosystems, and position Brazil as a leader in the Global South.

Across energy, infrastructure, finance, business, and employment, opportunities are emerging: scaling renewable energy while phasing out fossil fuel dependence; investing in climate-resilient, green, and digital infrastructure; mobilising sustainable finance for development justice; redefining corporate leadership through ESG 4.0 and entrepreneurship in marginalised communities; and treating employment as a strategic investment in national resilience.

While the potential is immense, Brazil also faces significant **headwinds**, from global trade tensions and the prohibitive cost of doing business to the challenges of preparing young people for the jobs of the future and navigating the transformative impact of **AI**.

It comes down to the choices Brazil makes. There will be hard trade-offs to navigate—short-term fiscal pressures vs long-term sustainability, domestic priorities vs global influence, and the political will required to reform outdated systems. As a founding member of BRICS, Brazil can bring leadership to a vision for a more balanced global economic order—but its leadership will ultimately be measured by how well it aligns **economic power with social equity and environmental stewardship**.

▶ What to Watch

- Brazil's green jobs boom: Brazil ranks third globally in [renewable energy job creation](#),²¹⁴ driven by significant biofuel investments.
- The precarity of gig workers is a growing challenge. Amidst growing [bololô protests](#),²¹⁵ Brazil's Supreme Court has suspended all cases related to reclassifying [contract workers](#)²¹⁶ (currently classified as "entrepreneurs" without recourse to labour rights) as employees, as it debates the future shape of sectoral legislation. Meanwhile, [underage gig workers](#)²¹⁷ under pressure use AI and other tools to circumvent labour laws to earn a living.
- Attracting the next generation of skilled workers is becoming more difficult: Young, educated Brazilians [are turning away from formal employment](#),²¹⁸ seeking flexibility, purpose-driven work, and healthier working conditions. Across the board, professional workers prefer [hybrid work](#)²¹⁹ over full-time, in-person formats.
- A privileged minority retain choices and bargaining power, but most Gen Z Brazilians feel left behind, lacking the relevant skills to fill existing market gaps. [Youth unemployment](#)²²⁰ (ages 18-29) is twice as high as for older generations. Memes express the cynical [frustration of younger workers](#),²²¹ highlighting underemployment and the lack of opportunities; others give up on finding decent work in Brazil and [pursue career paths](#)²²² abroad.
- [Bridging technological and structural skills gaps](#),²²³ especially for younger workers, is critical to Brazil's future. Increasing the chances of success for future employees begins with [replicating](#)²²⁴ the approaches of successful schools. Efforts are under way to reconnect the growing number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)²²⁵ with quality schooling opportunities. Unlocking the latent potential of the workforce is not solely the responsibility of the government—industry must start [investing in training](#)²²⁶ its current and future workers to close skills gaps.

🕒 Now What?

Can Brazil bridge the skills gaps that are limiting economic growth and worker mobility?

- Can Brazil grow its economy without growing its middle class? Employment is not only about wages—it is about building stable, upwardly mobile lives. Without a thriving middle class, domestic demand stagnates and inequality hardens. What fiscal and employment strategies could help expand Brazil's middle class—not only its GDP?
- What if fixing education is Brazil's most important employment reform? From teacher training to early literacy to civic learning, education is shaping how Brazil's future workforce will be prepared. How can Brazil scale successful local reforms—such as Ceará's—to systemically link education to employment, democracy, and dignity? If education is key to expanding employment opportunities, what must Brazil do to reform its system to increase effectiveness with limited resources?
- Will green and digital transitions democratise work—or deepen inequality? Brazil is a leader in biofuels and fintech—but without inclusive skilling and regional investment, the future of work may bypass those who need it most. How can Brazil ensure that green jobs are not only clean, but also just?
- Are we preparing people for jobs that no longer exist? Future employment will depend on anticipating shifts in energy, technology, and services. Current education and training systems trail behind this transformation. What cross-sector reskilling ecosystem could prepare Brazil's youth for agritech, AI, and green jobs?
- How can Brazil design labour laws for a generation that does not want—or cannot find—a boss? While informality and entrepreneurship are often symptoms of exclusion, they are increasingly the preference of more privileged young workers seeking freedom and flexibility. Yet the regulatory system has not kept pace. What new protections and incentives could support the growing cohort of informal, gig, and self-employed youth?
- Will Brazil run out of workers before it runs out of work? Shrinking birthrates and widening skills gaps are creating a demographic crunch. Brazil must raise workforce productivity without reproducing inequality. Can Brazil lead the Global South in defining productive, equitable, and digital workforces?
- Will Brazil invest in its ageing workforce—or overlook this underappreciated asset? Thanks to advances in healthcare, people are not only living longer, they can work longer too. This will require reskilling, lifelong learning, and balancing the expectations of older and younger workers, all seeking dignified economic opportunity. Brazil, like other nations, will face a broader debate about generational trade-offs linked to longevity and meaningful work.

Q Observations

"The 'app-companies' exploit the base of the pyramid more than they create real jobs or pathways to employability. They sell the illusion that you control your own time, that you are an entrepreneur with a flexible schedule—but in reality, it is the opposite: you are being manipulated and directed by an algorithm that makes you work more while earning less."

Emanuelly de Oliveira Longo, Fortaleza, CE

"This anti-CLT movement—this push for labour flexibilisation—is frightening, because workers lose rights and gain more work. We move away from a career-based vision and enter a portfolio-based one. I have to be a bit of everything just to enter the labour market."

Diogo Montechiari Barbosa Campos, Macuco, RJ

"Every day there are fewer labour rights. Job stability is almost extinct, both in the private sector and in international organisations that promote decent work. Without stability, it is impossible to plan one's life."

Lennon Junqueira, Brasília, DF

👍 Wishes for Brazil's Future

"If I were president for a day, I would implement a National Education Programme starting from early schooling and extending through the training of university students. Our people are intelligent and skilled at improvisation. What they need is quality education. Without it, no other national priority can be achieved. Only then will we reach the long-awaited goal of social inclusion"

Ana Paula M. Machado, Rio de Janeiro, RJ

"I wish for a country where people can choose any career and still have access to decent work and an income that allows them to live with dignity."

Business Administrator, Brasília, DF

THEME 8

BUSINESS/PRIVATE SECTOR: SOFT POWER, HARD LIMITS

Innovation is emerging not despite Brazil's challenges, but because of them

From [agritech that merges AI with precision farming](#)²²⁷ to the revolutionary [PIX payment system](#),²²⁸ Brazilian businesses are not just keeping pace—they are [shaping global conversations](#)²²⁹ in fintech, [sustainable finance](#),²³⁰ and [renewable energy](#).²³¹ Innovation is arising not despite Brazil's challenges but [because of them](#),²³² driving solutions that respond to real-world constraints.

This dynamism positions the private sector as a [soft power asset](#)²³³ in BRICS, G20, [B20](#)²³⁴ and global climate negotiations, and as a key actor in shaping a neo-industrial Brazil. Strong signals point to what is possible: impact-driven [ESG 4.0 models](#),²³⁵ [corporate coalitions for a new social ethic](#),²³⁶ and emerging [periphery-led impact enterprises](#)²³⁷ linking business growth to local problem-solving.

However, the Brazilian private sector faces headwinds that could hamper future growth. Brazilian businesses operate within an unstable global trade environment marked by [escalating tariffs](#)²³⁸ and [protectionist policies](#).²³⁹ The cost of doing business with—and within—Brazil remains high ("[Brazil Cost](#)").²⁴⁰ These costs, combined with an ever-shifting legal environment, discourage companies from establishing business operations in the country. Brazil has also suffered a dramatic loss of its manufacturing base over the past 20 years of [deindustrialisation](#),²⁴¹ accelerating the replacement of higher-paying manufacturing jobs with lower-paying [tech and service jobs](#).²⁴²

Other challenges include the infiltration of organised crime into [traditional industries](#),²⁴³ widening [skills gaps](#),²⁴⁴ and [continued dependence on commodities](#)²⁴⁵ and imported technologies.²⁴⁶ Without a coordinated industrial policy, as well as sustained investment in human capital, infrastructure, and inclusive innovation ecosystems, Brazil risks underleveraging the potential of its private sector.

External forces are also exerting pressure, particularly changes initiated by the United States (Brazil's second-largest export partner), including tariffs and sanctions on Brazilian goods. Yet, in a world where demand for energy and rare earth minerals is rising sharply to fuel AI and digital transformation, economic power is no longer one-sided. This shift may open new opportunities for technological cooperation and trade.²⁴⁷

The opportunity now is to move beyond shareholder returns towards shared prosperity. Could government—through solutions such as tax incentives or tax credits—help Brazil reindustrialise for the AI age, generating the higher-paying jobs young people seek and safeguarding Brazil's manufacturing sovereignty? Could new markets, such as Africa or India, be developed to rebalance trade relations with the United States and China? Done well, Brazil's private sector could help redefine what responsible, future-oriented capitalism looks like—from the Global South outward.

▶ What to Watch

- Strategic international partnerships, with both nation states and multinational corporations, could accelerate economic growth. **Brazil and China are signing a bilateral agreement**²⁴⁸ aimed at revitalising Brazilian industry through infrastructure investment, skills development, and AI cooperation.
- While partnerships are necessary to achieve economic goals, maintaining **sovereignty**²⁴⁹ **over critical assets** and avoiding dependence on **trade and infrastructure** partners remains a critical consideration in the era of **coercive geoeconomics**.²⁵⁰
- Brazil's new industrial policy, **Nova Indústria Brasil**,²⁵¹ responds to decades of deindustrialisation. The question is whether Brazil can reset the **neo-extractivist trap**²⁵² that incentivises nations to prioritise economic growth over environmental necessities.
- The **high direct and indirect costs**²⁵³ of doing business in Brazil ("Brazil Cost") deter foreign companies from manufacturing in Brazil and constrain domestic growth. At the same time, limited local opportunities are driving **high-skilled professionals**,²⁵⁴ scientists, and entrepreneurs abroad, threatening long-term competitiveness and deepening cycles of lost potential.
- Brazil aims to become a **leading exporter**²⁵⁵ of agriculture products. But the economic rewards of exporting **virtual water**²⁵⁶ (the hidden volume of fresh water required to produce export goods and services) through agricultural commodities should be balanced with the environmental and social costs to Brazilians.
- Brazil's **economy is resilient**,²⁵⁷ but it cannot rely on commodity booms. A renewed focus on technological innovation could help the country escape the middle-income trap. Brazil is emerging as a **regional hub for AI**²⁵⁸ in Latin America, with an opportunity to become a **global player in financial technology**,²⁵⁹ particularly in digital payment systems.²⁶⁰

🕒 Now What?

- **Can Brazil stop exporting potential and start owning innovation?** Can the country break its dependence on commodities (oil, agriculture, and others) to build a more balanced export economy driven by manufactured and processed goods? Brazil leads in exporting commodities but imports its high-tech future, relying on others for AI, EVs, and quantum technologies. Even within BRICS, it risks becoming a provider of resources rather than a co-creator of solutions. What fiscal and industrial policies could help Brazil retain value and move up the innovation chain?
- **Is it time for Brazil to help define a Global South model of responsible business?** From AI regulation to sustainable (ESG) finance, Brazil is positioned to lead with values if it can avoid capture by old interests and new extractive logics.
- **What if the future of business in Brazil depends on fixing basic needs related to sectors such as education and infrastructure, such as energy and water treatment?** Brazil's private sector cannot innovate in a vacuum. Infrastructure gaps, unstable energy systems, and unequal access to quality education are quietly undermining competitiveness. How can business and government jointly invest in foundational systems as economic multipliers?
- **What steps could government and the private sector take to reduce the "Brazil Cost"?** Without bold investments in R&D, career pathways, and creative freedom, Brazil may lose the race for frontier industries. What measures could reverse the country's brain drain and inspire the next generation of innovators?
- **Will public-private partnerships (PPPs) serve the public—or only the private?** PPPs are expanding across climate, energy, and infrastructure²⁶¹—but often without community participation or transparency.²⁶² Without redesign, they may reinforce elite capture. What rules, metrics, or accountability structures could ensure PPPs deliver equity and regeneration?

🔍 Observations

"A signal I have been observing is the rise of entrepreneurship focused on social impact, particularly the growing commitment among women entrepreneurs to produce while also considering how their products and services affect their communities. Today, we are seeing significant growth in the bioeconomy—a very positive indication of the direction in which Brazil is heading."

Gabriela Fideles Silva, São Paulo, SP

"There is a national policy movement around the Circular Economy, and this is enabling new business models. So, a lot of things that were previously just part of an ESG agenda are now coming off the paper. I see that this regulation can have an impact on the private sector's vision of the future in Brazil."

Rodrigo Cury Teixeira, Florianópolis, SC

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"If I were president, I would reduce logistics costs, which are absurd in Brazil today. I would unlock exports and internal circulation."

Danillo Regis, Amargosa, BA

"I would work to improve the quality of working life, reducing dependence on the State, lowering expenses, and creating room for private companies by 'freeing up' resources to invest in infrastructure, health, and education."

Eliakim Herbert de Araújo Silva, Gravatá, PB

"I wish for a Brazil with excellent public services, so that the private sector would have to invest more in research and extension, as it invests very little today."

Systems Analyst, Belém, PA

"I would certainly invest in Brazil's aerospace technology and in artificial intelligence, and I would 'launch' them. We need to reduce the dependency our country has on others."

Emerson Torres, Brasília, DF

"I want a future in which Brazil is a leader in sustainable technology. I want to see Brazil take the lead—pioneering positive, responsible uses of artificial intelligence and environmental technologies."

Renata Koch Alvarenga, Porto Alegre, RS

THEME 9

SUSTAINABLE FINANCE: REWRITING THE RULES

Global leadership is limited by local entitlements and obligations

Brazil is emerging as a global innovator in [sustainable finance](#)²⁶³—not only adopting global frameworks but shaping them. Through instruments such as [sovereign sustainability bonds](#),²⁶⁴ partnerships with BRICS partners, the [Panda bond](#),²⁶⁵ and a nationally tailored [green taxonomy](#),²⁶⁶ Brazil is helping redefine how development is financed.

This leadership is economic as much as environmental. Green finance is now a [mainstay](#)²⁶⁷ of the country's economic development. Climate finance for land use in Brazil alone [increased 99 per cent](#)²⁶⁸ between 2021-2023 (compared to 2015-2020). Brazil is using sustainable finance to channel capital towards [education](#),²⁶⁹ [care work](#),²⁷⁰ inequality reduction, and ecological resilience. In doing so, it is reframing green finance as not only about decarbonisation, but about development²⁷¹ justice.

Strong signals point to an expanding role: new [BRICS-linked climate finance platforms](#)²⁷² are opening South-South investment flows; [digital finance tools](#)²⁷³ are improving [transparency in bond reporting](#); ²⁷⁴ and partnerships with [socio-bioeconomy enterprises](#)²⁷⁵ in the Amazon are showing how green capital can directly strengthen local livelihoods. Brazil's position in [G20 negotiations](#)²⁷⁶ gives it the soft power to push for climate and financial reforms that reflect Global South priorities while [bridging global South-North relations](#)²⁷⁷ to shape a new green consensus.

Yet [contradictions](#)²⁷⁸ remain. [Fiscal constraints](#),²⁷⁹ incoherent credit policies that create [perverse incentives](#)²⁸⁰, and uneven regulation could slow progress. Without coordination across ministries, regions, and sectors, Brazil's green finance leadership risks remaining more potential than paradigm.

What to Watch

- Sustainable finance is a global challenge. South-South cooperation could redefine global green finance as Brazil seeks to issue its first [Panda Bond](#)²⁸¹ in China. China has expressed interest in the [Brazil-led Global Forest Fund](#),²⁸² endorsed by 53 countries at the [Belém Climate Summit](#).²⁸³ Innovative South-North plans that propose to use public funds from wealthier nations to back renewable energy loans²⁸⁴ in developing countries could strengthen international solidarity around climate goals.

- Recent leadership positions in the G20 and COP have created an opportunity for Brazil to advocate for [global green finance reform](#)²⁸⁵ on the international stage, while building trade and financing bridges with both the Global South and the Global North.
- Policy loopholes mean green finance is often manipulated by capital markets to the detriment of ESG goals. [Subsidised rural credit](#)²⁸⁶ lines are sometimes channelled to finance practices linked to deforestation, creating contradictions that stall Brazil's green transition. New legislation [establishing regulations](#)²⁸⁷ for carbon-credit trading seeks to close these loopholes.
- Brazil's development of a national green taxonomy—modelled in part on the EU— to redefine [green finance](#)²⁸⁸ could eliminate loopholes, increase transparency, and combat greenwashing.
- Indigenous community funds, governed by Indigenous people to finance local priorities and strengthen collective support networks, can help align climate and community development objectives.

Now What?

- **Could sustainable finance become Brazil's soft power advantage?** Through BRICS and the G20, Brazil's financial innovation could shape a new consensus for the Global South—but only if it delivers results that others want to emulate. How can Brazil position itself as the climate-finance voice of emerging economies without becoming a cautionary tale?
- **What if sustainable finance is the next development model—not just a tool?** Brazil's emerging ecosystem blends fiscal policy, social justice and climate goals. This could be more than a finance strategy—it could be a whole-of-society shift. Can Brazil turn sustainable finance into a foundational model for inclusive development, not just green growth?
- **Can Brazil set global rules while contradictions remain at home?** Brazil is helping rewrite the global green-finance playbook—but fragmented domestic regulations and social exclusion risk undermining its legitimacy. What would it take for Brazil to “own” sustainable finance—by aligning domestic policy, regulatory coherence and inclusive outcomes? What governance innovations are needed to safeguard against greenwashing and unlock public trust?
- **Is green finance truly sustainable if it leaves people behind?** While Brazil leads on ESG bonds and carbon markets, rural credit still fuels extractive models. Without equity, innovation risks reinforcing old inequalities. Can Brazil design sustainable finance that serves the rainforest and the rural poor?

Observations

“I see a growing influence of organised crime in business, which affects private-sector strategic planning and foreign investment. Banks are beginning to measure the risks and impacts of this trend, because once criminal groups enter a sector, they can fundamentally alter market dynamics.”

Gabriela Fideles Silva, São Paulo, SP

“GDP is a number based solely on productivity and output. And we know that if every country had a GDP comparable to highly developed nations, there would be no planet left for everyone, right? So I believe the search for other, more human indicators of quality of life is essential to shift the strategic direction of countries' decision-making.”

Rodrigo Cury Teixeira, Florianópolis, SC

“Companies with stronger sustainability performance tend to be more profitable over time. So it's good for everyone. It's a win-win.”

Luciane Moessa de Souza, Soluções Inclusivas Sustentáveis (SIS), Rio de Janeiro, RJ

Wishes for Brazil's Future

“I would focus on creating a sophisticated green economy, with development of technological centers modeled after Embrapa for each Brazilian biome, for example. And I would attract investments in clean energy generation and high technology.”

Alexandre Dall'Ara, São Paulo, SP

“I see a lot of future in regenerative economy—it's not just about minimizing damage, it's about restoring, revitalizing, strengthening what we already have.”

Mariana Pincovsky, Recife, PE

THEME 10

INFRASTRUCTURE: CONNECTIVITY AS A REQUIREMENT

Balancing partnerships and sovereignty to build the infrastructure that Brazil needs to thrive

Brazil's development hinges on high quality, sustainable infrastructure²⁸⁹—not just more of it. The future will be shaped by the types of infrastructure being built, whom they serve, who owns them,²⁹⁰ and whether that infrastructure can survive a changing climate²⁹¹ and a shifting global economy.

From the Amazon to the favelas, from digital deserts to flooded coastlines, Brazil faces a paradox: bold ambitions and globally admired innovative models—such as its renewable energy grid²⁹² and digital payments system²⁹³—alongside deep bottlenecks in fiscal capacity,²⁹⁴ regional equity,²⁹⁵ and local implementation.

A lack of adequate infrastructure creates other kinds of friction. Infrastructure deficiencies²⁹⁶ not only raise the cost of creating more infrastructure²⁹⁷ but also exacerbate spatial inequality²⁹⁸ and generate indirect costs that ripple across the economy. This makes Brazilian products less competitive, increases the costs of moving people and goods across the country, and limits economic potential.²⁹⁹ Combined, these factors make doing business in Brazil less attractive³⁰⁰ than in countries that have invested in foundational infrastructure.

The next wave of ambition-to-action could include new BRICS-era trade³⁰¹ and transport links connecting African,³⁰² Asian, and Latin American³⁰³ partners; green logistics corridors³⁰⁴ for climate-resilient supply chains; and digital connectivity projects bridging rural-urban divides.³⁰⁵ Brazil's renewable energy leadership offers a blueprint for integrating green infrastructure into national economic development strategies.³⁰⁶

Infrastructure is no longer just physical—it is digital, green, inclusive, and strategic. If Brazil can align subnational execution, climate resilience, and connectivity goals, it could emerge not only as a continental logistics hub, but as a Global South infrastructure innovator. If it fails to act, the cost will be more than missed growth—it could mean eroded social cohesion, a stalled green transition, weakened sovereignty, and deepened territorial inequalities.

▶ What to Watch

- Multinational infrastructure partnerships are deepening Brazil's connections to global trade partners. Brazil and China are discussing the construction of a railway linking³⁰⁷ to a deep-water port in Peru, expanding the Belt and Road Initiative and connecting BRICS to the Latin American Bioceanic Corridor.³⁰⁸ Brazil is also planning five new overland routes³⁰⁹ through the Amazon to link the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.
- Development partnerships are not just international. Private infrastructure spending in Brazil is expected to increase by 61 per cent³¹⁰ by 2029, injecting much-needed capital into projects with economy-wide benefits.
- "Technofeudalism"³¹¹—where big tech companies act as "lords" over key systems and institutions—and the growing foreign ownership of digital and physical infrastructure essential for commercial connectivity pose rising threats³¹² to national sovereignty.
- Investment in water and sanitation projects is mission critical, as Brazil seeks to achieve universal access³¹³ to potable water and sanitation by 2033. "Small infrastructure"³¹⁴ projects, such as sanitation, yield high returns given their direct impact on the lives of Brazilians. At the same time, risks of water shortage crises³¹⁵ in Brazil pose a global threat due to widespread dependence on Brazilian agricultural exports.
- Advancements in digital infrastructure³¹⁶ (PIX, DREX, Gov.br, Jus.br) are helping Brazil close access gaps by connecting people, businesses, and government, while positioning the country as a leader in digital governance. These systems will need to keep pace with rapidly evolving technologies to sustain Brazil's competitive edge.
- Brazil urgently needs to scale up infrastructure investment³¹⁷ to expand access, improve quality, increase productivity, and enhance competitiveness while reducing inequalities. Infrastructure access is a gendered and racial³¹⁸ issue. More minorities and women need to be involved³¹⁹ in the development, planning, and design of infrastructure.

Now What?

- **Pix (national digital payment system), DREX (Digital Brazilian Real), Gov.br, and Jus.br show Brazil's potential for public digital infrastructure leadership.** But broadband deserts and digital inequality still exclude millions. How can Brazil ensure its digital transformation does not reinforce old divides?
- **Can Brazil lead Latin America and become a competitive global economic player without connecting itself first?** Poor internal connectivity—physical and digital—limits Brazil's regional influence. What further federal investment strategies and cross-border infrastructure partnerships could accelerate Brazil's transformation into a 21st-century continental hub?
- **Can climate adaptation and inclusiveness become Brazil's competitive advantage?** Sea-level rise and extreme weather are already eroding transport, energy and housing systems—yet resilience remains a side project. Future infrastructure will need to be climate-smart by default. How can Brazil mainstream climate risk into every layer of public procurement, urban planning and rural investment?
- **What if Brazil's next renewable revolution isn't in energy but in infrastructure?** Brazil's 90 per cent renewable electricity grid proves transformation is possible. But replicating this success in transport, urban mobility and water systems demands a long-term vision rather than short-term savings. What fiscal and planning reforms could unlock green infrastructure pathways—beyond electricity—at scale?

Observations

"We have never been able to address Brazil's structural challenges. We have never resolved basic sanitation, never resolved infrastructure—highways, railways, basic systems—and we have not resolved education. These three areas continue to undermine progress, holding back any form of sustainable development."

Roseli Teixeira Alves, Brasília, DF

"For many, increased connectivity would be positive. Increased business opportunities are positive. Although Brazil is a major economic power, it also still has a very significant number of people below the poverty line. But Indigenous peoples and other communities have already started to make their voice quite clear about the potential impacts on the way of life, and the impact on the environment. So yes, infrastructure and progress are probably much needed for more to have more economic opportunities, but not at any cost."

Elisa Calcaterra, UNDP Brazil, Brasília, DF

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"Municipalities need to be aligned with the characteristics of their region to ensure climate security and prevent further environmental degradation. Population growth must be compatible with regional characteristics, and that is not what we are observing. Some cities have lost their climatic characteristics, leading to disorderly population growth that, in turn, contributes to climate disasters such as floods."

Eliakim Herbert de Araújo Silva, Gravatá, PB

"I wish for a Brazil that is prepared, with investment and intersectionality, for more effective disaster prevention and preparedness, so that we are not always responding after reconstruction needs emerge."

Renata Koch Alvarenga, Porto Alegre, RS

THEME 11

ENERGY: PARADOX OF POWER

A new narrative on energy equity requires confronting present entitlements

Brazil is both a [global model](#)³²⁰ and a [cautionary tale](#)³²¹ when it comes to the energy transition. [Nearly 90 per cent](#)³²² of its electricity is generated from renewable sources, creating a clean energy backbone that attracts [global tech investment](#),³²³ [powers AI infrastructure](#),³²⁴ and [reduces dependence](#)³²⁵ on volatile fossil fuel imports.

Yet Brazil is also a member of OPEC and the world's [7th largest oil producer](#)³²⁶—set to become the 4th—with more than [BRL 90 billion in fossil fuel subsidies annually](#),³²⁷ significantly more than subsidies for renewable energies. This duality creates a strategic choice: will Brazil leverage its renewable advantage to lead the global energy transition, or will it double down on [hydrocarbon dependence](#)³²⁸ to stay fiscally afloat?

Another concern is the rapid expansion of data centres built by large technology companies, which require substantial amounts of energy and water for operation and cooling, therefore directly impacting vulnerable citizens and the environment. This growth is being fuelled by [public policies](#)³²⁹ that strongly encourage such development. A careful balance is needed between expanding the tech sector and ensuring that energy and water infrastructure can meet human needs, especially as the world continues to get warmer.

There is an opportunity to lead an [alternative global narrative](#)—through the BRICS, for example³³⁰—on energy strategy: one that funds the future with clean power while ensuring [energy security, sustainability, and equity](#),³³¹ especially for vulnerable and remote communities. This means confronting hard trade-offs, from [phasing out combustion engines](#)³³² to investing in [EV charging](#),³³³ [nuclear](#),³³⁴ [green hydrogen](#),³³⁵ biofuels (Brazil is now the world's [second-largest producer](#)),³³⁶ and industrial-grade [Battery Energy Storage Systems](#)³³⁷ (BESS)—even potentially considering [bitcoin mining batteries](#)³³⁸ to balance and fund green energy loads.

▶ What to Watch

- Energy security and sovereignty is a complex, multifaceted challenge marked by deep contradictions. Energy security—a consistent, reliable supply—is uneven across Brazil, with rural areas [requiring significant investment](#)³³⁹ to build resilience. [Droughts](#)³⁴⁰ in Northern Brazil are reducing the viability of hydroelectric power, forcing the country to import energy. Brazil is negotiating the purchase of a [floating nuclear power plant](#)³⁴¹ from Russia to secure stable energy for the Amazon region.
- A robust clean energy market could fuel growth in [AI and data centres](#)³⁴² without compromising domestic energy security. Brazil will need to balance eliminating [energy poverty](#)³⁴³ for its population with powering data centres to unlock economic opportunity for the same individuals.
- Renewable energy generates opportunity alongside sustainability: Brazil now [ranks third globally](#)³⁴⁴ for renewable energy job creation.
- [Battery Energy Storage Systems \(BESS\)](#)³⁴⁵ will be essential to ensuring more reliable electricity as reliance on solar and wind increases. Bitcoin mining—being tested in [Ethiopia](#)³⁴⁶ and [Bhutan](#)³⁴⁷—as a way to turn convert energy intermittance into sovereign wealth is another option to help stabilise renewable grids.
- The future energy mix is diverse and decentralised. A convergence of innovations is emerging to reduce Brazil's dependence on hydroelectric power and fossil fuels, including converting confiscated [marijuana into biofuel](#),³⁴⁸ building [solar power plants](#)³⁴⁹ on former landfills, pioneering resource-efficient solutions such as green hydrogen, and expanding [acceptance](#)³⁵⁰ of [nuclear energy](#).³⁵¹
- Yet [expanding the State oil company's production](#)³⁵² and maintaining fossil fuel subsidies could dampen [Brazil's COP30 ambitions](#),³⁵³ despite the country's significant accomplishments in green energy.

Now What?

- **Is Brazil ready to lead the world in energy transition with bold commitments?** As the host of COP30, Brazil has a unique platform to shape global narratives. But showcasing its leadership in renewable energy must go hand-in-hand with policy clarity, safeguards for a just transition, and concrete commitments to curb fossil fuel expansion. Will Brazil present a bold, credible energy transition plan—or risk losing soft power in the climate arena?
- **Is Brazil's [national energy transition plan](#)³⁵⁴ just, or just another transition?** The shift to renewables risks reproducing extractive patterns unless it addresses infrastructure gaps, regulatory inconsistencies, and structural inequalities. Can Brazil phase out fossil fuel dependence without undermining its social contract or growth strategy? What accountability mechanisms and participatory models can ensure that Brazil's energy transition is equitable?
- **Can Brazil lead in clean energy without embracing all its options?** With hydropower increasingly threatened by climate impacts and solar still scaling, nuclear energy may offer a reliable, low-carbon baseload. Yet expanding nuclear power raises difficult questions—about risk, cost, community consultation, and long-term waste. Should Brazil integrate nuclear energy into its green development strategy?

Observations

"There is growing interest from big tech companies and data centres in our natural resources... yet there is still little care and limited dialogue with the population."

Ilanah Maia de Mello, João Pessoa, PB

"We understand all the concerns about oil production in Brazil, but... we need this kind of development... Most of our health system, like our free health system, free education for the population and so on—all these social policies rely on the oil and gas money. So, it's very [important] we see the peak of the supply. But we don't see the peak of demand."

Lais Forti Thomaz, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Brasília, DF

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"If I were President of Brazil for a day, I would allocate budget for energy transition and protection of Indigenous peoples and their lands."

Ana Carolina Zottmann Bickel, São Leopoldo, RS

"Our greatest challenge in achieving the energy transition is ensuring that equality is at its core. It is an ethical imperative that everyone has access to reliable, high-quality energy at fair and affordable prices."

Maria Ceicilene Aragao Martins, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Brasília, DF

ESSAY: “BRAZILIANNES” AND INNOVATION: THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION



Rodrigo Cury Teixeira
Innovation Specialist at Fruki Bebidas
Florianópolis, SC

Future forecasts and global trend reports converge on a common point: the world is undergoing irreversible change. These are not merely incremental shifts, but a reconfiguration of global systems. We are living through an era of unprecedented disruptions, marked by pandemics, climate-related disasters and structural technological advances such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology and quantum computing. In Brazil, this reality becomes even more intense, shaped by distinctive cultural, social and geopolitical factors. In this complex landscape, two abilities stand out: **resilience**—our capacity for adaptation, reinvention and recovery—and **creativity**—the ability to generate innovative and disruptive solutions, even in contexts of scarcity.

“Brazilianness” (“Brasildade”) in the private sector can be defined by the creative way in which Brazilians undertake and innovate, from entrepreneurs in the peripheries to executives in large companies. Perhaps this stems from growing up hearing that “a Brazilian never gives up”. Our resilience is implicit in popular sayings; we learn to draw strength from our ability to adapt, reinvent and recover. And while the “Brazilian way” may carry negative connotations in some contexts, it also reflects a unique ability to generate innovative and disruptive solutions. **To confront today’s complex reality, innovation is essential.** And the central topic in global innovation summits and events is artificial intelligence, which is revolutionising how we interact with information. But beyond artificial intelligence—far from the summits and the spotlight on GPTs—two other, non-artificial intelligences are quietly undergoing transformation: social intelligence and individual intelligence. Together, these three dimensions—artificial intelligence (in its different models), individual intelligence (cognition, critical thinking, empathy) and social intelligence (collaboration, network-building, collective intelligence)—exponentially enhance human creative potential, expanding our

capacity to innovate. In this context, **the private sector plays an increasingly strategic role, leading this transformation**, particularly by adopting innovation strategies focused on sustainability and eco-efficiency grounded in ESG management.

The maturity of Brazil’s innovation ecosystems has demonstrated a strong capacity for articulation and networked collaboration—from incentive and support programmes for networked innovation, to investment vehicles for innovative start-ups and open innovation programmes with universities and technology parks. Although the country faces challenges in taking on high-risk investments in basic research and frontier technological development, collaboration within the ecosystem enables the sharing of knowledge, resources and infrastructure, creating conditions for transformative technologies to emerge. For this transformation to generate development and positive impact, it is essential to establish an ESG agenda that integrates environmental, social and governance criteria in corporate decision-making. The relevance of this strategy goes beyond the direct impacts of ESG-related initiatives; it also includes positive influence across society and supply chains, particularly in a country where people tend to place more trust in companies than in government, according to recent surveys.

Even with an optimistic outlook for the future, it is necessary to rethink skills and competencies to navigate such uncertainty. The complexity of today’s challenges demands systemic thinking and an approach that integrates the three intelligences through collaboration. In this sense, **Brazil has the potential to position itself as a leader in building a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable future.**

THEME 12

GOVERNANCE: RESTORE AND REINVENT?

Old fractures and new shadow forces must be brought to light

Brazil's governance stands at a crossroads.³⁵⁵ Institutions are regaining strength³⁵⁶ after years of erosion, yet the deeper cracks—from elite capture³⁵⁷ to political fragmentation,³⁵⁸ both among the electorate and within the very branches of government³⁵⁹—still run deep and trap Brazil in cycles of short termism.³⁶⁰ Can the country create new channels for meaningful citizen participation beyond Congress³⁶¹ that enable ordinary people to contribute to policymaking³⁶²—without falling prey to misinformation?³⁶³

Power no longer resides only in Brasília. It flows through digital platforms,³⁶⁴ agribusiness lobbies³⁶⁵ in Mato Grosso, evangelical networks³⁶⁶ with growing political influence, and even criminal factions³⁶⁷ such as the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and the Comando Vermelho (CV). At the same time, new forces are rising: Indigenous leaders³⁶⁸ defending the Amazon, youth climate activists³⁶⁹ mobilising in cities, and citizens pioneering the use of digital technology³⁷⁰ to amplify their voices in government and strengthen government accountability and transparency.

Political polarization³⁷¹ is no longer a background tension; it is a daily reality throughout Brazil's political system. Amplified by the lingering “ghost” of the dictatorship,³⁷² it fuels extremism,³⁷³ deepens distrust,³⁷⁴ and weakens governance capacity.³⁷⁵

Although internet access continues to expand, without digital literacy³⁷⁶ and civic digital responsibility,³⁷⁷ citizens become vulnerable to misinformation,³⁷⁸ disinformation, and populist manipulation. Brazil may wish to follow the example of other regions that are taking steps to expand digital literacy³⁷⁹ to create a more level playing field for democratic participation in shaping the country's future governance.

The next few years will be decisive. How will Brazil navigate polarisation, ensure peaceful power transitions, and design governance structures—in partnership with its people³⁸⁰—that match its diversity and complexity? There is an opportunity to seize this moment and shape bold, future-ready architectures of trust, foresight, and accountability.

CLUSTER 3: AGENCY FOR ADAPTABLE FUTURES

Brazil's path to resilience will not be built solely on recovering from crises—but through reconfiguring power, participation and possibility

Across governance systems, cities, ecosystems and public institutions, resilience is constrained by fragmentation, inequality and eroding trust. In the absence of coherent state action, informal systems—from community networks to criminal groups—are stepping in to govern, protect or exploit. At the same time, climate impacts, biodiversity loss and social unrest are intensifying along lines of race, class and territory.

Yet Brazil is also alive with bottom-up innovation. From favelas designing green corridors to Indigenous leaders defending regenerative systems, the country is rich with living alternatives. Resilience is already being prototyped—not as a return to the status quo, but as an invitation to reimagine who decides, who benefits and what development means.

The future demands several shifts: from control to care, from symbolic participation to structural inclusion, and from siloed strategies to systems thinking. Resilient futures will emerge not from centralised blueprints, but from distributed agency, biocentric imagination and a radical commitment to justice.

▶ What to Watch

- Brazil's democracy is in danger **due to deep polarisation and institutional strain**.³⁸¹ Initiatives to counter election-related **disinformation**³⁸² are critical to safeguarding democratic processes.
- Digital civic literacy is now an urgent priority. On the one hand, digital platforms such as **Brasil Participativo**³⁸³ offer a centralised, sustainable, and modern digital platform for citizens to engage in federal policymaking, demonstrating how the social web can strengthen civic participation. Digital public infrastructure³⁸⁴ helps government bodies connect with citizens even in the most remote corners of the country. On the other hand, **big tech companies**³⁸⁵ are openly teaching politicians and political influencers how to use AI to shape elections. This moment requires a pragmatic approach to **AI governance**³⁸⁶ that balances social harms with public benefits.
- The growing alliance between the far right and Evangelical Christians is **reshaping political norms**³⁸⁷ in Brazil. The “un-separation of church and state,” along with the merging of **evangelical movements and right-wing populism**³⁸⁸ and their resulting influence on governance, poses risks to Brazil's democracy.
- Threats to the legitimacy of Brazil's governance also stem from **the militias that exercise de-facto control over urban areas in major cities**³⁸⁹—and from the blatant infiltration of **criminal organisations into mainstream politics**.³⁹⁰

🕒 Now What?

- **Can Brazil rebuild trust in the rules when power still bends them?** From budget earmarks to judicial overreach, many Brazilians believe institutions are captured by elite interests. Digital transparency tools exist, but they have not reversed the deeper erosion of trust. What governance reforms can move Brazil from procedural legitimacy to perceived fairness?
- **Can Brazil defend democracy while decentralizing power?** Brazil's federative system allows local innovation—but also fragments authority and accountability.³⁹¹ As misinformation spreads and polarization deepens, the balance between centralised stability and decentralised experimentation becomes harder to manage. What governance architectures can reconcile federal leadership with empowered local communities?

- **Who governs the governors in the digital age?** “Coronelismo” has gone digital: Influencers now act as local power brokers, and political campaigns are shaped by algorithmic echo chambers. Governance is increasingly negotiated on social platforms, not only through formal institutions. What new accountability models can regulate political power in the platform era without curtailing rights and freedoms for activists and whistleblowers?
- **What if representation means rethinking who governs?** Calls for increased Indigenous representation in Congress are not just about diversity—they are about safeguarding Brazil's future. Without voices that can challenge agribusiness dominance, the state risks deepening social and environmental inequality.
- **What happens when citizens stop showing up?** Participation fatigue is growing. Citizens increasingly question whether their input leads to real change. Meanwhile, criminal organisations and informal networks are stepping in to “govern” in the gaps. How can Brazil evolve its democratic innovations to feel more consequential to citizens and prevent their capture?
- **How will digital tools impact Brazilian democracy?** Digital services such as gov.br and AI-enabled audits promise more responsive governance. But without ethical frameworks, they risk reinforcing inequality and surveillance. Can Brazil become a pioneer in anticipatory governance that centres equity, foresight, and digital rights?
- **Is it time for a fourth power—Popular governance?** A growing movement is calling for a “fourth branch” of government: civic participation as a permanent power, not just a symbolic gesture. This reflects deep frustration with the limits of electoral democracy and a desire for community-based decision making. Could Brazil lead the world in institutionalising participatory governance beyond the ballot box?

Q Observations

"I see the advancement of digital government as a pathway that transcends partisan debate—directly improving citizens' daily lives."

Marcos Toscano, Recife, PE

👍 Wishes for Brazil's Future

"I see the formation of a fourth power—the power of the people joining the legislative, executive, and judiciary—to enable more active public participation in decision-making."

Ianah Maia de Mello, João Pessoa, PB

"For the future of Brazil, I hope for a strong partnership between the public sector and universities, combining evidence- and data-based public policies. I want to see greater recognition of the knowledge produced in academia, bringing it into public management practice and listening to those on the front lines."

Camila Manique Ferreira, Porto Alegre, RS

"I hope that public policies are both encouraged and monitored—and that people know which public policies they can benefit from."

Ana Rita Nascimento, Natal, RN

THEME 13

PUBLIC SAFETY: FROM CONTROL TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Reform means addressing the roots of violence

Public (in)security³⁹² in Brazil is shaped by deep structural fractures—where organised crime³⁹³ fills the vacuum left by the State, and local policing, increasingly militarised and partisan,³⁹⁴ which often reinforces inequality³⁹⁵ rather than justice. In Rio de Janeiro's favelas, young Brazilians, especially Black youth, face the dual threat of gang violence³⁹⁶ and harassment³⁹⁷ by those meant to protect them.

Fragmented governance,³⁹⁸ racialised violence,³⁹⁹ and an over-reliance on militarised policing⁴⁰⁰ have eroded trust, particularly in marginalised communities.⁴⁰¹ The rapid spread of surveillance technologies—such as predictive policing,⁴⁰² AI-powered body cameras⁴⁰³ in São Paulo, and facial recognition in Bahia⁴⁰⁴—without strong oversight risks entrenching discriminatory practices and deepening mistrust.

Again, a ghost of the past lingers in the shadows. Despite these new policing technologies, Brazil maintains a distinctive separation between military and civil police, yet military-styles training—a legacy of the dictatorship⁴⁰⁵—continues to shape policing culture. This model is from consensual: some advocate for even more hard-line approaches, including the use of the Armed Forces (and even the militarisation of schools),⁴⁰⁶ while others view the police with deep fear⁴⁰⁷ and suspicion. Sixty-three percent of Brazilians are dissatisfied with police performance.⁴⁰⁸

Confidence is also low pertains in the judiciary.⁴⁰⁹ According to a 2024 Pew Research study, 47 per cent of Brazilians say the court system has a negative influence⁴¹⁰ on the country. Frustration public grows with lengthy, cyclical judicial processes that often lead to reoffending. A faster, more coordinated justice system is needed, along with more empowered judicial actors.

Yet in community halls and on the streets, Brazil's people are charting new paths—from evidence-based policing⁴¹¹ to community-led safety patrols that have reduced crime by up to 80 per cent⁴¹² in Amazonian towns. These models show it is possible to reduce violence without violating rights.

The next few years will be decisive. True safety will emerge not from more control, but from inclusive, participatory, and accountable systems of protection that confront the root causes of violence: inequality, corruption, and exclusion.

▶ What to Watch

- Brazil is arguably already “at war”⁴¹³ with organised crime in urban favelas. Fuel Mafias are [infiltrating petrol stations](#)⁴¹⁴ and other traditional industries (logging, biofuels), leaving marginalised communities living in fear in a lawless state of nature. Parallel power structures undermine State authority; in Rio, drug gangs operate as [shadow governments](#).⁴¹⁵ A proposed [security bill](#)⁴¹⁶ expands the federal government’s role in policymaking to combat organised crime, but questions remain as to whether it is too little, too late.
- Women are not safe in their own homes. Brazil is now recording the highest level of violence against women⁴¹⁷ in its history. Over [84 per cent of victims](#)⁴¹⁸ are killed by a current or former intimate partner, and [most \(65 per cent\)](#)⁴¹⁹ of the victims of domestic femicide are Black. Studies show that [socio-economic segregation](#)⁴²⁰ in Brazilian cities accentuates inequalities, creating pathways to violence. Yet violence is also inflicted on communities by their those meant to protect them. Nearly [90 per cent of people killed by the police](#)⁴²¹ are Black.
- People are pushing back in their own ways. From [militarised](#)⁴²² schools to personal gun ownership—the number of guns owned by Brazilians has [doubled](#)⁴²³ since 2018—Brazilians are seeking ways to bolster their [sense of personal security](#).⁴²⁴
- The intersection of technology and policing offers the promise of greater control but also fuels public concerns about surveillance, particularly alongside the growing militarization of the police force. Special Police Operations Battalion (BOPE) in Rio de Janeiro recently introduced a robot dog⁴²⁵ to patrol high-risk areas, while AI-enhanced [body cameras](#)⁴²⁶ raise concerns about privacy breaches, racial bias, and inadequate oversight—especially paired with expanding [predictive policing technology](#).⁴²⁷
- [Community policing and crime prevention strategies](#)⁴²⁸ in São Paulo may offer a peaceful pathway to strengthening trust in the police while reducing crime.
- People also require protection in the digital realm. The new [Bill to Safeguard Children's Privacy](#)⁴²⁹ underscores how online and offline safety are becoming increasingly intertwined.

🕒 Now What?

- **What if Brazil’s security future lies in reducing socioeconomic segregation and addressing the unequal treatment of Black people and women?** To confront the root causes of violence, Brazil must consider how best to tackle the poverty, racism and inequality that lie beneath.

- **Will the federal expansion (militarisation) of policing be a step forward or a step back for public security?** Security begins with trust. Can greater community participation in policing build confidence and reduce the need for excessive force?
- **What if Brazil’s security future lies outside the police?** Public safety in Brazil has long been dominated by militarised policing, but rising demands for territorial justice, restorative approaches and social investment signal a shift in thinking. Safety is increasingly seen as the outcome of *inclusion*, not only enforcement. What would it mean to fund schools, housing and youth programmes as national security strategies?
- **Who defines safety—and for whom (and from whom)?** Afro-Brazilians, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQIA+ communities and favela residents experience security threats not only from criminal groups but often from the very institutions meant to protect them. What would security systems look like if designed by those most affected?
- **Can Brazil reclaim its democracy from organised crime?** From *favelas* to forests, parallel systems of governance led by criminal groups are undermining state legitimacy. These groups provide services, settle disputes and even influence elections—especially in territories where the state is less present. Can government re-enter these areas and rebuild trust?
- **Will digital surveillance deepen inequality—or prevent violence?** Brazil is expanding smart policing and surveillance tools, yet critics warn of racial bias and institutional overreach. Without accountability and public dialogue, such technologies may reinforce the status quo rather than dismantle it. Can Brazil lead in designing digital security infrastructure that is transparent, equitable and grounded in rights?

🔍 Observations

“The drug traffickers in Brazil construct their own census because they are planning. They need to know the size of cities, demographic patterns, and income distribution. So they have financed a census of their own, for their own purposes. They are conducting their own census, like a state within the state—governing without permission through a subterranean layer of society. It is no longer only the grey economy that is untaxed, untraced, unsanctioned, and operating parts of the economy. It is also *grey governance*.”

Betina Barbosa, UNDP Brazil, Brasília, DF

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"It is necessary to bring the issue of urbanisation closer to the issue of public security. To speak of public security without speaking of health, or without speaking of social assistance, without speaking of education, would be naïve. But we need to talk about public security through urbanisation—how cities take shape, and how spaces for coexistence materialise. It is a detail that is sometimes overlooked, but it holds enormous potential."

Christiano Hagemann Pozzer, Porto Alegre, RS

"I believe education is the key to addressing gender-based violence—changing how both men and women think, in big and small ways. It may seem obvious that no one should be assaulted physically, psychologically or emotionally, yet the reality of domestic violence shows otherwise. It is not monsters who commit violence; it is ordinary men."

Jonn Tsu Kuo, Imbituba, SC

"We need to view public security through a civilian lens, but also as an issue of climate security—so that we do not face even greater environmental degradation."

Eliakim Herbert, Gravatá, PE

THEME 14

URBANISATION: LABORATORIES OF IMAGINATION

Brazil's cities are sites of both crisis and creativity

Brazil's cities are under pressure from [chronic underinvestment](#),⁴³⁰ climate risk, and institutional fragmentation—eroding infrastructure and deepening inequality. Yet they also are laboratories for bold experimentation: from [Green Resilient Model Cities](#)⁴³¹ and [heat-responsive housing in Recife](#)⁴³² to [community-led flood adaptation](#)⁴³³ in Manaus and [electric mobility innovation in São Paulo](#).⁴³⁴

In favelas, residents [organise](#)⁴³⁵ to survive; in wealthy enclaves, [high-tech](#)⁴³⁶ solutions promise comfort but risk reinforcing [old divides](#).⁴³⁷ In some neighbourhoods, governance has been informally outsourced to [organised crime](#),⁴³⁸ [churches](#),⁴³⁹ or "entrepreneurial" civic collectives.⁴⁴⁰

In the shadows of Brazil's urban areas lie the ghosts of Brazil's past. There are friendly ghosts, such as the unification movements of the [1980s](#)⁴⁴¹—while others are less than benign—including the lingering legacies of [dictatorship](#)⁴⁴² that continue to shape urban areas. These ghosts manifest in gentrification and [gated communities](#),⁴⁴³ creating physical disconnection. This fuels distrust between long-standing residents and newcomers arriving from [rural areas](#)⁴⁴⁴ or [foreign conflict zones](#)⁴⁴⁵ in search of a better life.

Urban politics are increasingly shaped by questions of who controls future infrastructure. Chinese investment via the [Belt and Road Initiative](#)⁴⁴⁶ is expanding port and rail links; [Meta's undersea cables](#)⁴⁴⁷ are embedding foreign control into Brazil's digital backbone; and domestic industries compete with [global players](#)⁴⁴⁸ for strategic footholds in energy grids, transport systems, and data infrastructure. As Brazil strengthens its role in global trade, does it also need a firmer grip on the [sovereignty](#)⁴⁴⁹ of its own infrastructure?

The next decade will determine how urbanisation evolves across Brazil. Where some view cities primarily as the infrastructure needed to support humans, others are [collectively imagining urban spaces](#)⁴⁵⁰ where all residents, regardless of status or geography, can shape a shared future. This includes expanding opportunities for all and strengthening small cities, Indigenous territories, and rural communities as viable and innovative spaces (e.g., India's [Department of Rural Development](#)),⁴⁵¹ providing balance to large-scale urban areas. The opportunity is clear: to transform Brazil's cities, of every size, into models of equity, climate resilience, and civic creativity.

▶ What to Watch

- The 6th National Conference of Cities is scheduled to take place in February 2026. [Conferences have traditionally served as critical governance spaces in Brazil](#),⁴⁵² enabling direct participatory processes between civil society and government. After a hiatus of nearly 13 years—the last conference was held in 2013—the challenge is whether the event can address emerging issues from civil society, given how communication and political engagement have been so transformed over the last decade.
- [Climate migration](#)⁴⁵³ in Brazil is increasing as severe weather and flooding intensify. Urbanisation is heightening [heat stress](#),⁴⁵⁴ and rising urban temperatures are exacerbating risks to [human health](#).⁴⁵⁵ Coastal cities are particularly vulnerable to [sea-level rise](#).⁴⁵⁶ New cities may need to be built, high-risk cities must adapt ([sponge cities](#)⁴⁵⁷ are one possible approach), and “safe” cities must prepare to accommodate migrants.
- Preparing [Brazilian cities for climate change](#)⁴⁵⁸ requires embracing nature-based solutions and adapting to evolving conditions. [AdaptaCidades](#)⁴⁵⁹ trains municipal and State civil servants to develop climate adaptation and resilience plans, while the [Green Resilient Model Cities programme](#)⁴⁶⁰ will support 50 cities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Brazil’s [favelas](#)⁴⁶¹ continue to expand at an alarming rate. Yet their residents remain highly resourceful. Some favelas are collectively learning how to [adapt to climate change](#)⁴⁶² and even adopting [green initiatives to avoid eviction](#).⁴⁶³ The National Youth and Rural Succession Policy offers [incentives](#)⁴⁶⁴ for youth to remain in, and build futures within, Brazil’s rural areas.
- Human health and the urban health are intrinsically linked. Higher mortality rates are associated with [air pollution](#),⁴⁶⁵ which is driven in part by heavy industry and disproportionately affects poorer Brazilians.
- To democratise infrastructure and living standards, Brazil could adopt a [national strategy for its cities](#).⁴⁶⁶ The country’s plan to provide clean water and sanitation⁴⁶⁷ for its entire population is a step towards spatial equity. Curitiba, which has following its [master plan for sustainable urbanisation for 60 years](#),⁴⁶⁸ offers a model that other cities could adapt.

🕒 Now What?

- **Can Brazil build cities that include rather than displace?** Urbanisation is expanding not only outwards but unevenly. Gentrification, eviction, and real estate speculation push low-income populations into precarious peripheries, while informal settlements face chronic underinvestment. What legal, fiscal, and participatory frameworks could help Brazilian cities prioritise inclusion over profit?
- **Can Brazil turn peripheral areas into innovation hubs?** Peripheries are often framed as problems—but they are also spaces of cultural, environmental, and economic innovation. From community-led housing to digital favelas, new models are emerging from the margins. How could Brazil shift investments and narratives towards valuing peripheral urban resilience?
- **Will climate change reshape where and how Brazilians live?** Rising sea levels, extreme heat, and flash floods from so-called 1,000-year rainfalls are redefining urban risk, especially in low-income and coastal communities. How can climate adaptation policies centre vulnerable communities in decisions on urban design?
- **Is Brazil’s housing model fit for the 21st century?** Despite significant unmet housing demand, new construction often favours middle- and upper-income buyers. Rental models remain underdeveloped, while informal housing continues to grow. What new housing finance and ownership approaches could reduce precarity and support sustainable urban density?
- **Who really governs Brazilian cities?** In many urban spaces, governance is fragmented—caught between municipal governments, real estate developers, organised crime, and the logistics of digital platforms such as food delivery services. This weakens accountability and democratic planning. Can Brazil reassert public control over urban planning in the face of privatised or criminal governance structures?
- **What role will digital platforms play in shaping cities of the future?** If meaningful, high-speed internet were equally accessible throughout Brazil, including rural areas, would that reduce the need for people to move to large cities in search of opportunities? Brazil boasts relatively strong connectivity, yet important gaps remain that could reshape where Brazilians pursue economic opportunity.

Observations

"Brazil is investing in roads, hydropower plants, railways and other infrastructure without considering that these assets will need to withstand both today's climate and the climate the country will face in 50 years' time."

Natalie Unterstell, Instituto Talanoa, Rio de Janeiro, RJ

Wishes for Brazil's Future

"Brazil needs to have green areas in its urban centres—not just one big park, but many green areas. We are talking about an Amazonian, tropical country, and we have lost ourselves to the uncontrolled verticalisation of cities without planning."

Digital Product Specialist, São Paulo, SP

"I wish that people wouldn't have to move to another city because of environmental issues—that they see a future in the place where they live, without worrying whether it will flood or whether it will be too hot. I long for more bird sounds in the city."

Maria Eduarda Do Canto Menezes, Porto Alegre, RS

"I want a Brazil in which 70 per cent of cities are recognised as sponge cities."

Diogo Montechiari Barbosa Campos, Macuco, RJ

THEME 15

CLIMATE: AMBITION WITH EQUITY

The climate crisis in Brazil is not a distant threat—it is a lived reality

From deadly [heatwaves](#)⁴⁶⁹ and [floods](#)⁴⁷⁰ in Rio Grande do Sul to [historic droughts in the Amazon](#)⁴⁷¹ (typically associated with Northeast) and severe [flooding in São Paulo](#),⁴⁷² Brazil is already paying the price for climate inaction. [Infrastructure is buckling](#),⁴⁷³ [food prices are rising](#),⁴⁷⁴ and vulnerable communities bear the [heaviest burdens](#).⁴⁷⁵

COP30 offered a distinct and [catalytic moment for Brazil](#)⁴⁷⁶ and the world to align climate ambition with territorial equity, justice, and new regulations for a green economy. This will not be an [easy conversation](#),⁴⁷⁷ particularly for Brazil, which must balance economic growth, especially from its agriculture and oil and gas sectors, with the imperative of protecting the Amazon, the world's lungs and a global climate stabiliser. Could climate ambition be reframed from environmental necessity to economic opportunity?

As home to the Amazon—and one of the world's [top 6](#)⁴⁷⁸ emitters from land use—Brazil carries global ecological responsibility. Yet deforestation and [degradation](#)⁴⁷⁹ continue in Pará, [offshore oil exploration is expanding](#),⁴⁸⁰ and bold climate targets remain [fragmented](#)⁴⁸¹ across [ministries](#).⁴⁸² To reach its 2030 GHG goals, Brazil will need to close a [BRL 1 trillion Real](#) financing gap.

There is, however, a bigger picture. Brazil is not only the Amazon. It comprises multiple biomes—the Atlantic Forest,⁴⁸³ the [Cerrado savannah](#),⁴⁸⁴ the [Caatinga semi-arid forest](#),⁴⁸⁵ the [Pampa grasslands](#),⁴⁸⁶ and the [Pantanal tropical wetlands](#),⁴⁸⁷ alongside the Amazon rainforest and river system. All are interconnected and increasingly affected by climate change and biodiversity loss, compounded by deforestation, agribusiness expansion, and urban development.

Still, signals of transformation are emerging. Manaus is piloting [adaptive](#),⁴⁸⁸ nature-based flood management; youth and Indigenous leaders are reframing climate as a [justice](#)⁴⁸⁹ ([ecojustice](#))⁴⁹⁰ issue, and states such as [Ceará are investing in green hydrogen](#).⁴⁹¹ [Opportunities for inclusive green jobs](#),⁴⁹² [forest restoration](#),⁴⁹³ and [food system reform](#)⁴⁹⁴ remain underleveraged—but the seeds of change are being planted.

The climate challenge is not just a technical or financial issue—it also carries deep social and political dimensions. Whether Brazil moves from symbolic leadership to structural transformation will depend on its ability to align climate ambition with territorial equity, justice, and long-term coherence. The next decade offers a narrow but powerful window to lead the world in climate action rooted in fairness.

▶ What to Watch

- COP30 offered an [opportunity for Brazil](#)⁴⁹⁵ to place climate change firmly back at the top of the global agenda. [Expectations are high](#),⁴⁹⁶ [yet criticisms](#)⁴⁹⁷ regarding weakened environmental regulation are growing. Nonetheless, despite [contradictions and complexities](#),⁴⁹⁸ Brazil remains a climate change leader and a model that other nations can emulate.
- Reflecting a twist on the [rising religiosity](#)⁴⁹⁹ trend in Brazil, Afro-Brazilian youth leaders are [mobilising traditional faith](#)⁵⁰⁰ and religious practices in support of climate action in Brazil.
- The threat of climate change has evolved into a daily reality of climate crisis. Brazil's urban future will need to contend with [wildfires](#),⁵⁰¹ drought and floods. In rural areas, the Amazon is approaching [a tipping point](#)⁵⁰² that could transform the forest into a drier savannah.
- Climate change is a poverty and equality issue. [Climate shocks](#)⁵⁰³ could push an estimated three million Brazilians into extreme poverty by 2030. [Systemic cooling poverty](#)⁵⁰⁴ in Brazil is already magnifying inequalities in [urban favelas](#)⁵⁰⁵ during heatwaves.
- Global solidarity and responsibility for action against climate change is growing. The International Court of Justice⁵⁰⁶ has ruled that countries are legally obligated to reduce emissions and protect the environment. Globally enforced [solidarity taxes](#)⁵⁰⁷ on major polluters are under consideration and could raise billions to support climate action. Another innovative proposal suggests using public funds to back renewable energy loans⁵⁰⁸ in the developing world.
- Demonstrating willingness to innovate, Brazil is testing [experimental "mini-worlds"](#)⁵⁰⁹ to address the resilience of Amazonian waterways to climate change and microplastics, and it is emerging as a global leader in novel approaches to reducing [methane emissions from cattle](#).⁵¹⁰

🕒 Now What?

- How far is Brazil willing to go to address the implications of [climate change while still growing its economy](#)?⁵¹¹
- **How can Brazil lead on climate at the global level while addressing internal climate change issues?** Brazil is celebrated as a climate leader—hosting COP30, stewarding the Amazon, and pioneering in renewables. But within its borders, deforestation continues, rural producers face contradictory incentives, and climate impacts are deepening inequalities. Should Brazil align its climate diplomacy with domestic climate justice?
- **Can Brazil's climate leadership withstand political cycles?** Brazil's international climate commitments often hinge on progressive leadership, but enforcement is fragmented and vulnerable to political reversal. What governance models can institutionalise long-term climate action across administrations and changing political regimes?
- **Could Brazil step up to regulate "green" foreign investment that displaces communities?** Foreign-backed "green" projects, such as data centres, carbon-offset schemes, or hydrogen initiatives, are under way in climate-vulnerable regions with limited local accountability. Will Brazil enforce social safeguards on climate-linked investments to ensure they benefit local populations, not just global capital?
- **Will climate education and youth leadership be scaled or sidelined?** Young Brazilians are mobilising around climate, but school curricula, public campaigns, and policy fora rarely reflect their urgency. Could Brazil make climate education a foundational pillar of democratic participation and green innovation—beginning in schools?

Q Observations

"Despite fiscal constraints, local governments have been able—and increasingly willing—to address the aspects of climate change that directly affect people's daily lives, particularly the agenda on climate change adaptation."

Marcos Toscano, Recife, PE

👍 Wishes for Brazil's Future

"I want to nurture an agro-ecological future in the broadest sense of the term—one in which our agricultural production works in harmony with nature, and where art, culture, education and politics come together to root a healthier society in Brazil."

Ilanah Maia de Mello, João Pessoa, PB

"If I were president for a day, my priority would be to restrict the use of oil as much as possible, encouraging a shift to renewable and clean fuels. I would allocate as much of the national budget as possible to research on sustainability innovation (especially biodegradable materials to replace plastic)."

Vitoria Gonzatti de Souza, Porto Alegre, RS

THEME 16

BIODIVERSITY: EXTRACTION OR REGENERATION?

Leveraging Brazil's extraordinary biodiversity for generations to come

Brazil is one of the planet's [most biodiverse nations](#)⁵¹²— from the Amazon and Cerrado (Brazil's "cradle of waters") to the Atlantic Forest and Pantanal. What happens to these ecosystems (including the loss of natural animal and [insect life](#)⁵¹³ and the rise of [invasive species](#))⁵¹⁴ will shape [global climate, food,](#)⁵¹⁵ and [water](#)⁵¹⁶ security, as well as local [economic](#)⁵¹⁷ and social resilience.

Brazil faces a conundrum. The country's greatest riches may lie undiscovered. Because its biodiversity is so vast, and because many regions remain [largely unexplored](#),⁵¹⁸ safeguarding biodiversity today also means preserving future possibilities—such as ingredients for [potential new medicines](#),⁵¹⁹ new food and water sources, new forms of energy, rare earth minerals, and much more.

Yet biodiversity remains structurally undermined. [Funding is patchy](#),⁵²⁰ enforcement is lacking and [fragmented](#),⁵²¹ research capacity [is ageing](#).⁵²² [Legal loopholes](#),⁵²³ [corporate interests](#)⁵²⁴ and deregulation continue to erode ecosystems and [Indigenous rights](#).⁵²⁵ Deforestation in [Pará](#),⁵²⁶ fires in [the Pantanal](#),⁵²⁷ and mangrove loss in [Maranhão](#)⁵²⁸ reveal how fragile existing protections are.

[The Law on Access to Genetic Heritage and Associated Traditional Knowledge](#)⁵²⁹ offers an example for other nations on how to safeguard biodiversity for future generations while enabling responsible academic and corporate access. This legal framework, alongside research centres such as the Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden and SisGen in Brasília, is designed to prevent biopiracy while enabling breakthroughs in medicines, cosmetics and food products.

More seeds of transformation are sprouting. Traditional [ecological knowledge](#)⁵³⁰ from Indigenous peoples, community-led [restoration led by women in the Atlantic Forest](#),⁵³¹ and [youth-driven innovation](#)⁵³² in sustainable food systems and [global partnerships](#)⁵³³ are pushing biodiversity beyond conservation, towards [regenerative economies](#).⁵³⁴ Potential synergies between [carbon markets and biodiversity protection](#)⁵³⁵ could position Brazil as a [global standard-setter](#).⁵³⁶

Making decisions about the future is not easy. Trade-offs exist between biodiversity management approaches, or between centralised control and Indigenous and community stewardship.⁵³⁷ Striking a balance will be essential. The conversation became especially salient at COP30: a unique moment to shape global biodiversity governance, integrating Indigenous stewardship and regenerative economic models.

National ambitions for biodiversity face [political headwinds](#),⁵³⁸ particularly from sectors reliant on extractive land use. Yet biodiversity also could serve as a unifying pillar of a sustainability agenda. With the right alliances and bold policy, Brazil could set a global benchmark for inclusive biodiversity governance that safeguards both nature and the communities that protect it.

▶ What to Watch

- Biodiversity is no longer solely a conservation issue. Brazil's biodiversity is of [strategic relevance](#)⁵³⁹—linked to climate mitigation and adaptation, soft-power diplomacy, sovereignty, and green economic pathways, including [catalytic capital for regeneration](#). It is [critical to the future of both Brazil and the world](#).⁵⁴⁰
- Although deforestation of the Amazon has been slowing down, [ecosystem degradation](#)⁵⁴¹ continues to rise. For example, [orchid bees](#),⁵⁴² a key pollinator in Brazil agriculture, are at risk. Brazil has proposed the USD 250 billion [Tropical Forests Forever Facility](#)⁵⁴³ to preserve the world's tropical rainforests and is partnering with the biggest rainforest nations to form a [triple alliance](#)⁵⁴⁴ on forest preservation.
- There is a long-standing tension between commercial and community interests and the responsibility to safeguard biodiversity for all. [Agribusiness—including cattle ranching—threatens](#)⁵⁴⁵ Brazil's diverse ecosystems and their genetic value. For economic vulnerable communities, food insecurity remains a key [driver of deforestation](#).⁵⁴⁶ Yet business and biodiversity can be reconciled through [sustainable and inclusive bioeconomy approaches](#).⁵⁴⁷
- Among more privileged groups, rising awareness of healthy food options is driving rapid growth in [Brazil's organic food market](#),⁵⁴⁸ demonstrating the economic value of protecting and propagating biodiverse food sources.
- Indigenous and local communities are undervalued [biodiversity stewards](#),⁵⁴⁹ protecting natural assets without commercial incentives. [Seed networks](#)⁵⁵⁰ across Brazil collect, exchange, and plant native seeds in degraded areas. These communities serve as role models for others navigating the pressures of agribusiness and the demands of an economy reliant on agricultural commodities.

- Although biodiversity research for the Amazon is [underfunded](#),⁵⁵¹ Brazil remains fertile ground for [innovation](#).⁵⁵² From [drone-assisted pollination](#)⁵⁵³ to [urban biodiversity corridors](#),⁵⁵⁴ the country is experimenting with adaptive, technology-integrated models that combine ecology, equity, and innovation.

🕒 Now What?

- **Can Brazil protect its biodiversity while confronting development pressures at scale?** Brazil holds one of the planet's most vital ecological treasures—yet faces significant developmental and political pressures. Deforestation, agribusiness expansion, infrastructure megaprojects, and [organised crime](#)⁵⁵⁵ have turned biodiversity protection into a political and economic battleground. What governance and incentive systems can Brazil design to reward the protection of its biomes?
- **Can food security and biodiversity protection be solved together?** Can investments in systems that enable local communities to [produce their own food](#)⁵⁵⁶ reduce hunger without driving environmental degradation? Is Brazil ready to recognise and support traditional forest-based livelihoods as a pathway to conserving biodiversity?
- **Can Brazil position biodiversity as a strategic geopolitical asset?** From biocultural diplomacy to biotech innovation, biodiversity is more than conservation—it is leverage. Brazil's stewardship of the Amazon and Cerrado biomes offers soft power and scientific opportunity. What alliances can Brazil build to translate biodiversity protection into international legitimacy and domestic prosperity?
- **Is Brazil willing to recognise the interconnectedness of biodiversity conservation and government?** If Brazil seeks a more equitable governance model, it may need to consider the role of Brazilians who serve as the voices—and stewards—of the country's diverse lands, waters, and skies. Can common ground be found in which elites and vested interests respect the rights of all, while safeguarding biodiversity in the process?

Q Observations

“What makes me most optimistic about the country’s future is believing in the organisations that mobilise to build *buen vivir*; it is recognising and strengthening the networks that work in favour of life. These are collectives, movements, and communities dedicated to weaving possible ways of inhabiting the Earth with love, respect, integration, and togetherness. They cultivate practices that unite care for nature with social justice, seeking to restore harmony between human beings, other living beings, and their territories. Supporting and taking part in these initiatives is to plant the seeds of a future in which we can live with dignity, solidarity, and sustainability, breaking away from colonial models that exploit and destroy.”

Yasmin da Nóbrega Formiga, Santa Luzia, PB

“One major trend I see gaining importance in the coming years is not only conserving and controlling deforestation of natural areas, but also restoring degraded land and the various biomes and landscapes damaged in the past by the expansion of cattle production and agriculture.”

Gustavo Matsubara, UNDP, Brasília, DF

👍 Wishes for Brazil's Future

“My idea for creating a better Brazil is to advance land regularisation processes and to demarcate and grant titles to Indigenous and Quilombola lands, because these peoples stand on the frontlines in their territories, confronting large estates and the disorderly expansion of agribusiness. There is no life without forests, without a living environment.”

Maria Antonia Teixeira Dias, Quilombo Cariongo, Santa Rita, MA

“I wish to nurture a sovereign, diverse Brazil, attentive to its environmental, social, and territorial potential. A country that cares for its biomes symbiotically, recognising them as foundational to our relationships beyond national borders. A country whose ancestral voice speaks in unison with Latin America, offering the world an example of the primacy of diversity.”

Christiano Hagemann Pozzer, Porto Alegre, RS

ESSAY: BRAZIL, A GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY FOR CLIMATE ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT



Maria Netto
Executive Director
Instituto Clima e Sociedade (ICS)

Brazil stands uniquely positioned to demonstrate how climate action and economic development can advance hand in hand. As the world confronts the twin challenges of achieving climate goals and ensuring equitable growth, Brazil offers a compelling case of climate leadership rooted in its natural assets, public policy innovation, and emerging green industrial potential.

One of Brazil's most powerful levers lies in land restoration and nature-based solutions (NBS). The country's cattle industry, a cultural and economic cornerstone, supported the world's second-largest herd in 2023—238.6 million head—producing more than 10 million tonnes of meat. Yet this production depends on 179 million hectares (Mha) of pastureland, over 60 per cent of which is degraded. The result is reduced productivity and significant environmental externalities, including greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss.

This degradation, however, represents one of Brazil's greatest opportunities. Public policies such as Plano ABC+ and the National Programme for the Conversion of Degraded Pastures (PNCPD) aim to transform up to 40 Mha into sustainable production systems by 2035. These include no-till agriculture, agroforestry, integrated crop–livestock–forest systems, and planted forests. Such transitions offer simultaneous mitigation and adaptation benefits, contributing to Brazil's climate targets, food security, and rural inclusion. Sophisticated geospatial modelling shows that these transformations are not only technically feasible but also economically attractive.

At the same time, **Brazil's energy and industrial sectors are poised for strategic repositioning in the global low-carbon economy.** The country benefits from a power



Roberto Kishinami
Senior Specialist
Instituto Clima e Sociedade (ICS)

matrix that is over 80 per cent renewable and a long-standing tradition in bioenergy. This provides the foundation for “powershoring”—the strategic location of green industries in countries with competitive decarbonisation advantages. Brazil's emerging industrial policy, through initiatives such as Nova Indústria Brasil and the Ecological Transformation Plan (PTE), targets critical sectors including sustainable aviation fuels, solar panels, biomethanol, and circular-economy technologies.

However, policy coherence remains a major challenge. Instruments such as Brazil's Emissions Trading System (SBCE), sustainable taxonomy, and green public procurement remain at early stages of implementation. Integrating fiscal reform with green-investment incentives, and strengthening coordination across sectors and levels of government, will be essential to unlocking scale.

International investors and donors have a unique window to support this transformation. Blended finance, guarantees, and concessional capital can de-risk pioneering projects and enable the scaling of restoration and reindustrialisation efforts. With the right tools and partnerships, **Brazil can emerge not only as a solutions provider but also as a model for integrated climate and development strategies in the Global South.**

As COP30 approaches in Belém, Brazil has an opportunity to showcase this vision. Through a combination of nature-based solutions, industrial innovation, and institutional reform, **Brazil can lead a new generation of climate action**—one that is rooted in its landscapes, powered by its people, and aligned with global goals.

SCENARIOS: A BRAZILIAN LUNCH IN THE FUTURE

*How might a Brazilian lunch be experienced 10 years from now?
Four scenarios offer glimpses of what may lie ahead*

Scenarios help us imagine futures in human terms. They bring systemic change down to the level of daily life, communities and personal experience. This is a natural instinct: when we face or anticipate change, we immediately ask how it will affect us and those closest to us.

Professional futurists use scenarios to explore a range of possible futures—from those we hope to avoid to those we aspire to create. Their purpose is to open a space for reflection on the futures we want, and to guide action towards achieving them.

Drawing on the University of Houston’s [foresight framework](#)⁵⁵⁷, together with the research and collaboration underpinning the Signals Spotlight, the UNDP Strategy and Futures Team developed four scenarios for Brazil’s future. Each is based on a recognised scenario archetype—a general narrative pattern that helps us imagine credible alternative futures.

The four scenario archetypes are:

- **Baseline Scenario**—a future in which Brazil’s current trends persist and today’s forecasts unfold largely as expected.
- **New Equilibrium Scenario**—an “alternate reality” in which familiar trends remain present but evolve in less stable and less predictable directions than current assumptions suggest.
- **Collapse Scenario**—a future in which institutions fail and systems break down irreversibly.
- **Transformation Scenario**—a future dramatically and fundamentally changed, where our current systems a future of profound change in which current constraints are transcended through social and technological innovation.

How were these scenarios created?

The in-depth research phase of the *Signals Spotlight*—scanning for signals of change, analysing trends and data, conducting expert interviews and running surveys—generated a rich picture of Brazil’s present and its possible futures.

The UNDP Strategy and Futures Team then convened workshops with stakeholders to identify 12 key drivers of change—macro forces exerting significant influence on Brazil’s trajectory:

1. **Insecurity Rising**—Will social stability strengthen or fall into disorder?
2. **Social Polarisation**—Will ideological echo chambers deepen divides, or can common ground emerge?
3. **Smart Urbanisation**—Will technology democratise cities or exacerbate urban inequalities?
4. **Natural Value**—Will nature be more or less valued and protected?
5. **Debts of the Past**—Will Brazil confront and heal historical injustices or leave them unresolved?
6. **Growth (at a Cost)**—Will future growth be sustainable and healthy or explosive and unsustainable?
7. **Fragmented Governance**—Will the three branches of government grow together or drift apart?
8. **All Along for the Ride**—Will Brazil harness the power and value of its ethnic diversity—or squander this gift?
9. **Gender in Flux**—Will movements for gender equality consolidate or fracture?
10. **Fiscal Crunch**—Will rising public demands and shrinking fiscal space prompt reform or breakdown?
11. **Post-Digital Relationships**—Will technology make the work, labour relations and wealth more equitable or more unequal?
12. **AI Races Ahead**—Will Brazil lead or lag in global AI transformation?

Each driver was expressed as a set of *uncertainties*—questions about how it might plausibly evolve. Exploring different combinations of outcomes led to four distinct scenarios for Brazil’s future.

Each scenario was then further deepened through a workshop using the metaphor of a **future Brazilian lunch** to humanise its implications.

Participants reflected on the following questions, aligned with the key clusters and themes covered in the *Spotlight*.

Hope for Fair Futures:

- **Equity, Equality, Poverty:** *Who prepared this food? Who served it? Do we see everyone at this table as equals? Are we paying people a fair wage to make this meal possible?*
- **Education:** *Can everyone at this table read the menu? How would widely accessible, high-quality education shape the conversations taking place here?*
- **Health:** *Does this food nourish and strengthen us? Is it made with ultra-processed ingredients? Are we eating fast food for lunch? Are others still going hungry?*
- **Youth:** *Are our children welcome at this table to share their voices, laughter, and concerns? What about our grandchildren's children?*
- **Diversity:** *Do we value the rich diversity of food, drink, and people at this table? Are all Brazilians genuinely welcome here? Is Brazil willing to share this meal with people from other countries—and if so, with whom?*
- **Values:** *Does this meal bring us together as Brazilians? What are we discussing at this table—what are we hesitant to talk about?*

Courage for Responsible Futures:

- **Employment:** *Who made this meal? Not only the cooks, but also the farmers and ranchers, agricultural researchers, truck drivers, agricultural equipment manufacturers, furniture makers, and everyone else who played a role in bringing this meal to the table. How were they trained? Are they entrepreneurs or employees? What was the nature of the human-AI interaction in producing this food?*
- **Business/Private Sector:** *Which innovations contributed to this meal? What about manufacturing? Who are the entrepreneurs who made it possible? What role will Brazil's trade partners and alliances (China, the United States, BRICS, G20, Africa) play in enabling this meal? What will be the impact of AI and robotics on this meal?*
- **Sustainable Finance:** *Will Brazil continue to lead in green finance, creating new opportunities for the country's farmers?*
- **Infrastructure:** *How critical will infrastructure (roads, railways, water systems, electricity, digital connectivity, etc.) be in bringing this food to the table?*
- **Energy:** *Could this meal one day be produced with zero-carbon emissions? Through green hydrogen? Fusion? Expanded wind and solar power? Are we relying on imported energy to make this meal possible?*

Agency for Adaptable Futures:

- **Governance:** *What policies have been—or will be—enacted to make this meal possible in 10 or 25 years? Are people still going hungry? Can everyone in Brazil afford to eat lunch?*
- **Public Safety/Security:** *Can we eat this meal in peace? Has the influence of organised crime tainted this meal?*
- **Urbanisation:** *Is there enough time to enjoy this meal? How is this meal experienced in a major city compared to rural areas?*
- **Biodiversity:** *Does this meal reflect Brazil's rich and truly unique biodiversity? Will some foods or beverages disappear from this table over time?*
- **Climate:** *Are we doing enough to protect the Amazon while managing the farmland needed to produce this meal? What about methane emissions from livestock? Can farmworkers safely produce the ingredients for this meal as temperatures continue to rise?*

It is Lunchtime in Brazil... in 2035

SCENARIOS

Brazilian Lunch in 2035



SCENARIO 1: BASELINE

GOURMET SET MEAL (PRATO FEITO)

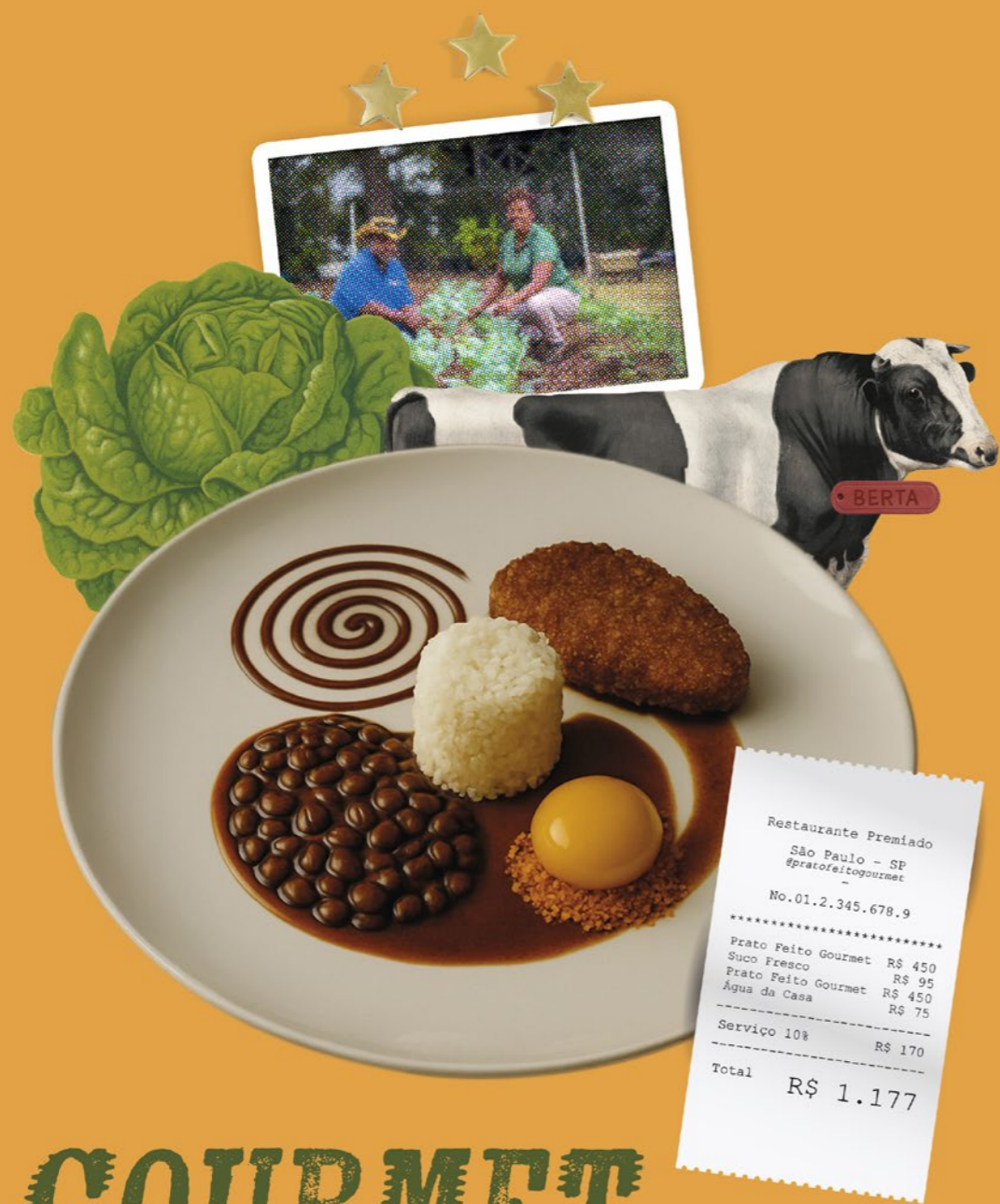
It is the Brazilian lunch—rice, beans, and *farofa*—now dressed in gourmet fashion. A starred chef opens a “popular” restaurant, claiming to “democratise” fine dining. And the recipes? Learned from his aunts in childhood. The farofa is made with “bottle butter” aged for 15 days. The beans are smoked with jatobá wood. The rice is stacked and served with tweezers.

The experience costs BRL 450 per person. Every ingredient has a backstory: the menu is interactive, featuring photos of each farmer, the cow’s name and lineage, and even the “sounds of the terroir”. From the moment you sit down, you are immersed in a multi-sensory digital experience. An experience that excludes those without digital literacy—but they do not enter the restaurant anyway.

The restaurant becomes a sensation in São Paulo. Fully booked for months. Award-winning. A highlight on global food tours as a symbol of “Brazilian authenticity”. It inspires other chefs seeking to open their own innovative restaurants. Those who fail to adapt to this new model are losing ground. Simple food is no longer enough.

Meanwhile, the real lunchbox vanishes from the streets: rice and beans become unaffordable, and local cooks can no longer even rent a food stall. The staple foods of the Brazilian table are forced to change. Rice and beans are too expensive and replaced with cheaper, government-subsidised grains. The “Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population” are updated to reflect these shifts.

The people’s food has been captured, transformed into an aesthetic of scarcity, and sold as luxury. And the humble lunch plate becomes a memory within the country’s cultural heritage—but no longer for the people.



GOURMET
SET MEAL

SCENARIO 2: NEW EQUILIBRIUM

NUTRITION VIA APP

Every morning, a delivery app drops off a sealed pouch at your door. It contains a personalised meal tailored to your biometric data, hormonal levels, stress index, and micro-deficiencies. Your lunch is not chosen—it is calculated.

No flavour, no colour, no pleasing texture. Just a dense, smooth, beige glob that dissolves quickly and digests even faster. Yet your body has never performed better. Blood sugar—stable. Inflammation—low. Sleep—deep.

All your meals arrive the same way, based on a subscription model. You eat them quickly, alone, efficiently, without interrupting your daily activities. There are weekly updates based on real-time feedback from your microbiome, constantly adjusting nutrients as needed, but never altering the product sensation—always the same glob.

Your body has never been healthier, but the same cannot be said for your mental health. No one derives pleasure from eating anymore, and some have turned to other addictions. Food culture is no longer relevant; eating has become a practical, impersonal activity. Diverse cuisines are a thing of the past. You no longer need to think about what to eat, and you certainly do not need to cook. Kitchens are being phased out in new apartment designs. Dining rooms have become workstations.

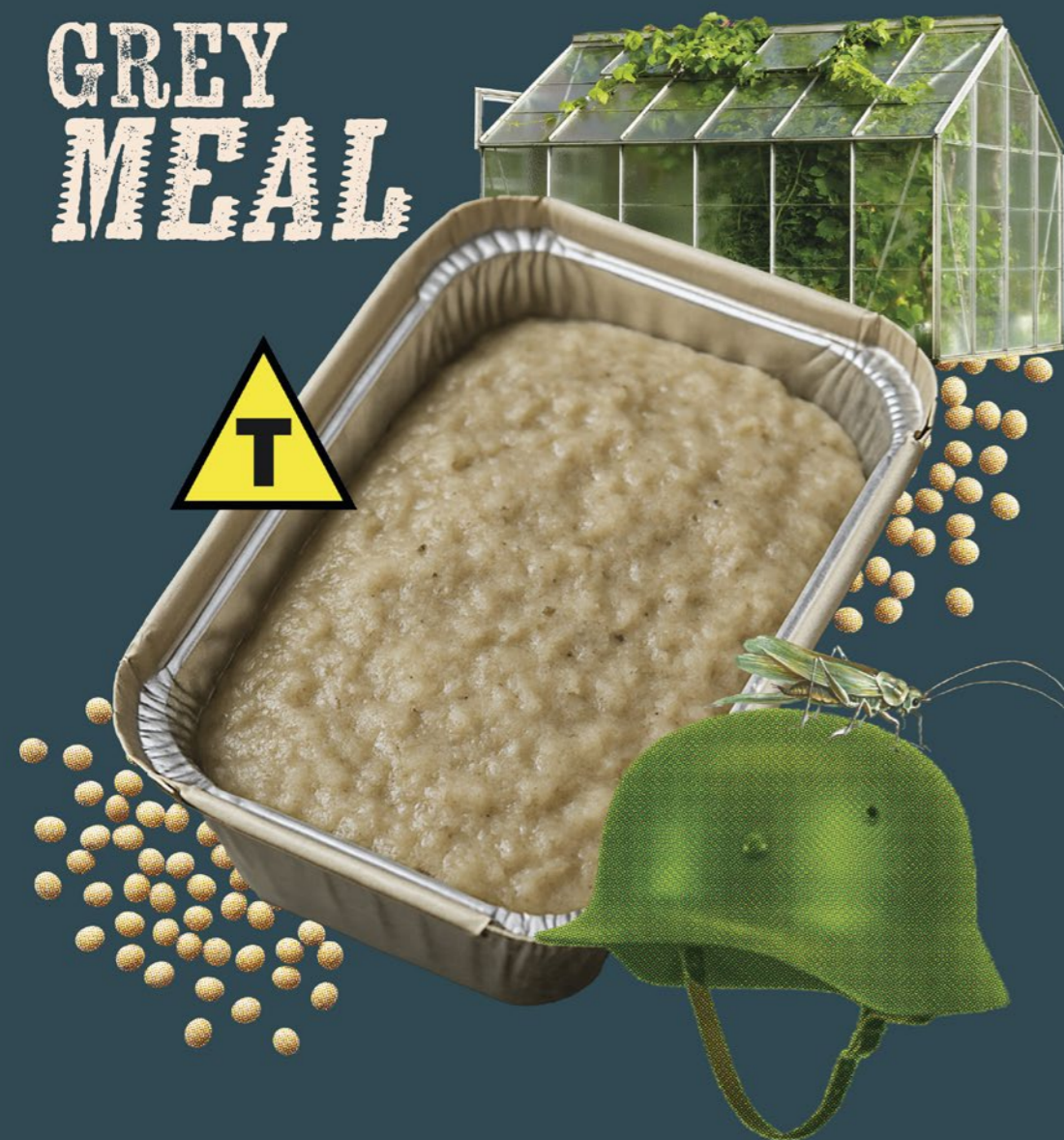
A few companies dominate the market, heavily influenced by pharmaceutical conglomerates. The plastics industry is thriving due to high demand for custom packaging. The traditional food sector is facing serious challenges, as this diet leads to the devaluation of natural foods. The few companies capable of delivering health-focused innovation are thriving, driven by growing demand for functional nourishment.

There are no smells, no stories, no recipes passed down. Children do not learn to cook. Restaurants are museums. The food economy has collapsed—but productivity is up.

You are well-fed, efficient, and functional. You are healthy.



GREY MEAL



SCENARIO 3: COLLAPSE

THE GREY MEAL

Most native crops are extinct. Regional food systems have collapsed. The only thing that still grows at scale is transgenic soy engineered to survive drought, wind, and heatwaves. It is cheap to produce and easy to distribute.

A soy-based compound enriched with synthetic vitamins is now delivered through tightly controlled food access points. Long queues stretch for kilometres. People wait under military surveillance. Violence erupts often. Armed guards are standard at food depots. General hunger has increased violence, especially among younger people, who are growing up with insufficient nutrients.

Over 70 per cent of the population lives below the hunger line. Malnutrition is chronic. Food has become a controlled substance. Families are turning to alternative sources of nourishment— insects have become important protein sources. The pleasure of eating is no longer a reality, but lunchtime is profoundly communal. Families share the little food they have, and scarcity has brought distant relatives closer together.

Meanwhile, the ultra-rich eat quietly. They have climate-controlled greenhouses in their feudal-like properties. They grow bioengineered versions of ancient crops, inaccessible to most of the population. A black market of illegal seeds has emerged. Seed cartels operate in the shadows, trafficking climate-resistant varieties. Young people are being co-opted into seed-related criminality.

But a new movement is rising—cooperatives are creating collaborative greenhouses and sharing seeds adapted to this new reality. Large sums are being donated to these initiatives, and new government subsidies are supporting cooperative modes of production. Hope is beginning to spark again.

The dream of Brazil as a global food powerhouse may have died long ago, but internal solutions are now visible on the horizon.

SCENARIO 4: TRANSFORMATION

THE COMMUNITY BUFFET

By 2035, food in Brazil has become radically local and profoundly collective. You know who grows your food, and who prepares it. Every day, in every neighbourhood, there is a shared banquet. But the banquet varies from place to place. The richer the community, the richer the colours and flavours.

A buffet with local and seasonal fruits and vegetables; grains adapted to the soil; and also lab-grown meats, insects as a source of protein, and PANCS (Unconventional Food Plants). Everything the territory can offer—and nothing beyond it.

After an extreme ban on food exports and imports in 2032—a necessary move to hold back climate collapse—Brazil turned inward. What once seemed like isolation became rediscovery. Local food cultures flourished. Ancestral seeds resurfaced. Recipes reappeared from oral archives.

There was a revolution in agribusiness: without exports, small producers gained prominence in the local market, while former industry giants became obsolete. The Brazilian economy suffered an initial collapse, requiring major restructuring. Tensions rose as power dynamics shifted. Brazil now faces strong international pressure to reopen its markets.

Necessary new infrastructure is appearing across the country: railways to transport local grains, and greater investment in local clean energy solutions. Carbon and methane emissions are far lower than before the export ban. There is significant migration to the countryside, where food is more available. Big cities cannot offer a very varied menu.

Food follows the rhythm of the harvest—the calendar of the rain. Pesticide use is minimal. Public health has improved: chronic diseases are decreasing. However, the rise of lab-grown meat has also triggered new, previously eradicated viruses.

Brazil in 2035 is a country under reconstruction. A banquet of possibilities, but also of disputes. Food brings people together, but it also divides. The land nourishes—but it is also a battleground. Collectivity is an ideal, yet reality is complex.



Taste your futures

Now that you have “tasted” four different alternatives for Brazil’s future, pause to “chew” on your experiences for a moment. Reflect on how each future you visited made you feel.

- *Did you feel welcome?*
- *Did you feel nourished?*
- *Did you feel satisfied?*

What do you think you and your country could—and should—do today to ensure we all end up in a future that welcomes, nourishes, and satisfies everyone?

Imagining other scenarios for Brazil

Can you create your own scenarios using the signals and provocations contained in the Signals Spotlight?

The answer is “yes!” The scenarios presented here were created to start a conversation. You or your community can build upon these scenarios or create new ones. In addition, you can explore them in more detail with the board game *Futures Served*, created by the UNDP Strategy and Futures Team in support of the Spotlight.

Select a cluster or theme to focus on. Think about how these clusters or themes intersect or converge, and describe how your community might change as a result.

Imagine, for example, the impact on development. Look at the gaps in equality, equity, justice, sustainability, or resilience. Then work backwards—how did you get to this future from where you are today? Create a timeline. Create images. Create products or items that people use every day in those imagined versions of the future.

From there, share your thoughts with colleagues and have a conversation. How do they think about these stories? What did you learn? How did the world change? How did your community change? How did you change? How might you take action to make positive changes happen in every scenario?

If you’re ready to take action, we invite you to read and apply *Acting in the Jungle of Change*, which is available in a separate Toolkit booklet created in support of the Brazil Signals Spotlight.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

STOP IMAGINING; START DOING: A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO ACT NOW FOR BRAZIL’S FUTURE

Harnessing the collective power of Brazilian imagination to transform the lives of its people

The Spotlight challenges Brazilians to consider the legacy they want to leave for future generations and provides a framework for collective action towards preferred futures.

Throughout this collaborative process, Brazilians shared their frustrations and hopes about achieving a brighter future for their country.

What was abundantly clear is that Brazilians want to think about their future. Imagine the strategic power and strength of 212 million Brazilians actively thinking about—and collectively acting upon—their future, from the highest levels of the federal government to Rio’s favelas to rural communities nationwide. Or imagine an entire generation of schoolchildren learning how to think about the future while understanding Brazil’s history.

With support from the UNDP Brazil Country Office and the UNDP Strategy & Futures Team, the Brazilians who shaped the Spotlight identified challenges and opportunities, along with four potential scenarios—or visions—for the future.

The participatory process of developing the Spotlight complements the government’s efforts to build the Brazil 2050 Strategy.⁵⁵⁸ By strengthening Brazil’s capacity to think about its future, the country is sharpening a strategic tool that can help its people imagine and shape a future grounded in national development values such as sovereignty, equity, diversity and solidarity.

From the Spotlight’s exploration of Brazil’s potential futures, three key takeaways emerged:

1. Stop merely surviving the present; start designing the future

Brazil faces a choice between remaining trapped in the present—reactively responding to events—or proactively designing its future trajectory. The country and its people have a tremendous strategic opportunity to shape a new narrative that could serve as a model for the Global South, particularly in the areas of equality and climate change. However, this opportunity is constrained by *deindustrialisation*,⁵⁵⁹ *commodity dependence*,⁵⁶⁰ and the “Brazil Cost”⁵⁶¹ that undermines global competitiveness. Designing the future means reframing climate action from environmental burden to economic opportunity, integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, and building innovation ecosystems that extend beyond fintech pioneers towards comprehensive economic transformation.

Hosting COP30 provided Brazil with a [unique platform](#)⁵⁶² to demonstrate its commitment to measurable action—moving from short-termism to long-term nation-building with plans robust enough to withstand Brazil's election cycles.

2. Move from hope to a commitment to act

Hope is essential for shaping the future, yet there remains a gap between Brazilians' individual hopes and their expectations for collective progress. While 63 per cent of Spotlight survey respondents believe their personal lives will improve by 2035, only 40 per cent expect collective improvements. True transformation requires confronting structural racism, investing in [education quality](#),⁵⁶³ and treating [diversity](#)⁵⁶⁴ as competitive advantage. This means dismantling elite capture of institutions and fostering genuine participatory governance through the redistribution of power. Brazil is making progress—[universal healthcare](#),⁵⁶⁵ [universal education](#),⁵⁶⁶ [PIX-driven](#)⁵⁶⁷ [financial inclusion](#), [renewable energy](#)⁵⁶⁸ leadership—but transformation requires structural reform rather than incremental adjustments to existing systems.

3. Shift from government dependence to citizen ownership

As trust in government, corporations and other traditional institutions declines, [evangelical churches](#),⁵⁶⁹ [digital platforms](#),⁵⁷⁰ and criminal organisations⁵⁷¹ are increasingly filling governance gaps. This signals the need for new models of citizen ownership, built from the bottom up, where Brazilians are meaningfully included in decision-making. Proven, ground-up examples already exist: community-led safety initiatives that have reduced crime by 80 per cent, [youth climate activism](#),⁵⁷² and digital governance platforms such as [Brasil Participativo](#).⁵⁷³ The path forward involves reimagining representation beyond electoral democracy, potentially institutionalising participatory governance as a “fourth power”. This shift requires citizens to take [ownership](#)⁵⁷⁴ of solutions rather than waiting for government action, moving from passive recipients of services to active architects of community transformation and democratic innovation.

Strategic implications

In Brazil, lunch is considered a sacred moment for family and friends to gather and share a meal. The *Spotlight* uses the Brazilian lunch as a metaphor for four scenarios for Brazil's future in 2035, ranging from persistent inequality (“*Prato Feito Gourmet*”) to transformation through community solidarity (“*The Community Buffet*”).

How can these scenarios and the Spotlight spark thinking about Brazil's future?

- **Evidence-based foundation for action**—The Spotlight examines themes from education and health to climate and governance. Signals of change offer citizens and leaders food for thought on what is working, what is failing and where opportunities for meaningful change may lie.

- **Practical tools for future-building**—Beyond inspiration, the Spotlight provides tools for individuals to take action, from hosting community dialogues to prototyping solutions, making future-building accessible to everyone regardless of background or resources. Everyone can play the Futures Served game.
- **Collective vision development through scenarios**—The scenarios help Brazilians move from abstract hopes to concrete images of the future. By using the relatable metaphor of the Brazilian lunch, complex systemic changes become tangible and open to debate.
- **Bridge between local and global impact**—The Spotlight situates Brazil's challenges within global contexts (BRICS, G20, COP30), showing how local actions contribute to international leadership. This perspective highlights Brazilians' agency in shaping not only national but also global futures, particularly in climate action and sustainable development models for the Global South.
- **Framework for moving from potential to action**—The Spotlight provides a structured approach for converting possibilities into action. It identifies specific leverage points where coordinated efforts can overcome systemic barriers, offering hope grounded in practical pathways forward.

Making a commitment to the future

The aim of the Spotlight is not just to start conversations—it is to inspire all Brazilians to begin taking action, however modest, to create a brighter future. Anchored in the long-term vision of the Brazil 2050 Strategy, the Spotlight shows that multiple futures are within reach.

By embracing strategic foresight, Brazil is becoming an active architect of its future—shifting from shared aspirations to collective commitments that generate tangible impact, from navigating today's disruptions to boldly shaping a resilient tomorrow, and from centralised, top-down solutions to a distributed, citizen-driven ownership of the future.

The future is not something that simply happens—it is built through the decisions made today, however imperfect. Let us do.

ACTING IN THE JUNGLE OF CHANGE

How to use the Signals Spotlight

The Spotlight invites you to *do something about your future* — to act towards the future you want and away from those you do not — and to inspire those around you to do the same.

So, now that we have explored signals of change and considered some scenarios, where do we go from here?

Acting in the Jungle of Change

This Spotlight is more than an analysis — it is a call to participation, to act collectively towards the common good. The UNDP Strategy and Futures Team invites you and your community to consider the following process.

Using the metaphor of the Amazon jungle — a complex system — imagine the Amazon tree of life standing at its centre. Then ask yourself:

- **Personas:** Who are the people and their distinct roles in Brazil's ecosystem of futures? Which role do you most identify with?
- **Action:** How could you use the Spotlight to spark change?

This diagram shows how different personas (on the left) connect with clusters of action (on the right) through the Amazon tree of life.

Who are you in this jungle?

Every role matters. From youth and parents to artists and policymakers, each voice shapes how Brazil imagines and builds its futures. Which of these roles speaks to you? You may identify with multiple roles simultaneously (i.e., you could be a student, a parent, and a frontline worker).

- 1 **Youth / Students (Macaw):** Like the macaw in the canopy, you spot signals of change first. Your colour and energy spark new conversations about Brazil's future.
- 2 **Parents / Caregivers (Jaguar):** Like the jaguar, you protect fiercely and guide with strength. Your hopes and fears shape the path for the next generation.
- 3 **Frontline Workers (Ant):** Like the leafcutter ant, you carry the forest's weight every day. Your labour reveals what needs care, protection, and reform.
- 4 **Trade Partners / Business Actors (Bee):** Like the bee, you build and connect. Through your choices, value chains can either sustain the forest or strip it bare.
- 5 **State Actors (Samaúma Trunk):** Like the great trunk of the samaúma tree, you stabilise and guide. Your decisions shape the roots of governance for generations to come.
- 6 **Community Builders (Vine):** Like the vine, you weave connections between people, voices, and needs. Your flexibility keeps the forest bound together.
- 7 **Knowledge Shapers (Fungi/Mycelium):** Like fungi beneath the soil, you spread unseen networks of wisdom. Your ideas and insights nourish the forest's imagination.
- 8 **Artists / Storytellers / Musicians (River Dolphin):** Like the river dolphin, you move between worlds of reality and imagination. Through story, music, and art, you bring myths and futures to life.



What can you do with the Spotlight?

Each action cluster is a pathway. Whether you share stories, gather communities, shape policy, or spark imagination, your steps help the jungle grow.

- 1 **Spot & Share (Toucan):** Like the toucan, you make yourself seen and heard. By noticing signals and sharing stories, you spread the colours of change through the forest.
- 2 **Gather & Talk (Howler Monkey):** Like the howler monkey, your voice calls the group together. Through dialogue and community circles, you create spaces of trust and belonging.
- 3 **Shape & Decide (Capybara):** Like the capybara, you live at the centre of the ecosystem, connecting land and water, groups and generations. Through policy and institutions, your choices set the direction and balance of the forest.
- 4 **Prototype & Test (Seedling):** Like a seedling pushing through the soil, you test what might grow. Some experiments thrive, others fail, but all nourish the forest of tomorrow.
- 5 **Learn & Teach (Spectacled Owl):** Like the owl, you pass wisdom from one generation to the next. By building futures literacy, you strengthen the roots of knowledge in the forest.
- 6 **Reflect & Imagine (Butterfly):** Like the butterfly, you remind us of transformation and beauty. Through reflection and imagination, you help the forest dream of what it can become.

How the jungle connects

Everyone has a role in the jungle of change. Find the persona that speaks to you, then explore the action clusters that connect most closely to your strengths, resources, or imagination.

Toolkit: Exploring the Jungle of Change

To provide you with more detailed guidance on how to take action on the Spotlight, the UNDP Strategy and Futures Team has created a separate Toolkit document, which includes the full Jungle of Change exercise. Through this exercise, you can explore the eight personas using a set of guiding questions and suggested actions.

Scan the QR code on the right to explore action toolkits and resources online.



GLOSSARY

English	Portuguese	Definition
Foresight	Prospectiva	Combination of methodologies and concepts from Futures Studies and Strategic Management, applied in a transdisciplinary way to investigate and anticipate change, and to create medium- and long-term plans.
Strategic foresight	Prospectiva estratégica	See Foresight. Term used to emphasise its application in strategic planning contexts.
Futures thinking	Prospecção de futuros	Skills developed through the practice of Futures Studies and Foresight. Related to the ability to imagine, analyse, and act upon possible futures.
Scenarios	Cenários	Narratives that help explore future possibilities and plan for potential futures. Used to challenge assumptions and reframe perceptions of the present.
Drivers of change	Vetores de mudança	Internal or external factors that shape future developments, such as technological innovations, laws, or social movements.
Trends	Tendências	Patterns of change over time in variables of interest.
Signals	Sinais/Sinais de Mudança	Early indications of emerging changes that may signal the rise of future trends. Example: world population growth.
Weak signals	Sinais fracos	Early and ambiguous signs of emerging changes that may become significant trends. Early and imprecise symptoms.
Horizon scanning	Exploração de horizontes	Systematic process of identifying early signs of change, threats, and opportunities across different areas.
Scanning	Exploração	Active search for relevant information on emerging changes.
Sensemaking	Interpretação de sinais	Process of interpreting and making sense of signals and trends to guide decisions.
Megatrends	Megatendências	Large-scale movements and changes that manifest consistently and decisively shape the future. See Drivers of Change.
Backcasting	Backcasting (usado em inglês)	Starting from a future vision of a preferable scenario and identifying the strategies and tactics needed to achieve it.
Forecasting	Previsão	The act of forecasting, projecting, and predicting medium- and long-term trends based on data and information analysis.
Wild cards	Elementos imprevisíveis	Low-probability, high-impact events. They are recognisable but underestimated and difficult to predict.

English	Portuguese	Definition
Black swan	Cisne negro	Events outside usual expectations, unpredictable and with great impact. They symbolise the limitation of forecasts based on past experiences.
Futures literacy	Treinamento em prospectiva	Development of anticipatory and imaginative skills to envision and create futures in the present.
Visioning	Construção de visões	Process of building an aspirational vision of a desired future.
Signal sensing	Detecção de sinais	Process of identifying and interpreting emerging signals that indicate possible future changes.
Signals scanning	Exploração de sinais	Active search for weak and emerging signals from various sources to anticipate change.
Sensing	Detecção	The act of perceiving or detecting subtle changes in the environment that may indicate future transformations.
Seeds of change	Sementes da mudança	Early elements of innovation or transformation that have the potential to generate major changes in the future.
Framing	Enquadramento	Definition of the boundaries and focus of a futures analysis, influencing how problems and opportunities are perceived.
STEEP-V	STEEP-V	Analysis of factors that influence futures: social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal, and values.
Futures Wheel	Roda de futuros	Visual tool for mapping impacts linked to specific changes, anticipating implications and opportunities.
Futures Cone	Cone de futuros	Diagram that represents potential futures: absurd, possible, plausible, probable, preferable, and projected.
Three Horizons	Três horizontes	Model that describes three time horizons of innovation and change—the present, emerging transitions, and the transformative future.
Roadmapping	Roteirização	Planning technique that visualises strategic pathways to achieve future goals, connecting trends, technologies, and actions.
Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)	Análise em camadas causais	Method that explores different levels of understanding of a problem—litany, systemic, worldview/discourse, and myth/metaphor – to reveal root causes and alternative futures.

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