

Youth**Action**Net®

# CASE STUDY SERIES

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**ASID Brazil:**

*IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES*

*A partnership between:*



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service  
Global Human Development Program



## **Introduction**

*This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.*

## **International Youth Foundation**

*The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.*

[www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org)

## **YouthActionNet®**

*Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.*

[www.youthactionnet.org](http://www.youthactionnet.org)

## **Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University**

*The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.*

<https://ghd.georgetown.edu>

## INTRODUCTION

### ***Meet Luiz Hamilton Ribas, Co-founder of ASID Brazil***

Luiz has always been a fighter. Growing up, he battled severe scoliosis, which required years of physical therapy, major surgery, and relearning how to walk. Despite these early setbacks, Luiz completed high school and entered the Federal University of Paraná.



At university, he became part of a junior enterprise, a student-run non-profit that provides services for companies. Students learn about consulting, marketing, and other business services from their peers and professors and then gain practical experience by working with companies. Businesses benefit from the discounted prices, while students enhance their education and develop critical business skills. Through Luiz's junior enterprise assignments, he learned the art of consulting and met two other participants, Alexandre Amorim and Diego Tutumi Moreira.

In 2008, Alexandre had received a class assignment to create a non-profit organization. Having a sister with autism and Down syndrome, he decided to dedicate his efforts to supporting institutions that help people with intellectual and physical disabilities. Once Luiz learned of Alexandre's project, he was eager to contribute. His experiences with scoliosis had inspired him to help others and be a part of something bigger. Together with Alexandre and Diego, Luiz created Ação Social para Igualdade das Diferenças (Social Action for the Equality of Differences), or ASID Brazil.

**ASID Brazil is improving opportunities for the personal development and social inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD).**



### ***The Problem***

According to the 2013 National Health Survey, 12.4 million individuals in Brazil have an intellectual, physical, hearing, and/or visual disability.<sup>1</sup> Of this population, about 300,000 people benefit from the 3,500 schools and non-profit organizations that offer free specialized education and care. This however, is only a fraction of the total disabled population. While some families can afford private services, many others cannot. As a result, the demand for free services far exceeds the capacity of institutions and has created a wait list of 60,000 people. Without the funds to pay for private services, these individuals are denied assistance that could improve their lives.

### ***The Solution***

ASID Brazil helps organizations serving PWD improve operations and accommodate more people. ASID uses a three-pillar approach to pursue this mission. First, recognizing that many institutions are led by individuals without business backgrounds, ASID Brazil offers free consulting services to

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<sup>1</sup> Malta, Deborah Carvalho, Stopa, Sheila Rizzato, Canuto, Rogerio, Gomes, Nayara Lopes, Mendes, Vera Lúcia Ferreira, Goulart, Bárbara Niegia Garcia de, & Moura, Lenildo de. (2016). Self-reported prevalence of disability in Brazil, according to the National Health Survey, 2013. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 21(10), 3253-3264.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1413-812320152110.17512016>

provide managers with a plan for improving capacity and program quality. Second, ASID Brazil builds the skills of managers through free professional development programs and corporate volunteer experiences so that they can execute plans to expand and strengthen operations. Third, ASID Brazil works with Brazilian businesses to increase diversity in the workplace through expanded employment opportunities for people with disabilities, thereby creating a pathway for people to exit institutions and improve their overall quality of life and sense of independence.

Figure 1: Three pillars of ASID Brazil

Management Consulting	Corporate Volunteer Programs	Diversity in the Workplace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ASID Brazil offers a free diagnostic to understand an institution's strengths and weaknesses. ASID then develops a tailored project to expand the number of PWD the institution serves and improve the quality of services.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff from third-party private companies share their specialized knowledge with institutions, helping strengthen operations so that more PWD can enroll in services.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ASID Brazil partners with companies to expand work opportunities for PWD so that they can exit institutions and create additional vacancies.</li></ul>

Operational Model

ASID Brazil is a registered non-profit based in Curitiba, Brazil. The organization is supported by an array of funding sources. Roughly 20 to 25 percent of funding is provided by personal donations, tax donations, and unrestricted corporate donations. The bulk of funding comes from three services offered to companies on a fee-for-service basis

Corporate Volunteering

Businesses pay ASID Brazil to structure a company’s corporate volunteering programs, with the goal of offering employees opportunities to develop skills in team work, communication, and more. The activities that ASID Brazil arranges for the corporate volunteers range from building and painting walls, to directly assisting students with disabilities, to advising the institution’s management team. These corporate volunteer opportunities are notable for the focus on long-term institutional growth. ASID Brazil highlights this distinction from other corporate volunteer programs by applying diagnostic tools before and after volunteer opportunities, with a rating to indicate the social impact.

Businesses’ operations also benefit from these activities. The opportunity to engage in meaningful projects advancing a social cause translates into higher employee satisfaction, which reduces

attrition rates.<sup>2</sup> An internal evaluation conducted by one corporate partner revealed that corporate volunteers were 28 percent more satisfied with their company than counterparts who did not participate. Since hiring and training processes usually entail high costs, corporate volunteering is a cost-effective strategy to maintain staff engagement and morale.

### **Awareness and Diversity Trainings**

Under Law 8213, Brazilian companies are required to meet hiring quotas for people with disabilities. While businesses generally comply with the law, many lack structured programs to successfully integrate and retain PWD. Furthermore, businesses tend to hire people with physical disabilities and exclude people with intellectual disabilities. ASID Brazil assists businesses to create more inclusive and systematized programs for employees with disabilities. This work includes drafting job descriptions, developing retention plans, and organizing workshops and awareness programs for staff members. When PWD are better integrated into the workplace, they can provide more significant contributions to the business. In addition, other staff members develop important skills such as patience, teamwork, and adaptability.

### **Social Investment Verification**

Companies also pay ASID Brazil to conduct assessments of organizations working with PWD that are part of that company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. These assessments are used to ensure that the companies are supporting organizations with adequate standards of institutional governance. Businesses complete due-diligence, and ASID Brazil can extend assistance to an even greater number of institutions.

The services ASID Brazil offers create a relatively stable funding source by enhancing businesses' core interests. The pay-for-service model also offers a path forward for scalability because ASID Brazil can expand operations to work with other branches of the same company. ASID Brazil's growth prospects will be further bolstered by the organization's expansion into São Paulo in 2017, which will introduce ASID Brazil to a greater market of institutions and businesses.

## **KEY ASSETS AND SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES**

ASID Brazil has found a niche market in management consulting. The organization has a deep understanding of the special needs care sector and the regulatory laws for institutions and companies. This knowledge allows ASID to offer unparalleled service and find ways to bring together diverse actors to achieve a common social mission.

### **Unique Assessment Methodology**

ASID uses a proprietary methodology, IDEE (índice de desenvolvimento da educação especial, or index of special education development) to examine the operations of philanthropic service centers and identify areas for improvement. IDEE is composed of 26 indicators and 143 assessment items

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cbve.org.br/wp-content/uploads/Pesquisa%20Perfil%20do%20Voluntariado%20Empresarial%20no%20Brasil%20III%20-%202012.pdf>

that provide a holistic analysis of an organization's services across eight areas: social impact, human resources, legal management, financial management, fundraising, marketing, leadership, and physical infrastructure. ASID Brazil's founders and employees developed the methodology largely by drawing upon their experience with the junior enterprise. They have uniquely tailored IDEE to institutions that provide services for PWD.

ASID Brazil applies the IDEE tool at the beginning of any new project with a service institution. The results generate a comprehensive report that ASID Brazil then uses to design a proposal to improve the growth, quality, and sustainability of the organization. The assessment is repeated at the end of the project period, which can span from three months to two years, to determine the organization's progress in achieving the recommended changes. Thus far, more than 70 institutions across four states have benefitted from analyses using the IDEE tool.

ASID Brazil also offers a free assessment each year after the project period ends. The staff view continued engagement as a critical component for sustaining progress. As the organizations evolve through leadership and staff changes and new funding opportunities, these follow-ups ensure that ASID Brazil's recommendations are not forgotten.

### **Strong Network of Institutions**

In addition to ASID Brazil's free consulting services, organizations receive support through the ASID network. ASID Brazil's programming provides opportunities to maintain relationships and share best practices, thereby ensuring the sustainability of projects. The three central components are the Guide for Good Practices, a

publication describing the evolution and strengths of institutions within the network as models of success, Good Practices Breakfasts, monthly meetings featuring speakers who highlight effective approaches, and the IDEE Highlight Awards, an annual event honoring the three best institutions of the year in 12 categories.

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*I met ASID Brazil and saw an NGO with people who are enthusiastic about this same dream, and moreover, who believe and fight for this dream come true. Thank you for helping us to further professionalize our process and for teaching us that it is not enough to do good, we must do it well.*

*Andre, AMA - Associação Maringaense dos Autistas*

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Given ASID Brazil's commitment to continued assistance but limited human resources, the network plays an important role in identifying complementary resources. In particular, the ASID network reinforces the value of multidirectional exchanges. Organizations are encouraged to support one another and view each other as resources. These interactions build the confidence of institutions and reinforce the importance of a commitment to good management practices.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT

ASID Brazil has expanded considerably since its founding in 2008. However, as the organization continues to grow, leadership will need to adapt operations to reach a wider audience and maintain quality services. Therefore, ASID Brazil is exploring how it can leverage technology and current human resources to best support expansion.

### *ASID Brazil SWOT Analysis*

INTERNAL		Strengths	Weaknesses
INTERNAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDEE methodology</li> <li>• Strong local network of NGOs, entrepreneurs, and enterprises</li> <li>• Specialized knowledge of special needs care sector</li> <li>• Dedicated founders and staff</li> <li>• High stakeholder satisfaction and local brand recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographically concentrated</li> <li>• Human-capital intensive processes</li> <li>• Need for better social impact indicators</li> <li>• Little capital for investment in new technology</li> </ul>
		Opportunities	Threats
EXTERNAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target private institutions in need of similar services</li> <li>• Develop technological tools to reach more people</li> <li>• Help enterprises develop CSR initiatives</li> <li>• Use data and knowledge to influence government legislation and PWD policies</li> <li>• Draw upon existing volunteer network to build brand and generate new opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient revenue streams</li> <li>• New competitors</li> <li>• Unstable economy</li> <li>• Lack of interest by institutions in new market areas</li> </ul>

### *Digitalization of Methodology to Expand Reach*

ASID Brazil's management consulting was designed with the intent to eliminate wait times and increase the quality of services. Now, ASID Brazil has a waiting line of its own. The organization's management consulting process is human capital-intensive and requires personal interviews and the manual completion of an Excel-based tool. This reliance on individuals limits ASID Brazil's ability to meet current demand, let alone expand into additional states. To address these barriers of scalability, ASID Brazil has decided to digitalize the IDEE methodology.



ASID Brazil plans to create a web portal where organizations answer questions and receive recommendations for improvement based on their responses. Institutions will have the opportunity to repeat the exercise six months later to gauge progress. Through a 10,000 EUR grant from SAP Global the organization plans to have the portal online and running by the end of 2017.

Although the digitalization of the IDEE methodology will certainly expand ASID Brazil's geographic reach and allow it to assist a greater number of institutions, the organization remains concerned about the ability to enact a change in culture without face-to-face interaction. The principle challenge to scaling ASID Brazil's methodology is to retain quality and a sustained impact. Improved management without regard to the personal development and inclusion of people with disabilities does not advance the organization's purpose. Fortunately, ASID Brazil is well-aware of this danger and is working to ensure that the mission is not diluted for the sake of growth.

### ***Harnessing Corporate Volunteers' Business Knowledge and Skills***

ASID Brazil has a robust network of corporate volunteers with nearly 2,200 participants to date. While volunteers initially focused on building physical infrastructures, they have shifted towards improving management and operations practices. Given that corporate volunteers already possess the tools that ASID Brazil seeks to impart, they are more useful providing specialized knowledge. This shift has been most evident in ASID Brazil's use of corporate volunteers as presenters at the monthly Good Practices Breakfasts.

Moving forward, ASID Brazil wants to establish a more significant role for committed volunteers. By using corporate volunteers to bolster the management consulting pillar, the organization can overcome the limitations of a small staff and assist a greater number of institutions. This year, ASID Brazil is working with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to develop a continuous volunteer recruiting plan that will allow corporate volunteers to deepen their engagement with institutions. While this will augment ASID Brazil's human resources, ASID Brazil will need to continue to ensure that corporate volunteers are reliable participants who do not lose interest in projects or offer subpar services. The pilot with PwC is an opportunity to assess and mitigate these potential risks. If successful, ASID Brazil plans to replicate this program with other businesses.

## **CONCLUSION**

ASID Brazil started as a student's dream and became a reality that has improved the lives of thousands of PWD in Brazil. Luiz and his co-founders' commitment to ASID Brazil's mission has been the foundation of this success. Starting from ASID Brazil's beginning, the co-founders were determined to see the organization thrive and create meaningful social change. For the first year and a half of ASID Brazil's operations, the co-founders held more than 80 meetings with potential funders. Luiz spent weekends washing dishes and selling newspapers on a street corner to support himself and the organization while businesses continued to pass on funding. This kind of drive and dedication cannot be learned; it is innate to the co-founders and their organization.

Through years of hard work, ASID Brazil has developed strong methodologies, programs, and partnerships. Now, as the organization looks to expand, it will draw upon organizational strengths and passionate staff to continue to fulfill the mission of improving opportunities for PWD in Brazil.



## FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT ASID BRAZIL

- [ASID Brazil Website](#)
- [ASID Brazil Facebook Page](#)
- Video: [You Can Do More](#)
- Video: [Superpowers](#)
- Video: [Winner of Social Entrepreneur of the Future 2013](#)

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