

Ágere

Cooperação em Advocacy

formation-networks of social interest -e-learning courses -workshops -legislative -government - public p



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Annual Report - 2005

Presentation	2
Ethics	2
Advocacy Assistance	3
Third Sector Legal Framework	3
Youth and Political Action	4
Children and Adolescents' Rights	5
Shopkeepers' Rights	7
Communication and Culture	7
Participating in Political Groups	7
Distance learning courses	8
Financial Statements	10

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Advocacy action for social welfare

Founded in September 2002, Ágere - Cooperation in Advocacy is a Brazilian NGO with the primary mission to support civil society organizations (CSO's) initiatives to implement public policy (i.e., to engage in "advocacy").

In order to promote the respect for human rights, in its wider sense, and to contribute to internal growth and sustainability, Ágere works in two main areas: courses and cooperation in advocacy.

Advocacy is the process of acting strategically to change public policies in order to produce social impacts throughout the country –in the municipal, state or national level –and also in an international level.

Actions in advocacy include:

- 1.Planning, managing and monitoring a project;
- 2.Researching and analyzing public policies;
- 3.Creating and supporting networks and coalitions of social interest;
- 4.Media and communications work;
- 5.Lobbying work;
- 6.Mobilization of the members of the civil society.

Ágere – Cooperation in Advocacy acts to guarantee human rights in their various aspects that impact the population, monitoring public budget and defending issues as children and youth rights, third sector legal framework, culture and education improvement, and racial and social equality.

Ethics

Constructing a world permeated by fairness and equity demands everyday efforts. Hence, even the simpler spaces would be more pleasant and all the relationships would be more respectful.

The members of Ágere adhere to the following values:

- respect for human diversity;
- consider human beings as an organic unit , despite of their differences;
- everybody is responsible for the collective and individual welfare;
- everyone has to serve each other, in order to build a fair society.

Third Sector Legal Framework

Introduction

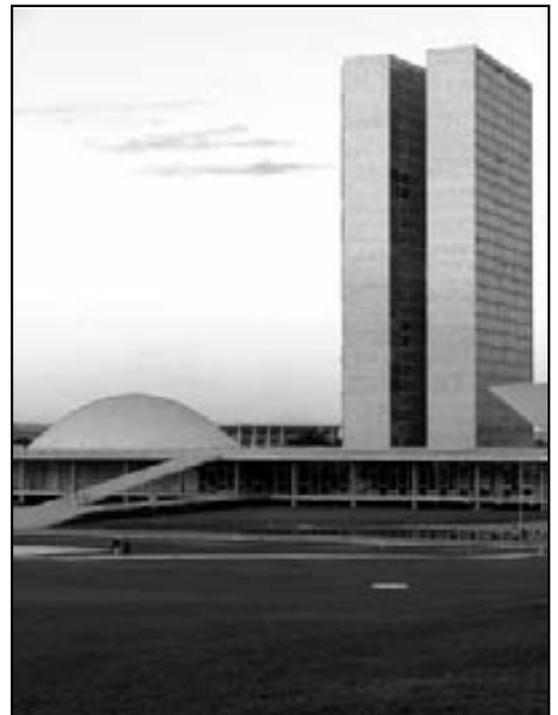
Since September, 2005, the project “Third Sector Legal Framework and Public Policies” has opened a new area of action through a partnership between Ágere and GIFE (Group of Institutes, Foundations and Corporations), acting within the Federal Parliament and Executive.

The primary objective of the project is to restructure the third sector’s legal framework, so as to offer a more appropriate legal, fiscal and tax environment for all non profit organizations. Altogether, this project defends bills and public policies that protect social welfare, cultural and educational improvements, and environmental protection.

In this project, Ágere follows and analyses bills and initiatives inside the Parliament and Executive, trying to impact them according to social interests and get civil society acquainted with government actions related to the third sector.

Ágere’s activities in 2005

- Mapping bills concerning the third sector legal framework, education, culture and environmental protection. Sixty-five bills were selected and classified into three levels of importance: high, medium and low importance;
- Creation of the Legal Framework Newsletter: this newsletter informs partners and other organizations about the status of each bill and the national Legislative and Executive agendas, as well as releases analysis about them;
- Scheduling events and public hearings to stimulate discussions about bills and acting in order to approve them.



Brazilian Parliament

Youth and Political Action

Advocacy Assistance

Introduction

The project Youth and Political Action (YPA) has discussed, created and monitored public politics of/for/with youth since February 2005. YPA is a partnership involving four NGOs: Ágere, Instituto Aliança, Cipó and Rede Sou de Atitude.

The project Youth and Political Action influences:

- Public policies: monitoring and contributing to the discussions on bills in the Parliament;
- Private organizations: stimulating their investment in projects related to the youth;
- Youth activism: fostering youth political discussion and pro-activism;
- Media: raising the frequency of youth themes in media agenda and creating products (such as websites and folders) about youth.

In this project, Ágere is responsible for accompanying the works with in the National Secretariat of Youth and the Parliament, following the proposals related to public policies for youth; monitoring public budget; participating in conferences and other discussions about this theme; joining actions promoted by international organizations for promoting youth rights.

Ágere's activities in 2005

- Mapping out the universe of bills related to youth;
- Influencing Congressmen and Senators to present, in the Parliament, two pronouncements defending youth rights;
- Suggesting changes in national budgetary bill for 2006;
- Following all works in the Parliament referring to youth rights;
- Keeping in touch with the National Secretariat for Youth to accompany government projects.



Children and Adolescents' Rights

Introduction

Ágere and Fundação Abrinq (Abrinq Foundation for Children Rights) have worked together since May, 2005, with the purpose of defending children and adolescents' rights in the Parliament and Executive.

In this project, Ágere acts in:

- Monitoring bills related to education and the protection of children's rights.
- Coordinating and executing activities within the Advocacy Committee in Rede de Monitoramento Amiga da Criança (Child Friendly Monitoring Network);
- Keeping in touch with other organizations interested in defending children's rights;
- Monitoring the national budgetary bill, in order to guarantee investments for children;
- Monitoring the project Plano de Ação do Presidente Amigo da Criança (Child Friendly President's Plan of Action) and other actions at the Executive scope concerning the defense of children's rights.

Ágere's Activities in 2005

• Monitoring Fundeb (Basic Education Fund):

Fundeb is a bill to improve public education throughout the country. Civil society organizations, including Ágere, worked hard in the Federal Chamber of Deputies, in 2005, organizing meetings with parliamentarians and demonstrations to put pressure for its approval.

Furthermore, these organizations assessed the bill and suggested changes to enhance both the text and policies. All these efforts resulted in improving the proposal and thus, in empowering public education policies and its supporters.

Until the end of 2005, Fundeb was passed in the Federal Chamber of Deputies, although not in the Senate. For 2006, the civil society organizations will continue to follow and monitor the bill.

Children's and Adolescents' Rights

- **Other bills concerning children and adolescents' rights**

In 2005 Ágere monitored many bills in the Parliament, evaluating which are pro-children's rights and which are opposed to them. The main themes accompanied were: health, education, special protection, and HIV/AIDS.

- **Plano de Ação Presidente Amigo da Criança (Child Friendly President's Plan of Action)**

The Presidente Amigo da Criança plan of action is a commitment signed by the President to invest in improvement of children and young people's life conditions. The plan has a budget of R\$ 56 billion (R\$ 2,20 = US\$1,00) in four years and approximately 200 actions. Civil society organizations monitored the spending of this money, being sure that the amount was spent for children and adolescents improved life conditions. These organizations also required the government's annual report about the theme.



Shopkeeper's rights

Ágere has had a partnership with the National Shopkeepers Union since 2004. In this partnership, Ágere helps the organization to fight for two bills in the Federal Chamber. These bills create rules in contracts signed by shopkeepers and malls owners, providing fair agreements. Nowadays contracts exploit shopkeepers because there are no rules for them.

In 2005, Ágere assisted in organizing a public hearing in the Federal Chamber of Deputies to discuss this theme; suggested changes in the bills texts and monitored them.

Communication and Culture

Ágere assisted the NGO *Comunicação e Cultura* (Communication and Culture) in its contacts with Federal Executive. For instance, Ágere has participated in meetings with Youth National Secretariat and with the Ministry of Education, related to *Comunicação e Cultura* projects, and keeps in contact with governmental organizations.

Comunicação e Cultura is a NGO that develops projects in educommunication –linking education and media by newspaper production in schools. These products are featured by students and teachers.

National Networks

Ágere has joined in four networks in 2005. They are:

- **Fórum PETI (Combating and Preventing Child Labor National Forum)**

This Forum monitors, evaluates and acts in public policy level to guarantee the execution of children and adolescents rights programs.

- **Fórum DCA (Children and Adolescents Rights Permanent Forum):**

Fórum DCA has joined NGOs for 20 years, in order to watch, propose and provide public policies for children and adolescents.

- **Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação (National Campaign for Education Rights)**

The Campaign fought throughout 2005 for Congress to pass Fundeb's (Basic Education and Appreciation of Education Professionals Fund) bill. In this sense, the Campaign organized some demonstrations in the Parliament and talk to parliamentarians to sensitize them to the cause.

- **Global Call for Action Against Poverty (GCAP):**

GCAP is an international network against poverty. It seeks to bring to media and governmental agendas themes concerning to poverty and ways to fight against it.

Distance learning inservice and preservice courses

Distance learning courses

The courses offered by Ágere in 2005 (Building Management Capacity in Human Rights; and Training in Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture) have the common aim of providing a theoretical underpinning to the participants, encouraging practical initiatives to directly impact public policy and improved living conditions, especially for the excluded.

The methodology is grounded in the preparation of content by specialists, its transposition into the language of distance learning, and the offering of rapid courses of an empowering nature (3/4 months). The courses include a tutorial system to support the students, most of whom are not very familiar with computers and surfing on the internet. In the first place, the tutors teach how to use the educational platform; secondly, they clear up any doubts regarding the content and the unfolding of the course; and finally, the continually assess the reading assignments and student learning. The courses always call for doing a final project based on the course contents, as well as developing practical policy recommendations to be made to the public authorities.

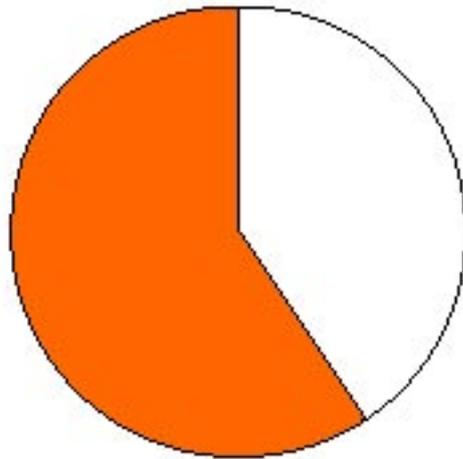
The figures on the African history course give an idea of the level of demand: 23,000 applications for 5,000 openings. Seventy-six per cent of the students gave high marks to the course, which reached 443 of the 558 micro-regions of Brazil.

Additional information:

	Building Management Capacity in Human Rights	Training in Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture
Applications	5,588	23,313
Openings	1,300	5,000
Total enduring (months)	15	11
Course enduring (months)	8	4
Micro-regions covered (of the 558 in Brazil)	332	443
Micro-regions covered (%)	59.5%	79.4%

Courses' territorial range in Brazil

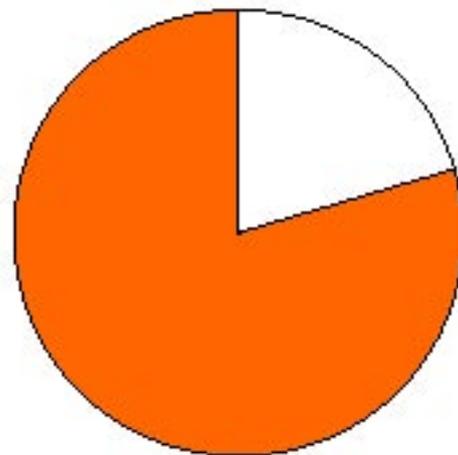
Building Management Capacity in Human Rights



■ Micro-regions covered in Brazil (59,5%)

Openings: 1,300
 Course enduring: 8 months
 Micro-regions covered: 59,5%

Training in Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture



■ Micro-regions covered in Brazil (79,4%)

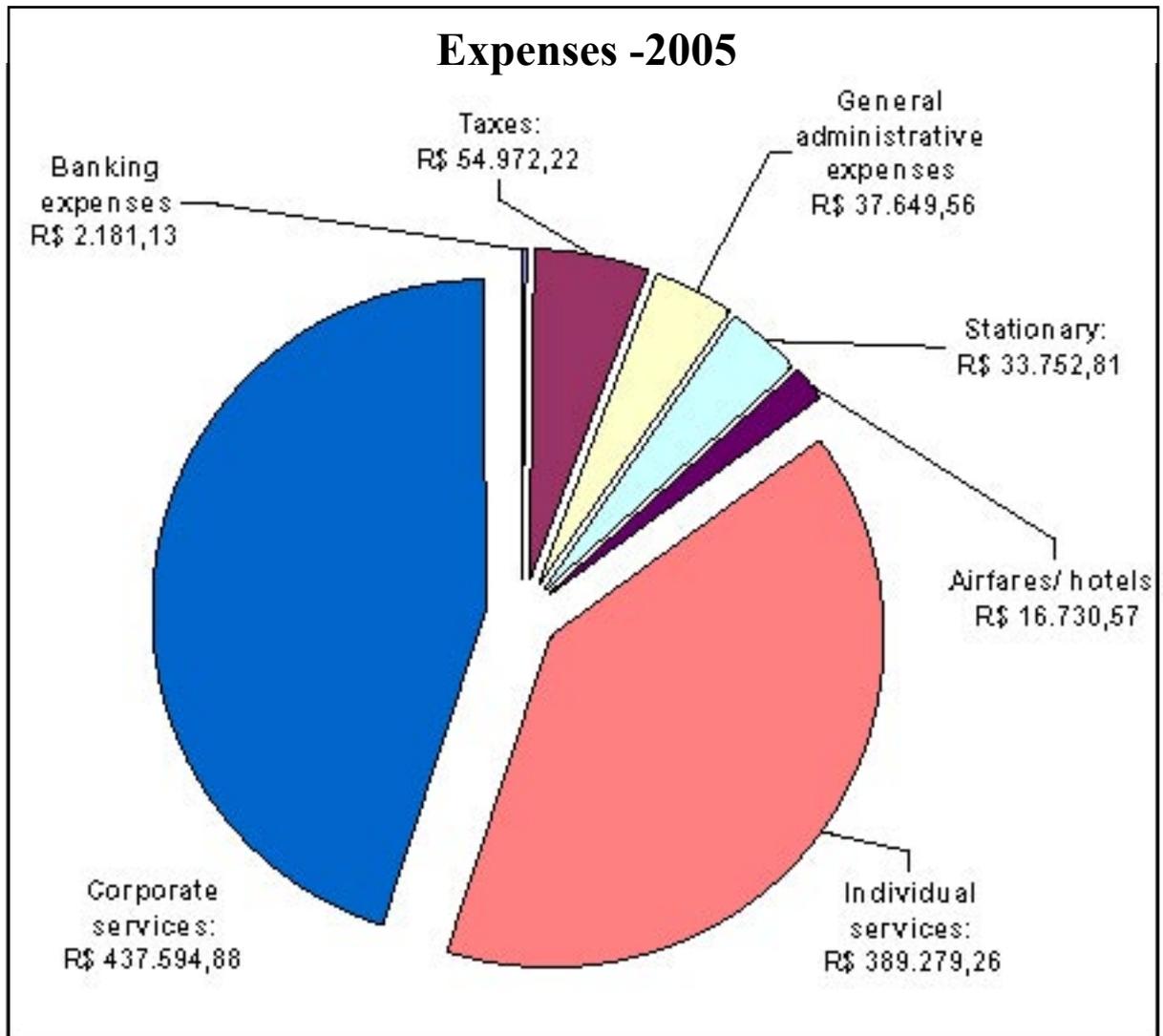
Openings: 5,000
 Course enduring: 4 months
 Micro-regions covered: 79.4%

Financial Report

(All figures in Reais (R\$) -R\$2,20 = US\$1,00)

Incomes	R\$ 1.244.270,50
Expenditures	R\$ 972.160,43
Balance to be transfered for 2006	R\$ 272.110,07

Incomes	
2004 Balance	R\$ 1.625,02
Fundação Abrinq	R\$ 83.760,00
Sindilojas/RJ	R\$ 42.880,00
Contributions	R\$ 28.834,78
Comunicação e Cultura	R\$ 3.680,00
Instituto Aliança	R\$ 27.000,00
Gife	R\$ 30.000,00
Distance learning courses (governmental funds)	R\$ 1.026.490,70





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