

# RAPS 12 YEARS

A legacy of civic friendship,  
democracy and sustainability  
for Brazil

REDE DE AÇÃO POLÍTICA  
PELA SUSTENTABILIDADE





# Index

## We need to dream about Brazil again

Guilherme Leal  
Board President  
Alvaro de Souza  
Board Vice President

10

## A legacy for Brazil

17

## Our People

55

## RAPS in 14 stories

Leadership Training

61

Networks

87

International Cooperation

113

Advocacy

127

## Historical partnerships

152

## RAPS team 2023

182

## Manifest

188





# We need to dream about Brazil again

Guilherme Leal Founder and Board President  
Alvaro de Souza Board Vice President

**“We can never stop discussing the country we want. Once a part of society, we have the duty to act in search of a friendlier, fairer and more sustainable reality.”**

This was the beginning of one of the first messages from the Political Action Network for Sustainability – RAPS and marks the spirit of its birth. We were convinced that sustainability should be a commitment not only in the business world, but also in the world of politics. It was with this mission, and the purpose of strengthening democracy in the country, that we founded it in 2012.

We were clear that there is no systemic transformation outside of politics. We knew that it was necessary to dialogue and attract leaders from all positions on the political-ideological spectrum and we wanted a group representing the country’s diversity to take on the task of changing Brazil through institutional policy.

That was the year we began our activities, selecting the first group of leaders to make up our network of members and participate in our qualifications. We could not imagine that the demonstrations of June 2013 were approaching, the second impeachment of a President of the Republic in less than 30 years of redemocratization, the stress of our democracy and a pandemic, a very painful manifestation of the disharmony and disconnect between man and nature.

After 12 years of operation, proud of what we have done, we announce the closure of our work. We were one of the first multi-party organizations in Brazil. We encouraged, trained, and qualified a generation of politicians, disseminating and defending the commitment to democracy. We helped put sustainability and the climate emergency on the government agenda, in addition to collaborating on proposals that represented progress or prevented setbacks. We leave as a legacy the innovative model of “civic friendship” in dialogue and political action, showing that it is possible to put differences aside in the construction of concrete solutions to our social, environmental, and economic challenges. We also inspire several organizations to multiply their actions in institutional policy.

The decision to end this cycle, despite the success of a project lasting more than a decade, is the result of our conviction that organizations must respond to the challenges of their time. Since our founding, the world has changed and so has Brazil, which demands new ways of acting and new institutions.

In this celebratory book we take the opportunity to remember this journey and those who allowed us to get here. None of

this would be possible without the dedication and commitment of a large group of people. Supporters, advisors, staff, network of members and partners are some of these people. We are grateful to each and every one.

We are sure that the values and spirit that brought us here, as well as the solidity of the relationships built, will allow for new encounters and new stories in the future. We can never stop discussing the country we want. We also cannot stop dreaming of another Brazil. May we be able to transform dreams into will. Where there is a will, there must be ways and they will certainly go through politics



The Political Action Network for Sustainability (RAPS) has been active for 12 years, and I have dedicated 11 of them to it. As a political scientist, having witnessed some of the most important moments in the country's history since the redemocratization and having contributed to responding to them through political activity is certainly a privilege. They weren't easy years, but they were certainly rewarding. I joined RAPS in 2013 as one of the leaders selected for RAPS Leaders Program, aimed at potential candidates, and was gradually incorporated into the team until I became the institution's Executive Director in 2018. I am sure that not many institutions give one of their beneficiaries the responsibility of running them.

Throughout this time, I have witnessed, from a very special place, a part of the transformation within Brazil through contact with people from all over the country, from all political parties and with thoughts that are not only different from my own, but also very diverse among themselves. Born as an organization initially focused on preparing political leaders for the election dispute, RAPS has responded to Brazil's transformation by also changing the way it operates and by focusing, from 2019 onwards, especially, on helping decision-makers with the democracy and climate agendas, with a particular focus on the National Congress, an agenda that I have been entrusted to lead alongside a dedicated and talented team.

Since then, we have learned that the method of civic friendship can have tangible impacts and results on very objective issues: combating deforestation, rebuilding the budget, transitioning to new energy sources, and defending institutions and democracy. Those were incredible years and, looking back, one element was always at the center of our work and decision-making: people.

They were, and are, our most valuable assets. They are the ones who carry out our institutional mission through their work. It is because of them that we do what we do.

When we first arrived here, there was no civil society organization dealing with the preparation of politicians outside of political parties. The field of civic entrepreneurship was still in its infancy, and many civil society organizations maintained a "safe" distance from institutional politics. None of this was set in stone, and we are proud not only to have helped change these scenarios, but also to be an organization that, in addition to preparing leaders, has paved the way.

After more than a decade working on preparing leaders for sustainability and gaining advocacy experience over the last four years, the accumulated knowledge that has brought us this far requires us to dedicate ourselves exclusively to the climate agenda. It is the climate emergency that demands it. In a changing world, we also need to change.

Our journey and our results would not have been possible without the support, commitment and dedication of thousands of people over the years: partners, supporters, advisors, staff, and our network of members are among them. We thank each and every one of them and wish them success in their respective journeys, secure in the knowledge that the values that unite us will enable us to meet new people and forge new partnerships.

As we come to the end of a cycle, it's impossible not to look at the thousands of people we've impacted over this time and ask: from now on, how will you lead us? Brazil needs each and every one of you working for the transformation we need.

To each one of you: thank you for the trust that has allowed me to bring you this far. Now it's time to write new stories about the future.

With fondness, sugar and love,  
Mônica Sodré | Executive Director at RAPS

# A for legacy Brazil

## 2012-2023 RAPS & BRAZILIAN HISTORY

In 2012, a group of people motivated by the desire to collaborate with Brazil put into practice an initiative that has acknowledgedly contributed to improving democracy by bringing the sustainability agenda into institutional politics.

RAPS - Rede de Ação Política pela Sustentabilidade (Political Action Network for Sustainability) was born when Brazilian democracy was 23 years old, based on the principles of Democracy, Sustainability, Civic Friendship, Transparency, and Innovation. An innovative movement which, in 12 years, has had an impact on the destiny of a country through people and politics, and which, in 2023, having fulfilled its mission and objectives, is embarking on a path of success. In this publication, you get to know its history.



# 2012

## RAPS



Inspired by the Argentinian organisation RAP - Rede de Accion Politica, we were created as a pioneering organisation in the country. We officially began our activities, led by Executive Director Marcos Vinicius de Campos, with the opening of the first leadership selection process. A total of 401 people signed up, giving life to the construction of a network made up of hundreds of Brazilians committed to better politics and a better future.

For the first time in Brazil's history, we have a woman in the presidency - Dilma Rousseff. The Federal Supreme Court sees its first black president, Joaquim Barbosa. In 2012, the Racial Quotas Law is sanctioned, guaranteeing at least 50 percent of places at public universities for students who have attended all their secondary education in public schools, with a distribution between the black and indigenous populations.

## BRAZIL



The Supreme Court is judging the mensalão scandal. The vote-buying accusation in the National Congress exposes an unsustainable modus operandi of corruption and raises the need for new leadership in national politics, with a new configuration, gaining form following the implementation of the Ficha Limpa (Clean Record) Act, which comes into effect by the time of the 2012 municipal elections, bringing new perspectives to local politics.

At RAPS, the "Candidates for Sustainability" course prepares candidates for the municipal elections in the first multi-party training initiative for politicians in the country. A pioneering spirit and innovation marks the organization's history.

Twenty years after Rio92, Brazil hosts the UN Climate Conference, Rio+20, with sustainable development as a worldwide issue.

In the first few months of the year, a Constitutional Amendment equalizes the rights of domestic workers and nannies with those of other workers, a movement made possible by the presence of women in Congress.



**RAPS**

A total of 39 members are selected for the “RAPS Leaders” Project, which is dedicated to people engaged in running for future elections and those who already hold elected office. Monica Sodré, the organization’s current Executive Director, is one of those selected for the project. The “Civic Entrepreneurs” and “RAPS Youth” projects are created. The former is aimed at people working in civil society, and the latter at potential political leaders under the age of 30.

**BRAZIL**



In June, Brazil witnesses the start of a sequence of protests that change the country forever. The movement gains capillarity and gradually adds agendas to the original dissatisfaction with the price of public transport. The build-up to the protests, coupled with the fallout from corruption allegations and the political burden of organizing the major World Cup and Olympics events in Brazil, would be decisive in Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment process.

2013



One year after the Supreme Court convicts 25 defendants of the mensalão, including José Dirceu, José Genoino, Marcos Valério and other politicians, the Federal Government launches the Mais Médicos (More Doctors) Program, with the aim of bringing professionals to the interior of the country. The arrival of foreign doctors provokes intense debate. By now, the RAPS member network has 120 people.

The selection process for the RAPS projects attracts 752 applicants. The RAPS leadership network almost doubles in size, with 234 members in three projects: "RAPS Leaders", "RAPS Youth", and "Civic Entrepreneurs". 23 RAPS members stand for election, and 5 of them are elected.

## RAPS

Brazil hosts the Football World Cup, and more than 15 million people go through the country's airports. The country leaves the UN Hunger Map for the first time. Dilma Rousseff (PT) is re-elected in the tightest election in the history of Brazilian democracy with a 3.28 percent lead over Aécio Neves (PSDB).

## BRAZIL



Executives from Brazil's largest infrastructure companies, investigated on suspicion of involvement in a scheme of fraud, embezzlement, bribery, and money laundering, are arrested by the Federal Police as part of the Operation Car Wash (Operação Lava Jato). The Civil Rights Framework for the Internet comes into force, promoting freedom of expression and user privacy. The initiative has been recognized as a global benchmark for legislation in the sector. The National Truth Commission (CNV) presents its final report on human rights violations that took place during the years of Military Dictatorship (1964-1985). The document recognized 434 victims. In the first edition of RAPS' 2014 Political Dialogues program, the role of political leaders in social innovation was debated by two experts: Mark Kennedy, director of the School of Government at George Washington University (USA), and Carlos Melo, political scientist, professor at Insper and columnist for the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*.

# 2014



**RAPS**

RAPS launches the RAPS Study Center, responsible for drawing up proposals and guidelines for public policies in the area of sustainability. The number of applicants to the selection process increases by 50 percent and the Network now has 383 members. The “RAPS Youth Challenge” marks the Network’s contribution to electoral campaigns. The “Political Dialogue” discusses topics such as the green municipalities, the future government, the Brazilian education, and the fight against corruption.



## BRAZIL

Brazil faces one of its most intense economic crises. Between January and September, the GDP falls by 3.2%, putting the country into recession. In November, inflation exceeds 10%, the highest since November 2003, and unemployment hits 7.5% in November. Cases of dengue, chikungunya, and zika, which are carried by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, have multiplied. More than 1.5 million people are infected and at least 700 deaths are confirmed.

# 2015

During the Conference of the Parties - COP 21, Brazil signs the Paris Agreement, a commitment made by 195 countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

RAPS takes part in COP21 with contributions from the Chamber of Deputies’ Participatory Legislation Committee.

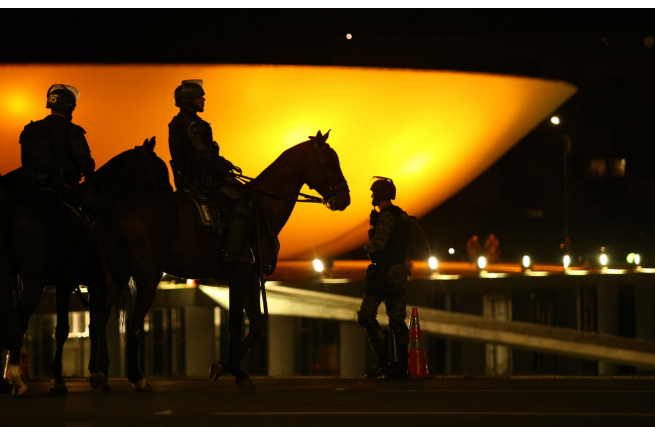
On November 5th, the collapse of a mining tailings dam belonging to the Samarco company in the rural area of Mariana (MG) causes the biggest environmental disaster in the country. The disaster carried 50 billion liters of mud into the Rio Doce, passing through nine towns until it flowed into the coast of Espírito Santo. The dam collapsed left 19 people dead and hundreds homeless.





## BRAZIL

In April 2016, the Chamber of Deputies approves the impeachment process against Dilma Rousseff on charges of fiscal responsibility. In August, the Federal Senate also approves the impeachment, resulting in Rousseff's removal from office and from the presidency, followed by the inauguration of Vice-President Michel Temer from the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB).



At the beginning of the year, Brazil witnesses a wave of popular demonstrations in various cities across the country. Thousands of Brazilians take to the streets to protest against corruption, the economic crisis and the government of then-president Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party (PT).

The Leadership Network has now 556 members, 73 of whom are running in the municipal elections, with 23 elected, 8 of them women. The Electoral Program, an initiative aimed at the leadership network, brings volunteers to 41 campaigns by RAPS members.

RAPS Study Center produces publications on sustainability for Rio de Janeiro: Policies to Strengthen the Family and Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Rights, Democracy and Governance, Guidelines for Evaluating Political Parties and the Road Map to Sustainability, all available on our website.



## RAPS

Eduardo Cunha, then president of the Chamber of Deputies and one of the main organizers of the impeachment, is arrested on charges of corruption and money laundering. Several politicians are arrested as part of Operation Car Wash, including former governor of Rio de Janeiro, Sérgio Cabral, and former Finance Minister Antonio Palocci. Former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) is indicted and becomes a defendant in various corruption-related cases. In December the PEC (Proposed Constitutional Amendment) of the Spending Cap is approved, a measure that set a limit on public spending for the next 20 years. Brazil hosts the Olympic Games for the first time in its history.

# 2016

The country faces a sharp increase in deforestation in the Amazon, reaching its highest levels since 2008.

# 2017



The government of then-president Michel Temer faces a political crisis after the release of a recording made by businessman Joesley Batista, owner of JBS, one of the largest meat processing companies in the world, of a conversation with President Temer, creating an atmosphere of political instability in the country.

## RAPS

Congress approves the Labor Reform, making labor relations more flexible, changing aspects such as working hours, holidays, outsourcing and collective negotiations.

Former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) is sentenced for the first time in 2017. Federal judge Sérgio Moro, responsible for the Operation Car Wash cases, sentenced Lula for passive corruption and money laundering related to the Guarujá triplex case.

Supreme Court minister Teori Zavascki dies in a plane crash. Teori was the rapporteur for the Operation Car Wash cases at the Court.

A general strike is called by trade unions and social movements in protest against the labor and pension reforms.

RAPS launches E-cities: Enterprising Cities and Territories, a project and reference guide for Civic Entrepreneurs to act locally to build sustainable cities and territories.

RAPS and the Lemann Foundation launch the first edition of the Public Leadership Program, benefiting 20 people and providing training for the following year's election.

RAPS Study Center promotes face-to-face courses on electoral campaigns, legal strategy in parliamentary action, civic entrepreneurship and social transformation, mandate planning and communication in mandates, benefiting more than 130 registered people. The structuring of support for members in elective positions begins, with meetings aimed exclusively at members in executive and legislative positions. The Citizen Program, which visits and immerses members in the offices of elected leaders, benefits 26 members of the leadership network and opens 16 offices over the course of a year and a half.

## BRAZIL



# 2018

In response to the growing violence in Rio de Janeiro and the security crisis in Roraima due to the influx of Venezuelan immigrants, the Brazilian government decrees military intervention in these regions.



Councilwoman Marielle Franco, a human rights defender and critic of police violence, is shot dead in Rio de Janeiro along with her driver Anderson Gomes. The crime causes great commotion in the country and around the world, raising discussions about public security and gender-based political violence.

## RAPS

Face-to-face #RAPSPorElas course qualifies more than 60 women for the election campaign. The Open Campaign Project takes volunteers from the network of members to 80 campaigns of RAPS leaders running for election. RAPS is going through its second national election. Among its members, 37 were elected, with a combined total of more than 26 million votes. The network of members has grown to 559 people, 93 of whom are elected officials. Among them, 2 governors and 16 members of the National Congress

## BRAZIL



Former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) is arrested after being convicted of passive corruption and money laundering in the Guarujá triplex case.

Jair Bolsonaro, of the Social Liberal Party (PSL), is elected president. His campaign was marked by conservative speeches and promises to fight corruption and crime. Shortly after Jair Bolsonaro's election, the then federal judge Sérgio Moro, who was responsible for the Operation Car Wash cases, accepts an invitation to take over the Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

A drop in vaccination coverage brings back outbreaks of polio and measles in the country. A major fire destroys the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro. The museum was a century-old institution and housed a vast historical, anthropological and scientific collection.

RAPS Youth and Civic Entrepreneurs projects are discontinued.

The Selection Process, the first exclusively for the RAPS Leaders Project, attracts 3,433 applicants from 33 different parties, 3 times more than the previous selection. For the first time, women make up more than half of those selected (53 percent). RAPS and the Lemann Foundation are holding a gender-equitable second edition of the Public Leaders Program, benefiting an additional of 20 people, which offers training for electoral campaigns and includes a trip to Oxford.





Jair Bolsonaro takes over the presidency of Brazil. His inauguration marked the rise of a conservative government with promises of political and economic change.



## BRAZIL

In January 2019, a Vale mining tailings dam collapsed in Brumadinho, Minas Gerais, causing a major tragedy, the largest labor accident in Brazil in terms of loss of human life, killing 270 people, including three missing. The disaster had serious environmental and social impacts on the region.

Former president Michel Temer is arrested as a result of investigations into Operation Car Wash, charged with passive corruption, money laundering and embezzlement. After a decision by the Federal Supreme Court (STF) on imprisonment after conviction in the second instance, former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is released.

# 2019

## RAPS

The selection process for the 2020 RAPS Leaders Project reaches the historic milestone of 7,030 applications. A total of 98 new members were selected, 51 percent of whom were women and 41 percent black and indigenous.

The RAPS leadership network now includes 670 people, 141 of whom occupy elected offices in all spheres of the federation. The Orienta RAPS programme, aimed at mentoring members of the leadership network, is launched.

RAPS participates in its first international event, COP25 in Madrid, and takes a delegation of five elected politicians, winners of the RAPS Innovation and Sustainability Award.



The website The Intercept Brasil publishes a series of leaked conversations between then-federal judge Sérgio Moro and prosecutors from Operation Car Wash, raising questions about the impartiality in the judgment of the cases. In October, the Pension Reform is approved.

The Federal Supreme Court (STF) rules to equate LGBTphobia with the crime of racism, making it a criminal offense in the country. A breakthrough for the human rights.





The world faces an unprecedented crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic. In Brazil, 195,000 people lose their lives to the disease, which overburdens the health system and leads to social distancing measures.

## BRAZIL

A series of demonstrations take place across the country in defense of anti-democratic agendas. In a crisis with President Bolsonaro, Justice Minister Sergio Moro leaves office.

# 2020

One of the world's largest biomes, the Pantanal is devastated by fires of alarming proportions. The fires have affected large areas, resulting in a significant loss of biodiversity and serious environmental impacts.

RAPS offers psychological support to women mayors during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Voters elect mayors and councilors across the country. RAPS leaders received 5.8 million votes in the elections, and 1 in 3 leaders linked to RAPS is elected, totaling 58 people. The leadership network now has 670 members from all Brazilian states, 141 of whom hold elected office.

## RAPS

RAPS is awarded the Diversity and Human Rights Seal by the São Paulo City Hall for Orienta RAPS, a mentoring program which aims to increase the connection and exchange of experiences and good practices between political leaders who hold or have already held elected office and those who wish to run for election.

## BRAZIL

In a remarkable scientific achievement, several COVID-19 vaccines are developed in record time.

## RAPS

During the pandemic, RAPS organizes an informative web series with experts on the evolution of the health crisis. It offers psychological support to women mayors, acting on a demand brought by the women themselves during this period. In partnership with the National School of Public Administration (ENAP) and the Center for Public Leadership (CLP), it runs the course "Public leadership in times of crisis".

# 20 20

RAPS Innovation and Sustainability Award has its first edition. RAPS launches an open and free Good Practices Database with sustainability-related initiatives implemented by executives and legislators. Launch of the publication "Co-legislative and shared mandates: challenges and possibilities for legislative representation in the 21st century." Launch of seven "Thematic Guides" for sustainable, innovative, inclusive, and resilient cities.

With Public Agenda, it publishes a guide to good municipal practices in managing the pandemic, and in partnership with CLP, shares a guide with experiences of actions and measures taken by eight RAPS leaders, "Public Leadership in Times of Crisis: A Practical Guide to Coping with the Covid-19 Pandemic".

Brazil begins the vaccination process against COVID-19.



## BRAZIL

The Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI) into COVID-19 is set up to investigate the actions and omissions of the federal government in tackling the pandemic, as well as possible irregularities in the purchase of vaccines.

In June, Brazil reaches the milestone of 500,000 deaths caused by COVID-19.

In September 2021, the Proposal for Constitutional Amendment (PEC) on the Administrative Reform is approved, with the aim of changing the rules of public service, including issues related to the stability and rights of public employees.

RAPS becomes the largest multi-party leadership network in the country. The leadership network has now 756 members, 228 of whom hold elective offices and 8 percent of whom are in the National Congress.

The Federal Supreme Court (STF) rules that former judge Sérgio Moro was biased in the cases related to former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Lula's sentences are overturned, allowing him to stand for election.

## RAPS

RAPS participates in public hearings in the National Congress on issues such as electoral reform, combating deforestation and the carbon market.

RAPS research "The Climate Agenda in the National Congress", in partnership with FGV and ICS, reveals a gap between what Brazilian congress members say and how they vote on the environmental and climate agendas. RAPS takes contributions to the Brazilian government for COP26 in a special hearing in the Chamber of Deputies. RAPS reaches the milestone of 72 partner organizations and its international partner network is expanded.

RAPS is honored for the second consecutive year with the Diversity and Human Rights Seal by the São Paulo City Hall.

The local health system in the state of Amazonas collapses, with a shortage of oxygen and difficulties in caring for patients, due to the significant increase in COVID-19 cases.

On September 7, 2021, demonstrations take place in several Brazilian cities, with groups defending anti-democratic agendas and attacking democratic institutions such as the National Congress and the Supreme Court.

# 2021

RAPS participates in two of the most important international climate forums: Climate Week NY and COP27. RAPS takes recommendations to the Superior Electoral Court and joins a Civic Vigil organized by the Brazilian Bar Association to guarantee the integrity of the electoral process and the defense of democracy.

## RAPS

In February 2022, we offer the Political Leadership for Sustainability course to 14 senators and federal deputies from our network, the result of a partnership with Insper's Center for Management and Public Policy (CGPP) and the Delegation of the European Union to Brazil, with the aim of bringing parliamentarians closer to the environmental and climate agenda.



## BRAZIL

Committed to the election year and connected to current forms of communication, the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) signs agreements and establishes partnerships to combat the spread of misinformation and fake news in the political environment.

In partnership with newspaper Estadão and Uma Concentração pela Amazônia, RAPS launches a proposal for the first 100 days of elected governments.

The murder of Dom Philips, a British journalist, and Bruno Pereira, a Brazilian indigenist, in the Javari Valley, in Amazonas, gains international repercussion. They were well known for defending indigenous people and the Amazon from criminal activities.

# 2022

## RAPS 10 YEARS

The year 2022 is marked by acts in defence of democracy and anti-democratic demonstrations by supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro, in a scenario of violence and ideological polarization.



In partnership with the Brazilian Public Security Forum, RAPS launches the report "Violence and Democracy: Brazilian Panorama in the 2022 Pre-Elections" on the Brazilian population's support for democracy.

# 2022

## RAPS 10 YEARS



RAPS organizes the “Political Leadership for Sustainability” course in collaboration with Insper and the European Union Delegation in Brazil, with the participation of 15 members of the National Congress.

The third edition of the Public Leadership Program, in partnership with the Lemann Foundation, qualifies 90 candidates for state governments and the National Congress.

Support material for the network “Sustainable Development: Practical Guide for City Halls” and “Practical Guide for Women in Politics” is developed.

**One in four leaders linked to the organization is elected in 2022**, adding up to more than 38 million votes across the country. RAPS now has five governors, one in each region of the country (in the states of Amapá, Espírito Santo, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Sul), three deputy governors, 15 federal deputies, seven senators and 31 state deputies. In all, 55 people were elected, 19 more than in the previous election, 38 percent of whom were women and 20 percent black.

### RAPS



RAPS launches:  
“Sustainable Development: A Practical Guide for Local Governments”, aimed at local governments.  
Practical Guide for Women in Politics.  
-Violence and Democracy: Brazilian Panorama before the 2022 Elections on the Brazilian population’s support for democracy, in partnership with the Brazilian Forum on Public Violence.  
In partnership with Estadão and Uma Concertação pela Amazônia, a proposal for the first 100 days of elected governments.

### BRAZIL

Former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers’ Party (PT) is elected president, making a return to office after eight years. Women’s representation in the Chamber of Deputies achieves a record in 2022, accounting for 17.7 percent of all seats, a major step towards greater representation in politics.

# 20

President Lula takes office with the handing over of the presidential sash by citizens who represent Brazil's demographics and diversity.



## BRAZIL

Brazil's GDP grows 1.9% in the first quarter of the year.

# 23

On January 8th, in an anti-democratic act, supporters of Jair Bolsonaro invade Brasília and promote acts of vandalism which impact on the structures of the three branches of government.

## RAPS

RAPS launches the Political Leadership Program for Climate in partnership with the University of Copenhagen, taking Brazilian congress members to Denmark in an international cooperation action on climate change.

# Our Impact through 12 years

Network Nov/22

more than 2000 people directly qualified

more than 500 leaders in our network run for election

on average, 1 one in 3 leadership candidates running for office were elected

## 2022 Elections

5 RAPS leaders elected state governors in all regions of the country

39% of RAPS leaders elected are women

more than 38 thousand votes for RAPS leaders that ran for state government office

7 RAPS network senators starting from 2023

564 members

28 political parties

26 federation units and the Federal District

182 representatives



# Advocacy

The advocacy for sustainability has gone beyond the spaces for training people within RAPS, reaching the maturity of the organization through concrete results. For more than a decade, numerous hours of training have been provided on topics related to sustainable development, education and democracy, with an impact on initiatives at the municipal, state and local levels.

In the past few years, these hours have been dedicated to the mandates in Brasilia, providing a framework for exchanging knowledge, expanding repertoire and technical content with a focus on qualifying the decisions of parliamentarians, whether part of the network or not, particularly committed to the climate emergency. RAPS played an important influential role in structuring decisions.

- **2019** Suspension of the bill to make the use of weapons more flexible, based on action in the CCJ/Federal Senate.
- **2022** Recomposition of the Ministry of the Environment's budget in the Chamber of Deputies.
- **2022** Closure of the bill related to the Colono road in Paraná, preserving the Iguazu National Park and, consequently, the Brazilian Atlantic Forest.
- **2023** Approval of the Kigali amendment, granting access to a \$100 million fund for Brazil to reduce the emission of hydrofluorocarbon gases (HFCs).
- **2023** Improvements to the legislation on land regularization approved by the Chamber of Deputies.



# Awards



**2020, 2021 e 2022** | Municipal Human Rights and Diversity Award from the São Paulo City Hall, for the Public Leadership Program, due to the promotion of diversity in institutional policy.



**2021 e 2023** | Silver Seal from the GHG Protocol Program for transparency in the disclosure of our greenhouse gas emissions.



**2021 e 2022** | Racial Equality Seal, from the São Paulo City Hall for diversity in the workforce.



**2021 e 2022** | Neutral CO2 Seal, awarded by Eccaplan - a sustainability consultancy - for measuring carbon emissions in its activities.



**2022** | Womens On Board Seal, awarded by Womens On Board, an organization supported by the United Nations (UN), for the presence of women on the Board of Directors.



**2022 e 2023** | Doar Seal - with an A+ concept for its management and transparency standards.

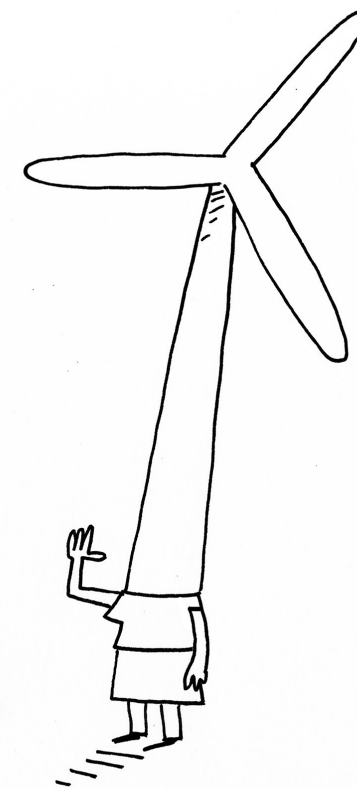
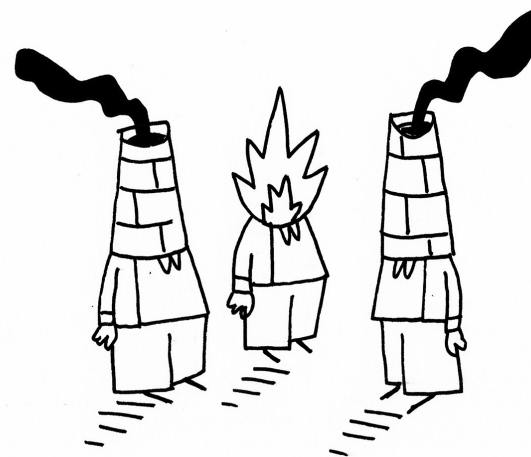


**2022 e 2023** | Great Place to Work Seal, recognized as one of the best Brazilian companies to work for.



**2023** | The Dot Good Seal - 9th best third sector institution in Brazil.





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PARA RAPS

**“Initially, RAPS made a significant contribution to furthering the education of young people with political aspirations and, more recently; it has produced content aligned with Brazil’s major socio-economic issues, complementing its initial phase. ”**

**ALVARO ANTONIO CARDOSO DE SOUZA  
(CO-FOUNDER)**



**Our People**



## Our people, our history

So much has changed in Brazil in the last 12 years. After seeing so many important social improvements in its 3 decades of democratic government, the country entered a period of great political instability. All around it feels like everything can suddenly change in the blink of an eye, going from a democratic euphoria to threats arising from ideological polarization. And yet, in the midst of so many challenges, Brazil has also seen the emergence of a movement of leaders committed to transforming the country, leaving an invaluable legacy.

Over the next few pages, we present the stories of 14 people who are a symbol of this process. Brazilians who have dedicated their lives to institutional politics and who represent the legacy of RAPS in its four pillars of action: leadership training, network building, and international cooperation and advocacy. They are people of different profiles and backgrounds who are part of a network that has already trained more than 2,000 leaders and has 500 leaderships and almost 200 political leaders in office as of 2023. In these accounts we can see how RAPS has impacted the lives of millions of Brazilians in a solid and practical way, without necessarily being visible to them, but being lived and felt by each of the people who have made a commitment with us to democracy and sustainability.

The stories featured here also explain the importance of a pioneering organization in the process of requalifying Brazilian politics based on sustainability, the defense of democracy and the fight against inequalities. At a time of deep distrust in politics and politicians, RAPS invested in people with common interests, training leaders prepared to deal with the challenges of the present and the future, connecting them with leading international initiatives and mobilizing parliament in favor of structuring agendas.

Our programs have evolved over the years, and the maturity of the organization and the network has kept pace with the country's situation and the understanding of its constant transformation. If, in the beginning, RAPS sought to train people and raise society's awareness of sustainability and democracy issues, in the last two years it has started to work closely with public agents in office, providing technical support that has helped qualify the structuring of public policies and effective actions in the face of the climate emergency, which is fundamental for the country's development.

In a space marked by polarization and weak representation, RAPS has brought diversity, dialogue and cooperation. This change goes across all spheres and starts in the municipalities, promoting opportunities for council members and mayors to see the potential of their cities and act locally for global goals. Some of the stories presented here illustrate this point. Dozens of movements have been inspired by RAPS, which plays a very important role in the enormous challenge of promoting plurality, representativeness and the qualification of institutional politics in a country with more than 5,000 municipalities and 203 million inhabitants.

The answers to the challenges that plague such a plural country are reflected in the network that has been formed, by people who inspire their voters to understand the real role of the politician in society, of sustainable, diverse and humane management. This representativeness is, step by step, being achieved in decision-making spaces, fulfilling RAPS' commitment to its pillars of action over the last eleven years, as the following inspiring stories will show.

**RAPS in 14 stories**

# Leadership Training

“Despite being one of the world's largest economies, Brazil is a country ridden with poverty and inequalities, which undermines the credibility of politics and democracy. Due to the scale and magnitude of their impact, the public policies managed by politicians are decisive for the quality of life of the population. By supporting and training political leaders to exercise their mandate in an ethical and competent manner, RAPS is contributing to the development of the country's institutional politics and the consolidation of our democracy.”

**ODED GRAJEW  
(CO-FOUNDER)**



“As a network for the defense of democracy, RAPS has had the opportunity to revive the debate and to **develop proposals** for issues that are relevant to society. As a council member, I have talked to young people who didn't participate in politics and now see themselves in my work.”

# Amanda Gondim

Councilwoman in Uberlândia (MG)



As a local councilwoman in Uberlândia, she had never participated in institutional politics until she ran for the first time and was elected in 2020. That doesn't mean, however, that Amanda wasn't involved in politics. Soon after entering the law course at the Federal University of Uberlândia, she founded two extension groups that have had a major impact on local society.

The first group, Todas por Ela, focused on free, specialized legal assistance for women and girls who are victims of violence - this is how Amanda became one of the first lawyers to specialize in gender issues in the city.


**“Through this project, I joined groups at national level and became interested in public policies. I realized that the law is not enough to respond to this issue, particularly because it can come too late for some women.”**

The second group, called Somos, assisted vulnerable members of the LGBTQI+ community in Uberlândia.

In both cases, Amanda drew her interest in the causes from her own experience. The same happened with her involvement as an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities.

**“While still an undergraduate, she discovered a degenerative disease that caused her to lose most of her sight - and found out just how damaging ableism is. “Prejudice is terrible because it takes away people’s potential, and they are not represented in political and decision-making spaces,” she reflects.**

**Known for her social work as an activist for minority rights, Amanda was invited to run for the city council.**

**“I was very excited about the possibility of working on all these issues in institutional politics. I also discovered the agenda of the right to the city, through which I can work on all the issues in an intersectional way,” she says.** 



It was during this time that she also became aware of the obstacles to women's participation in Brazilian institutional politics.

"The first incident happened during the campaign in 2020. A candidate from my party was annoyed that I was talking about topics other than the participation of women in politics. From his perspective, I was invading a space. So, he called the then candidate running for mayor to complain and even asked the party to boycott my campaign. This was recorded in the minutes of a meeting, I called the party, but nothing was done." She says that even after she was elected, the incidents didn't stop. In fact, the violence became a recurring problem. "I've had my speeches disregarded and was mocked several times in the plenary sessions. I've been openly surrounded by people and one person has even grabbed my arm. I have also suffered sexual harassment inside the Chamber."

Soon after the 2020 presidential elections, Amanda was the target of systematic attacks from all over Brazil on her social media profiles after forwarding complaints from residents about the concentration of anti-democratic activists in the city's barracks. "Some protesters cut out part of one of my speeches and sent it to an extreme right-wing group, together with my personal telephone number, my office telephone number and my email addresses. Another council member, a man, had reported the same problem, but only I was targeted. The fact that I'm a younger woman and a lesbian in a place of power makes it all the more difficult."

Joining RAPS was already in Amanda's plans, as she wanted to delve deeper into sustainability issues. But gender-based political violence made the network a fundamental part of her decision to stay in politics.

"For me, RAPS was the counterpoint to this political culture. While other actors ignored my complaints, RAPS and its team welcomed me. Not only did they listen to me, but they also listened to other women parliamentarians who faced the same problem and put together a handbook to combat gender-based political violence, which affects us on a daily basis within politics."

For Amanda, RAPS has been able to build a safe environment for women parliamentarians to report incidents, seek solutions and prevent others from experiencing the same problem. "Knowing that RAPS thinks about these issues makes me feel proud to have been part of this network," she says.



According to Amanda, as well as welcoming women and helping them to occupy more spaces in politics, RAPS has always been fundamental in promoting the exchange of ideas and solutions. This is important not only for improving the construction of parliamentary proposals, but also for democracy itself.

**"You have to be politically mature to talk to political fields that aren't close to you. For me it's important to have contact with people who think differently, with civic friendship, which is the basis of RAPS, because that way we can forge a new path with different perspectives. A political agent can't be held hostage by their own perceptions and RAPS has played a role in expanding my worldview, my perspectives," she says.**

She says she feels the generalized disbelief of the population in politics as an instrument of social transformation. "As a network for the defense of democracy, RAPS has had the opportunity to revive the debate and to develop proposals for issues that are relevant to society. As a council member, I have talked to young people who didn't participate in politics and now see themselves in my work.

From his childhood in a poor quilombola community  
to his work as a council member in Brasilia, Jorge  
**has broken down many barriers** for himself and  
helped open paths for others.

# Jorge Amaro

Council member in Mostardas (RS)



“My goal when I applied for the RAPS leadership program was to do my job a little better. When I went to the first event, I saw that there were lots of black people, men and women! RAPS was the first place in politics I entered where I wasn’t the only black person. I felt at home and realized that I’m not alone in the fight for diversity.”

This is how councilman Jorge Amaro, from Mostardas, describes his first contact with RAPS in 2019. In his first term, the parliamentarian spared no effort to attend all the meetings organized by the network. He left his municipality on the coast of Rio Grande do Sul, more than 200 kilometers from Porto Alegre, every Friday headed for São Paulo and didn’t return until Monday, after long hours on the road, with very little money in his pockets and a great desire to make more impactful public policies in Brazil. As well as connecting with other people who, like him, had overcome inequality to hold positions in institutional politics, Jorge learnt how to structure his own campaign – which he values greatly as a result of developing communication skills and articulating his proposals well – and broadened his vision of political work.

“It was RAPS that taught me something that I was experiencing in practice in Mostardas, but I didn’t yet know what it was: civic friendship. I was affiliated to the PT, took part in the black movement, am an environmentalist, work together with the mayor, from the PP, for the good of the city,” he says.

After almost two decades in various public service roles in Rio Grande do Sul and Brasília, Jorge Amaro overcame his party differences and accepted an invitation from an old friend and current mayor, Moisés de Souza, to take on the secretariats of Planning and Tourism and Culture in his hometown.

“I’ve been criticized by the left, the right, from all sides. My work was and is a huge challenge. Being a black doctor, like I am, bothers people. Even so, acting in a conservative environment, the Mostardas administration has become a national benchmark in racial equality policy,” he says.

Jorge decided to take on the challenge, just as he did very early on in his life. His path to institutional politics is an example of resistance, of all the obstacles that Brazil needs to get out of its way to guarantee more equal opportunities and, consequently, representation in positions of power, one of the causes embraced by RAPS.

Born in 1978 in the quilombola community of Teixeiras, Jorge Amaro de Souza Borges moved in 1983 to the outskirts of Mostardas, a town located on a peninsula between the Atlantic and Lagoa dos Patos. His grandfather encouraged him to go to school, which his parents hadn’t attended, but his journey wasn’t easy. The first major difficulty was the lack of basic care for Brazilian children.

**“It was June, and I couldn’t bear to go to class barefoot. At the beginning of the year, there were even other black students enrolled, but with the arrival of the cold, everyone dropped out,” she says. “I was about to leave school when my teacher gave me a sweatshirt. Then, a pair of tennis shoes. She looked after me and taught me that it’s necessary to treat unequal people unequally in due proportion to their differences,” Jorge recalls.**

As well as studying, Jorge started working to help his family. At one of these jobs, for a local radio station, he discovered an agricultural technical school in Viamão that could be his opportunity to continue his studies and open new career paths. The idea was, once back in Mostardas, to work in agribusiness. At the agricultural school, Jorge found out that another student had also struggled to study. So much so that the town’s mayor even gave him money to buy a pair of sneakers and bus tickets to visit his family. That student’s name was Leonel Brizola – who, in the 1980s, was already an icon in national politics and a great defender of public education and workers’ rights.

“Knowing that Brizola had faced difficulties similar to mine and had also studied there really inspired me to believe in education,” he says. At the technical school, Jorge dared to believe in the transformative power of education – so much so that he went on to attend specialization courses, get a master’s degree and a doctorate, and now he’s planning on getting a post-doctorate.

After beginning his career in the public sector as a trainee, Jorge became an adviser and then director of the environment and urban cleaning departments. However, he decided to take up a position at Fundação de Articulação e Desenvolvimento de Políticas Públicas para Pessoas com Deficiência (Faders), the foundation for the articulation and development of public policies for people with disabilities

in Rio Grande do Sul, when he realized that he needed more money and help to look after his younger brother, then 4 years old, whom he had taken in after the sudden death of his mother when she was 42.

This new contingency in life broadened Jorge's vision of the need for inclusion beyond the black movement. In his new job, the now councilman was given the task of teaching gardening and agricultural techniques to 120 people with intellectual disabilities.

"I didn't have any experience with disabled people, I didn't have any specific training. And it was one of the most relevant and important jobs of my life," recalls Jorge.

His work at Faders led Jorge to become vice-president of CHECAR, the State Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities and, in 2010, he was appointed general coordinator of the National Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities in Brasilia and hired the first employee in the federal government with Down's Syndrome, Jéssica.

**“Today everyone references my work. It has left a legacy. I put at least 20 people into the labor market. They were people with no prospects, sometimes over 50, with severe intellectual disabilities, who started working.”**



So far, he has amassed a series of recognitions that demonstrate the impact that good politics has on the lives of citizens, voters and elected officers alike. Jorge has been recognized by the Espirito Público Award, where he was given the opportunity to study for a week in Berlin, Germany, the RAPS Innovation and Sustainability Award, the Zumbi dos Palmares Award from the Legislative Assembly of Rio Grande do Sul and recognition from the Federal Government for his dedication to Human Rights.

From his childhood in a poor quilombola community to his work as a council member in Brasília, Jorge has broken down many barriers for himself and helped open paths for others. Through RAPS, he has strengthened one of the principles that he holds while working in public life - civic friendship, from a town of 13,000 inhabitants to Brasília. His plans are to continue in public service and politics, which have transformed his life and can transform that of many Brazilians.

At RAPS we had a governor, a community leader, a representative of organized civil society and council members from very small or very large cities sitting at the same table.

The values are the same, only the scale of the problems change. An exchange without any interest other than **sharing experience** and solidarity.



# Raquel Lyra

Governor of Pernambuco

“RAPS appeared at a time of reflection in my political life. I was going to run for re-election as a state representative for Pernambuco and I was asking myself: ‘How can I make this position useful and connect with people? Finding oneself in the parliament is not easy, firstly because I’m a woman.

Raquel Lyra was part of the second RAPS leadership training class in 2015 and says that the network was a “great window” to meet incredible initiatives and people who have had an influence both on her second term as state representative and on her time as mayor of Caruaru, as well as now, as governor of Pernambuco.

Despite coming from a family of politicians - her grandfather, uncle and father all held office in the state - Raquel mentions that she rejects the idea that the Northeast is some kind of hereditary captaincy. “Everyone has to carve out their own space and I represent my generation, which doesn’t believe in the way politics is traditionally done.”

She says that she realized that RAPS could show her new paths in politics from the very first meeting. “When I arrived at the office in São Paulo, I walked into the room and saw lots of different people from all over the country. It didn’t matter which party they were from. Nobody even asked my party. The important thing was that they had the same goals. This connection is a role that political parties today find difficult to fulfill. At RAPS we had a governor, a community leader, a representative of organized civil society and council members from very small or very large cities sitting at the same table. The values are the same, only the scale of the problems changes. An exchange without any interest other than sharing experience and solidarity.”

She recounts how, inspired by RAPS, she decided to run for mayor of her city. “It was my first time running for a major office and people always said to me: ‘Well, you’re a good candidate, but you don’t win elections, do you?’ But I’ve always believed that local power is the only force capable of changing the world, and that things don’t happen from the top down, but from the bottom up. And how can politics be built on people’s experience?”

During the campaign he travelled around the city three times. He walked for 12 to 14 hours a day. One of his favorite spots was the street market, where she was able to chat at length with the local producers and traders, to understand their difficulties and needs. On this occasion, there was no money to pay for a large advertising campaign, but it was possible to form a local support network that ensured a landslide victory in the runoffs.

**“Change is not achieved with speeches, but with a plan capable of changing the city. We built a government plan based on indicators. I had a very clear diagnosis of what the problems were and a strategy to transform each area. At first, people said I was crazy for making a participatory government plan. This notion that politics is a connection between people and ideas, which RAPS gave us, is what got me re-elected with 70% of the votes, even without a million-dollar campaign. In addition to that, I got 85% of the votes in my city in the second round in the campaign for state government.”**

One of Raquel’s projects in Caruaru was recognized by the RAPS Innovation and Sustainability Award. Via Parque transformed 8 kilometers of abandoned railway line into a park with various leisure options for the population, integrating the city, reducing crime and generating new business opportunities for the local population.

“Caruaru was once the third most violent city in Brazil. As mayor, I didn’t have access to the police. But how could I help solve the problem of criminality? Soon after I joined RAPS, I received an invitation to visit Colombia and I saw territorial development in practice: previously dangerous places that had become tourist attractions. I came back thinking about how I could do the same in Caruaru. City development used to be measured in kilometers of asphalt, in making a city for cars. Today, we want to make a city for people. That’s how we decided to build spaces where people could socialize, like the High Line Park in New York. The first idea, a bicycle lane, evolved to include a running track, an outdoor gym and sports courts. The idea was to transform the railway line, which divided the city, into an axis of connection.”




“With our idea in place, I had the opportunity to walk along the High Line with the architect who had designed it, and I told her that ours was better (laughs). Of course, there are many things we can improve on, but when we do a project our way, we really transform the area. Five hundred new businesses have already opened along Via Parque. What’s more, people who had houses in the area have started renovating. Some of the elderly women who used to live there used to hug me and say: ‘I never imagined I’d be able to walk down these streets again’.”

Another place transformed by Raquel’s administration was Monte Bom Jesus, the most violent neighborhood in Caruaru. There, the then mayor emphasized the importance of popular participation in government initiatives.

“We started building with the remaining funds from the municipality. But every time we laid new bricks, they were knocked down at night. The architect went there to find out what was wrong and discovered that we hadn’t involved the community. We decided to stop work and talk to the contractor who had won the tender. We asked him if he would be willing to train people from the community to do the work and act as security guards. He agreed! After that, we never had a problem again. The work is still in progress, because one stage leads to another. When I campaigned for the state government in Bom Jesus, I went to a church that was always closed because of the violence, but now it works normally. While I was there, a woman who sells tapioca came up to thank me. She told me that, with the reduction in crime, she had been able to work, save money and move into a house. It’s in those moments that everything makes sense. Did I change Verônica’s life? No. I just gave her the opportunity to transform her reality. And that’s what makes everything we face in politics worthwhile.”

Also inspired by RAPS, Raquel sought a partnership with Instituto Arapyaú to find innovative solutions to old problems in the municipality. She also included sustainability in the actions of her term in office: she set a goal for planting saplings and restoring an Atlantic Forest reserve and made a waste disposal plan that won an award from the Center for Public Leadership (CLP).

**“RAPS connected me to a world I would never have had access to.**

**The work of RAPS led me to other networks that emerged and strengthened, inspired by it. Through RAPS, I built up a portfolio of institutions that made sense for my terms of office, a real connection of knowledge.** 

I went to Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Oxford and Columbia universities. I had an enormous determination to seek out every opportunity to get to know different realities and connect them with the simplicity of all the people, my people, like the ones I heard at the street markets in Pernambuco during my campaign for state government, doing politics by listening and assimilating each other’s experiences in order to transform the country.”

**RAPS allowed me to meet many young people** from other states and strengthened some contacts with political leaders, civic entrepreneurs, and more.”

# Bruna Paola

Social Articulation Coordinator at the National Youth Secretariat.





“Where I was born, in the interior of Maranhão, occupying a political space was not part of my reality. Even less so as a young woman. Joining RAPS made me realize that I could be there and that alone had a huge impact. It was also with RAPS that I travelled to São Paulo for the first time. There I met young people and leaders from various states who, to this day, form a very important network in my life and in my political projects.”

Bruna Paola Castro Lima, who grew up in Sítio Novo, a town of 17,000 inhabitants in the state of Maranhão, was selected for the RAPS Youth program in 2016. She says that the program, as well as information on sustainability and public management, offered guidance on how to run an election campaign. This inspired her to develop training aimed at campaign mobilizers.

“The first time I heard about RAPS was in 2014, when my friend Rafael Boff took the leadership course. I took part in his campaign for federal representative in 2014 and we had political projects in Tocantins, the state where I was living. RAPS played a key role for me, right from the selection process. RAPS allowed me to meet many young people from other states, strengthened some contacts with political leaders, civic entrepreneurs and more.”

After graduating, Bruna was a parliamentary aide to Palmas councilman Tiago Andrino and also worked in the offices of Vinhedo councilman Rodrigo Paixão and state representative Marina Helou, all participants in the RAPS Leaders program. In March 2023, she took over the Coordination of Social Articulation for the National Youth Secretariat in Brasília.

**“In addition to the training, we had a very rich space for exchange. I had the opportunity to go to Pelotas to accompany Paula Mascarenhas’ term in office and it was really nice to accompany a woman in a high leadership position. I’m still in touch with her today because of that. When I worked as a parliamentary aide to Rodrigo, from whom I learnt a lot, I received three leaders to accompany his day-to-day work in the Chamber.”**

Bruna also emphasizes the importance of RAPS for the participation of women in Brazilian institutional politics. “We realized that RAPS had a role to play in improving our democracy and that meant taking a more careful look at women,” she says.

“In RAPS Youth there were many women, but among the leaders it was a challenge. With the women from other groups, we held an internal debate on gender. We came up with the proposal to set diversity goals and also defined how we could contribute to them, since increasing the participation of women didn’t just depend on the board, but on everyone. The goals were met as early as the selection process for the year following the debate, and this is still happening today.

We also talked about gender-based political violence, a process where we managed to bring together people from several parties around a consensus on common goals.”

One of the results was the drafting of projects for the creation of women’s prosecutors’ offices in local councils. “Prosecutors’ offices can serve as a space for strengthening women’s offices. But that’s just one example. In my work with Rodrigo, in Vinhedo, and with Marina, in the São Paulo Assembly, we use other projects from the RAPS database, both for gender and environmental issues.”

Gender issues first came up in Bruna’s life when she was studying law at the Catholic University in Tocantins. But her first memory of politics goes back much further than that. That was in 2006, the first time she took part in a municipal youth conference in her municipality – an event that she, now in the National Secretariat, is fighting to bring back to life.

“What drew my attention to politics at the age of 11 or 12 was that Maranhão had always been the worst state in terms of education, health and human development. It really bothered me that this was the case and I wanted to understand why it was happening. My first awakening was to look at the reality of the state. In my city, I followed the leaders, it was a closer relationship. But in the state, there was always the same family in charge. I wanted to understand why this happened and how it could be different.”

From school representative, Bruna expanded her political participation and in 2016 she helped collect signatures for the registration of a new party, Rede. She was president of the party in Maranhão, national women’s coordinator and is now in her third term at the National Executive Committee. This is a rare feat, especially considering the low rate of women and young people participating in party leadership.

**“I wanted to be a part of RAPS because I knew there were good people in politics, and I wanted to know the ones who were positive examples. We always look at the negative side of politics, but I always wanted to know who makes a difference and what my responsibility is in that. We don’t usually take our responsibility in the process of improving society.”**

Bruna sees many young people engaged in civil society organizations and political activism, but the spaces need to be reformulated so that young people want to be there. She believes that it’s necessary to cut down on bureaucracy and formality in order to bring politics closer to citizens.

“Bringing young people into politics is a great challenge. There is a prejudice that young people don’t have a commitment to society, that they don’t have a good grasp on the problems, but the only way to learn is to make room for it. The prejudice is even greater with young women. And if you’re black, it’s even worse. As public leaders, we need to bring young people on board, but without trying to fit them into a box. We have mental health challenges, school dropouts and precarious labor conditions that need to be looked at more carefully from the perspective of young people.”

Another important issue for the inclusion of young people in politics is the apparent distancing of the agenda from people’s lives. “One of the challenges is to see politics as the main tool for changing people’s lives. As much as we look at Brasilia, the main decision-making

center, and find it distant, the discussions that take place over there have a lot of impact on our present and our future. Bruna has been embracing her responsibility in this process, alongside the network encouraged by RAPS with leaders committed to diversity and sustainability.

“It took me a long time to feel comfortable in these spaces that are traditionally occupied by older white men. But today I can participate, speak out and I’m happy to inspire other girls. I believe that one of the challenges to having more young people in politics is to change Brazilian society’s view of young people. We need to see young people as part of the solution, not as a problem to be solved. We see young people as the future, but it is the decisions we make today that will change that future. We also need to face the challenge of intergenerationality, of being able to work and grow with different generations. Our challenges are different from those of past generations, but learning from those who have already made this journey helps us make better decisions.”

“Every four years, 75,000 political leaders are elected at the three levels [municipal, state and federal]. RAPS has contributed to the country by forming a network of people aligned with ethics, transparency and sustainability and political leaders with this value profile who believe that we won’t change the country if we don’t act in politics. If we don’t take part in a political debate, we won’t put forward an alternative narrative of development for the country. ”

**MARCOS VINICIUS DE CAMPOS  
(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT RAPS  
FROM 2012 TO 2018)**

# Networks

“For me, **RAPS was one of the most exciting initiatives** in recent years in Brazil. It has great value, because many people have been motivated and inspired by it.”

# Roberta Simonetti

Adviser for the  
Inter-American  
Development Bank  
(IDB)



“I’ve been working with sustainability since 2006, when I returned to the academic life for a Sustainability Management course at Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) and became a researcher at the FGV Center for Sustainability Studies (GVces). Politics came into my life a little later, in 2008. I was at the public hearing on the Climate Change Policy in the Municipality of São Paulo and asked to speak to expose the incoherence of being there discussing this topic and with the sun’s rays totally blocked by huge blackout curtains and dozens of incandescent light bulbs on. I made a quick calculation and estimated that in that meeting, in just three hours, we would consume half the monthly electricity consumption of my house!”

Roberta Simonetti recalls that she was applauded by those present (who rushed to open the curtains!) and praised by a political leader: Fábio Feldman, who helped create the São Paulo Forum on Global Climate Change and Biodiversity and served as its executive secretary until 2010. He said that he would support her in her race for a seat on the São Paulo City Council. Her friends liked the idea and even came up with a slogan: “Yes, Simonetti!”

Feldman was a constituent representative and helped draft the chapter on the Environment in the 1988 Magna Carta. He has also founded important movements such as SOS Mata Atlântica, Instituto GEA – Ética e Meio Ambiente and Fundação Onda Azul. Even with the endorsement of an important leader, Roberta didn’t feel prepared to take part in institutional politics at the time.

In 2012, her paths crossed with RAPS. GVces coordinator Mario Monzoni Neto took part in the Leaders course and that’s how she learnt about the initiative. Resistant to the idea of running for office, Roberta saw an opportunity to get closer to the network through the RAPS Civic Entrepreneurs program, launched in 2016.

“The first meeting was already very impactful for me. My parents came from Italy after the Second World War and when they arrived here, they didn’t get involved in politics. Because they were foreigners, they didn’t vote and, given the political context of the 60s and 70s, politics wasn’t discussed in our household.

I voted for the first time in 1989, in the first direct presidential elections. I always tried to vote consciously, thinking about the public and common good. I took part in campaigns, but I wasn’t really

involved. Like many Brazilians, I thought of politics as a bad environment and that politicians, in general, didn’t act ethically and weren’t willing to work for the collective good.

**“When I joined RAPS, I was thrilled to hear all those people, many of them young, wanting to get involved and take part in politics, as well as engaged and responsible leaders who really wanted to serve. It was very inspiring, especially because of RAPS’ proposal for sustainability, dialogue and civic friendship.”**

Roberta particularly highlights the debate on the mining framework promoted by RAPS and the impact of the lecture by Harvard professor Steve Jarding, who was invited by RAPS to the program. In his lecture, he argued that politics is “our best and last chance” to promote the necessary transformations in society, the economy and the environment. “Only public policies have this leverage.”

“I think it’s important to recognize the pioneering spirit and leadership of RAPS, which inspired other similar initiatives in the years that followed. For me, RAPS was one of the most exciting initiatives of recent years in Brazil. It has great value, because many people were motivated and inspired by it.”

“After the 2010 elections, I had the opportunity to listen to Guilherme Leal talking about the experience of running for an executive position (*Marina Silva’s vice-president*) to help build a bridge between politics and the business sector and then realizing that he didn’t have a vocation for party politics, but that he wanted to contribute to leadership training, and that’s how the RAPS proposal came about.”

Roberta says that when she joined RAPS, she also joined the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) to work on a project which aimed to end deforestation in certain biomes and value chains, particularly by engaging the financial sector and influencing public credit policies.

“I was a great supporter of Mônica Sodr  taking over the executive board of RAPS and, when that happened, I promoted the connection with WWF’s Advocacy area so that together we could influence the political sector on this issue.”

Roberta acknowledges that, over the last few years, a growing number of elected politicians and institutional leaders have adopted the sustainability discourse and practice. “Some have actually incorporated this vision, it’s not just an external thing. It has struck a chord, and they’re organizing themselves. I was once asked by RAPS to give a talk on sustainability at one of their leadership meetings. I spoke about the limits of the planet, emphasizing that some limits had already been exceeded (see reference: A safe operating space for humanity; <https://www.nature.com/articles/461472a>). A while later I heard a politician talking about it and I realized that this understanding, previously restricted to the academic world, was beginning to resonate in the political arena.”

With a degree in Physics, a Master’s in High Energy Physics and a PhD in Statistical Mechanics, she began a career in an investment bank in 1997, working on quantitative analyses and risk management. In 2006, she decided to dedicate herself to sustainability, having coordinated pioneering initiatives such as the Stock Exchange’s Corporate Sustainability Index, Editora Abril’s Sustainability Guide, the preparation of the Green Protocol Indicator Matrix, a commitment Febraban made to the MMA, and the preparation and launch of the Natural Capital Declaration at Rio+20.

“With more or less conceptual depth and practical application, sustainability is there.”

Today she works as a consultant for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), coordinating a working group dedicated to Green Finance, a very diverse group with representatives from funding agencies, development banks, law firms, the federal executive, the academic world and specialized consultancies to support the development of sustainable finance in the country. Roberta’s passion for the area has even influenced her daughters’ career choices: one is studying geography and the other, a recent economics graduate, is studying for a master’s degree in Europe in economic policies for the global transition.

**“Today, I’m a member of a political party and I’m increasingly engaged in political agendas. I could say that RAPS has helped me along this path, it helped me change my vision, changing me to the point where I want to be in this environment.”**



In 2018, Roberta joined a political party, Rede, for the first time and is now a member of the Ethics Commission in the state of São Paulo and of thematic links, party bodies (also open to non-members) which aim to debate important issues on the public agenda and to advise candidates on issues.

“Now I feel more comfortable walking the path of a candidacy. In a party like Rede, this process takes place organically, you must join, start interacting, take an active part in it and then you’ll become a potential candidate. I think we should bet on collective administrations, bringing together a group of people who are aligned with a common purpose, but who have specialties and knowledge that complement one another.”

“In the last few years, I’ve learnt and understood  
concept of **sustainable public management**  
and I have had the opportunity to apply this  
practice in my office as a mayor.”

# Caio Cunha

Mayor of Mogi das Cruzes (SP)



“When I joined RAPS in 2015, I was a councilman and had been elected as the least voted. I was re-elected as the most voted, a significant victory, and now I’m mayor of my city. RAPS definitely played a big part in my process.”

Caio Cunha, the current mayor of Mogi das Cruzes, a city with over 400,000 inhabitants in the São Paulo Metropolitan Region, summarizes his entry into RAPS as a moment of opening frontiers for his public life, of contact with plurality through the opportunity to connect with politicians from all regions of the country. Similar problems, different ways of looking at public policies and access to successful projects in other Brazilian cities broadened the repertoire of a young politician in search of progress for his hometown.

“Polo Digital, a project I implemented in Mogi, was very much inspired by Porto Digital in Recife, a model-city for Brazil and the world in terms of technology and innovation, and an experience I learnt about through a connection I made with Fernando Holanda, a political leader from Pernambuco, at the network’s meetings,” the mayor says. “I was also able to learn about different initiatives such as those of my colleague Guto Issa, the current mayor of São Roque, Gabriel Azevedo, a councilman in Belo Horizonte, among many others, using the network to come up with ideas that could exploit the potential of their city. “RAPS has the great virtue of connecting good people, regardless of their political or historical background, people who have the purpose of transforming Brazil through sustainability,” he adds.

In a collaborative administration, with intense popular participation, the mayor also opened the doors of his city to various RAPS members in a kind of benchmark centered on direct benefits for the population, with the potential to be applied throughout the country. He immediately recalls Kelps Lima from Rio Grande do Norte, Joana Darc from Amazonas and Bruno Cunha Lima from Paraíba as politicians who have been impacted in some way by the programs developed in Mogi, and vice versa. A mechanism that worked in favor of sustainable development, scalable through the network that impacted the politicians in their and qualification, but even more so, it has an impact on all the cities that now have a RAPS Leader.

“In recent years I have learnt and understood the concept of sustainable public management and I’ve had the opportunity to apply this practice in my term as mayor. Up until then, sustainability was a buzzword, very much because the practice of it in itself doesn’t get us

votes, but it does get us results for the city we want.” Last year, the mayor launched the project Mogi 500 Years, an initiative he attributes to the knowledge he gained through RAPS. “Unfortunately, cities in Brazil are planned for every four years, for election purposes, and end up with various problems such as floods and violence, because they are not planned in a sustainable way. We’ve created a program that thinks about Mogi until 2060. We’re starting to prepare our city in a planned, balanced and sustainable way,” he says.

**“We were chosen by the people to manage the city. I want to say, in a very simple way, that regardless of ideology and worldview, it is essential that there is a commitment to our city, with planning for the next 40 years. And, successively, that the next managers also rigorously carry out their duties and continue to improve not only the city that we want, but the city that we need,” says Caio Cunha.**

Project Mogi 500 Years comprises a long-term vision, supported by structuring projects, with a shared vision of the future and the participation of society. The initiative innovates by taking planning processes out of the office, changing the language of technical lingo to speak the language of the citizen and giving people the opportunity to participate effectively in the construction of their own city.

Theoretical training, broadening of the repertoire, opportunities for exchange in various spheres, personal and professional development of the political leader participating in RAPS, all contribute to public policies being thought out in an innovative way and structured in a way that is appropriate to the reality of each city. As part of a partnership between RAPS and Fundação Lemann, Caio Cunha travelled to Zurich, Switzerland, for a course on education and public safety. There he learnt more about the importance of early childhood care. From then on, he took part in other training courses outside Brazil and today Mogi das Cruzes is part of an international network of cities committed to actions that focus on early childhood. “This first training course was extremely necessary for me, being open to what is new is very important. Society is in constant change and to implement good things, solid and sure initiatives, the only way is to try out new knowledge.”

With the knowledge he acquired and always attentive to the





**“The leadership training and networking work carried out by RAPS may not have been recognized or understood by voters, possibly passing as irrelevant in the midst of so much information they receive about politicians, but practical experiences such as those developed in Mogi demonstrate how much cities are impacted by all the opportunities offered by RAPS. ”**

city’s needs, he implemented the program Mogi Cidade da Criança - Primeira Infância (Mogi City of Children - Early Childhood), which in a short space of time has made the municipality an international benchmark in actions aimed at Early Childhood, a work that is also part of the Mogi 500 Years Program. “Much of what the city will reap as a project won’t be up to me as mayor, but the important thing is that the city reaps and evolves,” he emphasized, recalling the principle that guides his tenure, sustainable public management.

The mayor emphasizes that without focusing on a right or left position, but with the clear objective of promoting relevant agendas for Brazil, he sees RAPS as the only institution that has managed to talk about the present and the future in a planned, structured way,

without political-electoral bias, bringing depth to different themes for those who really want to make a difference. Replicating his experiences to his local reality, Caio organized a training course for community leaders, highlighting the wealth of knowledge that exists in the city and showing that popular participation goes beyond complaining about services. Aware that this is a process of cultural change, he has worked to involve the population in politics. “The networking done in politics is reproduced in society, if we don’t follow a path of connections, acting in a sustainable way, we won’t get anywhere.

“Many of the debates are at the federal and State levels. But we actually live in the cities. If we don’t bring the **debate** and the measures to the cities, nothing will change.”

# Mariana Calsa

Councilwoman in Limeira (SP)



“I’ve always liked politics and, as a lawyer, every day I realize the size and impact of the crisis of representation we’re experiencing. I and a large portion of the population don’t feel represented in many places, especially in institutional politics. With the municipal elections approaching, I realized that there is no such thing as an empty seat. If we are not represented, other people will be there. I made the decision to run for office.”

In her first electoral campaign at the age of 30 and with no political background, Limeira councilwoman Mariana Calsa was the most voted woman in Limeira, a city 170 kilometers from São Paulo. The joy of her victory was accompanied by the realization that, in order to do well in office, she would need all kinds of support, even more so at the start of her career. This led her to contact RAPS.

“For me, politics is about thinking about how to improve, how to change people’s lives. And to put that into practice, we need qualifications. I went through the selection process and joined RAPS in mid-2021. In addition to training, RAPS has also strengthened women’s offices and sought to elect more black and trans people, so that politics really does represent all of the Brazilian people. The more diverse it is, the richer and more representative politics will be – whether in the municipality, the state or the Union.”

But for her, the influence of RAPS went far beyond diversity; it also had the positive effect of bringing sustainability issues to the agenda. “In politics, priority is often what has an immediate, tangible effect, not what will have an impact in a few years’ time. So, it’s a big job to get proposals on the subject approved and to sensitize the Executive to the need to put them into practice in order to guarantee the future.”

Change can start on a small scale. “Many of the debates are at the federal and state levels. But we actually live in the cities. If we don’t bring the debate and the measures to the cities, nothing will change.”

The councilwoman says it was very important to have the support and expertise of RAPS to create a municipal climate change policy in Limeira. For her, having access to experts in various fields is one of the great values of RAPS. “We can’t understand all the issues, we don’t have enough staff to evaluate all the proposals. That’s why RAPS’ technical support is fundamental.”

While recognizing the technical quality, Mariana also highlights the importance of the network in human terms.

**“The network we have formed helps us not to feel alone. There we have someone to share our pains, doubts and solutions with. There we also learn to deal with different ideas. If we want to build better and more viable proposals, this is fundamental. The proposal can’t come from just one office. Or it can, but it needs to be approved and, what’s more, it needs to be put into practice. And that requires a capacity for dialogue and patience.”**

In her first term in office, she has worked specifically on four issues: education, entrepreneurship, integrity and transparency, and women’s rights. She has also been responsible for the special women’s prosecutor’s office in the Limeira City Council since she took office as a council member.

“At the end of 2022, we experienced a serious episode of gender-based political violence in the Chamber. We put together a new, more diverse slate for the Board of Directors and that was enough for us to live through days of terror. A video of the threats and the people invading the plenary circulated on social media. In the city itself, no-one spoke up or offered support to me and the other five councilwomen. In RAPS I found the support to ensure that today this was treated as it should be, as a criminal offense. The network was fundamental in connecting me with people like, for example, Senator Leila Barros, who at the time was the women’s prosecutor in the Senate.”

The issue of gender-based political violence is ever-present. Mariana says that, in addition to RAPS, she participates in other forums with women in politics. In each of these gatherings, other female colleagues, whether councilwomen, state representatives or secretaries, reported situations of moral, psychological and even physical violence.

“We used to argue for hours. Sharing is important for those enduring pain, but we got nowhere.”

These situations were making me uncomfortable. We have all these problems, now what? What do we do? We need to know what measures can be taken.” This is how the RAPS Practical Guide for Women in Politics, in which Mariana participated, was born. The Guide was conceived based on the experiences of 16 leaders who hold, have held or have run for elected office from different parties and regions of Brazil, and interviews with six experts. In it, two interactive action

maps are presented that seek to cover as many ways as possible to combat gender-based political violence, including identifying situations. "It may sound simple, but on one occasion I was only able to identify the violence I had suffered days later."

"In December, we suffered violence in the Chamber. In March, during a similar voting session, I even called in the police.

**“There is still a long way to go for women to experience a more equal environment in politics. Putting the issue on the agenda and denouncing it has a positive effect in itself.”**

The attacks were not repeated. Giving visibility to this issue is important to bring about a change in attitude," says Mariana.

The laws on political and gender-based violence are recent, dating from 2021. The offense was only included in the electoral and penal codes recently. But more important than having the laws is recognizing when the crime happens and then enforcing the laws.

Violence against women in politics is widespread and includes, for example, the distribution of campaign funds. "It's economic violence when the party allocates more money to a male candidate

than to a woman without any criteria. And we know that money makes a huge difference in a campaign," she says. Many other situations follow after the elections, such as online harassment and even microphones being switched off during the session.

The councilwoman admits that life in politics is challenging. "I'm not going to lie: sometimes the work we do here is very demanding. But we must keep doing it and it helps to know that we're not alone, that we have someone to turn to when the heat is on. As I said at the beginning, there's no such thing as an empty space. Thank you, RAPS, for qualifying my presence in this space."



From a researcher at Embrapa, to working  
scientific research, to a new local  
political **leadership**

# Chió

State Representative (PB)



“When I found out about RAPS, I had just been re-elected mayor.

I sought out the training thinking that, after my second term in the mayor’s office, my career in politics was over.” Not only did the political life of Melchior Naelson Batista da Silva, known as Chió, take off, he also became a key figure in a network that aims to train a new generation of politicians in Paraíba.

Chió began his first term as mayor of Remígio, in Paraíba, in 2012. His family had a history in local politics. A cousin had been vice mayor and a brother had been a council member for two terms. But he had always been behind the scenes and confesses that he was ready to lose when he started campaigning. He says that the two political groups that had been alternating in the mayor’s office for 30 years decided, in that election, to unite on a single slate, making room for a challenger. He knew that, without tradition or money, winning would be difficult, but he calculated that he could become a leader of the opposition.

From a researcher at Embrapa, to working in scientific research, to a new local political leadership. In a poll taken in August, his name appeared 16 points ahead of his opponent. And if he had gone in to lose, now Chió didn’t want to let go of the victory that seemed ever closer. “I picked up the pace and just went for it, adding more people. It was a very beautiful campaign, the city embraced me, and it was a surprise for many people,” he recalls. Despite his successful terms in office, he couldn’t see any way of staying in institutional politics.

“The town where I was born and where I was mayor is small, with 20,000 inhabitants and just over 13,000 voters. How was I going to become a state representative?”

A new path emerged from the meetings at RAPS, an organization he met through the referral of Douglas Lucena, then mayor of Bananeiras, also in Paraíba. Selected for the leadership training program in 2017, Chió overcame the perception that RAPS was a right-wing organization that wanted to catechize left-wing leaders and took to new heights in institutional politics.

**“I’ve always been open to innovation and at that time, especially here in Paraíba, what RAPS was proposing was very new, bringing together people from different political tendencies.”**



It was the exchange of experiences within the RAPS network that changed Chió’s plans. “Every speech was always very inspiring. At RAPS we hear stories of people with even more adverse conditions than ours, with different life stories, and this inspires us. I especially remember the testimony of Rodrigo Cunha, who is now a senator for the state of Alagoas. He had been the director of a consumer protection agency and was the most voted state representative. With encouragement from RAPS, I realized I could go further: so, I, too, became a state representative.”

In his second term in the Legislative Assembly of Paraíba, Chió went further in innovation and began, like RAPS, to structure his own leadership training network. It’s the New Attitude Movement.

“We were inspired by RAPS and the vision of its founders to train new leaders here in the state, regardless of party. I learnt a lot from being inspired by other people, and I want to replicate this with the young people of Paraíba.”



About to select the third class of new leaders, Chió believes in the importance of qualifying new colleagues and strengthen new ways of doing politics. The state representative says that he often meets good people who are interested in entering politics, but don't know where to start. Hence the importance of a training course. "It was RAPS that gave me knowledge and courage. I want to pass on this purpose that I received from RAPS." With each course, the New Attitude Movement aims to train 40 new leaders, usually young people interested in politics.

**"If I want to grow politically, I must qualify other leaders with similar values. We helped train a street cleaner who is now running for city council, and a quilombo leader who has also entered politics. There are even people from traditional political groups who, because of our network, are being inspired to do politics in a new way. It's important to get away from stale politics, from coronelism, from patronage, from the exchange of favors. That's how I see our efforts and our work. Even if I don't stay in politics, the seed will be planted and will grow."**

During his time in office, the state representative created a circuit of street races. The first was born in Remígio, with the intention of giving the town an identity and restoring its residents' self-esteem. The international race was attended by African athletes who compete in important races such as the São Silvestre race.

His experience with races inspired him to create the Amó Viver circuit, which promotes low-cost races in the interior of Paraíba. Chió is also setting an example by incorporating the sport into his own life. "Politics is full of sameness, but RAPS shows that there is room for innovation."

He says that politicians from other states whom he has met at RAPS have not only inspired him to pursue new positions and initiatives in politics but have also supported his regional network by sharing their knowledge. "Not least because we know that saints don't work miracles. You have to take examples from other places to inspire people."

With the experience he has gained so far, Chió is assessing the next steps in his political career. "My focus today is on building the political base, council members, mayors, vice mayors and, if I'm doing well, entering the 2024 race for Federal Representative."

# International Cooperation

“We have gradually helped push the environmental agenda into the political agenda, with an emphasis on climate change, a global challenge for governments, societies and economies.”



**GUILHERME LEAL, FOUNDER AND  
BOARD PRESIDENT**





In 2023, she was invited to immerse herself in the topic of environmental issues at the University of Copenhagen. The program, a partnership between RAPS and the Danish embassy, invited parliamentarians to learn about the **most advanced solutions** in sustainability that can be used as a basis for public policies in Brazil.

# Renata Abreu

State Representative



National president of Podemos, federal representative Renata Abreu sees in the diversity of positions and parties that participated in and formed RAPS a solution to the crisis of representativeness in institutional politics in Brazil.

“The combination of civil society movements such as RAPS with political parties has generated new leaders such as Kayo Amado in São Vicente and Caio Cunha in Mogi das Cruzes (RAPS members). We also have the example of a young revolutionary, Igor Soares, who was re-elected with the highest percentage in Brazil as mayor of Itapevi. RAPS brought political discussion to these young people and prepared them to act. We need to pave the way for the new leaders, the ones who will take over states and the presidency, because they are much more connected to the new generation, which today doesn't feel represented by institutional politics.”

The renewal promoted by RAPS, she says, also involves qualifying people who are already part of institutional politics. “When I received the invitation to join RAPS, I thought it was great, because usually these movements end up calling only new people. RAPS looked for parliamentarians who were aligned with the network's agenda. My theme was very much education, but RAPS allowed me to immerse myself in the environmental agenda, which changed my point of view,” she says.

For Renata, RAPS' work on the sustainability agenda is an example of how it is possible to overcome this old divide. In 2023, she was invited to immerse herself in the topic of environmental issues at the University of Copenhagen. The program, a partnership between RAPS and the Danish embassy, invited parliamentarians to learn about the most advanced solutions in sustainability that can be used as a basis for public policies in Brazil.

“There is a false duality. Nowadays, it seems that the debate on the environment is “left-wing” and the debate on agribusiness

is “right-wing”. But worrying about the country's sustainability has everything to do with worrying about agribusiness, because an impact on the environment can harm this activity. Placing the issue in this ideological fight leads nowhere. Sustainability can be a major catalyst for the country's development.”

Renata says that the experience was so transformative that, upon her return, she became a member of the Chamber's Environment Committee. She says she realized that, just like education, the sustainability agenda has an impact on the future of generations to come. Today, she wants to expand the network of politicians engaged with the issue, so that it becomes a priority. “The more people who enter politics with this vision, the easier it will be to draw up projects in this area and have the agendas processed more quickly.”

The immersion promoted by RAPS was, in the parliamentarian's assessment, effective because it forced them to stop their agendas to study the issue. But as well as working with politicians, Renata advocates talking to society as a whole about sustainability.

**“Politicians are usually focused on the next elections. But when the population realizes the importance of a problem and puts it on the agenda, the politicians change. The animal cause is an example of this. It became part of the population's aspirations and politicians related to it began to get elected. It's a cascade effect. Parliament is a mirror of society and the causes that concern people.”**

For her, one of the main challenges for parliamentarians is having the time and technical support to delve into the issues that arise. “When you're in politics, the debates are very fast-paced, there are many agendas going on at the same time. So, there's often no time to delve deeper. And RAPS has made that possible.”



**“At home, I was always told: ‘Politics is the tool through which a country is transformed. If good people don’t choose the path of politics, the bad ones will.’”**

She also says that the work of RAPS is an inspiration for the renewal of parties, which need to overcome what she describes as the old division between right and left to cope with the dynamism of the world in the 21st century.

“The Berlin Wall fell a long time ago. What is driving society today is not the division between left and right. Today, 89 percent of the Brazilian population doesn’t identify with any of the 30 existing parties. We have studied and seen that this is because we are 21st century citizens who are dealing with political institutions conceived in the 18th century. What we are seeing is the emergence of movement-parties, which are not about ideology, but about causes. If the political party doesn’t have the flexibility to understand the causes of society, it will be left behind.”

Renata has a lot of experience talking about society’s relationship with politics because she has lived it since childhood. Her family fought against the dictatorship in Brazil and was persecuted. Her uncle was imprisoned and tortured, and her father’s company was closed down by the military regime. But they resisted and her father, José Masci de Abreu, founded a movement to defend immigrants through the Center for Northeastern Traditions.

She confesses, however, that she didn’t like politics. “As the daughter of a politician, I had an absent father. But then I began to realize how much his work and that of the CTN changed people’s lives. I realized that in life we have two paths: to leave our children an inheritance or a legacy. I received a legacy from my father and mother that I’m very proud of. I can’t shy away from it, even in the name of those who fought for us to have the right to vote.”

Renata says that her father collaborated in the creation of the first racial crimes police station in the country and received encouragement from the Northeastern community to enter institutional politics, where he served two terms as a federal representative.

Renata also chose politics and encourages new leaders to make the same choice.

"I was invited by RAPS to the COP25 in Madrid,  
where I was able to talk about our experience,  
about what was happening in our city, and  
learn **new solutions** to problems."

# Deborah Almeida

State Representative (PE)



“São Bento do Una is a municipality of 60,000 inhabitants in semi-arid Pernambuco. I was the first woman to be elected in the town and I felt very alone. And I thought: ‘Am I the odd one out?’ Am I wrong to think of politics in this way?’ When I joined RAPS, I realized that I wasn’t wrong, that there really was another way of doing politics.”

Débora already had a career, a well-resolved life, and faced doubts even from her own mother about embracing politics, which she defines as a mission. A federal prosecutor since January 2005, state representative Débora Almeida decided to take a leave of absence from her position at the Federal Attorney General’s Office to run for mayor for the first time in 2012.

**“I see politics as a means of transforming people’s lives. And to make things happen for those who need it most, you must face the difficulties. You have to have the courage to follow a line and be consistent.”**

In Débora’s opinion, one of her greatest obstacles is to build solutions for the semi-arid region that overcome the polarization between environmental protection and economic development. “Drought is a chronic problem in the region, which has been exacerbated by climate change. Even so, we are the fourth largest egg producer in the country. The basis of our economy is poultry and dairy farming,” she says.

“I was invited by RAPS to the COP25 in Madrid, where I was able to talk about our experience, about what was happening in

our city, and learn new solutions to problems. We need to have public policies to live with this reality, since it is permanent. We already know we’re going to have dry weather, but we’re dependent on having a good year because there’s no knowledge and resources available to producers. We need to respect nature and look for technologies and innovation. Genetic improvements, techniques for the rational use of water, renewable energies.”

After two terms in the municipal Executive, Débora has experienced the scope and limitations of the state Legislative. If, in the Executive, problems fall into the lap of the administrator, who is forced to make decisions, in the Legislative it is necessary to articulate the causes and seek space in the Executive. “In both cases, the main weapon is knowledge. Knowledge of demands, agendas, innovations, good practices. It’s combining knowledge with day-to-day practice.” This was one of RAPS’ missions.

For her, the cross-party debate held by RAPS is especially important given the polarization we have in the country today.

She also recognizes that the organization’s role has gone far beyond politics during the pandemic. Throughout 2020, RAPS ran a program that offered free online psychological support to female mayors. “Mônica (Sodré, executive director of RAPS) called me and asked what we needed. And I said: ‘someone who will listen to me’. During the pandemic, nobody knew what was going to happen, what we were going to do. It was very difficult. We didn’t even know how the week would end, whether we would be alive, and managing the city in this context was a huge responsibility. When you’re in a management position, especially at a time



**“We need to listen to different opinions, and RAPS has brought this possibility of debate above the parties, promoting civic friendship. Discussing how we can change people’s realities, improve health, education.”**


like that, we can't show fragility. I have to reassure people, so they know they can trust me. RAPS took us in and offered us psychological counseling. It took care of those who take care of cities, of people.” In constant dialogue with all the RAPS leaders in office and decision-making positions during the pandemic, the institution identified a common point among the women, the need for shelter and mental comfort during the months of crisis.

Despite all the difficulties, Débora has set her sights on politics as a way of life. Recently, she was tipped to take up a seat on the State Court of Auditors. She would be the only woman on the court, in a permanent capacity. But she decided to stay in institutional politics, “even if some people think I’m crazy to be there, every four years, listening to insults”.

Shortly after this decision, she went to visit a town in the Northeastern hinterlands and a voter said he was happy that his representative was going to remain in office. “Then an old lady said to me: ‘you have brought more than amendments here. You came here and spoke to everyone’. It’s this kind of simple, everyday things that motivate and show that being a parliamentarian doesn’t mean living in another world. We’re just like everybody else.”

“Politics is not distant; it’s people’s daily lives. We can’t keep good people out of it. We have to make sure that they stay, that they don’t give up, that they face the challenges. For my part, I want people to be able to look at me, especially women, and say: ‘boy, I’m going into politics too because there are serious politicians who can make a difference’.”

“Talking to politicians about the challenges of a fairer and more supportive Brazil is not a simple endeavor. Let alone bridging the differences that prevent political leaders from getting closer to the broader, more complex challenges of the global sustainability agenda. To this end, RAPS was created, and has gradually created and generated conditions and spaces of trust for its leaders so that these differences and altercations could be put aside to find concrete solutions to the environmental, social, economic and political challenges facing this unequal country.

Over the course of a decade, the structuring and rise of this agenda has had its successes and setbacks, but there is no doubt that today it is more institutionalized and aware of the demands of a world in constant change, which nevertheless points towards a new order. Much of this progress is due to RAPS, in the broadest sense. Its raison d'être has always been institutional politics, training and collaborating to ensure that the sustainability agenda is understood and prioritized by the political agents. And if political leaders are currently engaged with this agenda, it is also because RAPS has fulfilled its purpose, influencing the political world and leaving its mark, its legacy. 

**FERNANDO REI  
(CO-FOUNDER)**

# Advocacy



RAPS became part of the senator's political life in 2019, when Fabiano Contarato was elected president of the Senate's **Environment** Committee (CMA).

# Fabiano Contarato

Senator (ES)





Senator Fabiano Contarato (PT) has many characteristics that are in line with the ideals of RAPS. One of them, however, stands out: his tireless disposition to dialogue. Contarato believes in building bridges with opposing views, aggregating differences and being open to listening to the various segments of society. This is one of the attributes that the senator valued most in RAPS. “The members of parliament who were part of the network belong to various political parties, and this is very positive. It’s through convergence that we strengthen the environmental agenda, which for me is fundamental. Defending the environment means defending every form of life that is yet to come.”

The senator often emphasizes that politicians, first and foremost, serve society. Their parliamentary work must be guided by the fundamental premise that the real target of their work is the population. “We need to break down the walls of parliament” is a recurring phrase in his speeches.

Contarato’s proposal to break down the barriers, separating representatives and represented should not be confused with anything resembling the episodes of violence seen in Brasilia on the infamous 8th of January, 2023. The structures Contarato is endeavoring to break down are different. One example is the Júlio Lancellotti Law (14.489/2022), which prohibits the so-called “hostile architecture”, a measure that aims to prevent homeless people from living in squares, viaducts, pavements and gardens. Contarato was the author of the bill that bears the name of the religious man who for decades has dedicated himself to social causes in the city of São Paulo.

As he likes to remember, in 2019 he was a “neophyte” in politics. Born in Nova Venécia - a city in the state of Espírito Santo with just over 50,000 inhabitants - he comes from a low-income family. His father was a driver and his mother a housewife, responsible for raising six children. After decades dedicated to the police and teaching, Fabiano was the most voted Senate candidate in his state in the 2018 elections, with 1,117,036 votes, for Rede Sustentabilidade. By winning his first elections, Fabiano Contarato also achieved a historic feat by becoming the first openly gay politician elected to the Brazilian Senate. This achievement is a significant milestone for representation in the country’s political sphere. The senator is married to Rodrigo Groberio and is the father of Gabriel and Mariana.

RAPS became part of the senator’s political life in 2019, when Fabiano Contarato was elected president of the Senate’s Environment Committee (CMA). “My background is in law. I worked as a police officer for 27 years and as a professor of criminal law and criminal procedure. I was chosen to chair such an important committee, in a very challenging context”. The environmental agenda was facing a series of threats, such as the end of the Secretariat for Climate Change and Forests and the government’s public criticism of the work carried out by Non-Governmental Organizations in the Amazon.

The environmental agenda was ‘love at first sight’, as the senator often says. What was needed, however, was the technical support to tackle the debates and promote the dialogues that would be crucial to resisting the setbacks that lay ahead.

**It was then that RAPS proved fundamental to the senator’s work. As well as bringing together politicians from different parties - a characteristic that made RAPS unique in Brazil in Contarato’s opinion, the organization’s technical production was essential for qualifying the ongoing discussions. “Without the work of RAPS, I might not have performed as well as I did in terms of confrontation and proposals. We built a very solid path in defense of the environment, in a responsible way, because it wasn’t about blind defense, but understanding that it’s perfectly possible to walk hand in hand. It’s sustainability, generating jobs and income, boosting the economy. It was in this context that I found RAPS and I’m very proud to say that I’m part of it”.**



**“At first, I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees, then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realize I’m fighting for humanity.”**

The senator recalls the fundamental role played by RAPS in sensitizing him to the situation of the Guaranis-Kaiowás, the second largest indigenous people in Brazil, made up of around 50,000 people, mainly concentrated in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. During his visit to the region, Contarato witnessed the violence faced by this population and demanded immediate action. On that occasion, a cacique expressed his gratitude, saying that it was the first time that a Senator of the Republic went in person on the site.

The experience left a lasting mark on the parliamentary activity of the man who, in his inaugural speech as chairman of the Environment Committee (CMA), had quoted the famous phrase by Chico Mendes:

Years later, Contarato would take to the Senate gallery to urge his colleagues to “leave their ties and suits behind” and go to the indigenous groups.

In 2022, Fabiano Contarato was one of the participants in the event, “Political Leadership for Sustainability”, organized by RAPS in partnership with the European Union delegation in Brazil and Insuper. The initiative offered RAPS leaders from the National Congress the opportunity to find out more about the impacts of climate change on Brazil, especially with regards to social and economic risks. Fabiano celebrated the meeting, emphasizing that forums like this allow for an important exchange and increasingly strengthen the human rights agenda.

The senator likes to use a phrase by French writer Victor Hugo to refer to the importance of time in politics and life: “There is nothing more powerful than an idea when its time has come”. Fabiano Contarato believes that the time has come

for the environmental agenda, and he will be there to defend it, breaking down walls and building bridges.



"I was very fortunate to be part of RAPS and to join this select and privileged **body of public leaderships**. I was the first trans person to be selected and I felt welcomed and respected."

# Giowana Cambrone Araújo

Lawyer



Lawyer and administrator Giwana Cambrone Araújo has been a member of Rede since the party was founded and, in 2018, she helped organize trans people's candidacies for that year's national elections.

The initial idea was that she would run for the Senate, someone else would run for a seat in the National Congress and three candidates would run for seats in the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro. It was in this context that Giwana was selected to join the RAPS Leaders Network.

"Several people from the Network had already taken part in RAPS' programs and commented on the importance of training for public leaders. I started following the organization's work on social media and applied when the selection process opened. My intention, in addition to getting training for my candidacy, was to multiply knowledge."

She says that the training, which covered topics such as electoral law, public administration and campaign planning, had a very positive impact not only on her, but on other transgender pre-candidates and the party's activists.

"I was very fortunate to be part of RAPS and to join this select and privileged body of public leadership. I was the first trans person to be selected and I felt welcomed and respected. That's a great contribution. When another trans person was selected, I was invited to sponsor her. This was very careful and sensitive and shows RAPS' genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion. Inclusion is a pillar of sustainability. Diversity can only be sustained if the environment is inclusive. I have immense admiration for RAPS. Building a qualified political organization committed to values is very beneficial for Brazil."

In Giwana's opinion, diversity needs to reverberate within leadership training programs, and everyone needs to be involved in this debate. "We need this issue in training, and we must include men in the discussion because they are part of the problem."

She also believes that affirmative action policies are essential for dealing with the stark differences in Brazil, but that they are insufficient. "More than a thousand companies are fined every year for not complying with quotas for people with disabilities, even though the law dates back to 1991. We need to promote a much more radical cultural change and start the debate on the structure of our society, which is sexist, racist, ableist, and LGBTQ-phobic."

**"The greatest impact that the training had on my life and that of other people was the realization that we need to occupy the political space to promote the social changes we need. LGBTQI+ people are generally excluded, made invisible and silenced. Promoting the occupation of public space is the first step to start dealing with this problem."**

For the lawyer, the inclusion of trans people in public administration is important to ensure the rights of this population, which is currently excluded and stigmatized. "There is a lack of access even to basic rights - for example, the physiological right to use the toilet."

At the Human Rights Secretariat, Giwana worked with the LGBTQI+ population. Her job involved accompanying victims of violence to the police station so that they could register a case. Or to the registry office, which insisted on not registering marriages. "Making rights viable doesn't just depend on the law. Politics is essential, but we need to change culturally, from school age onwards."

Bringing this content into the debate so that we can transform, over the years, the contaminated society we have today."

In 2018, after a change in the local political scene, Giwana ended up running for a federal seat in a last-minute campaign. Three other trans people ran for the legislative assembly. None were elected, but they continued their work for the rights of LGBTQI+ people. Some now occupy spaces in institutional politics, working in offices. Others, like Giwana, organize diversity and inclusion actions in the private sector.

She returned to the private sector after a traumatic experience: she was sacked from the company where she worked because of her transition. "I went to the public sector because there was more space, the discussion was more open," she says.

She was born in Minas Gerais, where she graduated in Law and Administration, and moved to Rio de Janeiro to get her master's degree. The lawyer recognizes her privilege among the trans population. "I went to university, I'm white, I wasn't kicked out of my house. This made it possible for me to enter the public sector 10 years ago. Today, the private sector is different. There is a great demand for representation, diversity in the workforce and the construction of inclusive environments. This demand doesn't exist by chance, but because society is demanding it."

In 2018, there was an increase in trans candidates, which continued in 2020 and 2022, with more women candidates elected at the municipal, state and federal levels.

**“Inclusion is very important for parties in general, whether right-wing or left-wing, due to the quotas. Trans people get in because of their gender identity”**

But Giwana points out that, like cis women and black people, trans candidates face a lack of eligibility conditions – little funding, lack of support even within the party, and, in the case of trans people, moral questioning. Another challenge is for voters to feel represented by these candidates.

“I heard many times that my candidacy was interesting, important, but that didn’t translate into votes. Voters still don’t see trans people as their representatives in spaces of power. But it’s not enough to be legal, that alone won’t change the political landscape. You have to objectively get votes. The same goes for women and black people. There is an unconscious bias, so many voters don’t see themselves represented by minority candidates. “

In the current legislature, federal representatives Erika Hilton and Duda Salabert have managed to break through the barriers but continue to face gender-based violence both within the party and in institutional politics.

“There are many incidents of disrespect and harassment. The process is moving forwards and backwards. But this is what we expect from a democracy. When inclusion policies advance, opposition to them comes to the surface, it’s natural. However, we’ve reached a point where we’ve come out of the closet and we’re not going back to it.”

Ramos believes that the future of  
RAPS lies in continuing to influence  
**paradigm** shift in politics.

# Marcelo Ramos

Former State Representative (AM)



Former federal representative Marcelo Ramos Rodrigues, from the state of Amazonas, looks back at his own history in politics to identify a crucial problem for the advancement of sustainability agendas in Brazil: the lack of involvement of the population and politicians from the Amazon region in building solutions.

“We made the mistake of discussing the Amazon only outside the Amazon and we are still a long way from overcoming this vacuum.” In the politician’s opinion, most events are international or held in the Rio de Janeiro – São Paulo – Brasília axis. This makes it difficult to bring the urban population of the Amazon closer to these fundamental issues.

But there’s an even bigger obstacle: the idea that protecting the forest means blocking the development of the local population. Ramos says that he has always felt close to the economic agenda, with his defense of the Manaus Free Trade Zone and his close relations with Brazil’s economic sectors, but sustainability was not an issue in his political life either. When he arrived in the Chamber of Deputies in 2019, he had already served one term as a state representative, campaigned for the office of mayor of the capital of Amazonas and for state government.

**“It’s difficult to explain to people in the forest, without any support, that they can’t fish or hunt because they have to preserve that area. It’s like going against the survival instinct, which is much stronger than any environmental awareness. So much so that there are no parliamentarians in the current benches of federal and state representatives from any of the Amazonian states who have the environmental agenda at the center of their actions. Sustainability issues do not generate political gains in the Amazon. But RAPS had the sensitivity to dialogue with me and open the way for me to identify with and approach the issue”.**

Ramos was invited by RAPS to sign up for the 2019 leadership program and, as part of the network, he says, he was able to see the issue in a non-stigmatized way.

“RAPS educated me to realize that it’s not just the logic of command and control that will solve the problem of the environment in Brazil. We need to combine economic alternatives that generate jobs, income and combat poverty in the Amazon, at the risk of maintaining the current status quo. The Amazon is a bioeconomy and we’ve had dialogues, with the participation of Guilherme Leal, in which business experience has shown us the importance of combining the environmental issue with a mechanism for returning the wealth of the Amazon to the traditional populations that occupy the forest. Today, I see that you can’t be a member of parliament for Amazonas without giving relevance to the sustainability agenda. And one of RAPS’ assets is its capacity for dialogue with parliamentarians from the Amazon.”

With a broader vision of what sustainability is and how it can be fundamental to the wealth of his state, Ramos decided to delve deeper into the subject and proposed two key draft laws for the region. Bill 2402/2022, on the protection of the Amazon Biome, which is important for giving legal certainty to economic development projects in the region, and Bill 528/2021, which establishes the Brazilian Emissions Reduction Market (MBRE).

He believes that both bills could be voted on as early as 2023. “The government has inaugurated a bio-business center in Amazonia for the development of the bioeconomy, and we need a regulatory framework to provide legal certainty for these projects,” says Ramos.

The second project could have an even greater impact on the region. “The carbon market used to be a non-issue, it wasn’t on the agenda. The issue was thoroughly debated with RAPS and has the aim to create a mechanism for monetizing the forest’s capacity to absorb carbon from the atmosphere and to revert part of these resources to fighting poverty in the Amazon. We defined a strategy, I made a project that is a reasonable average of opinions, and I presented a draft that can be improved throughout the process. I think it’s the most robust project and should serve as the basis for the 2023 parliamentary vote,” he says.

Since then, the carbon market has become a key issue. Another deputy presented a draft bill, two senators made proposals and the federal government set up a working group with the ministries of Finance, Industry and Development, Environment and Science and Technology to deal with the issue.

De lá para cá, o mercado de carbono virou um tema fundamental. Mais um deputado apresentou um projeto, dois senadores fizeram propostas e o Governo Federal criou um grupo de trabalho com os ministérios da Fazenda, de Indústria e Desenvolvimento, do Meio Ambiente e da Ciência e Tecnologia para tratar desse tema.

**“In Brazil, it is no longer a choice to regulate the carbon credit market, it is an imposition. For two reasons. The first is civilizational: we have a generational duty to provide a habitable planet for future generations. That alone would justify any effort to reduce emissions. The second is that it offers an innovative economic alternative for the local population. From a legislative point of view, protection has been resolved with the forestry code. We need to find an economic way forward.”**



Ramos says he is very proud to have been involved in these issues in Brazil, which even earned him a leading role at COP 26 in Glasgow. He delved so deeply into the subject that it even changed his career path. Today he is a carbon market consultant.

“RAPS now recognizes its gains and the role it has played, not only in the case of offices like mine, but also in a number of very important processes for the country. The political training process over these 12 years has been fundamental in building politics that is more committed to democracy and sustainability.”



We were born to make institutional  
politics a better place and to **make**  
**sustainable development a priority**  
for political actors.

**Mônica Sodré**

Executive Director



RAPS' commitment to leadership training involves training, developing and nurturing its own team. One of the key names in this mission is Mônica Sodré, the current executive director of RAPS. She changed her life trajectory when she joined the organization and has been leaving her mark on it for more than 10 years.

Mônica was selected for the first edition of RAPS Leaders in 2013. The program was aimed at potential candidates for the next elections, but getting elected wasn't one of her goals. A political scientist, with a master's and doctorate in Inter-National Relations and a university lecturer, she wanted to get even closer to politics through science and education and saw a common ground between her goals and those of RAPS.

**“We needed to think about a democracy that would guarantee the highest quality of life for the greatest number of people everywhere. And that could only come through politics. Sustainability and democracy always go hand in hand,” she says.**

After going through the RAPS Leaders program, Mônica was invited to become a consultant for the organization, until she took over as executive director in 2018. “Contributing to democracy and improving the political process was already in RAPS' DNA since the creation of its statute, but this mission has gained strength over the years. We are in the midst of a crisis in the model of economic development and the use of natural resources. The planet's limits are not being respected, which consequently results in increasing inequalities. Our goal is to change this trajectory,” she says.

In the eyes of RAPS and Mônica, the climate agenda is the political agenda of the 21st century. “The most vulnerable people are the ones who will feel the consequences of climate change the most

and will therefore resent the absence of the state. It is precisely this section of the population that may tend towards solutions outside the democratic regime, because they don't see democracy in their daily lives,” he says.

To ensure that Brazil moves towards this critical agenda, RAPS carries out two essential activities. The first is preparing candidates so that they not only defend sustainable development issues in their candidacies, but also have the right tools to put them into practice once elected. The second is advocacy work, which provides knowledgeable support to all those who make public policy decisions and need to fight environmental and democratic erosion in the country.

“If we elect better politicians to decision-making positions, whoever and wherever they are, and they manage to improve people's lives, it means that we have made a huge contribution to the country,” says Mônica.

When RAPS first emerged, preparing candidates for institutional politics outside the party environment was so innovative that it raised questions for the founders and members. Today, this is no longer the case and countless other initiatives and institutions dedicated to this task have been created. “Thanks to all this work, political discussion in the country is no longer the monopoly of political parties. Civil society is actively participating,” says the executive director.

The diversity that RAPS seeks in its leaders is also a value that is reflected in the institution's internal structure, whose council is a third composed of women, a third of black people and a third of people over the age of 50. The fact that the executive director is a 37-year-old woman also demonstrates this commitment.

When she arrived, Mônica supervised the production of content to qualify the work of members of the city council. Afterwards, she took part in almost all the selection processes for new leaders, created the politics, advocacy and relationships departments, worked with network management and became the organization's spokesperson. "Thanks to RAPS, in these 10 years, I have met and worked on different fronts that have allowed me to get to know people who have been transforming the country, the main personalities in national politics."

As executive director, Mônica is in charge of the organization's strategy. "We are an institution embedded in a young democracy. We respond to society's aspirations and need to adapt to new and unstable times, such as what we have just experienced."



**“For me, politics is capable of changing people’s lives in a systemic and individual way. RAPS is an incredible experience of innovation in Brazilian democracy, because it brings together different ideologies, transforms institutional politics and reinvents itself and evolves together with the people.”**

One of her greatest satisfactions is running an organization that takes a human approach to the political process, which can be very stressful. "These people give up many things, such as better pay, family life, and put their reputations at risk for the sake of others."

For the next few years, Mônica Sodré predicts an improvement in the quality of public policy discussions in Brazil. "If, in 10 years' time, the pointer has changed in policies and in the preparation of political actors thanks to actions like ours, with better people and more qualified decisions in institutional politics, I'll be even prouder," she says. "We're not just an institution that prepares leaders, but one that leads."

# Historical Partnerships





# Founders

Alvaro de Souza

Fernando Rei

Guilherme Leal

Julio Moura Neto

Leandro Machado

Maria Alice Setúbal

Oded Grajew



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**2022/2024**

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# Raps Network

Since 2012

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A blue background with several yellow semi-circles of varying sizes. One large semi-circle is in the top right corner. A row of smaller semi-circles is in the middle left. A larger, more complex pattern of semi-circles is in the bottom left, forming a grid-like structure.

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Since 2012


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The background features a solid purple field with two large, bright yellow shapes. One is a curved, wedge-like shape in the upper right, and the other is a curved, semi-circular shape in the lower left. The word "Manifest" is centered in the purple area.

**Manifest**

# **we are what we believe in**

And we believe that a better world is possible. We believe that politics has the power to change people's lives. That we are all born free and equal in rights and dignity.

That in a country like Brazil, the best politics are the ones that fight against inequalities.

That education, science and technology are the investments capable of bringing us into the 21st century.

That climate change is the political agenda of the 21st century.

That production and environmental conservation are not mutually exclusive.

We believe that it's impossible to make a difference alone

That dialogue and cooperation between politicians is possible.

That good politicians are driven by purpose.

That good policies are based on evidence.

That democracy should never go out of fashion.

And that it is made in the encounter between those who are equal and those who are different.

We believe that politics has the power to change people's lives.

That a better democracy is made with better political leaders.

And if we are what we believe in, we believe that a better democracy is possible **with you.**

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Coordenação Geral | Claus Hansen





“On this journey we have learned that the method of civic friendship can have tangible impacts and results on very objective issues: combating deforestation, restoring the budget, transitioning to new energy sources and defending institutions and democracy. These have been incredible years and, looking back, one element has always been at the center of our work and decision-making: people. They were and still are our most valuable assets. They are the ones who carry out our institutional mission through their work. It is because of them that we do what we do.”

**Mônica Sodré | Executive Director at RAPS**