

**Final Evaluation of the “Empowering youth together in Brazil” programme
Management Response
KIYO Brazil**

1) General Statement

In light of the decision to enter into a phase-out of KIYO’s activities, the present management response does not aim to define a detailed action plan for the implementation of the recommendations.

Rather, it seeks to:

- Clarify KIYO’s position with regard to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation;
- Identify the key lessons to be capitalised on;
- Specify how these learnings will be shared with partners and other sector actors.

2) Reflections on the main findings

Key evaluation finding	KIYO’s position
<p>1. Strong overall programme performance and meaningful youth empowerment</p> <p>The final evaluation finds that KIYO Brazil’s implementation of the Empowering Youth Together Globally (EYTG) programme performed strongly across key OECD-DAC criteria, particularly efficiency, relevance, and effectiveness.</p> <p>The programme aligned closely with the priorities of partner organizations and the realities of the target groups.</p> <p>Activities were generally well managed, resources were used appropriately, and implementation adapted over time to changing contexts and emerging needs.</p> <p>The programme successfully created supportive and gender-sensitive quality learning environments where young people could strengthen their agency, build confidence, develop skills, and participate more actively in their communities.</p>	<p>KIYO welcomes the positive findings of the final evaluation and is encouraged by the recognition that the EYTG programme performed strongly across key OECD-DAC criteria, particularly efficiency, relevance, and effectiveness.</p> <p>These results are especially meaningful given the significant challenges faced throughout implementation. For KIYO, these findings reaffirm not only the relevance of the programme model, but also the resilience, flexibility, and commitment demonstrated by partners and youth.</p>
<p>2. Innovative partnership and capacity-development model generated strong results, but long-term sustainability remains a challenge.</p> <p>KIYO’s Mutual Capacity and Shared Capacity Development Strategy proved to be an important strength of the programme, combining financial support, peer learning, capacity and network development, supporting partners in formalizing</p>	<p>KIYO agrees with this balanced assessment. While the programme supported partners in institutionalizing policies, strengthening practices, and building both operational and financial professional relationships, we acknowledge that financial sustainability remains a critical challenge.</p>

<p>internal policies, documenting pedagogical approaches, improving financial management, and adopting impact-oriented Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) tools.</p> <p>However, sustainability presents a more uneven picture. While social sustainability was positive, with local ownership of tools and strengthened capacities, financial and technical sustainability remain concerns. KIYO represented a significant share of partner budgets, and there are uncertainties regarding partners' ability to secure future funding independently or to maintain the reach (community actors) capacity-building model.</p>	<p>However, sustainability was never meant to depend on KIYO alone; it will require continued leadership, sustained resource mobilization, and active networking with both national and international actors.</p> <p>Nonetheless; KIYO actively supported partners in securing new funding and reducing costs. Notable successes include assisting YOUCA Brazil in securing a €90,000 grant from YOUCA Belgium and facilitating partnerships for AMAR to share premises with other organizations, effectively lowering their operational expenses.</p> <p>Also, KIYO acknowledges the limited operational capacity of community actors, a challenge identified during implementation</p>
<p>3. Favourable context and strong local partnerships enabled success, but KIYO's broader visibility and multiplier impact were limited</p> <p>The programme benefited from a favourable socio-political environment in Rio de Janeiro, including stronger openness from public institutions, collaboration opportunities with Sistema S actors, renewed civic participation spaces, and increased private-sector interest in ESG agendas. These contextual factors, combined with strong local partnerships, helped maximise programme results.</p> <p>At the same time, coherence was assessed as moderate: while collaboration with direct partners functioned well, KIYO did not fully consolidate itself as a widely recognised actor beyond its immediate networks.</p> <p>In addition, the programme faced difficulties in demonstrating and measuring its broader multiplier effect through indirect partnerships and network-based influence.</p>	<p>KIYO agrees with this observation; strong local partnerships allowed us to leverage the favourable local environment to create impact such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: Capitalizing on the Novo Ensino Médio reforms to integrate social circus and cultural initiatives into schools. • Employability: Leveraging the Sistema S network (Sebrae/SESC) to expand vocational pathways for vulnerable youth. <p>However, we also acknowledge the need for more consolidated institutional presence beyond our immediate networks to further enhance the programme's strategy and networks.</p> <p>Furthermore, even though the overall perception exists that the multiplier effect exists, we are aware of weaknesses in our MEAL system for a structural and evidence-based follow up.</p>

<p>4. Important gaps remain in gender mainstreaming and safeguarding.</p> <p>The evaluation identified several areas requiring improvement. Gender mainstreaming advanced unevenly, with only one partner adopting a formal gender policy by the end of the programme, while boys appeared more likely to disengage over time, suggesting a need for stronger work on masculinities and retention strategies.</p> <p>Integrity, child protection, and safeguarding mechanisms also require more robust institutionalisation.</p> <p>Environmental sustainability was addressed mainly as a cross-cutting topic rather than through structured frameworks.</p>	<p>KIYO's support enabled all partners to develop formal gender and integrity frameworks, though implementation speeds varied according to each organization's culture, leadership and participation in the programme. Notable successes include the full implementation of a gender policy at YOUCA Brazil, the establishment of an integrity reporting protocol at SER, and a significant cultural shift at AMAR, where KIYO's advocacy led to organization-wide gender sensitization.</p> <p>Navigating participation and masculinities while the programme successfully engaged girls, retaining heterosexual boys remains a challenge. KIYO has responded by integrating the topic of masculinities into seminars and creative projects however it remains a challenge. We acknowledge the evaluation's suggestion to include more "practical" incentives, such as university preparatory activities, to strengthen the appeal for male participants.</p> <p>A significant achievement of the programme is the creation of "queer safe" environments in regions where such spaces are rare. While this can result in lower participation from heterosexual boys, it highlights a strategic success: providing life-changing platforms for girls and LGBTQ+ youth who face multiple vulnerabilities. Moving forward, we believe in prioritizing the quality of these inclusive environments over strict gender parity, recognizing that vulnerable youth often have fewer alternative spaces for empowerment and social participation. Nonetheless, as stated above we remain committed to the importance of working on masculinities to ensure a holistic approach.</p>
<p>5. The power of non-formal, creative methodology</p> <p>Activities that move beyond traditional classrooms and prioritize hands-on, creative expression (such as dance, graffiti, or technical workshops) are the primary drivers of youth engagement. These flexible environments allow young people to shift from passive learners to active protagonists, fostering a sense of ownership and leadership through collective problem-solving.</p>	<p>KIYO recognizes non-formal and creative methodologies as central to youth empowerment. To enhance visibility and replicability, KIYO supported partners in publishing their methodologies, such as YOUCA's peer-to-peer and SER's social circus models. Valuing this grassroots expertise is essential for expanding innovative, youth-centered approaches across different contexts.</p>

<p>6. The partner as a "safe haven".</p> <p>Partner organizations serve a dual purpose: they are not just training centers, but essential community hubs that provide emotional support and a sense of belonging. This holistic approach fills critical gaps left by formal education and family systems, creating the foundational safety and trust necessary for long-term programme engagement.</p>	<p>KIYO agrees that partners serve as vital "safe havens" of care and belonging, filling gaps left by formal systems. While trust-based relationships are fundamental to youth autonomy, they also carry risks of dependency or paternalism. To prevent over-protection or unrealistic expectations, it is essential to balance emotional support with clear institutional boundaries and strategies that promote youth co-responsibility</p>
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3) Response to recommendations

Recommendation	KIYO's position	Follow-up modalities
<p>Systematically integrate and scale practices that foster a sense of belonging: A sense of belonging –promoted through inclusive pedagogies, representation, and practical support such as food provision– is a critical enabling factor for youth engagement and learning. These elements not only address material and structural barriers to participation but also create safe and affirming environments where young people feel recognized and valued.</p>	<p>KIYO fully supports this recommendation. The Brazilian context shows that safe and affirming environments are essential for creating a sense of belonging, which is a powerful driver of youth empowerment.</p> <p>A key factor in this is representation: when youth identify with mentors who share their backgrounds or identities, it creates a powerful sense of belonging and inspiration.</p>	<p>During the final month of the programme, KIYO will work with the partners to identify and anchor successful practices while pinpointing remaining gaps to address in future initiatives.</p> <p>KIYO will also host a closing celebration to recognize shared achievements, incorporating a brief feedback survey to capture final insights on inclusion and belonging.</p> <p>Furthermore, KIYO will consolidate these learnings through sharing the final evaluation, and lessons learned with partners, donors, and the wider NGO and youth sector.</p>
<p>Improve monitoring tools to better engage youth: The use of scorecards for evaluation was perceived by many young participants as overly long and difficult to complete. Participants suggested developing simpler, faster and more engaging monitoring tools that can still generate meaningful data while respecting young people's attention spans.</p>	<p>KIYO finds this recommendation relevant.</p> <p>To improve tool accessibility and youth engagement, KIYO facilitated peer exchanges for partners to share best practices to apply the scorecards. While there is still room to simplify these tools further, these exchanges have already led to more consistent reporting and a qualitative improvement in the data collected.</p>	<p>During the last reflection workshop, KIYO will present partners with alternative tools and methods for conducting evaluations / applying scorecards that can be applied in future programmes.</p> <p>KIYO will encourage partners to involve youth directly in the design of monitoring tools to measure their empowerment, ensuring they are more engaging and better reflected in their lived realities.</p>

<p>Maintain and expand international and interregional exchange opportunities: Participants strongly valued exchange opportunities with other regions and countries. These experiences do not necessarily need to involve international travel; virtual or hybrid exchanges with youth from other countries can still generate meaningful learning.</p>	<p>KIYO agrees with this recommendation which usefully underlines that exchange opportunities do not necessarily need to involve international travel but also generate meaningful learning through virtual or hybrid exchanges.</p> <p>However, we recognize that the language barrier remains a recurring challenge, often limiting the fluidity and accessibility of these exchanges. This is a critical factor to be addressed in the design of future learning opportunities.</p>	<p>KIYO will share with partners a list of recommendations for international networks in which they can participate.</p>
<p>Strengthen the mainstreaming of gender policy across partner organisations: Gender policy should be more consistently mainstreamed across all partner organisations, with each organisation expected to establish and implement a robust gender policy. In addition, these policies and related programme activities must explicitly address masculinities in order to promote healthy relationships between boys and girls and sustain male participation.</p>	<p>KIYO accepts the recommendation and acknowledges that partners are in varying stages of institutionalizing and implementing their policies.</p> <p>Furthermore, we endorse the importance of addressing masculinities as a key step in sustaining male participation and building equitable, safe environments for all youth.</p> <p>KIYO views the work on masculinities as a vital lesson learned. While deconstructing masculinity is essential for youth, this work must extend to organizational leadership. Because male-dominated management can inadvertently act as a barrier to gender policies, sustainable change requires moving beyond technical activities to include intentional sensitization and accountability at the leadership level.</p>	<p>In the final month of the programme, KIYO will work together with the partners to develop a gender action plan for the implementation of their policies in the coming years, ensuring continuity of the work already developed.</p> <p>KIYO will share this with partners and the wider NGO sector as part of the lessons learned.</p>
<p>Develop an anti-racism policy: Race and ethnicity play a significant role in the relationships among young beneficiaries, within the leadership structures of partner</p>	<p>KIYO agrees partially with this recommendation.</p> <p>In Brazil, while formal racial indicators were absent from the initial framework, an</p>	<p>KIYO will share this recommendation with its partners and the wider NGO and youth network.</p>

<p>organisations, and in the dynamics between funders and grantees. Strengthening racial literacy should be considered essential components of youth empowerment, enabling young people to better understand and confront structural inequalities that shape their opportunities and life trajectories.</p>	<p>intersectional lens was systematically applied to our gender policy to address the inseparability of race and gender. This local approach, prioritizing 'youth in all their diversity', was instrumental in evolving KIYO's global 'Gender and Inclusion' framework.</p> <p>Since 2024, KIYO has also enriched its training by inviting external experts to address diverse themes, including trans and Black masculinities and favela-based youth work. This commitment was reinforced in 2025 by a dedicated anti-racism seminar, ensuring capacity-building remained concrete, contextualized, and focused on structural inequalities.</p> <p>KIYO agrees with the recommendation to formalize anti-racism guidance through the development of a dedicated organizational policy, including the development of indicators that specifically capture local intersectionalities and structural power dynamics.</p>	
<p>Support organisations in developing internal safeguarding policies: Partner organisations should be supported in developing and implementing internal safeguarding policies addressing sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, with the completion and adoption of such protocols established as a mandatory condition for the disbursement of funds.</p>	<p>KIYO agrees partly with this recommendation and the importance of developing and implementing safeguarding policies when working with youth.</p> <p>Capacity building on integrity and safeguarding were central themes in our partnership strategy. We acknowledge that partners are in varying stages of institutionalizing and implementing their safeguarding policies.</p>	<p>Partners will be encouraged to institutionalize steps already taken.</p>
<p>Headquarters should increase transparency in relationships with country-offices and local partners: Several participants highlighted the need for greater transparency in</p>	<p>KIYO agrees with this recommendation. At times, communication challenges regarding sudden strategic shifts and budget reallocations from HQ created pressure on</p>	<p>The teams are committed to applying these insights to strengthen the quality and impact of future partnerships.</p>

<p>communication between KIYO headquarters, regional offices and local partner organisations. Establishing clear and consistent protocols for organisational transitions and programme adjustments would help strengthen trust with partners and reduce uncertainty during periods of institutional change.</p>	<p>the relationship between partners and the local office. We recognize that more consistent alignment is necessary to navigate these transitions effectively.</p> <p>Future programmes must prioritize transparent communication and shared planning among HQ, local offices, and partners. To maintain stability, management shifts and budget adjustments should be handled through predictable, annual planning cycles.</p> <p>Furthermore, potential budget revisions linked to co-financing targets must be clearly communicated at the programme's outset to manage expectations effectively.</p>	
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4) lessons learned

The evaluation highlights several important lessons for future similar programmes:

The evaluation highlights several important lessons for future similar programmes:

- Partnerships and knowledge exchange enhance programme relevance: both national and international exchanges – whether with other organisations, communities or youth groups – were repeatedly identified as powerful learning opportunities. These interactions help participants recognise shared realities across territories and strengthen collective learning.
- Having a more participatory design process from the outset could have reduced the period of trial and error experienced during the first years. It took considerable time for partners to fully understand the programme's approach, particularly the shift away from direct service delivery towards work with third actors. Earlier joint reflection and clearer communication about the programme's Theory of Change may have avoided some of the initial resistance and operational friction.
- Leadership transitions and organisational instability can significantly affect trust and programme implementation. Changes in leadership within KIYO and complex governance relationships between partner organisations created tensions and periods of uncertainty, which at times weakened confidence and slowed decision-making.
- The programme highlighted the importance of clearly defined technical structures within partner organisations. A more structured approach to staffing – including clearly defined technical roles such as partnerships manager, coordinators and fundraiser leader – could have strengthened implementation and ensured that specific programme components, particularly work with third actors, received adequate attention and resources.
- The experience suggests that stronger incentives for innovation and proactive partnerships may be necessary. In some cases, opportunities to expand collaboration with external institutions –

such as technical education providers or vocational training centres – were not fully explored. Encouraging partners to pursue more creative partnerships could strengthen the programme’s ability to influence systems and extend its impact beyond direct beneficiaries.

5) Capitalisation / legacy statement

Although KIYO will not continue its activities in Brazil, the organisation considers this evaluation as an important contribution to collective learning within the sector.

The lessons learned will be shared with partners, donors and other actors working on youth empowerment, in order to inform the design of future interventions in similar contexts.

Signed on May 12, 2026.



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