

Proskauer Advises NGO Funding Recycling Projects in Brazil

Proskauer For Good Blog on **June 16, 2022**

For the past five months, Proskauer has acted as pro bono counsel to [Instituto Recicleiros \(Recicleiros\)](#), a Brazilian non-profit, in obtaining a grant from the Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW). AEPW is an industry-founded non-profit dedicated to funding projects to reduce, and ultimately end, plastic waste.

Brazil has long struggled to properly manage solid waste, as many cities do not provide for proper collection, treatment and disposal of solid waste. This deficiency has resulted in the proliferation of informal dump sites (*lixões*) that generate public health and environmental hazards. The recent enactment of Brazil's National Policy for Solid Waste Management requires private companies to comply with recycling requirements and integrate the use of recycled materials into their production processes. Other regulations stipulate that municipalities must ensure that there are proper disposal options, including the recycling of solid materials.

Notwithstanding these policies, the absence of funding and a complex legal framework have created challenges for many cities to implement disposal and recycling programs. As a result, many impoverished individuals have begun informally acting as waste collectors (*catadores de lixo*) in order to sell recyclable materials themselves.

Recicleiros identifies communities throughout Brazil that do not have adequate recycling programs but do have a significant number of *catadores de lixo*. *Recicleiros* incubates recycling cooperatives in these communities and trains the waste collectors to operate the cooperatives, thereby providing technical training and formal jobs to marginalized and vulnerable individuals.

Recicleiros' cooperatives act as sorting units for recyclable materials and sell the sorted materials to private companies to reuse in their production processes. Once *Recicleiros* deems these sorting units economically self-sufficient, *Recicleiros* donates the units to the members of the cooperative, thereby promoting the social and economic independence of its members.

Recicleiros also works with municipalities to ensure that proper waste management policies are implemented and regular municipal waste collection services are provided to the sorting units. Meanwhile, *Recicleiros* negotiates with private companies to purchase materials from the cooperatives, ensuring a steady demand for the cooperatives and a reliable and traceable source of recycled material for the companies. As a result of its work so far, *Recicleiros* has entered into agreements with prominent corporate clients across Brazil, including numerous multinational corporations.

With the proceeds from the AEPW grant, *Recicleiros* will expand the reach of its operations to all 27 Brazilian states, implementing sorting units in an additional 60 cities throughout the country. These new units are expected to increase the recovery value from plastic waste by segregating the collection of household waste and recycling more than 30 kilotons of plastic waste every year. These new units are expected to generate over 3,000 jobs, with a social impact on more than three million people.

The Proskauer team representing [Recicleiros](#) includes Partner Antonio Piccirillo and Associate André Perdiza.

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