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WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY
BRAZIL LEARNING INITIATIVE

1. CONTEXT

2. LEVELS OF MONITORING

3. MONITORING TOOLS

Table: Main monitoring tools of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan

CONTEXT

The "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan accepts that poverty is a multidimensional pheno-menon. Poverty is much more than people not having enough money to live on. It is also mani-fested by other types of deprivation, including food and nutrition insecurity, low education and training levels, difficulties to find a job, and precarious access to water, electricity, health and housing.

In view of the above, overcoming poverty requires the State to undertake intersectorial actions. This calls for concerted action by a large number of partners across different sectors. A total of 15 ministries are involved in the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan, as well as many other direct and indirect government agencies and entities, and stakeholders from the private and third sectors — all coordinated by the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS). These partners undertake around 100 actions that comprise the Plan. The actions are divided into three main areas of activity:

1   In addition to the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (coordinator), the Plan also involves the Ministries of Agriculture, Cities, Agrarian Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, Education, Finance, Institutional Relations, National Integration, Environment, Mines and Energy, Fishing , Planning, Social Welfare, Health, Labor; plus the Secretariats for Strategic Affairs, Human Rights, Racial Equality Policies for Women, the Presidency General-Secretariat and the Chief of Staff´s Office (*Casa Civil*).

» Guaranteed Income, involving programs related to cash transfers to increase family incomes for the immediate alleviation of extreme poverty;

» Productive Inclusion, aimed at providing opportunities for professional training, employment and income, by using specific strategies targeted at urban and rural areas;

» Access to services, to provide, expand and improve public services with a view to improving living conditions, promoting citizenship and breaking the intergenerational reproductive cycle of poverty.

The "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan is not confined to maintaining all the programs and partners involved in the above-mentioned areas of activity under one umbrella. The Plan pursues a truly intersectorial approach aimed at mobilizing the synergies between the various programs in order to save government money and, in particular, to ensure simultaneous access by the target population to the different actions.

Given the continental size of Brazil, the huge differences between the regions and the diversity of the population, an enterprise of the magnitude of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan could never be sustained without the existence of a grand federative pact to engage the 26 states, the Federal District and all the municipalities.

The Plan is thus an all-encompassing initiative, as befits a national strategic effort to overcome poverty. It is faced however with enormous challenges in terms of intersectorial and federative coordination of the actions (topics addressed in previous texts of this series), and of monitoring actions throughout the entire country. This paper focuses specifically on the monitoring aspects of the Plan. Tracking the many actions is obviously not an easy task given the size of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan: it involved developing institutional arrangements and sets of tools to adequately reflect the intersectorial and federative nature of the Plan.

This paper first looks at the three levels of monitoring involved in the Plan: monitoring macro results, monitoring the results of actions, and monitoring family trajectories. Actions monitoring embraces three interrelated monitoring mechanisms: situation rooms, budgetary identification and database cross-referencing.

2. MONITORING LEVELS

The "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan involves three main levels of monitoring. The first concerns macro results related to poverty and extreme poverty reduction. The second level monitors the results of each of the actions that comprise the Plan, while the third level tracks the individual trajectory of the families that constitute the Plan's target audience.

2.1 Monitoring macro results

The monitoring of macro results in terms of poverty and extreme poverty reduction is mainly done by analyzing data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) and the Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute (IBGE). The Consumer Expenditure Survey (POF) and the Demographic Census are also invaluable sources although, unlike the PNAD, these do not allow year-on-year monitoring.

While monitoring the macro aspects of poverty from the income standpoint is a uni-dimensional exercise, multidimensional monitoring measures are also required to assess the combined effect of the Plan´s policies on different areas, given that the Plan is a multidimensional strategy.

One of the multidimensional monitoring measures is based upon World Bank methodology that tracks both the monetary and non-monetary dimensions of poverty. The latter include education, basic services, housing, living conditions and access to goods. Another method that serves as a basic reference is the Multidimensional Poverty Index (IMP), used by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its Human Development Report. The IMP records data on multiple deprivation in three areas - education, health and living standards (it does not include income).

Another important source for "macro" monitoring is the administrative data provided by the Federal Government's Unified Registry for Social Programs on income and other dimensions of poverty (more information on the Unified Registry can be found in the relevant publications at https://wwp.org.br/pt-br/cadastro-unico-0).

2.2 Monitoring the Plan's actions

The day-to-day management of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan is the responsibility of the Special Secretariat for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (Sesep), especially created by the MDS. Certain higher level decision-making bodies also exist above the MDS, including a Steering Committee and an Executive Group, both composed of representatives from the various ministries involved in the Plan. Meanwhile, the Interministerial Monitoring Group comprises other representatives (not the ministers themselves) whose function is to consolidate the actions, define targets and monitor the results of actions that have been implemented. Sesep submits consolidated progress reports to the above bodies every six months.

When the partner institutions first became associated with the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan, they already possessed their own mechanisms for monitoring actions. The Plan had no reason to duplicate these existing monitoring arrangements. As from 2011, its function was to closely monitor the development of the actions from a purely 'poverty' standpoint, comparing the results obtained by the partner institutions with the targets of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan in terms of actions implementation, expansion, articulation and enhancement.

This routine monitoring is intensively done by Sesep in the situation rooms. Sesep also tracks the performance of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan from the federal budget standpoint, and oversees the Unified Registry data that is cross-referenced with data from other administrative records.

a) Situation Rooms

Sesep established thematic situation rooms to monitor the actions of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan that coincide with those of other federal government agencies. The situation rooms involve regular meetings attended by representatives of the relevant partner agencies.

PAC Inspiration

The Growth Acceleration Program (PAC) is a federal government program aimed at boosting the growth of the Brazilian economy through investment in infrastructure works such as ports, roads, airports, sewage networks, energy generation, waterways and railways. Given that the PAC was also a major intersectorial strategy, the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan was inspired by the PAC´s use of situation rooms as one of its monitoring mechanisms. The situation rooms comprise groups of government officials appointed to monitor the actions of a particular sector. Each situation room undertakes fiscal and financial monitoring of action schedules, with a view to ensuring compliance with deadlines and results, as well as to suggest ways of overcoming obstacles to appropriate performance. The PAC situation rooms monitor the different stages of a project from beginning to end. Ongoing monitoring can detect possible problems that need to be resolved to maintain the pace of project implementation. The situation rooms thus serve as a core point for managing critical situations and informing decision-making.

The situation rooms (one for each area, and consisting of a different intersectorial team for each room) enable detailed monitoring of the pertinent actions and a survey of constraints, delays, possible risks, and results achieved. The meetings can be held on a monthly or bimonthly basis depending on the type of action. The data collected in the situation rooms underpin Plan decision making.

Administrative monitoring of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" actions involves the following data flow: sectorial ministries receive data on the actions from the relevant implementing parties; staff evaluate the consistency of the data; the data is then consolidated; and, finally, it is transmitted to the situation rooms of the MDS and other ministries.

The "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan initially worked with 13 situation rooms[2]. However, the need for situation rooms was waived for some of the Plan´s programs, either because the programs were focused entirely on people in a situation of poverty, as in the case of the *Bolsa Família* Program, or because programs could be organized and monitored through bilateral contact, avoiding the need to assemble different stakeholders in situation rooms (e.g. the *Luz para Todos* (Light for All) program).

In due course, as the Plan matured, certain automatic monitoring routines were introduced. This development, together with the good results obtained in bilateral meetings, avoided the need for some situation rooms (education, health and social assistance, etc.).

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2   Literacy training and full-time education, social assistance, *Brasil Carinhoso* program, solidarity economy, entrepreneurship, professional training, health, *Agua para Todos* (Water for All) program, support for production and marketing (family farms), Agrarian Reform settlers and acampados, indigenous peoples, and the *Bolsa Verde* (Green Grant) forest conservation program .

b) Budgetary identification of actions

The Budget Plan (OP) is a managerial-type budget tracking procedure which allows different actions to be aggregated under the same federal budget tracker. This facilitates the consolidation of financial data related to planning and project implementation by different agencies which need to be monitored centrally, as is the case of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan.

To make monitoring of the actions more efficient from the budgetary standpoint, a specific OP called "Brazil Without Poverty" was created to monitor actions carried out by several different agencies. The use of this budget tracker makes it possible to follow up OP actions from the time of the initial proposal submitted by the responsible agency through to the actual release of funds.

In addition to standardizing the tracker (which relieves different agencies from using different ways of identifying actions that belong to the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan), OP identification makes it possible to automatically detect requests for inclusion, exclusion or modification of the budgetary value of the actions identified with the "Brazil Without Poverty" tracker.

It is worth noting that all the actions under the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan are identified in the budget in the above way. The reason for this is that, in view of the universal nature of some of the actions, they have to cover the entire population in need of services. This population already includes people in situations of extreme poverty (whether or not the action contains a specifically-designed component aimed at this audience). This is, for example, the case of the health and education actions. On the other hand, some programs that are identified in the budget as belonging to the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan target audiences that are not 100% in 'extreme' poverty. This is the case of the *Bolsa Familia* Program, directed to both poor and extremely poor families, given that the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan is not confined to the population in extreme poverty.

The above-mentioned budget refers to the federal government budget, and therefore does not include the expenditure of the States, municipalities and other stakeholders in the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan.

c) Database cross-referencing

Another method used to monitor the actions of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan (with regard to its focus on the poorest population) is to cross-reference the data from the Unified Registry database with the databases of other administrative registries. One example is the data on electricity connections for rural households in the context of the *Luz para Todos* program run by the Ministry of Mines and Energy. Cross-referencing between the databases of the electricity utility companies (responsible for implementing the program) and those of the Unified Registry made it possible to ensure that the program actually benefited the country's poorest families. A similar approach involved the Unified Registry and other programs such as *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (popular housing) and guided productive microcredit programs.

Monitoring the actions under the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan enables the MDS to disclose half-yearly consolidated national results in its *Cadernos de Resultados.* This makes it easier for the stakeholder partners and the general public to monitor the performance of the Plan. The data in the *Cadernos* is also sent electronically every month to the Plan' s partners and others interested in the subject.

2.3 Monitoring family trajectories

In addition to providing information on the macro results on poverty reduction and to enable assessments to be made on targeted "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" actions, the Unified Registry also makes it possible to monitor the trajectory of each family registered in the system.

The Unified Registry provides comprehensive data on each enrolled family. This information, updated at least every two years, records the names of family members, their addresses, the educational status of each member, their jobs and income, the features of their homes, and many other details. Using these data, several programs aimed at the poorest sector of the population makes it possible to identify the target audiences and select the people eligible to benefit from such programs.

The wide range of data contained in the Unified Registry enables monitoring, on the one hand, of the programs to which families have or do not have access and, on the other hand, to evaluate the effects of the programs on their lifestyles in the housing and education areas, etc. It is also possible to detect whether families have simultaneous access to several programs and the effect of these on the families' trajectories.

3. MONITORING TOOLS

The monitoring strategy of "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan was designed to address different audiences. It was therefore necessary to identify different applications for systematizing the indicators. The monitoring indicators used in the Plan' s IT monitoring tools are aimed at users such as managers at the three levels of government, academics, representatives of the media and organized civil society, and ordinary citizens.

The table below summarizes the main computer-based monitoring tools used in the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan, their functions and their user market.

Main monitoring tools in the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" **Plan**

TOOL	FUNCTION	MAIN USERS	DETAILS
Federal Government Unified Registry for Social Programs	Monitoring macro results Monitoring focused on specific actions Monitoring family trajectories	Federal, State and municipal managers	See material on the Unified Registry available on the WWP website
MONIB - Monitoring Panel of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan	Monitoring macro results Monitoring specific actions at national, regional and State levels	national coordination of the Plan academia, the media, organized civil society and ordinary citizens	Key dashboards regularly updated
"'Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Portals in your state/ municipality'	Monitoring specific actions at State and municipal levels	municipal and State managers national coordination of the Plan academia, the media , organized civil society and ordinary citizens	See details below

Given that it is important to engage the states and municipalities in order to ensure the success of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan, this paper highlights the tools that have been especially developed for them.

3.1 "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan Portal in Your Municipality'

www.brasilsemmiseria.gov.br/municipios

The success of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan depends largely on the alignment of policies between the federal, state and municipal governments. The efforts of the three federative entities are likely to have more impact if they are combined rather than piecemeal. The efforts thus gain in terms of scale, consistency and value for money. In addition, managers at the point of delivery are better able to address the very different forms in which poverty is manifested in different parts of the country.

To assist local governments to monitor the evolution of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan in their areas, the MDS developed a tool containing key data on the performance of the Plan's actions in each of the country´s 5,570 municipalities. This tool assembles data from different sources in the same virtual environment.

Updated every two months, the "'Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" *Plan in Your Municipality Reports*' are bulletins tailored especially to each municipality (city or town), containing analytical articles and graphs. These documents are a powerful instrument for portraying the situation in a given municipality. By consolidating information from different sources in a single document — simple, user-friendly, complete and accessible — the bulletins assist local managers to monitor and target investments for the most disadvantaged areas in their domain. Given that these bulletins can be freely accessed, the tool also contributes to ensuring

the transparency of government actions by enabling citizens to check and monitor the performance status of official policies.

The original idea was to present the reports as a series of tables. However, many users in the municipalities might not have fully understood the underlying significance of the figures. It was decided therefore to prepare a report with short texts that would clearly explain the various programs and their key indicators. The reports generally make it possible to compare the results of the city or town with national averages, and include recommendations about the measures that can be taken in the event of results falling short of expectations.

If the municipal manager is not aware of how the actions of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan mentioned in the bulletins actually work, he can access, in the actual web portal, information sheets describing each of the main programs covered by the Plan. These include explanations of the goals and operations of the programs, their target audiences and participation criteria, the ways in which municipal governments can join the program, and suggestions of how to provide or enhance the programs in the municipality.

Operational aspects of the construction of the portal

The data and indicators that comprise the '"Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan in Your Municipality Report' and the portal monitoring panel are stored in a large MDS databank. This contains national, regional and municipal data, employing a data extraction, generation and indicator-loading methodology in an accessible and jargon-free interface, thereby facilitating the routines involved in inputting data into the bank and ensuring more efficient content analysis.

The databank contains more than 70 indicators and variables from at least 20 different official sources that collect the data and transmit them to the MDS for systematization and bimonthly updated dissemination.

To gather periodically updated data in reports customized for each Brazilian municipality, Sesep was able to take advantage of the expertise of the Secretariat for Evaluation and Information Management (Sagi) and the MDS. Sagi's capability to operate very large data banks, aggregating and disaggregating data according to the requirements of MDS management, was crucial to ensuring the web portal's viability.

To ensure that this tool is satisfactorily updated, data flows were established, as well as the indicator to be loaded. Some data flows involving MDS responsible departments are already in use. Others referring to programs executed by other ministries are coordinated by Sesep, which transmits the data to Sagi on a monthly basis to be processed, and to generate the indicators for feeding into the databank.

3.2 "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Portal in Your State'

www.brasilsemmiseria.gov.br/estados

After the release of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Portal in Your Municipality, State secretaries and other managers in the states reported that the tool was important for their work. However, those operating in states with a large number of municipalities complained of the problems involved in having to view hundreds of individual municipal reports in order to produce an overview of the situation in their particular states.

These complaints led to the decision to introduce a web portal for the states, also developed jointly by Sesep and Sagi. This new portal, as with that prepared for the municipalities, contains consolidated data tailored for each state and updated every two months. Furthermore, to enable quicker evaluations of the situations in different municipalities, the portal contains spreadsheets with data on the main programs, disaggregated by city or town. This enables the user to compare results between the different municipalities, to prepare regionalized diagnostic reports and to plan the management of actions throughout the state.

Both these web portals (states and municipalities) have made an important contribution as tools to support decision-making. By arming managers with key information for meeting their commitments to overcome poverty, the portals have enhanced their potential and capacity to transform the social situation on the ground. Essential data is now available to those managing basic operational procedures for them to ensure successful performance. Meanwhile, the more strategic manager now has indicators at his fingertips that allow him to fully monitor the macro-processes involved.

Monitoring Panel

The *Monitoring Panel* was subsequently included in the portals. This panel represents an advantage over the 'reports' because it enables managers and others not only to see the results of the programs but also to view their development over time. The historic series of Plan indicators allows users to prepare more accurate appraisals. It also enables them to detect possible obstacles blocking the actions and to improve actions at the local level, as well as to ensure better quality monitoring and planning. Fed by the same databank used for the portal reports, the Monitoring Panel also facilitates comparisons of the municipal data with the data on the states, the region or the entire country.