

*Following the introductory texts on conditionalities in Newsletter 3, this series takes this topic a step further by presenting the main results and impacts of the conditionalities monitoring process. The series also highlights the consequences of non-compliance with the conditionalities, and takes a look at the social work that has been undertaken with families benefiting from the conditional cash transfers under the Bolsa Família Program (PBF).*

*The first of the four texts presents and discusses the monitoring of health and education conditionalities based on time series evidence. The second text analyzes non-compliance with the conditionalities and its consequences. The third and fourth texts record the main impacts of the education and health conditionalities on low-income families.*

In order to contribute to breaking the poverty cycle from one generation to the next, the conditionalities aim to ensure access to social rights by targeting the structural causes of poverty. Seen from this angle, poverty is not simply a question of shortage of money. It has other facets; it is, in short, a multidimensional phenomenon.

Therefore, monitoring school attendance, the health agenda and detecting vulnerable situations - all linked to conditional cash transfers - is a crucial ingredient in the strategy of the Bolsa Família Program for dealing with poverty.

Monitoring conditionalities in the Bolsa Família Program involves periodic reports being produced on beneficiary households' access to basic public education and health services. Analyzing this information enables prompt action to be taken in the event of vulnerable family situations arising from non-compliance with the conditionalities. These analyses can pinpoint individual situations linked to access to education and whether the health agenda is being followed by children and pregnant women.

Over the years that the Program has been in operation, monitoring has been enhanced by expanding the coverage and production of more accurate information through the development of information systems for collecting, recording and classifying data, and the building of conditionalities management networks that link the Bolsa Família Program to the areas of education, health and social assistance - all of which has generated a more effective monitoring process.

Managers responsible for managing conditionalities currently operate in all Brazilian municipalities. Most of the PBF target population is now monitored, and the information obtained from the monitoring process serves to strengthen and coordinate sectorial policies for the poorer sectors of the population.

## Education Monitoring

The monitoring of school attendance is one of the key initiatives of the Bolsa Família Program for halting the cycle of intergenerational poverty, by contributing to scaling up access and permanent school attendance by children and adolescents from PBF beneficiary families. The overall goal is to produce a more educated and better trained generation of young people capable of more fully exercising citizenship and entering the job market.

The Ministry of Education (MEC) is responsible for managing school attendance monitoring five times a year (see Newsletter 3, Text 4). This is a major operation which involves bimonthly recording of school attendance of over 17 million children and adolescents in around 160,000 schools in Brazil's 5,570 municipalities. Attendance recording is done by the School Atten-

dance Monitoring System/MEC (Sistema Presença). In addition to professional educators in every school, this process directly involves around 40,000 operators charged with collecting and transmitting to the Sistema Presença individual PBF student's attendance records and with explaining the reasons, informed by the school, for insufficient attendance.

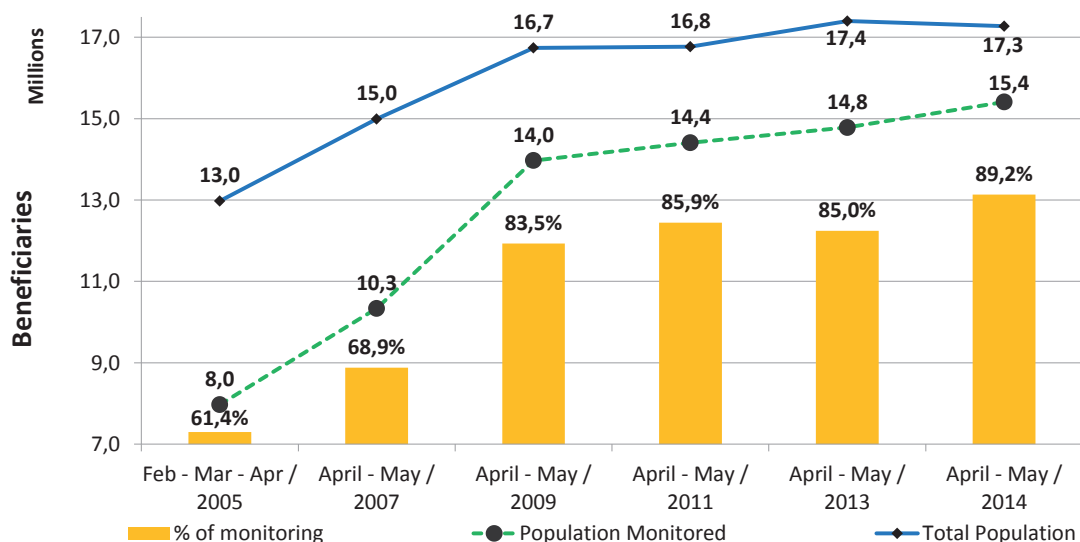
The education information on PBF beneficiaries that is needed for identifying the school population to be monitored is obtained from the Unified Registry (see Newsletter 3, Text 5).

The target population for monitoring education conditionalities has expanded during the lifetime of the Bolsa Família Program, due especially to the expansion of the 6-15 year old range to the 6-17 year age range as from May 2008. Together with this widening of the target age range, the monitoring process has been gradually improved and refined over the past 11 years of the PBF's existence. At present, the education conditionality status of around 90% of the profiled population is monitored every two months. Monitoring for the months of April and May 2014, for example, provided information for the Federal Government on the school attendance of 15.4 million students (i.e. 89.2% of the total). Figure 1 shows how the monitoring of the education conditionality has evolved, highlighting the months of April and May, since February 2005. The total percentage monitored increased from 61.4% to 89.2%, despite the considerable increase of the population to be monitored.

The Sistema Presença was launched in December 2006 by the Ministry of Education to replace the first system developed by the Federal Mortgage Bank (CEF). The new system allowed the individual monitoring of school attendance, strengthened the procedures involved and contributed to the formation of a structured network of State and Municipal stakeholders, which is responsible for the daily monitoring of school attendance by student beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Program.

This system enables greater capillarity by the school attendance monitoring network and timely response to requests for information, as well as promoting good management of the monitoring process by taking into account, through friendly interface, of the different circumstances of Brazilian municipalities.

**Chart 1 - Total (in millions) and percentage of students with school attendance information**



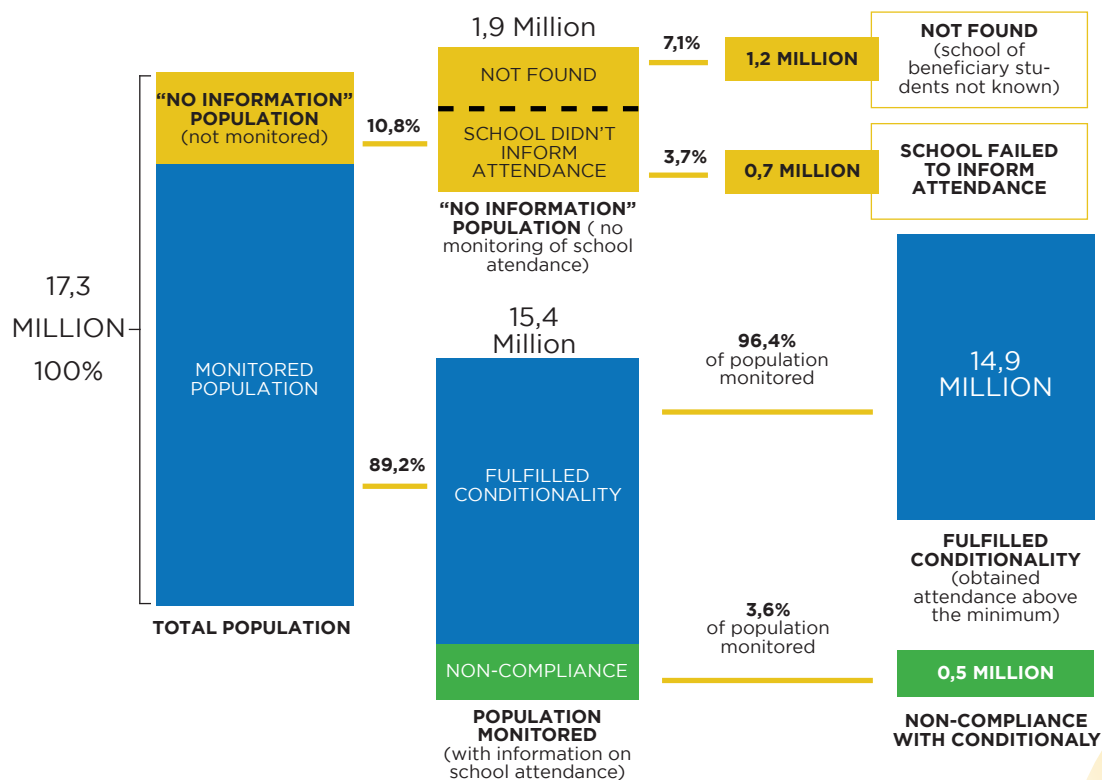
Source: Conditionalities System / SICON

As noted in Chart 1, school attendance data has not been collected from all the PBF beneficiary students, i.e. they are not monitored. Beneficiary students frequently change schools and these changes are often not updated in time in the Unified Registry, which makes it difficult or even impossible to monitor them<sup>1</sup>. It is estimated that between 20% and 25% of the students change school every year - either because they have completed the school year or because their families have moved home. In cases where the relevant information is out of date or non-existent in the Unified Registry, the PBF student is required by the School Attendance Network to update his/her attendance record in the System. If the student cannot be located he/she is recorded as “not found”.

In addition to the “not found” entries, there are other situations in which attendance records are not registered in the Sistema Presença. Situations occasionally arise where, although correct information on the beneficiary’s school exists, the student’s attendance record is not informed due to technical and operational difficulties encountered by the school or the local municipal management. The target population involved in these situations is recorded in the system as “school did not report attendance”. This segment of the school population is placed in the “not found”, “no information” attendance monitoring category.

As shown in Figure 1 below, the school attendance monitoring exercise for the months of April and May 2014, revealed that 1.9 million student PBF beneficiaries (10.8% of the total) were in the “no information” category. Of these, 1.2 million were “not found”, and 0.7 million had no information on them because “the school did not report attendance.”

**Figure 1 - Population detected by bimonthly April / May 2014 school attendance monitoring**



<sup>1</sup> Many beneficiaries are monitored even without the information from the school being updated in the Unified Registry. In the absence of such information the school attendance monitoring network can obtain it in the education network and update it in the Sistema Presença, thus making monitoring viable.

For the “no information” beneficiaries, no data exists to verify whether the conditionalities were complied with or not and therefore the effects of non-compliance (warning, blocked, suspension or cancellation of benefit) for this group are not applied. However, this type of situation needs to be closely watched, particularly regarding the “not found” beneficiaries, since the lack of information may possibly mask vulnerabilities that cause truancy or drop-out.

In 2013, the number of “not found” students declined substantially as the result of a joint effort by the Bolsa Família Program and the Ministry of Education involving crosschecking information from the Basic Education School Census database<sup>2</sup> with the Sistema Presença and the Unified Registry databases. As a result, the percentage of Bolsa Família students monitored in the last two bimonthly periods of 2013 increased for the first time, reaching 92.2% in October/November (5% higher than in the same period in 2012). This excellent outcome reinforced the decision to incorporate database cross-referencing on an annual basis in the monitoring of the education conditionality.

## Health Monitoring

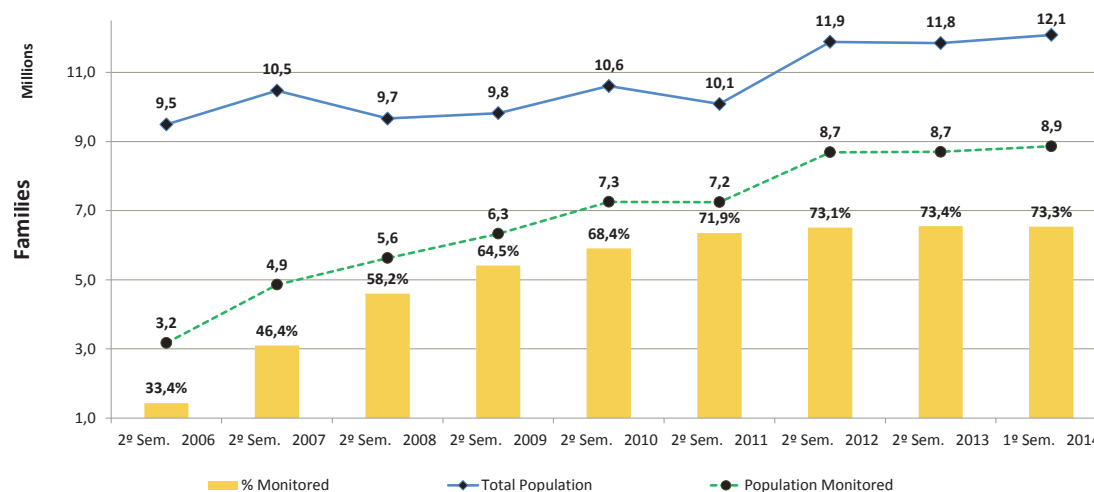
The health conditionalities target children and pregnant women. Lack of access to health services in these critical phases of the life cycle constrains physical and social development, leading to an endless cycle of intergenerational poverty. The results of health conditionalities monitoring indicate that access to health services by PBF beneficiaries is increasing.

Each semester the Ministry of Health uses the Unified Registry to identify the target population for health conditionality monitoring. Over 12 million families are eligible for monitoring in each 6-month period. This universe comprises households with children aged up to seven years old, and those with women aged between 14 and 44 (to facilitate identification of pregnant women).

Health conditionalities monitoring and recording is done twice a year under the aegis of the Ministry of Health’s Bolsa Família Program Health Management System. Health conditionalities monitoring involves health teams visiting the homes of beneficiary families or families presenting themselves at the health services. With the expansion of the Bolsa Família Program and improvements in monitoring coverage since 2012, over 8 million families are now tracked every six months by the health teams.

<sup>2</sup> The School Census is a nationwide statistical-educational data survey undertaken every year by the Ministry of Education. This is the main tool for collecting and recording data on basic education (schools, enrollment, teachers, turnover and education outcomes).

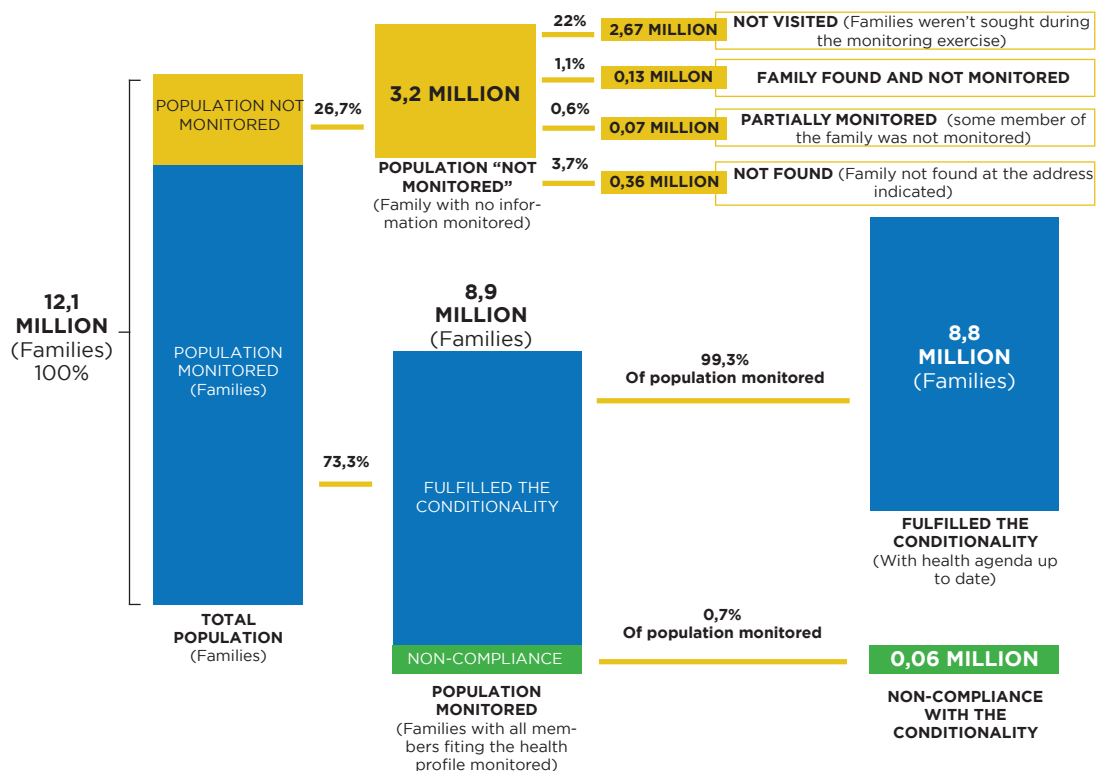
**Chart 2 - Total (in millions) and percentage of families covered by health monitoring**



Source: Conditionalities System / SICON

Health conditionalities monitoring has progressed substantially in recent years. The target population monitored virtually tripled between 2006 and 2014 - from approximately 3 million to around 9 million families (33.4% in 2006 to 73.3% in the first semester of 2014). The increased percentage of monitoring occurred despite the significant expansion of the PBF, with the number of households eligible for health conditionality monitoring increasing from 9.5 million in 2006 to 12.1 million in 2014. It is worth noting that the identification and monitoring of pregnant women PBF beneficiaries expanded from 67,000 in the second semester of 2006 to 209,000 in the first semester of 2014. A key ingredient in the increased tracking of pregnant women was the introduction of a financial inducement for them as from the second semester of 2011.

**Figure 2 – Population covered by health conditionality monitoring in the 1st semester of 2014**



Source: Bolsa Família Program in Health System / MS

One of the factors that influenced progress was that the Ministry of Health acknowledged the importance of monitoring health conditionalities and in 2012 began to include the percentage of monitored PBF families in the indicators used for regulating the transfer of funds to municipalities.

However, around 3 million families are still not monitored for health conditionalities. This is because they have not been located due to communication errors between actual data collection and notifying the Bolsa Família Program in Health System, or to outdated addresses, or to the beneficiaries' inability to access health services in the municipalities where they live. The percentage of "not found" families (i.e. those not living at the address recorded in the system) declined from around 6% in 2009 to 3% in 2014 (a decrease of 44%). Over the same period, the percentage of the population not visited by health service staff decreased from 29% in 2009 to 22% in 2014. Although there has been an increase in monitoring, significant challenges remain related to health services coverage and to problems associated with inputting data in the System, especially in the big cities.