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BRAZIL LEARNING INITIATIVE



WWP Series: M&E Use Reports

*The National Survey on the
Homeless Population*

WWP Series: M&E Use Reports¹

The National Survey on the Homeless Population²

OBJECTIVE: Conduct a census and mapping the socioeconomic profile of the homeless population in Brazil.

DATE: Executed between 2007 and 2008.

DESIGN AND SUPERVISION: Secretariat for Evaluation and Information Management (SAGI) in partnership with the National Secretariat of Social Assistance (SNAS), both from the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS).

ACHIEVEMEN: Meta Institute for Opinion Research.

USE: Support the development of the National Policy for the Homeless Population (Decree 7.053 / 2009) and the Supplementary Form 2 of the Unified Registry for Social Programs of the Federal Government (see other developments of this paper in the last section).

1 Series of reports regarding the use of evaluation research and tools produced by the Ministry of Social Development (MDS/ Brazil).

2 Text written in 2015 by the Analyst for Social Policies of the MDS Roberta Cortizo.

“On August 19, 2004 occurred a fact that will never be forgotten. An episode that became known as the Massacre of the Praça da Sé, where seven homeless people were brutally murdered for no reason that would justify such cowardice. The news ran the country causing great social unrest, but that was it. What could be drawn from this tragedy is the positive visibility to the large number of people living on the streets to fend for themselves without any support or protection. The Massacre of the Praça da Sé will always be remembered with great sadness by all of us, homeless and former homeless people, and is a milestone in our struggle for rights (...)”³

Background: From the massacre of the *Praça da Sé* to the National Survey on the Homeless Population

The history of the National Survey on the Homeless Population is intrinsically linked to the fight for the rights of homeless people of big cities. After the huge media coverage of the massacre in the *Praça da Sé*, the government turned its attention to this group, historically

forgotten in Brazil. Until then, there was no federal public policies directed exclusively to this population, which was residually and precariously attended by some social policies⁴. Starting 2004, there was a confluence of actions directed to homeless people in Brazil:

- Creation of the National Homeless Movement (MNPR) in 2004: This was the 1st time that the homeless population discussed their demands directly with the government and researchers, making the MNPR a protagonist in the defense of rights for the homeless.
- First National Meeting of the Homeless (2005), organized by the National Secretariat of Social Assistance (SNAS/MDS): with the presence of social movements and managers of social assistance, guidelines, strategies and recommendations for the formulation of public policies for this population were discussed in Brasilia. As a priority action, the importance of studies to quantify and characterize the people on the streets, in order to guide the development and implementation of specific policies was highlighted.
- 1st normative achievement for the homeless population (2005): Article 23 of the Organic Law of Social Assistance (LOAS) was amended to add the service of assistance to homeless people (Law 11.258/2005).
- GTI Creation – Cross-ministry Working Group (2006): coordinated by the MDS and composed of representatives from six other ministries, the MNPR and other institutions related to the theme, GTI’s scope was the development of public policy proposals for the homeless population, with cross-sectoral actions in the areas of social assistance, health, education, labor, justice, among others.

3 NATIONAL HOMELESS MOVEMENT, 2009, p. 17.

4 GONELLI; CHAGAS, 2009, p. 223.

The Research

The initiative for the National Survey on the Homeless Population resulted from the demands of social movements, identified in the First National Meeting on Homeless Population, and the discussions of the Inter-ministry Working Group. On more than one occasion, MNPR's representatives argued that a census survey



The target population of the research was composed of people over 18 years living on the streets. The research covered 71 Brazilian cities (23 capitals and other 48 municipalities with more than 300,000 citizens).

5 Homeless population is the heterogeneous population group that has in common: the extreme poverty, broken or weakened family ties and the lack of regular conventional housing, and that uses public places and degraded areas as living space and livelihood, temporarily or permanently, as well as public hostel units for temporary overnight or as temporary housing (BRAZIL, 2009).

6 Brazilian capitals Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte and Recife were not surveyed because they had recently conducted similar researches. Porto Alegre requested its exclusion from the research due to the fact that it was conducting a municipal study simultaneously to the research commissioned by the MDS.

7 According to Sposati (2009, p. 210), "It was identified that the homeless population reached almost 50 thousand inhabitants. This amount could be achieved when summing 31,922 people located in the streets by the national census with 13,915 registered by the census in the four cities. You can extend the total of 45,837 to about 50,000 homeless people considering that, out of these four cities, São Paulo released records from 2003 (...) and the censuses of Recife and Belo Horizonte were from 2005."

would help to break the "social invisibility" of decades, thereby contributing to the rescue of a citizen condition, with access to basic health rights, education, social assistance, etc.

In this sense, the research was a collective construction, designed with the objective of quantifying and investigating the socio-economic characteristics of homeless people, with the main focus on the formulation of public policies aimed at this population. Through a cooperation agreement between the MDS and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), SAGI launched a public selection process in 2006 for the preparation of the National Survey on the Homeless Population, which was performed between 2007 and 2008 by the Meta Institute.

The target population of the research was composed of people over 18 years living in the streets⁵. The survey covered 71 Brazilian cities, including 23 capitals and other 48 municipalities with more than 300,000 citizens⁶. The research identified a contingent of 31,922 homeless adults in the studied municipalities, besides raising socioeconomic data of the respondents. Including the results of the counts carried out in all four capitals, which were not involved in the MDS's research, there was an amount of 45,837 homeless people⁷.



70.9% of the homeless people surveyed performs some type of remunerated activity.

The research faced several challenges that required the development of specific strategies and methodologies. An initial problem was the lack of a fixed residence and the high mobility of this population within cities. Typically, the collection of census data is performed in domiciles, so the homeless were not included.

How to collect data from a homeless population? Based on the experience of the four municipalities that had done this population count⁸, some criteria were defined for the localization and identification of homeless people. Among the specificities of this identification, there was the need to produce fieldwork in the evening, when generally these individuals are in the place they will remain for the night. The mobility of this population, including at nighttime, requires that the information collection is done within the shortest possible time in order to minimize double counting. In order to facilitate the approach, the entire data collection process was performed with the participation of social movements and organizations working with the homeless population⁹.

To define the methodology, workshops were held with researchers, social assistance managers, representatives of movements and associations connected to the cause. Finally, a pre-test of the data collection forms was applied in three capitals. The training of interviewers was done with the participation of representatives of MNPR and other associations, which explained the habits, language, approach manners, codes of conduct and characteristics of this population. Another key activity was the mapping of places where the population would remain during the night, which had the support of representatives of movements and associations working with the homeless¹⁰.

⁸ See footnote 6.

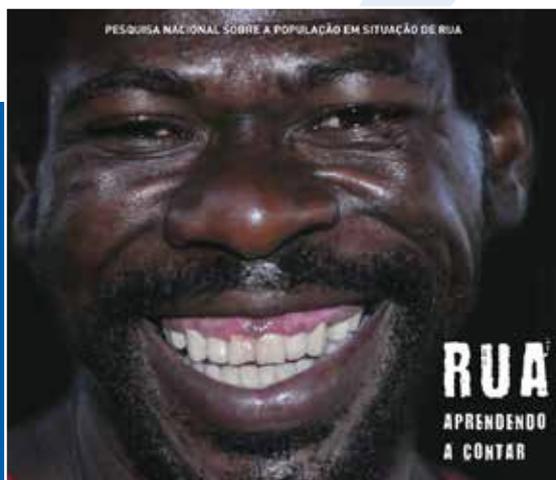
⁹ VEIGA, 2009, p. 17.

¹⁰ SILVEIRA, 2009, p. 41.

The research collected basic data of all interviewees and conducted a more detailed research of 10% of the population¹¹. These identified information about the main reasons to live on the street, forms of income, time spent on the street, education, family ties, access to social programs, possession of documentation, health and hygiene conditions, among others.

The research team was composed of 55 engineers, 269 supervisors and 926 interviewers, totaling 1,250 professionals. 147 homeless or former homeless people and 86 professionals

working with this population supported the fieldwork. In total, 1,483 people worked in the data collection activities. A broad effort was needed in order to locate the various places where this population lived, including sidewalks, squares, marquees, bridges, alleys, disabled railways, roads, ports, underground galleries, tunnels, abandoned buildings, among others. The active participation of homeless, former homeless people and social educators contributed to the proper approach of interviewees and this resulted in a small rate of refusal to answer the questionnaire (13.4%).



ACCESS THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE HOMELESS POPULATION:

[http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/sagirms/simulacao/sum_executivo/pdf/sumario_24.pdf]

ACCESS THE STREET JOURNAL: LEARNING TO COUNT: NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE HOMELESS POPULATION AT:

[<http://acervodigital.mds.gov.br/xmlui/handle/123456789/56>]

¹¹ The field survey was census (questionnaire with 19 questions) and sampling (questionnaire with 62 questions). A sample of 10.4% of the universe was selected using systematic random sampling technique (BRAZIL, 2008).

Main Results

- 31,922 homeless adults, which is equivalent to 0.061% of the population of the municipalities surveyed.
- 82% of homeless people are men.
- 53% of the interviewees have between 25 and 44 years¹².
- 67% of people declared their skin color as brown or black. This proportion is much higher among the homeless population than in the general population (44.6%) at the time of the survey.
- 76.1% of interviewees have always lived in the city where they live now or in nearby municipalities, contradicting the myth that people on the street are from other states / regions.
- 70.9% work and perform some sort of remunerated activity¹³. Only 15.7% of interviewees asked for money as the primary means of survival. This also goes against the common perception that homeless people are composed exclusively of “panhandlers” or “beggars”.
- 52.6% receive between R\$ 20.00 and R\$ 80.00 per week.
- 1.9% of interviewees said they were working with a formal contract.
- 24.8% of homeless people do not have an identification document, making it difficult to obtain formal employment, access to government services and programs.
- Most do not have access to government programs: 88.5% said they did not receive any benefit from the government. Among the received benefits, the following were highlighted: retirement (3.2%), Bolsa Família Program (Family Grant Program) (2.3%) and the Continuous Welfare Benefit for the Elderly and Disabled (1.3%).
- 63.5% have not completed the 1st grade; 95% were not studying at the time of the survey.

¹² Only people with 18 years or more were interviewed.

¹³ Of these activities, we highlight: recyclable materials collector (27.5%), car washers (14.1%), construction workers (6.3%), cleaning (4.2%) and porter / stevedore (3.1%).

24.8% of the homeless people interviewed do not have identification document, making it difficult to obtain formal employment, Access to public services and government programs.



Consequences

The research created an objective and detailed picture of the homeless population in Brazil, contributing to the formulation of specific strategies and policies, more adherent to the reality experienced by this group. With access to more information about the social conditions, characteristics and weaknesses of these people, research could help create strategies for reducing prejudice by society. Deconstructing the myth that homeless people are “people who come from far away, do nothing, are only asking for money” is a key step to give back to these people the dignity and rights of Brazilian citizens.

After the research, several actions were promoted aimed at homeless people. In 2009, article 60 of Decree-Law 3.688/1941 was re-

voked, which considered begging a misdemeanor, subject to imprisonment of 15 days to 3 months¹⁴. Afterwards, Decree 7.053/2009 established the National Policy for the Homeless Population, which seeks to guarantee various rights to this segment, especially:

- To ensure broad, simplified and secure access to public health policies, education, social security, social assistance, housing, security, culture, sports, leisure, work and income;
- Provide access for homeless people to social security benefits, social assistance and income transfer programs;
- Implement specialized reference centers for assistance for homeless populations, under the Special Protection of the Unified Social Assistance System;
- Establish the National Center of human rights for the homeless;
- Provide professional training programs for homeless people; and
- Establish a cross-sectoral committee for checking and monitoring of the national policy for homeless people.

In the National Typification of Social Assistance Services¹⁵, services to the homeless population is inserted in Special Social Protection. In this service, specialized services are provided for homeless people, social approach and hosting services. Between 2011 and 2014, the number of Specialized Reference Centers

¹⁴ Law 11.983/2009 revoked the Decree-Law above.

¹⁵ National Typification of Social Assistance Services was approved in 2009 by the National Council of Social Assistance (Resolution 109).

for the Homeless Populations (POP centers) increased by 95% from 90 to 215 units. In 2014, 80% of POP Centers directed homeless people to professional courses¹⁶.

There has also been many advances in the income transfer area. In 2009, the Supplemental Form 2 was finalized for conducting interviews with homeless families for their inclusion in the Unified Register. The research supported the elaboration of the questions of the Supplemental Form 2, as well as its use in the Unified Register' interviewees' training activities. In the course about the registration form, there is a specific class – with an instructional video and a Registration Guide for Homeless People – in order to explain the form of the differentiated registration and educate participants on this matter.

In the last three years, the number of homeless families registered in the Unified Registry has increased about six times. Since the registration of these families is done in conjunction with the

Social Assistance area in the municipalities, it is possible to relate the expansion of POP centers to the higher number of registered families¹⁷. In March 2016, there were 51,474 homeless families registered¹⁸. Of these, 41,781 received the Bolsa Família (81.2% of the registered population)¹⁹.

Questions from the Supplemental Form 2 of the Unified Registry, exclusively directed to homeless people.

16 BRAZIL, 2015.

17 BRAZIL, 2014.

18 The Unified Registry has as the basic unit of reference the family, being allowed the possibility of single-person households, that is, composed of only one person. 97% of homeless families in the Unified Registry are single-person (reference May/2015).

19 Data extracted from the Social Information Report (<http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/sagi/RIV3/geral/relatorio.php#>).

Below we highlight other achievements of recent years:

- I. 1. Ordinance 122/2011, issued by the Ministry of Health, which defines the operation of the Street Health Post, in order to deal with different problems and health needs of the

homeless population²⁰. Over a hundred Street Health Posts are already operating in Brazil;

II. Ordinance 940/2011, issued by the Ministry of Health, which regulates the National Health Card System, allowing access of the homeless population to the Brazilian National Health System without proof of residence;

III. Ordinance 595/2013, issued by the Ministry of Cities, which establishes the process of selection of beneficiaries of the Minha Casa, Minha Vida Program (“My House, My Life”), establishing additional criteria of social vulnerability to prioritize homeless people;

IV. Notice 3/2013, issued by the Ministry of Labor and Employment, supports the solidarity economy as a socioeconomic inclusion strategy and autonomy of the homeless population²¹.

V. Ordinance 693/2014, issued by the Presidential Secretariat for Human Rights, which establishes rules and implementation criteria and monitoring of the National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (Pronatec), creating a dedicated mode to homeless people, Pronatec Pop Rua²².

Much progress has been made in recent years in public policies aimed at homeless people in Brazil. Certainly, there is still much more to improve. Today, so that the massacre in Praça da Sé is not forgotten nor repeated, August 19th was established as the National Day for Fight for the Homeless.

20 The Street Health Posts are composed of professionals from various fields (doctors, psychologists, social workers, etc.). The activities of these teams are performed on-site, in an itinerant manner, including Active Searching and assistance to alcohol, crack and other drugs users.

21 The purpose of this Notice was to select projects that are more effective in fostering the socio-economic inclusion initiatives of the homeless population through solidarity economy projects, with a view to overcoming extreme poverty, under the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan.

22 Pronatec Pop Rua aims to provide professional training opportunities to the homeless population. The Pronatec Pop Rua courses should be appropriate to the profile of the people living on the street, aiming their integration into the labor market.

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