



*To achieve the goal of overcoming extreme poverty (understood as a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon), intersectoral State action in the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan was paramount. As such, the Plan involves multiple partners from various sectors. Given Brazil’s enormous size, the large differences between regions, the diversity of the population and the distribution of powers among the Federal Government, states and municipalities, a large-scale federal pact (described in the next article in this series) was also required.*

## THE PARTNERS OF THE “BRAZIL WITHOUT EXTREME POVERTY” PLAN

Twenty-two ministries<sup>1</sup> participate in the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan. These include the following ministries, in addition to the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (the coordinator of the Plan): Agriculture, Cities, Agrarian Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, Education, Finance, National Integration, Environment, Mines and Energy, Fishing, Planning, Social Security, Health, Labour, Human Rights, Racial Equality, Policies for Women, Institutional Relations, Strategic Affairs, General Secretariat and the Office of the Chief of Staff (Civil House) of the Presidency.

Among the agencies and entities involved in direct and indirect administration and the private sector and third sector partners of the Plan, there are public banks, associations representing economic sectors, non-governmental organizations, companies and international organizations.

### The three axes

Under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, the partners carry out the actions that compose the Plan, divided into three main areas of activity (each axis will be addressed in a specific paper in this series):

- » Income Security, through money transfers for immediate relief from extreme poverty, and to complement household incomes;
- » Productive inclusion, by offering opportunities for professional development, employment and income, through strategies designed specifically for rural and urban areas;
- » Access to services, to provide, expand and enhance public services in order to improve living conditions, promote citizenship and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

As such, “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” comprehensively addresses the multidimensional phenomenon of poverty by implementing initiatives in several areas along these three axes, helping families overcome a range of context-specific deprivations and leave extreme poverty behind.

The main characteristics of the actions that make up “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” were the subject of the first paper in this series. The table below lists the main macro-actions of the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” and the partners most involved in each of them.

<sup>1</sup> On October 2, 2015, the Government of Brazil has announced a ministerial rearrangement, which extinguished eight ministries and ministerial secretariats, including the Ministry of Fishing and Aquaculture (MPA), the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs of the Presidency of the Republic (SAE/PR), the General Secretariat of the Presidency and the Secretariat of Institutional Relations. At the same time, it was announced the merging of the Ministry of Labor and Employment into the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Special Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality and the Special Secretariat for Women's Policies into the Special Secretariat for Human Rights.

## Partners of the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” by macro-process

Macro-process	Main Macro-ações <sup>2</sup>	Partners
Urban Productive Inclusion	Professional qualification ( <i>Pronatec</i> )	Ministries of Education and Social Development and Fight against Hunger, states, municipalities and institutions that offer training courses
	Individual Micro-entrepreneur	Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae), states and municipalities
	Popular and solidarity economy	Ministry of Labour and Employment, states and municipalities.
	Labour Intermediation	Ministries of Labour and Employment and Social Development and Fight against Hunger and states
	Guided Productive Microcredit ( <i>Crescer</i> )	Banco do Nordeste do Brasil, Banco do Brasil, Caixa Econômica Federal, Banco da Amazônia, Ministries of Finance, Labour and Social Development and Fight against Hunger, states and municipalities
Rural Productive Inclusion	<i>Água para Todos</i> Program	Ministries of National Integration, Social Development and Fight against Hunger and the Environment, National Health Foundation, Banco do Brasil Foundation, states and municipalities
	<i>Luz para Todos</i> Program	Ministries of Mines and Energy and Social Development and Fight against Hunger, states and municipalities
	<i>Bolsa Verde</i> Program	Ministries of the Environment and Social Development and Fight against Hunger, the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation, National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform, the Heritage Bureau of the Federal Government, states and municipalities
	Inclusion in the field: Technical Assistance and Rural Extension, seeds and Promotion	Ministries of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, Agrarian Development and Fishing and Aquaculture (MPA), National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform, the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation, the National Indian Foundation, Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality, the Palmares Cultural Foundation, states and municipalities

<sup>2</sup> The macro-actions mentioned herein will be detailed in other papers devoted to each of the action axes of The “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan.

Income Guarantee	<i>Bolsa Família</i> Program	Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, states and municipalities
	Continuous Welfare Benefit for the Elderly and Disabled (BPC)	Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, the National Social Security Institute, states and municipalities
Access to public services in health, education and social assistance	<i>Brasil Carinhoso</i> Action Day Care Centres	Ministries of Education and Social Development and Fight against Hunger, the National Fund for Education Development, National Institute of Studies and Research, states and municipalities
	Full-Time Schools	Ministries of Education and Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS), states and municipalities
	<i>Brasil Carinhoso</i> Action Health	Ministry of Health, states and municipalities
	Social Assistance	Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, states and municipalities
Active Search	Unified Registry	Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, organisations representing traditional and specific populations, states and municipalities

Obs.: This table does not include all the Plan actions and partners in each macro-process.

## UNIVERSALITY AND EQUITY

If a policy is universal, then in theory it should be available to everyone – rich or poor, male or female, black or white, living in cities or in the countryside – with the same level of quality. In practice, however, this is not always the case – and those excluded are generally the poorest in the population.

One of the main reasons for establishing an inter-sectoral strategy for overcoming extreme poverty is the ability to encourage and support partners' activities and draw closer to effective universality in the services provided, taking advantage of synergies they could not have leveraged had they been acting alone. Below are some of the the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” actions where this is the case:

### **a. *Brasil Carinhoso* Action: strengthening services for children in day care centres.**

Use of existing structures within the Ministry of Education to transfer additional funds to municipalities that enrol more *Bolsa Família* children in early childhood education (the transfers are proportional to the number of poor children enrolled and aged 0 to 48 months).

### **b. *Mais Educação* Program: prioritising schools with a majority of poor children when expanding full-time education towards universality.**

Use of existing structures within the Ministry of Education to transfer additional funds to municipalities that enrol more *Bolsa Família* children in early childhood education (the transfers are proportional to the number of poor children enrolled and aged 0 to 48 months).

### **c. *Pronatec*: massive inclusion of young people and low-income adults in vocational training courses.**

The engagement of the Ministries of Education and Social Development and Fight against Hunger, the social assistance network and other sectors of the public administration at the

municipal and state levels has been fundamental in encouraging the poorest in the population to join the courses.

In all these cases:

- » Services should be universal so as to uphold rights and promote citizenship;
- » Intersectoral actions and federal coordination are key elements to success.

Therefore, The “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan did not simply place all these partners under a single umbrella and slap a new label on them. The work was truly intersectoral, with important results for those who need the services the most.

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### **Strengthening the universalist agenda without sacrificing equity**

In addition to building Basic Healthcare Units in the places with the highest incidences of poverty, another example of an effective search for universality in health comes in the form of *Programa mais Médicos* (the “More Doctors Programme”), bringing medical professionals to areas with the greatest shortages of doctors and the highest levels of vulnerability. There were cases where this “focus” on the poorest was mistaken for a denial of the universalist agenda – it is, in fact, the exact opposite. The objective is to strengthen this agenda, making services effectively available to everyone, including those hardest to reach – who are often also the ones most in need of services.

The centrality of universal policies, however, does not rule out the need for initiatives specifically aimed at the most vulnerable parts of the population. Hence the existence of initiatives within The “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan that are not universal in nature; instead, they are geared exclusively towards people in poverty or extreme poverty (such as *Bolsa Família*) and specific subgroups of the extremely poor population (*Programa Bolsa Verde* beneficiaries).

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## **THE INTERSECTORAL COORDINATION STRUCTURE IN THE “BRAZIL WITHOUT EXTREME POVERTY”**

### **Coordination by the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger**

The “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan benefitted from the direct involvement of the President of the Republic, who saw the fight against poverty as a priority in her government and endeavoured to engage not only the federal executive branch, but also state and local governments and society as a whole in this effort.

To carry out this comprehensive intersectoral strategy, an entity was needed to coordinate the activities. This task was attributed not to a central agency of the Federal Government, but to a line ministry – the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS).

Although this is not usual, the clear designation of the ministry as coordinator, the status given to the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” by the government and the direct contact between the minister and the president led to a setting in which the other ministers, governors and mayors felt comfortable to discuss the plan and make decisions about it alongside the ministry.

The ministry had acquired experience in initiatives aimed at poor and vulnerable populations, through the Unified Registry for Social Programmes and the *Bolsa Família* Program. The

ministry's role in the social assistance network<sup>3</sup> — the basis for organising important services for the most vulnerable populations — and the work done by the ministry in the areas of food and nutritional security ensured that the partners would be working with a qualified coordinating agency.

Another major advantage of instituting MDS as the coordinator was the fact that it facilitated Plan monitoring, as it was also the national ministry in charge of the Unified Registry. As such, the ministry would be able to compare the databases of end-user programmes in the Plan with the Unified Registry and monitor the effectiveness and targeting of these programmes and then inform the decision-making process with much more agility and precision.

The fact that MDS does not have the attributions of a central agency — which would involve making decisions of great magnitude on a daily basis, usually requiring the assessment of issues from a more aggregated perspective — enabled a closer and more detailed look at the policies that make up the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty”. One such example was when the ministry delved into issues relating to early childhood development — it observed pre-existing programmes and gaps in the services provided in order to gain a better understanding of the needs to be met and the problems to face. *Brasil Carinhoso* Action came about as a result of this effort and the experiences of the ministry and its partners; it included initiatives for early childhood in the areas of income, health and education.

On the one hand, the partnership with ministers, governors and mayors was built on political will around the fact that the fight against extreme poverty is key to building a fairer country and is everyone's duty; on the other hand, technical partnerships were “stitched together” day after day in the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” situation rooms (see text below) and through contact with managers in states and municipalities and representatives of social movements.

All this conferred legitimacy to the ministry's leadership and strengthened the role of social assistance or development secretariats as policy coordination forums at the state and municipal levels.

### Governance structure

The governance structure of the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan comprises the three inter-ministerial instances described below.

National Steering Committee:

- » A deliberative entity that sets goals and guides the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan;
- » It is composed of the ministers of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, Finance and Planning, the Chief of Staff of the Presidency, and the minister of the Extraordinary Secretariat for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (Sesep).

Executive Committee:

- » Ensures the implementation of the policies, programmes and actions that make up the Plan;
- » It is composed of the executive secretaries that belong to the National Steering Committee.

<sup>3</sup> The network of the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS), responsible for providing social assistance services to the population, is managed according to a tripartite rationale (including the central government, states and municipalities), and is present throughout the nation. In 2014, there were 10,675 SUAS service centres available to the population across the country.

Interministerial Monitoring Group:

- » It is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” initiatives;
- » It is made up of representatives from the same agencies mentioned above, plus the General Secretariat of the Presidency and the ministries of Cities, Labour and Employment, Agrarian Development, Health, Education and National Integration.



The National Steering Committee and the Executive Group make structural decisions about the Plan’s initiatives – such as budget issues, legal changes and sending projects to Congress – based on the information gathered by the Interministerial Monitoring Group.

Contact among the participants in these entities is not restricted to meetings convened formally – which, to date, have been very few. Much more often, information is exchanged among members through daily meetings, by telephone, electronically or through formal documents.

### Sesep and situation rooms

Created alongside the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan, the Extraordinary Secretariat for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (Sesep) is the division within the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger responsible for activities relating to the coordination of Brazil’s strategy to overcome extreme poverty. It works seamlessly with ministries, states and municipalities through direct contact and electronic query tools (the work with states and municipalities is the subject of the subsequent paper in this series).

In activities related to managing, monitoring and evaluating the Plan’s actions (and in coordination with the other activity areas under the Federal Government), Sesep held regular meetings in thematic situation rooms with representatives from various Federal Government agencies and other stakeholders.

The situation rooms – each focusing on one specific area and consisting of different intersectoral teams – have become managerial and informational entities, allowing for the detailed monitoring of actions and surveying of restrictions, delays, possible risks and results achieved. Meetings are held monthly or bimonthly – depending on the action – and the data is used to inform Plan decisions.

At first, the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan saw the creation of the following situation rooms:

- » Literacy and comprehensive education
- » Social Assistance
- » *Brasil Carinhoso* Action
- » Solidarity economy
- » Entrepreneurship
- » Professional qualification
- » Health
- » *Água para Todos* Program
- » Production and marketing support (family farming)
- » Individuals in settlements and camps
- » Indigenous people
- » *Bolsa Verde* Program

*Bolsa Família*, *Crescer* (microcredit), *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (housing), *Luz para Todos* and the active search strategy already had monitoring mechanisms in place, but closer monitoring was required through situation rooms. Given the importance of the Unified Registry and the active search strategy for the entire Plan, the team responsible for managing the Unified Registry participated – and still participates – in many of the meetings, helping to devise strategies to reach and serve the target population.

Later, the establishment of structured monitoring routines and the greater ease in arranging bilateral meetings meant that some of the situation rooms would no longer be convened – such as education, health and social assistance.

As for the disclosure of information about Plan monitoring, transparency has always been a core value of Sesep and, as such, it has enacted a Communication Plan for the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan. The Plan includes the dissemination of the consolidated results of Plan actions at the national level every six months, in publications called “Results Books” (“*Cadernos de Resultados*”) and information broken down by states and municipalities every two months, through the the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” web portals at the state and municipal levels. A monthly newsletter is also sent to partners, and the secretariat is always ready to answer questions received from the various stakeholders – including the press – through various channels, such as e-mail, telephone and letters.

The national coordination structure of the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan inspired all 26 Brazilian states and the Federal District (as well as several municipalities) to create their own entities to coordinate and monitor actions related to poverty and inequality reduction (see the next paper in this series about federative coordination).

## ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF INTERSECTORAL WORK

### Efficient use of resources

As stated earlier, the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan makes the most out of the synergies that exist among the different partners involved in the Plan. Joint and optimised work increases the efficiency, efficacy and the effectiveness of all partners. Three iconic cases of efficient resource use should be highlighted.

### **a) The *Bolsa Família* magnetic card**

Rather than issuing a new card to transfer funds to farmers in Support to Rural Productive Activities, another card to pay *Bolsa Verde*, and a third card to pay the supplements provided to *Bolsa Família* by certain states and municipalities, the decision was made to unite all payments in a single card. The card chosen was the *Bolsa Família* card, used by the Federal, state, and municipal governments and various programmes. This reduces the costs of issuing new cards and the fees charged by banks to programme managers with each deposit; it also eliminates the need to design separate systems to manage the benefits of the new programmes — a complex, costly and time-consuming task. Using a single magnetic card also greatly facilitates the lives of families.

### **b) Using the Unified Registry for Social Programmes**

The Unified Registry provides greater efficiency to the Plan by bringing different activities into a single tool: registration, conducting diagnostics and selecting the target populations of a number of initiatives (such as *Bolsa Família*), technical assistance and rural extension services (Support), cistern construction, and enrolment in Pronatec “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty”, among others. The costs of developing and maintaining different information systems for each of these programmes would be very high in financial terms — and probably even higher in terms of lost opportunities for coordination and synergy among the actions.

### **c) Use of pre-existing mechanisms in resource transfers from the Federal Government to municipalities**

This and additional simplified procedures facilitate the transfer of resources to enhance municipal operations; it also makes efficient use of transferred funds. This is due to not only pre-existing mechanisms, but also to the simplicity of procedures, which do not require preparation, signing, agreement management and monitoring or other types of fund transfers among federal entities. One example are the funds transferred to the municipalities in support of their active searches (mentioned in the previous paper in this series specifically on the active search). Another example are funds transferred to municipalities for day care centre vacancies filled by *Bolsa Família* children.

The experience of the “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan shows that actions must be formulated and implemented in an intersectoral fashion.

#### **This text is based on the following article:**

COSTA, Patricia Vieira da; FALCÃO, Tiago. Coordenação intersectorial das ações do The “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty” Plan. In: CAMPELO, Tereza; FALCÃO, Tiago; COSTA, Patricia Vieira da (Orgs). **O The “Brazil Without Extreme Poverty”**. Brasília: MDS, 2014.