The Unified Registry

The Unified Registry for Social Programs is an important tool for planning social policies. It provides a map with detailed information about the poorest families in the country and serves as the main gateway for low-income individuals to gain access to a set of policies that use the Registry's data in beneficiary selection. These include housing policies, lower electrical tariffs, funding for productive rural activities, cistern construction and *Bolsa Família* Program.

The Unified Registry — operated at the national level by the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS) — contains information about an extensive population in urban and rural areas. The Registry includes the names and addresses of families and information about each family member, age, gender, race / colour, educational level and school attendance, household status, benefits received by the family, nature of work and wages.

In addition, the Registry — operated locally by the municipalities — contains fields for identifying families as Traditional or Specific Population Groups (GPTEs, *Grupos Populacionais Tradicionais ou Específicos*), including communities that feature linguistic, cultural and ethnic uniqueness (such as indigenous, Quilombola and Romani communities) as well as families that are vulnerable due to specific, and often temporary hardships (such as those affected by infrastructure projects), as well as other populations — such as extraction workers, waste pickers and the homeless.

Registration is carried out by the social services network in the municipalities. As of March of 2015, 27 million households are registered in the Unified Registry - a total of 81.5 million people.
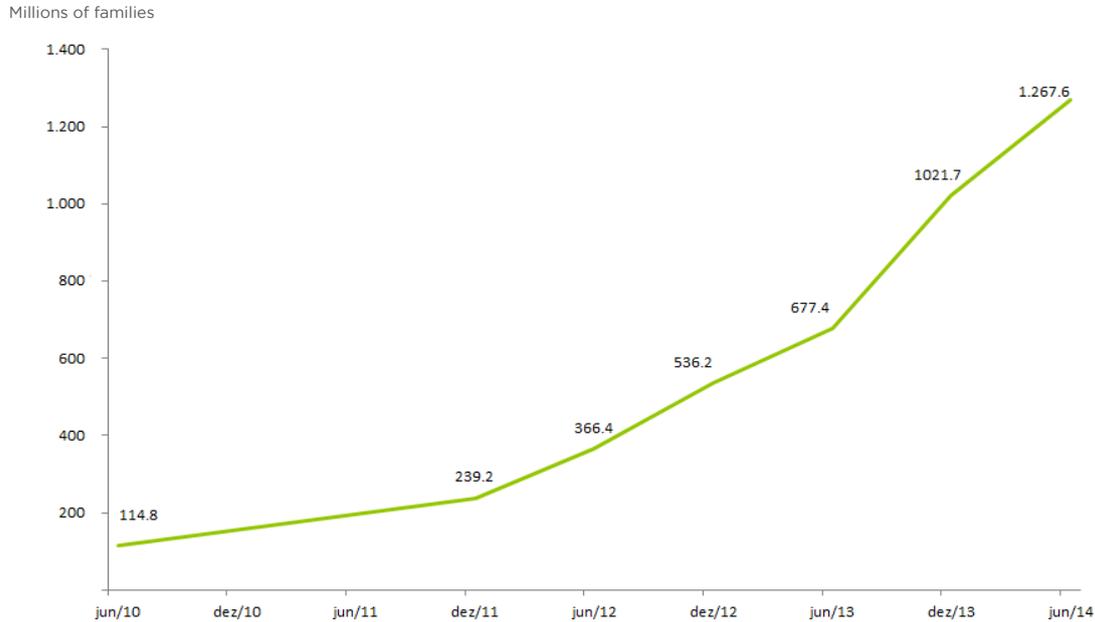
The active search

Certain family groups require different strategies for inclusion in the Single Registry for Social Programs so they may qualify for various programmes, including *Bolsa Família*.

The enhancement of the Unified Registry tools and a broad agenda to mobilise and identify these populations has allowed many families to be found, registered (thus gaining access to programmes that use the Registry when selecting participants) and identified in the Registry as belonging to traditional and specific groups (thus allowing them to qualify for actions designed to target such groups and setting an important foundation for conducting public policy diagnostics).

Differentiated registration strategies were already in place prior to the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty", but they were further strengthened and expanded upon by the Plan. This can be demonstrated by the increased rate of identification of families belonging to traditional or specific population groups after the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" was introduced, in June 2011.

1 This includes the data collection form, instructional and communication material, capacity building, workshops and a data entry system.

Traditional or Specific Population Groups - Evolution of the number of identified families (2010-2014)

Millions of families

Source: MDS

The active search in the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan

When the Federal Government first took to designing the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty", it considered the fact that the cost of seeking out services is always very high for the poorest portions of the population. Lack of knowledge about their rights and the public services available to them — or even lack of money to pay for transport to the venue where services are requested or provided — are just some of the obstacles faced by the poor.

Nevertheless the success of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" hinged on reaching this population and implementing as many actions as possible. The government knew, however, that promoting the access of the most vulnerable, less informed or more isolated parts of the population to public goods and services would be difficult and costly and would require a specific strategy.

This required a clear shift in the stance of the State. The active search was then placed at the core of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty"'s strategy to overcome extreme poverty in Brazil. The Plan sought to change the traditional rationale — that of offering services and actions and hoping that the population would seek them out. The State became committed to finding, registering and including people in their actions, which meant an important advance in the conduct of policies on social development and the fight against poverty.

From the outset, the active search was one of the concepts of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" most widely incorporated by the different players in the Plan, especially the municipalities — the entities largely responsible for enabling the field actions put in place since 2011 to add more extremely poor households into the Unified Registry.

The "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" drove the active search forward in many ways. First, through increased funding from the Federal Government to local governments. Second, by creating social assistance mobile teams equipped to go where the poorest families are located, including through the use of boats to facilitate travel around several municipalities. Third, through large-scale joint registration efforts.

The result was the addition of 1.4 million extremely poor families to the Unified Registry between July 2011 and March 2015, contributing to the current total of 27 million families.

Transfer of funds to municipalities

The Federal Government was regularly transferring funds to support the municipalities in operating Bolsa Família and the Unified Registry in amounts that varied according to management quality on both fronts. With the introduction of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty", the amount soared from R$ 300 million transferred to municipalities in 2011 to R$ 503 million in 2013.

For these transfers, we multiply a reference value by the number of households served in the municipality. The reference value was adjusted by the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty", but the main change prompted by the Plan was in the way federal transfers to municipalities were calculated: previously, all *Bolsa Família* households were included; with the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty", all households with updated records in the Unified Registry were included — a much larger number of households per municipality.

The number of identified families belonging to traditional and specific groups grew eight-fold, reaching 1.26 million families in fifteen specific types of populations: Indigenous peoples, Quilombolas (slave-descendant communities), the homeless, Romani, extraction workers, artisanal fishermen, individuals settled by the agrarian reform, beneficiaries of the National Land Credit Programme, people in camps, those affected by infrastructure projects, inmates in the prison system and collectors of recyclable material.

Other resources: mobile teams and boats

The creation of mobile teams is helping municipalities find families who live in more remote locations and even those in urban centres but beyond the reach of social policies. These teams are now a part of the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS) structure.

Between 2012 and 2014, the Federal Government invested R$ 152 million in more than 1,200 mobile teams composed of professionals from various fields - such as social work, psychology and health — to reach out to the target population. This amount, transferred by the Federal Government to municipal funds, supplements the funds mentioned in the preceding item, about the management of the Unified Registry and Bolsa Família. In 2015, there were mobile teams working for Reference Centres for Social Assistance (Cras) in over a thousand cities across the country.

The Federal Government also delivered boats to the cities free of charge, enabling the transport of mobile teams for operations in the Amazon rainforest and the Pantanal wetlands, in addition to transferring funds for boat maintenance.

Joint registration efforts

Another important action for registration in difficult to access locations and places with insufficient or no public services are the joint registration efforts (mutirões). *Bolsa Verde* Program, created within the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty", was unique opportunity to register families living in forest regions and other remote areas.

Bolsa Verde Program, a part of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan, is aimed at extremely poor households that make sustainable use of natural resources in priority conservation areas. These are families that belong to riparian, extractive, indigenous, Quilombola and other traditional communities.

A field survey revealed that half of the potential population of *Bolsa Verde* was not registered in the Unified Registry. That portion of the population was deemed a potential target for the active search strategy. This gave rise to joint efforts aimed at registering these families.

With the participation of federal public servants and managerial support from the municipalities, these joint registration efforts enabled new families to be added to the Unified Registry (and, consequently, to the programmes that use it) and also issued documents for those who needed them.

Hyper-focus on the actions of the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty"

To ensure that the poorest are not the last group served by public policies, it is important that strategies targeting the most vulnerable be included when consolidating universal policies.

Based on this conviction, and with support from the Unified Registry, the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" introduced a new way to prioritise social development policies, which could be defined as a "hyper-focus", in the sense that the State does not limit the plan to a specific population (the extremely poor) — it also uses lists of names extracted from the Unified Registry when directing the course of its field actions.

The "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" innovated by defining individuals and families — rather than the municipality or territory — as the object of the action. Different the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" actions used lists of names extracted from the Unified Registry to define and scale the target population. One such example is *Água para Todos* Program (for building and installing cisterns), which used a list of all the families in rural areas of Brazil's semiarid region who had no access to the public water supply network and (when income profiles were available) to guide field actions when building the cisterns. Another important example was *Luz para Todos* Program, with the objective of providing universal access to electricity in rural areas of Brazil.

The hyper-focus ensured that the action would reach those most in need; verification mechanisms were used to ascertain whether the target population did, indeed, benefit from the different programmes under the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty".

2 We reiterate that these amounts do not refer to the amounts transferred by the Federal Government directly to the households' accounts. These are funds to support the municipalities in managing the Unified Registry and Bolsa Família within their territories.

3 They were set up under the mechanisms needed for the tripartite management of the Unified Social Assistance System (under the co--responsibility of the Federal Government, the states and the municipalities).

Hyper-focused actions are a major legacy of the Plan in managing and implementing social policies, an important step in guaranteeing that cross-cutting policies such as the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" are successful in ensuring a fairer provision of services to the intended public.

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This text is based on the following articles:

CAMPELLO, Tereza; MELLO, Janine. O processo de formulação e os desafios do Plano Brasil sem Miséria: por um país rico e com oportunidades para todos. In: CAMPELO, Tereza; FALCÃO, Tiago; COSTA, Patricia Vieira da (Orgs.). **O Brasil sem miséria.** Brasília: MDS, 2014.

AMARAL, Aline Diniz. O papel do Cadastro Único no Plano Brasil sem Miséria. In: CAMPELO, Tereza; FALCÃO, Tiago; COSTA, Patricia Vieira da (Orgs.). **O Brasil sem miséria.** Brasília: MDS, 2014.