

**IASPD 12 - "A UNIFIED REGISTRY FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS- THE BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE"**

**September 3, 2014**

**Presenter: Joana Mostafa**, Director of Cadastro Único at the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger

**Commentator: Margaret Grosh**, Acting Practice Manager for Social Protection and Labor for the World Bank

**Main Points:**

**What is Brazil's Unified Registry and how has it become the main tool for implementing poverty-centered policies?**

In the last 14 years, non-contributive and selective policies have gained a lot of importance which brought about the need for a registry that takes into account the demand of these new policies. Today, the Unified Registry (UR) is the main tool used by the Brazilian state to select and include low-income families in social programs and has a national coverage of 74 million people.

**Who is in charge of the collection and management of the data?**

The Unified Registry is managed by the competency division within the Social Development Ministry (MDS), CAIXA (a public company of the Brazilian federal government), Brazilian states and municipalities. The registry has the support of the Brazilian auditing system. The cooperation between the different parties consolidates that Unified Registry into comprehensive state-run tool.

**What mechanisms were implemented for management of the Unified Registry?**

The management mechanisms exist in the three levels of the Brazilian government but 99.4% of the UR is found within the Social Assistance Secretariat of the local governments and all except 3 Brazilian municipalities subscribed to the UR. 60% of the registry is carried out by the Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS) which is a decentralized public entity, while only 6% of the registry is comprised of home visits.

**How many programs targeting the poor are currently using the unified registry and what are the mechanisms to make the database accessible?**

History: (2003) 5 programs are joined into one: "Bolsa Familia" (comprised of; bolsa escuela, bolsa alimentaria, tarjeta alimentaria, ayuda gas, programa de erradicación del trabajo infantil). The joining of these programs revealed the need for a unified registry with the vision of reaching all the poor and promoting the expansion and targeting of social programs in Brazil. Similarly, the Brasil Sin Miseria Plan, a program which is aimed specifically at extreme poverty reduction, was launched in 2011, and also became a social integration program. The UR has been an entry way for more than 20 programs and services on a national level and at least 10 programs and services on local level. The mechanisms to access the databases depend on the relationship that the program has with the citizen. The two main ways to access the database are through personal requests and aggregate requests made by organizations.

**Additional Discussion Points: Margareth Grosh**

- 1) When it comes to inter-agency coordination, there are conflicts that have to be taken into account and there is a need to find the best way to resolve them to effectively address the population that needs the coverage provided by these tools;
- 2) Some countries do not have unique identification numbers or civil registries that are as comprehensive as other countries, which can be an obstacle when trying to build a Unified Registry;
- 3) When using targeting tools it is very important to appropriately measure family wellbeing and to clearly define it;

- 4) Brazil's experience with the Unified Registry is unique to this country and the role of international institutions such as the OAS is to present these experiences to other countries in the region and to exchange information and best practices.

#### **Question and Answer Session:**

##### **To what degree do social programs have access to the registry's information?**

The Unified Registry can be consulted and income verification is used to ensure the quality of information. All of the information is categorized into specific situations. The information can be accessed via individual consultation or by category and income range, individuals, households, and civil records. In addition, the consultation can be done by datasets such as; regions, populations, individual characteristics, etc.

##### **What is the process of coordination between ministries of other sectors?**

In their bylaws, the programs include certain specifications about the public they serve, which forces the UR to give certain social programs access to the data.

##### **What is the main issue that would prevent the unified registry from being an integration system for other programs?**

The programs that do not have laws requiring them to use the Unified Registry face a slower integration process.

##### **What circumstances would make it so that that the UR was not an integration tool?**

Sometimes there is prioritization and politicizing of social programs which relieves specific programs of decision making and other responsibilities. It is possible that the issue of various programs with similar objectives surface because of a lack of program verification. For this reason, it is necessary to identify program redundancy. Another complication associated with the lack of communication between programs is that it can require remaking of social policies.

##### **How are the poor people identified and what types of measurements and variables are used?**

##### **What poverty methodology is used?**

They are identified using the census and the only indicators that are used are income measurements or monetary values. The poverty determinants are present even though the statistics that are used are solely monetary because income reflects the multidimensionality of poverty.

##### **How much does the construction and operation of the UR cost?**

Cost of initial investment: 0.03% GDP of Brazil

Operation cost: salaries, transportation, advertising campaign, etc. 0.04% Brazil's GDP/year

##### **Is there a differentiated information collection form for indigenous populations, homeless people, or people living with disability or in other unique situations?**

The UR has differentiated strategies for searching families with unique situations and it has identified 16 groups that need specific search strategies. The objective is to give differentiated attention to specific populations and to remove difficulties of access- integrating the actions of public agents in the affected localities. The use of differentiated data allows for the creation of action plans to remove difficulties faced by disadvantaged populations while also promoting coordination and removing barriers to accessing state-run programs.

##### **How are the interviewers trained and how is the information transmitted at this level?**

A content multiplication model is used which is replicated throughout the country on a federal level. Moreover, training plans are created every year which are a result of the coordination between the three levels of government. Lastly, the MDS is launching videos for independent education. CAIXA also offers system-specific training sessions as well.