



Monitoring the education conditionality is undertaken by the Ministry of Education (MEC) jointly with the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS), using data from the Sistema Presença/MEC which records information on over 16 million students in Brazil. Monitoring takes place on a bimonthly basis under a management process shared between the Union, the states and the municipalities. In each state and municipality one person is responsible for managing the Bolsa Família Program (PBF) and another for coordinating the PBF in the education area.

School performance¹

- » 75.6% of the student beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família concluding basic education are in the normal age range, i.e. up to 15 years old - a slightly lower percentage than the remaining students in the public education network (79.4%). Favorable results are obtained from the Bolsa Família beneficiary students in the poorest regions of the country with the most extensive PBF coverage. For example, in the Northeast region 71.3% of the Bolsa Família beneficiary students managed to finish basic education in up to 15 years old compared with 64% of the remaining students in the public network.
- » According to the survey Impact Assessment of the Bolsa Família (AIBF II) student beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Program have school progression rates of around 6% over and above those of non-beneficiary children with similar socioeconomic profiles.
- » Evidence suggests that the Bolsa Família Program reduces grade repetition by PBF beneficiary students. A study done by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) shows that among the students enrolled in the Unified Registry, there is a lower chance (11%) of them having to repeat the school year than non-beneficiary students. This study also shows that the Bolsa Família beneficiary students who fulfil the education conditionality (school attendance of over 85% for students between 6 and 15 years old, and 75% for those in the 16 to 17 year age range) are 40% less likely to repeat².
- » At high school level, regarding the consecutive pass rates for the period between 2010 and 2012, the difference is around 13%. While 52.2% of the PBF beneficiary students enrolled in the first year of high school education obtained three consecutive passes in the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, only 39.4% of the non-beneficiary students had similar pass rates.
- » The results of the Prova Brasil³ indicate that the PBF student beneficiaries on average perform worse than the non-beneficiaries, a fact that can be explained by their socio-economic circumstances, or by the types of schools attended. Research has substantiated this fact by showing that the schooling process goes hand-in-hand with educational inequality. In turn, this is associated to a range of inequalities that have persisted throughout Brazil's history, and clearly demonstrates the need for coordinated public policy actions to be taken at different levels in order to prevent schools from reproducing inequalities through drop-outs, grade repetition and school failure, and thus excluding students from the most vulnerable backgrounds.
- » However, given the very wide coverage of the *Bolsa Família* Program, there is evidence that the Program has positive effects on the school performance of child beneficiaries. In other words, the PBF helps to reduce educational inequality among these students when compared to other students in the public education network, reduces the disadvantages arising from poverty that they encounter at school, and helps to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

¹ Based on data from the 2008-2012 period.

² A study done in the University of Sussex, UK, in 2012, on Bolsa Família's effects on education suggests that higher benefit values and lengths of stay in the program are associated with better school outcomes.

³ A national survey that evaluates public schools in Brazil through: (a) socioeconomic questionnaires applied to students and teachers; and (b) Mathematics and Portuguese Language proficiency tests.

Table 2 - Association between participation and exposure to PBF and school performance/school career path based on multivariate models⁴

Explanatory variables	Performance measured by the Prova Brasil		Failure		Dropout		Age/grade distortion	
	Year 5	Year 9	Year 5	Year 9	Year 5	Year 9	Year 5	Year 9
Participation in the PBF	-0,106 ¹ (-29,65)	0,0819 ¹ (20,37)	0,000234 ¹ (3,629)	-0,00678 ¹ (-8,096)	-0,000529 ¹ (-4,809)	-0,00245 ¹ (-15,49)	-0,00862 ¹ (-7,582)	-0,135 ¹ (-111,2)
Exposure to the PBF	-0,0124 ¹ (-55,77)	-0,0160 ¹ (-64,82)	0,000736 ¹ (18,86)	0,00100 ¹ (19,62)	-3,63e-06 ¹ (-0,550)	7,07e-05 ¹ (6,994)	0,00308 ¹ (44,42)	0,00671 ¹ (86,19)

Source: School Census/Bolsa Família (INEP/MDS).

Note: 1 Statistical significance 10,0%

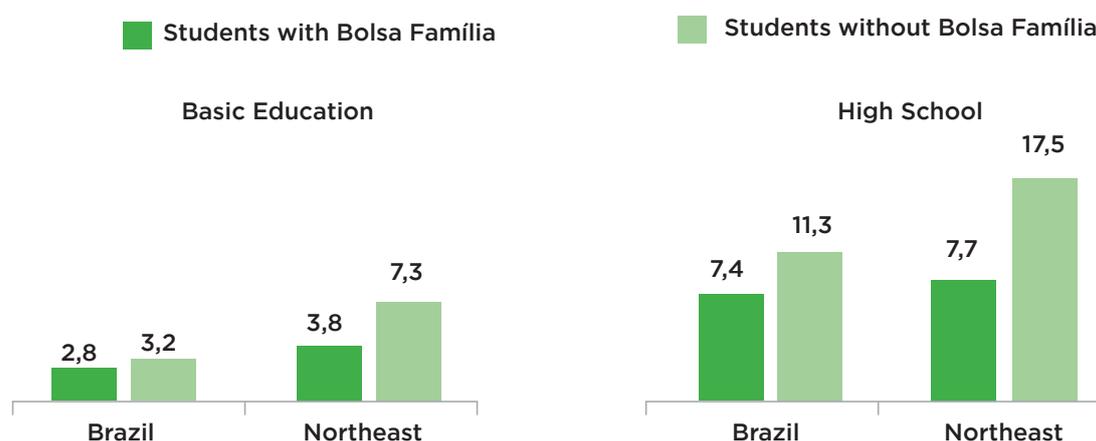
Obs: robust z-statistics entre parêntesis.

Attendance and dropout rates

» There is an estimated increase of 4% in school attendance by poor children aged between 7 and 15 years benefiting from the Bolsa Família Program when compared to PBF non-beneficiaries.

» A comparison between the dropout rates of PBF beneficiary students and non-beneficiaries shows that the beneficiaries are less likely to drop out of school. The graph below indicates that the dropout rate is lower for the beneficiary students both at the basic education and high school levels, particularly when the results from the Northeast region are taken into account.

GRAPH 1 - DROPOUT RATE (%) - BRAZIL AND NORTHEAST, 2012⁵



Source: MDS/MEC, 2013

» In the North and Northeast regions the differences between the dropout rates at the high school level are 8.4% and 9.8% respectively.

4 Campello, T.; Neri, M. C. (Orgs.). Programa Bolsa Família: uma década de inclusão e cidadania. Brasília: IPEA, 2013. Available at: <https://www.wpp.org.br/sites/default/files/sumario_programa_bolsa_familia_decada_inclusao_social_cidadania_pe.pdf>

5 Brasil. Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome. Secretaria de Avaliação e Gestão da Informação. Cadernos de Estudos Desenvolvimento Social em Debate. n. 18. Brasília, 2014. Available at: <http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/sagirms/ferramentas/docs/Caderno%20de%20Estudos%2018_final.pdf>

GRAPH 2 - DIFFERENCE IN THE DROPOUT RATE BETWEEN BENEFICIARIES AND NON-BENEFICIARIES OF THE BOLSA FAMÍLIA PROGRAM (%) - BRAZIL AND REGIONS, 2012⁵



Source: MDS/MEC, 2013

» At the High School level the results are significantly better for the Bolsa Família students compared with others studying in the public education network. This is true both of the dropout rate (7.4% against 11.3%) and in the pass/approval rates (79.7% against 75.5%).

» In general, comparing the students monitored by the Sistema Presença with the remaining students in the regular public education network highlights the fact that the beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Program have lower school dropout rates. The latter also have higher pass rates in the final years of primary education and higher pass rates at the high school level. These results suggest that a change has taken place in the course of the beneficiary students' school careers, signaling a consequent reduction of educational inequality in Brazil.

» Another study suggests that the aggregate effect of the Bolsa Família cash transfer program has enhanced school attendance and facilitated young people's access to the job market. The results highlight that most of the impact is due to the increase of the proportion of students aged between 15 and 17 years who combine school with work, especially in urban areas. Gender differences are also highlighted: surveys have shown that the Bolsa Família Program is having a positive effect on the population of school-age girls, with a reduction of the numbers who neither study nor work and an increase in school attendance levels by girls.

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