

New Strategy for Poverty Eradication in Brazil: the Emergence of the Brasil Sem Miséria Plan

by Rômulo Paes-Sousa, Director of the World Centre for Sustainable Development, RIO+ Centre

Brazilian social protection programmes have had consistent effects in reducing poverty and inequality among their respective vulnerable groups: children, adolescents and pregnant and lactating women. In 2011, President-elect Rousseff launched Plano Brasil Sem Miséria (PBSM — Brazil without Extreme Poverty), a strategy to eradicate extreme poverty by 2014, targeting 15 million extremely poor Brazilians.

This federal programme subscribes to the international trend of associating social protection with employment and income generation policies. In doing so, it brings together the concepts of social protection and social promotion.

Thus, PBSM has three main commitments:

- to raise the per capita household income of the target population;
- to expand access to public goods and services; and
- to provide access to job and income opportunities through productive inclusion initiatives.

The plan seeks to hone skills and expand opportunities for people living in extreme poverty, by improving cash transfer policies such as the Programa Bolsa Família (PBF — Family Allowance Programme), increasing access to social protection services and improving their quality, and implementing productive inclusion initiatives aimed at different vulnerable groups such as informal urban workers, family farmers, collectors of recyclable material, homeless people, traditional communities and indigenous peoples.

But the programme has faced continuous challenges. For one, monitoring of the extremely poor population depends on the development of a measurement methodology that reconciles data from the 2010 Demographic Census with the new integrated household search, currently being implemented by Brazil's statistics institute, IBGE, an exercise that entails a high degree of complexity in designing an appropriate methodology.

Also, the main budgetary challenge for PBSM is to strike a better balance between the services offered and the benefits transferred. In general, the social protection model that the PBSM is a (visible) part of repeats the same type of asymmetric intervention in favour of benefits as the models that preceded it.

Although the relationship with the state programmes is the greatest breakthrough in the design of the plan's institutional architecture behind social protection policies, the effectiveness of partnerships forged with the states requires that legal instruments be improved.

Despite the challenges, however, PBSM represents an added approach to the social protection policies enacted by the previous administration. Like the Estratégia Fome Zero (Zero Hunger Strategy), PBSM advocates a multidimensional and focused approach, funded primarily by the federal government, with the aim of reducing poverty.

Programmes within the PBSM and their Managing Federal Institutions, According to Thematic Axes and Areas of Activity

<p>Income Guarantee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brasil Carinhoso, MDS • Bolsa Família, MDS <p>Productive Inclusion</p> <p><i>Rural Productive Inclusion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAA, MDS/MDA • Technical Assistance, MDA • Support and seeds, MDA • Programa Água para Todos (Water for Everyone Programme), MIR/MDS • Programa Bolsa Verde, MMA <p><i>Urban Productive Inclusion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mulheres Mil, MEC • Pronatec, MEC • Programa Crescer, CEF, BB, BNB and Basa • National Productive Microcredit Programme (Programa Nacional Microcrédito Produtivo Orientado — PNMPPO), MTE 	<p>Access to Services</p> <p><i>Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mais Educação, MEC <p><i>Health</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Healthcare Units (Unidades Básicas de Saúde — UBS), MS • Saúde da Família (Family Health), MS • Low-Income Pharmacies, MS • Saúde na Escola (School Health), MS <p><i>Social Assistance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Assistance Reference Centre (CRAS), MDS • Specialised Social Assistance Reference Centre (Creas), MDS <p><i>Food Security</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Bank, MDS • Community Kitchens, MDS
--	---

However, the programme adjusted its focus towards the extremely poor population and shifted its management model towards a more effective configuration.

The plan seems to indicate that, once full benefit coverage is achieved and a network of services is created to foster social protection and promotion and to modify the contents of the programmes in these sectors to make them accessible to extremely poor people, strategic interventions would then be strengthened to combat extreme poverty. The centre of public intervention focuses on increasing the social protection and promotion of children of less than six years of age, to encourage changes in the labour market and to increase the working capabilities of extremely poor workers in rural and urban areas.

Therefore, the plan seeks to go beyond its primary goal of eradicating poverty by 2014. PBSM seeks to dialogue with the immediate future, in which extreme income poverty and extreme absolute poverty will be a thing of the past. It coordinates the different dimensions of well-being by incrementally constructing a sustainable foundation based on social right for all Brazilians.

References:

- Paes-Sousa, R. (2013). 'Plano Brasil Sem Miséria: Incremento e mudança na política de proteção e promoção social no Brasil'. *IPC-IG Working Paper*, No 113. Brasília, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.
- Paes-Sousa, R., F. Regalia and M. Stampini (2013). 'Conditions for success in implementing CCT programs: Lessons for Asia from Latin America and the Caribbean', *IDB Policy Brief*, No. 192. Washington DC, Inter-American Development Bank.