



**Examining the political, institutional and governance aspects  
of delivering a national multi-sectoral response to reduce  
maternal and child malnutrition**

**Analysing Nutrition Governance:  
Brazil Country Report**

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## Abbreviations

ACF	Action against Hunger
Bolsa Escola	School Grant
Bolsa Família (BF)	Family Grant
Bolsa Verde	Green Grant
Br_DHS	Brazilian Demographic Health Survey
Brasil sem Miséria	Brazil without Poverty
Campanha Contra a Fome	National Campaign against Hunger
CONSEA	National Council for Food Security
FAO	United Nations Food and Agricultural Programme
Fome Zero	Zero Hunger
IPEA	Institute for Applied Economic Research
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDS	Ministry for Social Development and the Fight against Hunger
Vale-Gás	Cooking-gas coupon
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

## I. Introduction

Brazil is a textbook case to illustrate how a concerted, continuous and comprehensive government effort to reduce children's chronic malnutrition has produced durable results for the benefit of the poorest. For more than two decades, Brazil has made significant advances to reduce the poverty of its population and improve the food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable. Between 1990 and 2008, the percentage of Brazilians who lived on less than US\$1.25 per day dropped from 25.6 per cent to only 4.8 per cent, which means the country surpassed the MDG targets by reducing poverty to a quarter of 1990 levels (4<sup>th</sup> MDG Progress Report 2010).<sup>2</sup> The prevalence of underweight children was more than halved in the past 10 years and the country is on track to halve hunger levels before the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2015 deadline. The country's success in reducing food and nutrition insecurity won President Lula the World Food Prize in 2011.

This brief country report documents government and non-government efforts to reduce malnutrition. The guiding premise is that the best nutrition outcomes happen when policy interventions are well aligned with political motivations. The report looks at three main dimensions of nutrition governance: a) inter-sectoral coordination within government agencies as well as between government and non-government bodies; b) vertical coordination between the national policy-making bodies and this state and local level implementing agencies; and c) the funding modalities that are employed to implement nutrition interventions.

The paper argues that the main factors for success include a concerted effort to frame nutrition challenges in terms of a national poverty reduction agenda, a presidential strategy to coordinate ministerial action, and a sustained effort of civil society organisations to introduce, monitor and demand effective implementation of nutrition initiatives. In terms of vertical coordination, Brazil shows a proactive strategy of the central government to engage with state and municipal governments to consult with diverse stakeholders, legitimize government policies and effectively implement policies at the local level. In terms of financing nutrition strategies, Brazil shows a diverse approach of multiple funding schemes that require and encourage multi-sectoral coordination at all levels. These schemes include the allocation of Bolsa Família, a conditional cash transfer directed towards the least privileged administered through the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS), as well as an ambition school lunch programme administered through the Ministry of Education. The delivery of both programmes also required a fair degree of ministerial coordination.

The research was conducted in Brasília and São Paulo, from July 11 to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The 27 interviewees were chosen in a selective manner from the key government and non-

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<sup>2</sup> In the period between 2000 and 2007, poverty fell from 22 per cent to 7 per cent of the population (World Bank, 2010), which translates to 20 million people being lifted out of poverty (FAO, 2011).

government organisations, including academia, think tanks, and representatives from the international cooperation whose work is directly or indirectly related to the government effort to mitigate malnutrition. All people responded to a one hour open-ended questionnaire that has been used across all cases of the research but was properly adapted for the case of Brazil.<sup>3</sup>

The report opens with a succinct overview of the magnitude of the malnutrition problem in Brazil and offers a historical overview of the main government policies adopted since the return to democracy, to mitigate this problem. The central part of the report discusses in greater detail the government approaches to ensure horizontal coordination, vertical articulation and financing of nutrition initiatives. The last part summarizes the main lessons and discusses the extent to which success factors observed in Brazil are replicable elsewhere.

## II. The Evolution of Malnutrition in Brazil

Brazil has made significant gains in eradicating hunger in the last two decades. Overall, hunger levels fell from 11 per cent in 1990 to 6 per cent in 2007 (FAO, 2010), as can be seen in the table below.

Subs?	2000-2002		2005-2007		1990-2009 GDP%
	Undernourished population, millions	Undernourished population %	Undernourished population, millions	Undernourished population %	
Brazil	16.3	9	12.1	6	2.5
India	19	200.6	237.7	21	6.3
China	133.1	10	130.4	10	10.1

From 2000 to 2007, the number of undernourished people was reduced from 9 per cent (16.3 million people) to 6 per cent (12.1million people) (FAO, 2010). In terms of prevalence of undernourishment, Brazil has performed better than India (2000-2: 200.6 million [19 per cent of the population]; 2005-7: 237.7 million [21 per cent]) and China (2000-2 – 133.1 million people and 2005-7: 130.4 million people, equivalent to 10 per cent of the population). This is despite the faster economic growth in India and China, respectively 6.3 per cent and 10.1 per cent in terms of GDP average growth rate (1990-2009). Brazil’s average growth rate was only 2.5 per cent (World Bank and IMF 2010). It is widely accepted that these achievements in hunger and poverty reduction result from the pro-poor policies introduced by President Lula’s government, particularly *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger), the national, multi- and cross-sectoral strategy launched in 2003 to tackle food and nutrition insecurity (Monteiro, 2009; Oxfam, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> See appendix for a list of institutions involved. The complete questionnaire is available upon request.

As 2015 fast approaches, developing countries worldwide are racing to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The ambition of MDG 1 – ‘Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty’ – is somewhat qualified by the pragmatism of Target 1: ‘Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day’. Nonetheless, this is a challenging goal which could radically change poverty statistics, affecting the proportion of population living on less than US\$1 (PPP) per day; the poverty gap ratio; and the share the poorest quintile of the population has in national consumption. Target 2: ‘Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger’, addresses the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age; and the proportion of the population with below-minimum levels of dietary energy consumption.

Brazil’s progress in achieving MDG 1 is representative of wider gains in nutrition. In 2009 the incidence for both underweight and wasted children was virtually eradicated across the entire country, including in north-eastern Brazil and lower income groups who historically suffered higher rates of undernutrition. The wins achieved on the nutritional landscape are illustrated by the striking improvement in the results of the 1996 and the 2006/2007 Brazilian Demographic Health Surveys (Br\_DHS). Both child underweight and child wasting were virtually eliminated across the entire country: underweight prevalence in under-fives has been reduced from 13 per cent to 1.7 per cent (1994–2006); and wasting prevalence is below 2 per cent. The prevalence of child stunting fell from 13.5 per cent to 6.8 per cent, with a particularly spectacular decline in the Northeast (from 22.2 per cent to 5.9 per cent). This drastic reduction in stunting and wasting is the result of a concerted effort to address malnutrition and undernutrition and is evidence of Brazil’s demonstrated commitment to implementing food and nutrition security policy programming (ACF 2009: 15).

Whilst the disparity between urban and rural populations continues to be problematic, particularly in the *Nordeste* (Northeast), there have been significant improvements in reducing the number of Brazilians living on less than US\$ 1.25 per day. In 1990, 16.2 per cent of the urban population lived under the poverty line, compared to 51.3 per cent of the rural population. By 2008, these figures had changed from 3.4 per cent urban and 12.5 per cent rural – a drop of 38.8 per cent (4<sup>th</sup> MDG Progress Report, 2010).

Brazil has expanded welfare coverage dramatically in recent years. Increases in the minimum wage and cash transfers through *Bolsa Família* have been introduced alongside subsidised credit and procurement programmes that support smallholder farmers. Brazil’s success in poverty alleviation must be directly attributed to the combined impact of the country’s advances in legislating for the universal right to food, and the focus on multi-sectoral programme delivery targeting income redistribution and universal access to education, health and sanitation services.

### III. Evolution and impact of Nutrition Policies

*If, by the end of my term of office, every Brazilian has food to eat three times a day, I shall have fulfilled my mission in life.*

*(President of Brazil, Lula da Silva, 2003-2010)*

A historical account of the most relevant social policies adopted by the Brazilian government to reduce malnutrition since the return to democracy in the mid-1980s reveals a significant degree of policy continuity, complementarity and stability. This is not to say that the design and implementation of malnutrition policies are exempt from political conflict or policy reversals, but taken as whole, they illustrate a 'cumulative' effect that takes place over time.

#### a) From 'hunger' to 'food security' (1985-2002)

The advent of democracy in Brazil during the 1980s also signified the emergence of an explicit government interest in reducing hunger and mitigating other social problems. But the approach adopted by the democratic government of José Sarney, and similar to the rest of Latin America, was mostly concentrated around direct food distribution, which lent itself to the proliferation of clientelistic practices, according to an MDS official. Although the 1988 Constitution established in its Article 6 the *universal right to food*, it would take Brazilians several more years to benefit from this right (Souza and Chmielewska 2011; de Schutter 2010). The organised civil society played a critical role to bring food insecurity to the top of the national agenda. Surprisingly, the citizens' mobilisation to demand the impeachment and ousting of President Collor on corruption charges in 1992 provided the basis to form a 'National Campaign against Hunger' (*Campanha Contra a Fome*) the following year. The campaign, led by sociologist Herbert de Souza, helped raise awareness of the need to tackle hunger in Brazil; it also helped establish thousands of collection and food donation committees (Peliano 1993). The campaign also prompted the government to develop a Hunger Map, as an empirical effort to create policy responses. This *Mapa da Fome* identified 21.9 per cent of the population (31.7 million people) living below the poverty line (Peliano 1993). According to many interviewees, the 1993 'Campaign against Hunger' marked an important change to understand nutrition issues in terms of food security rather than hunger.

The citizens' movement prompted the Cardoso administration (1993-2003) to create in 1994 a *National Council for Food Security* (CONSEA). During the first National Conference, the government advanced the notion of food security as part of a 'national project to transform the reality which produces and reproduces hunger, poverty, and exclusion'.<sup>4</sup> To advance this agenda, the Cardoso administration increased social

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Social Development <http://www.mds.gov.br/saladeimprensa/eventos/seguranca-alimentar-e-nutricional/i-conferencia-nacional-de-seguranca-alimentar-e-nutricional>

expenditure (as a share of GDP) and implemented a series of social protection policies such as a School Grant (*Bolsa Escola*), Food Grant (*Bolsa Alimentação*), Cooking-gas coupon (*Vale-Gás*), and Assistance to the Elderly and Disabled Persons among others (IMF 2006, Broad 2006).<sup>5</sup>

Parallel to the government efforts, the main proponents of the Campaign against Hunger regrouped around the *Instituto da Cidadania*, a think tank with political affinities to the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores or PT). The mission of IC was to create a critical mass of activists and intellectuals that would produce research and monitor government effort in reducing hunger. By 2001, presidential hopeful Lula da Silva launched from the *Instituto da Cidadania* a 'Project Fome Zero: Proposal for a Food and Nutrition Security Policy for Brazil'.

### **b) From Bolsa Família to Brazil sem Miséria (2003-2011)**

The arrival of Lula da Silva and the PT to the government of Brazil in 2003, allowed for the continuity of nutrition efforts initiated by civil society organisations 10 years earlier. The adoption of a *Fome Zero* project and subsequently *Bolsa Família* showed that the PT administration was 'socially progressive and more serious about dealing with poverty than any other previous regime' (Hall: 2004). The implementation of the the Zero Hunger project made significant 'conceptual advances and had positive – if initial – results' for the government's food and nutrition security policy, which included improving income, reducing poverty, building up food stocks, and stabilising food prices (Takagi 2006).<sup>6</sup> In this way, Zero Hunger offered a linkage between the adoption of structural policies - such as increasing production or generating employment and the need for emergency interventions.

Another pillar of government success was the adoption of *Bolsa Família*, the collective name for a social protection programme encompassing up to 54 different instruments, programmes and initiatives, including those that had come under *Fome Zero*. As of 2011, *Bolsa Família* served 12.986.870 families, approximately 25 per cent of the Brazilian population, with a calculated expenditure of US\$8.5 billion (0.4 per cent GDP) as of 2010 (MDS website, Soares 2011). Takagi (2006) argues that *Bolsa Família* gained popularity 'at the expense of the *Fome Zero* brand', partly because of the restructuring of the line ministry responsible for it (MESA turned into MDS) and partly because of the increased global focus on social protection mechanisms.

The success of *Bolsa Família* was largely due to the solid support of President Lula da Silva during his eight year administration. When the new PT president Dilma Rousseff

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<sup>5</sup> This would contradict what some have interpreted as 'timidity' (Cohn: 1999; 2000) on policy commitments to poverty reduction and social protection spending. The relative fiscal prudence exercised by FHC was due to the monetary stabilisation strategy and it ensured future macroeconomic stability (Costa 1999; Draibe 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Fome Zero marked a shift in focus from the concept of indigence used in the Mapa da Fome of 1993/4 to the World Bank poverty line of US\$1 a day. In 2003, this represented a monthly income of R\$78 per person.

assumed office in 2011, she announced the creation of a ‘new and improved’ continuation of *Bolsa Família* and *Fome Zero*, and her flagship social protection programme *Brasil sem Miséria* (Brazil without Poverty). Housed in the Ministry for Social Development (MDS), *Brasil sem Miséria* marks a renewed interest in mitigating poverty for more than the 800,000 families who live in extreme poverty and who have thus far fallen through the net. The ‘net’ is the *Cadastro Único*, the single registry through which all beneficiaries are registered and through which transfers are administered. Once registered, this will provide access to *Bolsa Família*, the Continuous Benefit (*Benefício de Prestação Continuada* – BPC) and the new *Bolsa Verde* among others.

The *Bolsa Verde* programme objective is to promote the social inclusion of rural families, as well as contributing to improved nutrition outcomes in the long-term. It will distribute R\$900 per family in order to help them make land productive – the sum will be divided into 3 instalments, and seeds, shoots and technology will be distributed to agricultural smallholders (MDS, June 2011). Similar to *Fome Zero*, *Brasil sem Miséria* seeks to guarantee steady income to families in need, promote inclusive production and improve citizens’ access to public services.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV. Analysing Nutrition Governance

Brazil’s notable improvements in child nutrition are related to the increased provision of essential services such as basic education, primary healthcare, and water and sanitation, as well as improved incomes through conditional cash transfers, and support to smallholder agriculture (ACF, 2010). Yet, a key factor contributing to the improvement of food and nutrition outcomes is the fact that the design, formulation and implementation of social assistance programmes has taken into account the complex political bargaining with fragmented and multiple political actors within the government and across all territorial layers. This section explains the political and policy coordination across different government ministries and non-government agencies, as well as the articulation of policies at the federal, state and local levels of government. To the extent that is possible, it explores how the existing funding mechanisms of social programmes facilitate greater horizontal cooperation and vertical articulation.

##### a) Intersectoral cooperation

The adoption of a multi-sectoral approach at the public policy level (for the execution of *Bolsa Família* and *Fome Zero*) focused on adoption of a multi-sectoral approach at the

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<sup>7</sup> The poverty line established for *Brasil sem Miséria* is R\$70 per person and encompasses 16.27 million people, 8.5 per cent of the population (Census 2010). Although only 15.6 per cent of the population live in the rural areas, they represent almost half of the population living in extreme poverty, 46.7 per cent, and are concentrated in the Nordeste, the north-east of Brazil. The remaining 53.3 per cent live in urban areas, where 84.4 per cent of Brazil’s population resides (MDS Nota, 2 May 2011).

public policy level. This approach focused on delivering complementary interventions through social protection, education, food production and income-generation initiatives, together with better access to health, and water and sanitation services (ACF 2010). In Brazil, part of the success story is directly linked to specific policy design (such as the adoption of cash transfer conditionalities), but a more important explanation has to do with the countries' style of 'coalition politics' developed since the 1990s (Pereira and Mejia Acosta 2010). It is a common feature of policy-making in Brazil that presidents use their constitutional powers and political influence to invite opposition parties represented in congress to form part of the government with formal cabinet representation (Alston et al. 2009, Raille et al. 2010).

Although president Cardoso facilitated ministerial coordination during the nineties, most interviewees agreed that President Lula's coalitional style was decisive to lead and sustain inter sectoral cooperation around the issue of nutrition. Lula's active involvement to launch Fome Zero in 2003 was the natural extension of a social activism pattern that he and close collaborators had began at the *Instituto da Cidadania* in the early 90s with the drafting of the Fome Zero project. With a strong sense of personal ownership, President Lula lead the coordination of his flagship social programmes (*Bolsa Família* and *Fome Zero*) from his government offices in Planalto. Strong policy commitment was reflected in the creation and expansion of the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security (MESA) into the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS) in 2004. The new ministry enjoyed strong presidential backing and permanent communication with Casa Civil, the presidents' executive office. The institutional strengthening around *Fome Zero* helped to consolidate the issue of food and food security on the national agenda, by centralising the policy under one overarching instrument rather than numerous isolated policies and public/citizen campaigns. Central programme coordination ensured that labour and social protection interventions reached beneficiaries in a concerted and coordinated way, in partnership with state and municipal governments and thus increasing the positive effects to vulnerable families (Takagi 2006).

A unique feature contributing to success of inter-sectoral cooperation was the active involvement of Congress, as a strategic space to negotiate and legitimise different policy initiatives. This is an area that has received less attention in the specialised literature but it is relevant to highlight the prominent role played by legislators and senators to draft key nutrition-related initiatives (such as Senator Suplicy's *Renda Mínima* or minimum income law precursor to *Bolsa Família*) that were later ratified by other political forces and citizens themselves (Suplicy 2009). In fulfilling the policy making and representation roles, legislators have established active communication channels between the executive office (Casa Civil), other ministries, state and municipal governments, and representatives of civil society. It is interesting to note for example, that all of the ministries that were directly involved in advancing nutrition initiatives (Education, Health, Agriculture, Social Development) and all had dedicated offices to

liaise with the legislative representatives. Similarly in Congress, politicians were active members of legislative committees (such as the Food Security Committee in Congress) that maintained an open invitation to representatives from government, state delegations and civil society groups, to participate and influence legislative hearings. A case in point is Federal Deputy Nazareno Fonteles, a representative of Piauí state from the governing PT party, a medical doctor or was involved in the creation of the Unified Health System (SUS) in 1988, and member of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger. Fonteles was also involved in the drafting of the Special Law on Food Security and Nutrition (LOSAN 2006). This level of interconnection has been rarely seen in other cases of study, and as it will be argued towards the end of this report, it may constitute a critical condition to ensure that political accountability and long term stability of policy actions.

Government efforts to promote intersectoral cooperation also included the participation of the private sector and agricultural smallholders. The private sector had an active role in promoting food security through the implementation of the Mesa Brasil programme, to promote a local food purchasing scheme to bolster local economies. Mesa Brazil was run by SESC (Serviço Social do Comércio), a social organisation funded and managed by a business association.<sup>8</sup> The government also increased support to smallholder farming through the National Programme to Strengthen Family Agriculture (PRONAF), which granted 1.9 million Reais in cheap loans. Another measure to support of small farmers was the introduction of a school lunches programme whereby at least 30 per cent of school meals across the country must be sourced from smallholder farmers, to save costs and boost the local economy (ActionAid, 2010).

The adoption of a special Food Security and Nutrition Law in 2010 further contributed to addressing some of the structural cooperation issues identified in the past (Takagi 2006), including a) a comprehensive understanding of the access to food as a human right, b) bringing policy attention back around issues of permanent food security, rather than addressing political concerns around emergency actions to fight hunger, c) improving the statistical measuring to monitor food insecurity, and d) gradual integration of nutrition policies away from sectoral silos and towards multi sectoral cooperation.

### ***The active role of civil society***

The nature of state society relations was best described in the following terms: 'In the design of state policies you can see reflected the face of civil society'. The phrase, coined by a prestigious researcher, is particularly relevant to understand the proactive role that civil society played in the design formulation and implementation of nutrition policies. First, organised civil society had a crucial role in bringing the problem of food

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.sescrn.com.br/index.php?page=pro-direitosedeveres>

and nutrition insecurity to the national agenda in the early 90s. Following the impeachment of President Collor de Melo in 1992, and mobilised group of activists and academics – led by sociologist Herbert de Souza – proclaimed a ‘Citizen Action against Hunger, Poverty and for Life’ campaign in 1993.<sup>9</sup> The governments’ responsiveness to the *Campanha Contra a Fome* marked a turning-point in state society relations because it offered civil society and open space for influencing policy-making. Social activism prompted the government to elaborate a Plan for the Fight against Hunger and Poverty in 1994 and it encouraged the creation of the National Council for Food Security (CONSEA) with the active participation of civil society members. During the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003), segments of the organised civil society led by former presidential candidate Lula da Silva, established a ‘shadow social cabinet’ based at the *Instituto de Cidadania* (Institute of Citizenship), to monitor, oversee and propose social policies to the elected government. It is through this process that *Fome Zero*, a social plan for the reduction of hunger emerged in time for the inauguration of Lula’s government in 2003. To accompany and monitor government efforts, a second CONSEA was formed in 2004. CONSEA emerged as a consultative and participatory body formed of civil society representatives and government members to ensure the Right to Food. The council is composed by two thirds of civil society members (38 representatives) and one third of government representatives (19 Ministers of State and representatives of Federal Government). As a high-ranking government official commented, the main role of CONSEA is to provide political legitimacy (in the form of support, monitoring and policy guidance to the President) in the formulation of food and nutrition security policy/programmes. The CONSEA is highly institutionalized in the sense that it has an explicit multi sectoral mandate, with its own budget allocation, formal structure and legal existence. According to an interviewee, CONSEA met every two months during the Lula administration, and the President himself attended these meetings and ensure that other ministers did. This is to show the political relevance of civil society in decision-making. As summarised by one of the interviewees, ‘what CONSEA speaks, can never be disregarded’.

### **b) Vertical articulation**

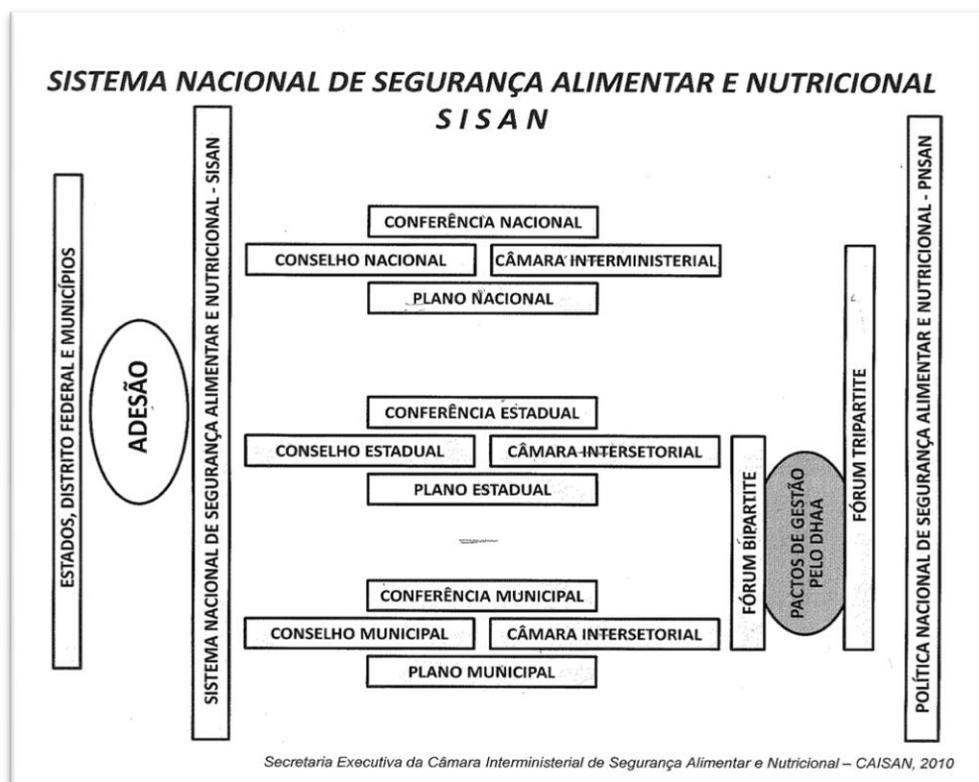
A significant challenge for the effective articulation of nutrition policies in Brazil refers to the government’s ability to coordinate between the federal, state and municipal levels of government. After the 1988 constitution, many interviewees argue that Brazil adopted a unique federal system in which the national government gained greater political and budgetary influence over municipalities with little or marginal influence from state governors. This unique arrangement (*estado federativo*) facilitated political coordination ‘by need or belief’ in the sense that municipal governments may or may not have ideological affinities with the party in power, but they will always be keen to

<sup>9</sup> Also known as *Campanha do Betinho* after its founder.

[http://www.direitos.org.br/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1279&Itemid=25](http://www.direitos.org.br/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1279&Itemid=25)  
<http://www.acaodacidadania.org.br/>

cooperate with the centre if they can benefit from government transfers. In the administration of *Bolsa Familia* for example, the central government remains responsible for the transfer of resources through the coordination of the Social Development ministry (MDS) to the municipal level.

A key aspect to organise the vertical dimension of decision-making and to ensure effective implementation across territories, was the shape of the consultation structure offered by the Unique Health System (*Sistema Unico de Saude*). The SUS, created in the 1988 Constitution, was the government system designed to offer free public healthcare to all Brazilian citizens. In terms of its internal governance structure, the SUS offered a venue for tripartite cooperation (*Comissao Intergestora Tripartita*) between the national level health ministry, the representatives of State secretaries, and municipal level representatives. This ‘capillary structure’ was conceived for the design, formulation, budget allocation, implementation and accountability of policies in the health sector, but was later ‘transplanted’ to effectively organise the National System of Food Security Nutrition (SISAN). In the case of discussing and approving the National Policy for Food Security and Nutrition (PNSAN), the organization of SISAN required that initiatives must be approved at the local level by a bipartite agreement between local and regional level government, then discussed at the tripartite level with national level officials, and finally approved by the president (see diagram below).



In practice, the vertical consultation structure worked better in states (in municipalities) where SUS had been effective already. In terms of inter-sectoral

cooperation, the Ministry of the Health was better prepared to carry out vertical articulation across its units, less so in the case of the Ministry of Social Development. Vertical articulation was hardest in the case of Ministry of Education in the case of making MDG commitments because sub national units at the state and municipal level are much more autonomous and less willing to coordinate with central policy-making.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in the case of SISAN, the vertical coordination structure also contributed to the development of SISVAN, a corresponding information system for reporting progress of nutrition indicators, sharing the data across ministries and monitoring future progress.

### **c) Funding mechanisms**

The third pillar of success is related to the way in which different funding schemes promote greater inter sectoral cooperation between different ministries and improved vertical coordination across government authorities. The implementation of *Bolsa Família* is a good example of how a conditional cash transfer can be used to promote inter-sectoral cooperation between different ministries at the local level. According to the scheme, poorer families with children receive an average payment of US\$35 every month; in exchange they commit to ensure that children attend school and take them to regular health checks. The conditionality of the cash transfer encourages different government ministries (Education and Health in this case) to share data and coordinate actions in order to make the conditions effective. The transfer of *Bolsa Família* funds is decided according to a formula that takes into account the economic situation of the household. In addition, the central government has designed an Index of Decentralized Execution (*Índice de Gestão Descentralizada*) to gauge the municipality's capability of using government funds, and has allocated additional support to help poor municipalities execute the BF programme. The relative importance of central government funding for some municipalities has, in many cases, eclipsed political differences between the districts. With rare exceptions such as the wealthy city of São Paulo, most municipalities are keen to set aside political differences and cooperate with government initiatives according to some interviewees.

A second funding scheme that promotes inter-sectoral cooperation is the school lunches programme (*Programa de Alimentação Escolar*), designed to benefit nearly 50 million students every day. According to this programme, the Ministry for Social Development is in charge of allocating money to a food supply company, which in turn buys from local producers, to feed local consumers. Actions need to be coordinated with the Ministry of Agriculture that oversees the production of food, and the Ministry of Education, in charge of administering the school lunches. The monies of the programme are transferred to municipal governments, as long as they match food purchase funding with adequate infrastructure and capable personnel.

The existence of diversified funding schemes has promoted in different ways the collaboration of different government agencies at the national level and coordination with state-level and municipal governments.

## V. Relevant findings and preliminary conclusions

This report analysed the political and institutional environment behind the undisputed success of the Brazilian government in alleviating poverty and reducing chronic child malnutrition. The proportion of underweight children was reduced to a half in the past ten years and the percentage of Brazilians who lived on less than US\$1.25 per day dropped from 25.6 per cent to only 4.8 per cent between 1990 and 2008. The country is well on track to halve hunger levels before the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2015 deadline and it has already met its poverty MDGs by reducing poverty to a quarter of 1990 levels (4<sup>th</sup> MDG Progress Report 2010). We argue that there are several key factors behind success:

1. Policy continuity. The historical evolution of government policies presented in section II, from food distribution to social protection schemes to food security and nutrition approaches, shows an important process of policy continuity. This process is characterised by a gradual and relative accumulation of expertise, rather than seen that policies are volatile or even reversed subject to political changes. This degree of policy stability is in part explained by the democratic continuity and alternation of governments since the 1990s, first with Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003) and then with Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2011). The election of Dilma Rouseff from Lula's Workers Party in 2011, represents both a validation of previous policies, and it offers a deepening of existing policies with the adoption of *Brasil sem Miséria* (Brazil without Poverty).
1. Political leadership and coalition building. The presidents' coalitional leadership style in Brazil means that presidents can both convene the participation of multiple political actors in the formation of government yet ensure that there is decisive action to coordinate and deliver good nutrition outcomes. The coalitional leadership is inherent to the fragmented nature of Brazilian politics, and it has been a trial and error process that started 20 years ago. At its core, coalitions have been sustained as long as there is a government commitment to inclusive policymaking and a responsible opposition that is willing to contribute to advancing food security and nutrition policies from their positions in the congressional arena, different cabinet ministries or subnational governments.
2. Effective decentralisation. Brazil's federal structure, modified with the 1988 constitution, gave the executive greater influence over the allocation of resources to municipal governments, at the expense of the influence of state governors. In a way, this shift helped to streamline the formulation and implementation of nutrition initiatives such as Bolsa Familia, which for the most part went beyond party affiliations or alignments. The vertical integration of stakeholders and government policies however, has been more successful in the health sector

(through the SUS for example) than in the education sector where municipal governments enjoy significant autonomy.

3. Active civil society engagement. Perhaps the key characteristic of the Brazil success story is the proactive participation of civil society organisations to introduce policy debates (such as the Campaign Against Hunger) and remain critical vigilants of government action during the implementation process. When needed, civil society organisations have participated in the form of oversight and consulting bodies to challenge and legitimise the political decision-making (as illustrated by the formation of CONSEA in 2003). Part of the success then, involved finding this delicate balance between proactive formulation, accompanying implementation and citizens oversight of government actions.
4. Conditional and targeted funding. Last but not least, this analysis argues that the conditional and selective nature of funding allocations (such as the conditional cash transfer scheme Bolsa Familia) was key to improve nutrition outcomes and mitigate poverty. From a policy-making perspective, the critical contribution of Bolsa Familia or other initiatives like the school lunches programme was that encouraged policy coordination, data sharing and concerted action from different government ministries including finance, health, education, agriculture, and social development.

#### **a) Can the Brazilian experience be replicable elsewhere? Entry points for further action**

It would have been impossible to predict that the same Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva who won the World Food Prize in 2011 for his country's success in reducing food and nutrition insecurity, was the same man who was repeatedly jailed by the military regime in the 1970s for been an active union leader and a communist threat. Needless to say, the uniqueness of the Brazilian case could hardly be 'replicated', but this section offers some lessons and entry points for thinking about policy reforms elsewhere.

1. Political ownership. A first lesson drawing from Brazil is the notion that party politics and electoral competition can be compatible and instrumental to producing sound social outcomes. The Brazilian Workers Party (PT), has been an organized political force since the 70s, it participated in presidential elections throughout the 80s and 90s and finally accessed to power in 2003 to obtain two subsequent re-elections. Although the party has not escaped the shadow of corruption scandals, party candidates have received the benefits of investing and good social outcomes, building on previous successes, contributing to government initiatives, and voters appeared to have rewarded that commitment.

The electoral success of Bolsa Familia has also benefited other non-government candidates, to validate the phrase that 'good policies are good politics'.

2. Legislative coordination. A second feature is the prominent yet undocumented role that the legislative branch (senators and congress people) have played to articulate policy debates and push for policy agendas between different cabinet ministers, the presidential office the private sector and civil society organisations. Although not devoid of problems, legislators have for the most part fulfilled their representative role to facilitate policy conversations with civil society through legislative hearings, consultations and legislative participation in local events. Additionally, some legislators have remained active policymakers to draft legislation around minimum income guarantees and food security and nutrition laws. Finally, legislators who have been in office for many years have the potential to imprint much-needed institutional memory for the development of new food and nutrition initiatives.
3. Critical involvement of civil society. Although it is not possible to replicate the long-standing influence that organised civil society has had on Brazilian politics, it is worth reflecting on the different 'roles' of organisations vis-a-vis the policy-making process. A first role is to proactively participate in the drafting and analysis of critical proposals in conjunction with researchers and policy experts, as evidenced by the Zero Hunger project developed during the 90s at the Citizenship Institute. A second role is to accompany, advice and validate government actions, as shown in the case of the National Council for food security and nutrition (CONSEA) formed in 2003. Finally, civil society can also play a watchdog function to monitor effective execution of policies and demand the timely release of government data to ensure policy accountability.
4. Financing social inclusion. While it would not be realistic to transport a financial architecture from one country to the next, it is worth thinking the ways in which conditional transfers and the selective allocation of government funding also contributed to: a) necessary policy coordination between government agencies, b) more comfortable use of public funds, and c) a gradual shift toward outcome oriented financing of social initiatives. Much work remains to be done to explore the conditions under which the financing of social initiatives can effectively escape political capture, and ensure the long-term sustainability of policy actions.

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## VII. Appendix

### a) Selected performance indicators

#### Brazil nutrition and poverty indicators (1995–2009)<sup>10</sup>

##### Nutrition indicators

Indicators <sup>137</sup>	1980–1994	1996	2006	Source
Chronic malnutrition rates	16%	13.5%	7%	UNICEF   DHS 2006 (1980–1994, 1996: NCHS/WHO, 2006: WHO)
Underweight rates	13%	6%	1.7%	
Acute malnutrition rates	2%	2%	1.98%	
Exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months	NA	NA	39.8%	
Proportion of the population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption	1991		2004	MDG Report Card. ODI 2010
	10%		6%	

##### Poverty

Indicator	1990	2008	Source
Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day	16%	5%	MDG Report Card. ODI 2010

### b) Legal and Institutional Framework

The inception of the National System for Food and Nutritional Security (SISAN) in 2006 was expressly designed to ensure the human right to food, which existed in various different forms within the 1988 Constitution (See Federal Constitution of Brazil, Chapter II, On Social Rights<sup>11</sup>). SISAN is regulated by a recent decree (2010) which institutes the **National Policy for Food and Nutritional Security (PNSAN)**, via the **Organic Law for Food and Security Protection (LOSAN)** thus establishing the parameters for the elaboration of the **National Plan for Food and Nutritional Security**.

Legal Instrument	Date and reference
<b>LOSAN, Organic Law for Food and Nutrition Security</b> <b>PNSAN, National Policy for Food and Nutritional Security</b> <b>National Plan for Food and Nutritional Security</b> ( <i>Lei Orgânica / Política Nacional / Plano Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional</i> )	<b>2010</b> Decree No. 7.272, 25 August 2010
<b>SISAN – National System for Food and Nutritional Security</b> ( <i>Sistema Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional</i> )	<b>2006</b> Law no. 11.346, 15 September 2006
<b>Zero Hunger, Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger</b> <i>Fome Zero, Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome</i>	<b>2004</b>
<b>MESA – Extraordinary Ministry for Food and Nutritional Security</b>	<b>2003</b>

<sup>10</sup> ACF 2010 – Annex 1, Brazil

<sup>11</sup> PT version [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/constituicao/constitui%C3%A7ao.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constitui%C3%A7ao.htm)

EN version: <http://pdpa.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Brazil/brazil05.html#mozToCl97749>

(Ministério Extraordinário de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional) <b>Executive Secretariat of the Intra-ministerial Managing Council of the Bolsa Família Programme</b> <i>Secretaria Executiva do Conselho Gestor Intraministerial do Programa Bolsa Família</i>	
<b>National Food and Nutrition Policy</b> <i>(Política Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional)</i>	<b>1999</b> Min. of Health Decree 710, June 10 1999
<b>Federal Constitution of Brazil</b> <i>(Constituição Federal do Brasil)</i>	<b>1988</b> Various amendments
<b>INAN – National Institute for Food and Nutrition</b> <i>(Instituto Nacional de Alimentação e Nutrição)</i>	<b>1970s</b>

### c) Questionnaire

#### Estudo sobre o combate à desnutrição infantil: protocolo de pesquisa e questionário para o Brasil

O objetivo deste estudo é documentar e analisar a bem-sucedida experiência brasileira na redução da desnutrição infantil. Nosso objetivo é identificar os fatores de política econômica que contribuíram para esse resultado, as boas práticas em dinâmicas e coalizões entre atores relevantes, e extrair lições políticas e recomendações para compartilhar com governo de outros países em desenvolvimento, agências internacionais e organizações da sociedade civil. Esta pesquisa é parte de um estudo comparativo empreendido pelo IDS e financiado pela agência britânica de cooperação DfID. O estudo inclui outros seis países (Peru, Brasil, Índia, Etiópia e Zâmbia). Como se trata de um trabalho acadêmico, suas respostas serão mantidas em anonimato e o(a) senhor(a) não será citado(a) diretamente em nosso relatório final, o que só será realizado mediante sua permissão expressa. Para efeitos de controle de qualidade, estamos gravando as entrevistas e, para isso, pedimos sua autorização.

#### I. Experiências na redução de desnutrição infantil

**Prevalência de baixo peso em crianças menores de cinco anos** foi reduzido de 13% para 1,7% (1994-2006);

**“Wasting prevalence”** é menor que 2%;

**“Stunting prevalence”** caiu pela metade entre 1996 e 2006 (de 13,5% para 6,8%), um decréscimo anual de 6,3%.

- Você concorda com a magnitude desta mudança? Esses dados são confiáveis?
- Existe um momento em que se deu uma importante guinada nas políticas sociais para reduzir a desnutrição?
- Pode-se falar de uma coordenação sustentada de boas políticas na área ao longo do tempo? Ou há muitas mudanças importantes nas estratégias adotadas pelo governo?
- Há outros fatores contextuais (crescimento econômico, migração, etc) que possam explicar a melhora destes indicadores?

- e. Que fatores explicam as grandes diferenças territoriais? (*Que factores explican las grandes diferencias territoriales?*)

## **II. Processo de mudança na redução da desnutrição no Brasil: cooperação intersetorial**

- a. Alguns estudos afirmam que o Brasil estabeleceu uma boa rede cooperação entre diferentes agências e ministérios para desenhar e implementar as políticas de nutrição. Você concorda com esta afirmação? CONSEA?
- b. Que agências ou entidades governamentais estão envolvidos nestas iniciativas?
- c. A cooperação entre setores no que tange a políticas de nutrição é produto de (1) um mecanismo formal, (2) um marco inaugural ou (3) resultado de dinâmicas (informais) de cooperação entre atores?
- d. Que papel tiveram outros atores fora do governo para desenhar essas políticas públicas ou ajudar em sua implementação?
  - i. Sociedade civil, agências de cooperação, atores privados?
  - ii. De que maneiras participaram?
  - iii. Todos trazem *inputs* semelhantes ou há diferenças na maneira em que participam?
- e. Que atores foram mais influentes ou decisivos para o avanço dessas políticas?

## **III. Processo de mudança na redução da desnutrição no Brasil: cooperação vertical**

- a. Houve uma coordenação direta e centralizada do Governo Federal ou é um processo de cooperação e consulta com diferentes agências?
- b. Em sua opinião, os políticos se interessaram mais por iniciativas na área de nutrição? Eles se beneficiam direta ou indiretamente? Isso tem um impacto direto em sua carreira política?
- c. Os legisladores estão ou estiveram envolvidos no apoio ou na produção de legislação em áreas-chave para combate à desnutrição? (por exemplo, na oferta de complementação alimentar, subsídios, etc)
- d. Como os governos estaduais têm se envolvido no processo? Quais são suas capacidades, atribuições e limitações?
- e. Como os governos municipais têm se envolvido no processo? Quais são suas capacidades, atribuições e limitações?
- f. O desenho e implementação de políticas de nutrição que são desenvolvidas em diferentes locais são bem coordenadas entre si?
- g. Os casos de cooperação vertical são mais prováveis onde o partido do governante local é o mesmo do governante federal? Governos de oposição? Não importa?

## **IV. Seção de financiamento**

- a. Como é o financiamento dos programas de nutrição no Brasil? É realizado por meio de programas específicos e fundos / orçamentos ministeriais?

- b. Que papel desempenha o “MEF”? Os recursos são direcionados para os programas ou se negociam destinações orçamentárias com outros ministérios?
- c. Entendo que houve um forte incremento do gasto social com FHC. Como isso influenciou o combate à desnutrição?
- d. Existem outros atores que contribuíram para financiar estratégias de nutrição? Financiadores internacionais? Setor privado?
- e. Existem pessoas que acreditam que alguns programas sociais foram usados de maneira ilegal (corrupção) por algumas elites políticas do partido. Você concorda com essa afirmação?

## V. Sustentabilidade e desafios

- a. Quais foram as mais importantes lições dessa experiência para a próxima fase, do Brasil Sem Miséria?
- b. Qual é o papel do setor privado?
- c. Existem oportunidades para auto-financiamento no futuro?

### d) Institutions interviewed

Institution	Date
ABRANDH - Ação Brasileira pela Nutrição e Direitos Humanos (Brazilian Action on Nutrition and Human Rights) and CONSEA - Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar (National Council on Food Safety)	July 11th
CAISAN - Câmara Interministerial de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (Interministerial Chamber on Food and Nutritional Security)	July 15th
Congress	July 14th
Coordinating Office of Vigilance on Non-Communicable Diseases	July 12th and 13th
FGV-SP - Fundação Getúlio Vargas - São Paulo (Getúlio Vargas Foundation)	July 18th
FNDE - Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação (National Fund for the Development of Education - Ministry of Education)	July 15th
IMIP - Instituto de Medicina Integral Prof. Fernando Figueira (Prof. Fernando Figueira Integral Health Institute)	July 11th, 18th
IPEA - Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Applied Economic Research Institute)	July 15th
International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth - United Nations Development Program	July 12th
Ministry of External Relations	July 12th
Ministry of Health	July 19th
Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management	July 13th
Ministry of Social Development	July 14th (2), July 15th
National Secretariat of Food and Nutritional Safety - Ministry of Social	July 11th

Development	
OPAS Brazil - Pan American Organisation for Health	July 19th
Oxfam	July 13th
Study Group on Nutrition and Poverty - Universidade de São Paulo (USP, Federal University of São Paulo)	July 18th
UFPE - Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (Federal University of Pernambuco)	July 18th