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## The Zero Hunger and Brazil without Extreme Poverty programs: a step forward in Brazilian social protection policy

Fome Zero e Brasil sem Miséria:  
um passo adiante na política brasileira de proteção social

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**Abstract** *Brazilian social protection programs have had consistent effects in reducing poverty and inequality among their respective target-groups: children, adolescents and pregnant and breastfeeding women. In 2011, the Brazil without Extreme Poverty program was launched as a strategy to eradicate extreme poverty by 2014. It makes the promotion of rights the core concept of the official political narrative. This study seeks to provide a systematic description of the Brazil without Extreme Poverty program and its initial results. A review of official documents and academic studies on the social protection programs was conducted. The Brazil without Extreme Poverty program represents an incremental approach to the social protection policies enacted by the previous administration. It advocates a multidimensional and focused approach, funded primarily by the federal government. The strategy subscribes to the international trend of associating social protection with employment and income generation policies.*

**Key words** *Family allowance program, Zero Hunger, Brazil without Extreme Poverty, Social protection, Poverty*

**Resumo** *Os programas de proteção social no Brasil tiveram efeitos consistentes na redução da pobreza e desigualdade em seus grupos-alvo: crianças, adolescentes, grávidas e nutrizes. Em 2010, o Brasil sem Miséria foi lançado como uma estratégia para erradicar a pobreza extrema até 2014. A promoção de direitos é o cerne de sua narrativa política oficial. O objetivo deste artigo é prover uma descrição sistemática do Brasil sem Miséria, bem como de seus resultados iniciais. Foi realizada revisão de documentos oficiais e estudos acadêmicos sobre os programas de proteção social. O programa Brasil sem Miséria representa uma abordagem incremental em relação às políticas de proteção social implementadas pelo governo anterior. Defende uma abordagem multidimensional e focalizada, financiada principalmente pelo governo federal. A estratégia adota a tendência internacional de associar proteção social a políticas de geração de emprego e renda.*

**Palavras-chave** *Bolsa Família, Fome Zero, Brasil sem Miséria, Proteção social, Pobreza*

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## Introduction

Brazil's socioeconomic dynamics has changed substantially since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, with numerous studies highlighting its ability to combine economic growth with social inclusion. Brazilian social protection policy has contributed to this in two ways: by increasing wage levels and stimulating human capital development in the poorer population.

Since the *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger, ZH) strategy was launched in 2003, the focus of Brazil's social protection policy has shifted significantly from an initial emphasis on food and nutritional security to combating poverty. In 2010, at the close of President Lula's second term, the *Bolsa Família* (Family Allowance Programme) conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme covered 12.8 million families, i.e. more than 51 million people.

In 2011, president-elect Rousseff launched *Brasil Sem Miséria* (Brazil without Extreme Poverty, BWEP), a strategy to eradicate extreme poverty by 2014. The new strategy comprises 120 public actions targeting 16.3 million extremely poor Brazilians. As in the Zero Hunger strategy, Brazil without Extreme Poverty makes the promotion of rights the core concept of its political narrative.

Both policy approaches state similar goals: protection against various types of vulnerability, expansion of family incomes, promotion of food security and development of human capital. The Family Allowance CCT programme forms the backbone of the public policy approach for both ZH and BWEP.

It is widely known that policy making is usually accomplished not by radical changes, but through processes of incremental *muddling through*<sup>1,2</sup>. This paper argues that BWEP represents an incremental adjustment to anti-poverty policies introduced during Lula's government by shifting the focus of the policy intervention and setting up new policy options and tools.

These programmes were all formulated from the outset in an international context of convergence on the notion of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon. As regards the shift in focus, while ZH approached poverty primarily as hunger and malnutrition, *Bolsa Família* sought to combat poverty more explicitly in terms of its multidimensionality and the capabilities regarded as necessary for breaking out of poverty from one generation to the next. This is embodied in the programme in health and education condi-

tionality. The idea of the multidimensionality of poverty is asserted more clearly in the design of BWEP, which included more substantial strategies to promote access to the labour market and to primary education. It also espoused more explicitly the idea of social justice for the most dispossessed portions of the population.

In order to assess the differences between the strategies, a review of official documents and academic studies of Zero Hunger was made, and also interviewing 21 leading actors. The variables compared in the two strategies were policy agenda, target population, governance strategy, key government actors, private sector and civil society participation.

## Background to the Family Allowance and Zero Hunger Programmes

In an international context dominated by retrenchment, CCT-based social protection policies have spread, prioritising spending on social interventions focused on the poorest. In Brazil, meanwhile, after 20 years under a military regime, during the 1988 constitution-building process that resulted from the democratisation movement, a social protection system based on the concepts of social security rights and universal healthcare began to be built. This institutional framework embodied a decentralised and participatory design for formulating and implementing social protection and social promotion policies, in particular policies to combat poverty.

In the 1990s, Brazil entered on a period of expansion of rights at the same time as the international fiscal crisis constrained public spending<sup>3-5</sup>. In Europe, that process produced universal policy constraints and reforms to welfare state social protection systems. In the years that followed, multilateral agencies spread conditional cash transfer programmes as the main pillar of a new social protection framework encompassing risk management strategies and "safety nets", that is, a set of targeted interventions and programmes for the poor and designed to address increasing poverty not only in the poorer and administratively weak countries, but also resulting from the removal of social protection systems in the countries of Eastern Europe<sup>6-10</sup>.

This agenda that made cash transfer programmes its *piece de resistance* drew a great deal of criticism. The strongest was levelled at its definition of poverty as solely lack of income and not as a multidimensional phenomenon, which implies that cash transfer interventions alone are

insufficient to overcome poverty. Thereafter, issues such as social justice, equity, recognition of differences, empowerment, democracy and moral principles would be even more present in the debate on more or less minimalist, universalist or targeted poverty and inequality policies and social protection programmes<sup>11-15</sup>.

Sen's human development theory was also a driving force in the academic and political debate on development, producing some international convergence around a concept of development that includes social dimensions as well as setting targets for poverty eradication, the rise of democracy and social justice. In that framework, development encompassed economic opportunities, political liberties, social power, health and education as basic conditions for developing capabilities. Poverty extended far beyond the limitations resulting from lack of income, relating to deprivation of capabilities that are basic for individuals to function in a societal context, to differentials in the capabilities that afford them equal access to opportunities in life.

Economists began to incorporate the issue of equity as "pro-poor growth" that includes labour and is accompanied by public policies to mitigate inequalities and facilitate income generation and employment for the poor, particularly women and other traditionally excluded groups. The idea that policies and institutions aimed at the most vulnerable groups can promote efficiency and equity took shape, based on evidence that investment in basic human needs improves productivity and economic growth<sup>16-18</sup>.

In the 2000s, the international agencies saw the fight against poverty as one of the major global challenges<sup>19</sup>, and the concept of poverty they used was more comprehensive, covering not just low levels of income and consumption, but considering also poor education, health, nutrition and other human development deficits. Social protection policies came to be conceived as means to develop social capabilities rather than as a residual category of safety nets serving merely to respond to failed policies or occasional shocks<sup>20</sup>. This had broadening of the concepts of poverty and social protection<sup>21</sup>. Social protection can address immediate poverty relief by increasing income, and also by providing health and education services to develop human capital and reduce intergenerational poverty.

This agenda spread in Brazil in the context of re-democratisation and decentralised implementation of the universal social policies in the 1990s. Poverty entered then in the policy agenda in a

context combining social democracy, social participation, fiscal and economic crisis and meagre progress on inequality.

In 1994, Brazil's first CCT programme was launched in the municipality of Campinas with education as the conditionality, the intention being to improve school attendance among poor children. In 1995, a similar programme – *Bolsa Escola* – was introduced in the Brasília Federal District.

In 2000, President Cardoso launched a federal programme with the same name and model of conditionality. In 2001, two more cash transfer programmes in relation to health care and energy (cooking gas), were launched with a view to promoting redistribution and poverty alleviation. The programmes acted autonomously, however, using different criteria and benefit policies, creating asymmetric contexts: while some poor had access to all programmes, the majority had access to none<sup>22</sup>.

In 2003, president-elect Lula launched the Zero Hunger programme, later called the Zero Hunger strategy, which initially focussed on food security and nutrition, moving later towards the commitment to combat poverty. The programme, which sought to integrate the actions of 19 ministries in partnership with civil society, was organised around the following objectives<sup>23,24</sup>:

1. Improving the living conditions of the population;
2. Including food and nutritional security as a public policy agenda item; and
3. Ensuring production and availability of, and regular access to, quality food for all.

In fact, Lula chose ZH as the central narrative for the presidential election – and retained it at the core of his discourse throughout the 8 years of his presidency<sup>25</sup> – because: 1) he knew about poverty and hungry from personal experience, a condition that allowed him to produce strong political messages; 2) the message was simple, and had strong connections with civil movements of the 1990s; 3) despite huge opposition to ZH from the media, academics, some leftist organisations, it attracted the attention of poor voters. ZH became a metaphor for inclusive socioeconomic policies.

Three problems seem to have hindered implementation of the programme as originally modelled:

1. Its strong emphasis on social organisations, which were to precede implementation of the programme. This inhibited adhesion to the

programme by municipal governments, and limited its introduction in municipalities with little scope for social mobilisation;

2. Problems of coordination: in the early years of a government led by an emerging political elite with no experience of federal administration, co-ordinated action was difficult.

3. The choice of an inefficient programme – the Food Card – as the public policy anchor. The programme joined the three existing programmes, creating even more redundancy and overlap.

In October 2003, President Lula replaced the four programmes by the Bolsa Família. In 2004, the Bolsa Família was integrated into Zero Hunger under the new Ministry for Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, which was designed to improve management of non-contributory social protection policies and defined those policies' clientele more clearly.

Two sensitive political issues tested the robustness and resilience of the Bolsa Família Programme and, by extension, the ZH: the conditionalities and "graduation". Initially, the conditionalities were presented as simply reinforcing the universal rights to health and education. However, criticism from the media and opposition parties forced the MSD to improve its monitoring systems<sup>26</sup>, producing the first rigorous methodology for monitoring and auditing the conditionalities for Brazil's CCTs, initially on education and more recently on health. The MSD's political narrative also reinforced the Bolsa Família as a means of interrupting the inter-generational transmission of poverty. A new narrative – originating in the conception of human development and which in Brazil was termed social development – took shape under the responsibility of a new federal body (the MSD), entailing adjustment to the new policy design, new tools and relations of governance.

Despite attacks in the political arena, Limitations related to the permanence in the program was never part of the policy of the MDS. The beneficiaries could remain in the programme as long as they needed. In 2006, that political resolve strengthened after the Federal Food and Nutrition Security Law was sanctioned.

In 2004, the Law aimed to ensure the human right to adequate food in Brazil. It instituted the National Food and Nutrition Security System to integrate initiatives in the area. It also endowed food and nutrition security with public policy status, thus requiring the State to enforce the universal right to regular access to good and suf-

ficient quality food, which respect cultural diversity and are environmentally, culturally, socially and economically sustainable. In 2010, amendment No. 64 to Brazil's Constitution declared access to food a social right<sup>27</sup>.

### **President Rousseff's policy to combat extreme poverty**

After eight years of the Lula government, several challenges as well as policy learning called for new policy tools and enhanced intersectoral interventions.

By early 2011, the FA policy design was close to its limit as a means for decisively tackling poverty, as the low values transferred to the extremely poor were insufficient to lift them out of poverty<sup>28</sup>. Economic betterment of the extremely poor depended on their connecting to the labour market or accessing other cash benefits. Fifteen million Brazilians were below the extreme poverty line, even though most were FA beneficiaries. Some 1.2 million eligible families, most of them belonging to remote traditional populations were not beneficiaries. Added to this, some state governments started to set up their own transfer programmes, threatening to produce a state of disorganisation similar to what had preceded the Bolsa Família.

Thus, the emergence of BWEP can be systematized from the government's political commitment to overcoming poverty and the history of success in its strategy for reducing social inequalities, whose instruments nonetheless had limited potential for achieving further progress. This all associated with the tension caused by state governments' seeking a role in social protection policy.

The Brazil Without Extreme Poverty plan widens and deepens the focus of the Bolsa Família, seeking to marshal the organised social response to the demands of the extremely poor. The narrative stresses social justice and dignity for the most deprived groups in the population. The foundations of the Plan are:

1. Promoting social development. Restoring the broader dimension of the concept of development, seeking to integrate an excluded population fully into the country's economic and social dynamics.

2. Promoting equity. Using public policies to reduce socially unjustifiable differences and to fight discrimination. Reducing the poverty gaps faced by black, indigenous and traditional populations.

3. Generating opportunities. Human capital development considering life cycle, gender, place of residence (urban or rural), and cultural context.

4. Improving quality in the current model. The main deficit faced by the extremely poor is lack of access to quality public services. The immediate interventions would cover: integration of the national, sub-national and private sector initiatives; review the current legal framework for expanding the services network; develop a communication strategy for beneficiaries, administrative partners, political actors and taxpayers.

5. Developing a sustainable policy. The endogenous and exogenous factors that can affect the plan's sustainability were considered while developing the model.

### Comparing policy agendas

Chart 1 shows the ZH strategy agenda. The FA, as part of the presidential agenda, drew much support within the national bureaucracy, accounting for more funding and prestige than any of the rest. However, the School Meals Programme (Ministry of Education), and the Food Procurement and Cistern Building programmes (MSD)

were also substantial in terms of coverage, budget and impact. The other programmes represented little funding or minor roles in the strategy.

Chart 2 shows the BWEP agenda. The new plan is not a definitive, official set of programmes. The MSD top managers support that the initial wide set approach with comprised 120 actions was lately condensed to a more manageable and effective set. The programmes are monitored in terms of priority actions, other relevant actions, and interactive actions (performed by the MSD's partners at the national or state level). As regards the composition of the policy agenda, the MSD managers proclaim and practice a sort of controlled experimentalism.

The Bolsa Família has gained importance in the new plan. It is the primary layer for accessing the other programmes. Only beneficiaries of the Programme may take part in the BWEP. The Bolsa Família registry and bankcard subsequently serve as registry system and bank mechanism for all BWEP programmes, improving its effectiveness.

The Food Procurement Programme (PAA) and the Cistern-Building Programme also increased their share of total funding. Comparing the 2010 and 2012 budgets, the PAA budget tripled and the cisterns programme doubled. Ca-

**Chart 1.** Zero hunger strategy.

#### **Axis 1. Access to food**

- Income: Family Allowance Programme
- Food Programmes:
  - School Meals, Distribution of Vitamin A and Iron, Food for Vulnerable Populations, Nutrition and Food Education, Food and Nutrition Surveillance System, Workers' Meals.
- Local and regional Nutrition and Food Systems networks:
  - Subsidised Restaurants and Canteens, Food Market, Urban Agriculture and Food Banks.
- Water:
  - Cisterns.

#### **Axis 2. Strengthening Family Farming**

- Family Farming Funding
  - Agricultural Insurance and Harvest Insurance.
- Food Procurement Programme (PAA)

#### **Axis 3. Income Generation**

- Social and vocational qualification
- Solidarity Economy and Productive Inclusion
- Microcredit for Production
- Regional Nutrition and Food Systems arrangements

#### **Axis 4. Articulation, Mobilisation and Social Oversight**

- Social Assistance Reference Centres (CRAS)
- Social Oversight Councils and Committees
- Citizenship Education and Social Mobilisation
- Individual and Corporate Donations
- Partnerships with Private Sector and Social Organisations



**Chart 2.** Agenda of the Brazil Without Extreme Poverty.

<p><b>Guaranteed Income</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements on Family Allowance Programme (Bolsa Família): extra benefits for covering extreme poverty gap to all beneficiaries, and 10% of increasing of the poverty threshold.</li> </ul> <p><b>Productive Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rural</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Food Procurement Programme (PAA)</li> <li>◦ Technical assistance and Productive Asset Oriented Cash Transfer</li> <li>◦ Rural Micro Financing Programme</li> <li>◦ Domestic cisterns</li> <li>◦ Water for production</li> <li>◦ Forest conservation subsidy (Green Grant)</li> <li>◦ Light for All Programme – providing energy for all households</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Urban</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Free professional qualification courses</li> <li>◦ Individual micro entrepreneur</li> <li>◦ Oriented productive microcredit</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Access to Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protection for children and adolescents up to 15 years old</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Nurseries</li> <li>◦ Fulltime time education</li> <li>◦ Expansion of the Health in School Program</li> <li>◦ Provision of supplements for children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ferrous sulphate</li> <li>- Vitamin A</li> <li>- Micronutrients</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ Free provision of asthma drugs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Expansion of the basic health care for low-income population</b></li> <li>• <b>Strengthening the social assistance network</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Social Assistance Reference Centres (CRAS)</li> <li>◦ Specialized Social Assistance Reference Centres (CREAS)</li> <li>◦ Street Population Reference Centres</li> <li>◦ Hosting facilities for street population</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Source: MDS, 2014<sup>29</sup>.

capacity building for urban workers, and access to full-time school, primary health care and two types of social assistance centres figure large in the new plan. Financial incentives and technical assistance are picking up momentum.

In June 2012, a new cycle of enhancement of the Bolsa Família started with the easing of the value of the benefit in order to fill the extreme poverty gap of the families with children up to 6 years old. In December 2012, the same measure was adopted for families with children between 7 to 15 years old. Finally, in April 2013, all family members were favoured by a flexible benefit aiming to help the families to overcome the extreme poverty. Therefore, the average value of the benefit jumped from 119 Reais to 167 Reais (from US\$ 53 to US\$ 76) in the period (MDS, 2014).

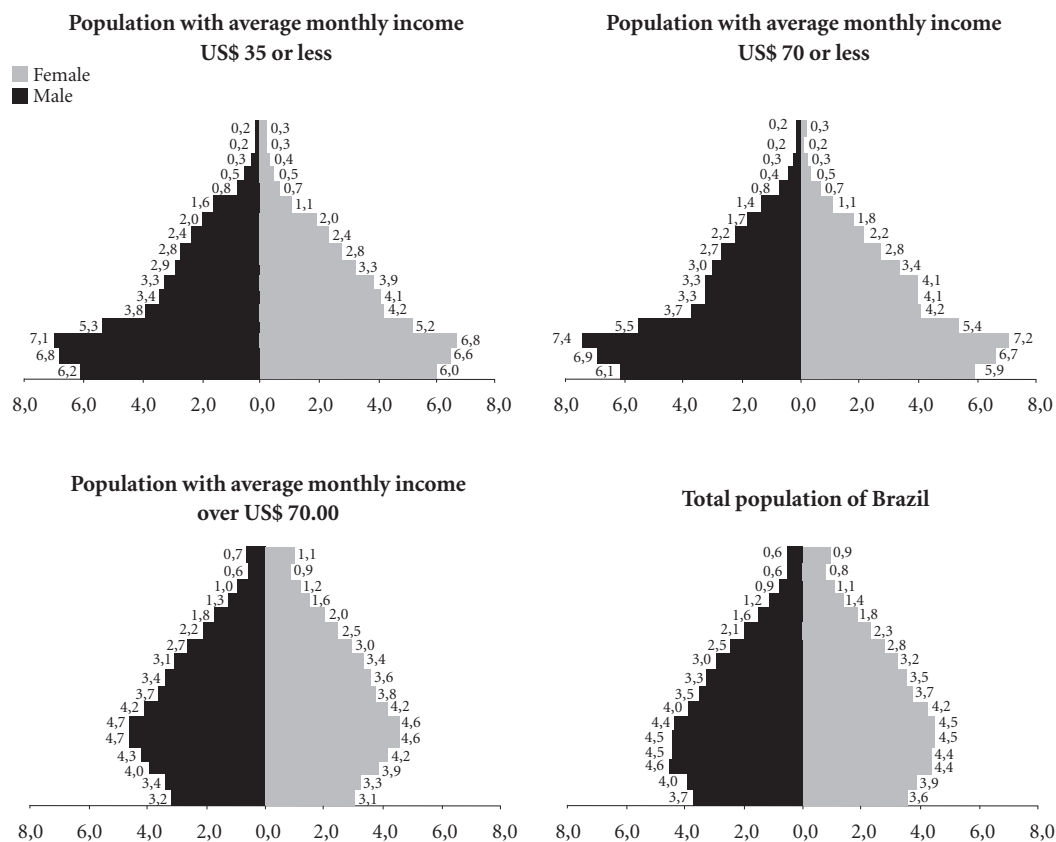
The two agendas are similar in the importance given to the FA and programmes targeting rural populations. The BWEP is broader and interlinks the 21 ministries' roles decisively, but that can be expected after the positive results obtained by the relevant ZH programmes. The BWEP adjusts the focus on the most vulnerable clientele of the ZH strategy and offers a wider set of options supported by a larger number of committed partners, aiming to address the determinants of chronic poverty.

## Target populations

In this section, demographic indicators, stratified according to monthly per capita income, are presented for four populations, using micro-data from the 2010 Population Census. The thresholds are based on average monthly income: US\$ 35 or less; US\$ 70 or less; more than US\$ 70, and the total Brazilian population. The first population is the BWEP target population; the second, the ZH target population.

Figure 1 shows the age structure of the ZH and BWEP target populations, non-beneficiaries and total population. Both initiatives display similar age structures, indicating a different stage in the demographic transition in relation to the non-beneficiary population. A pyramidal age structure usually indicates high fertility levels and mortality rates. However, in the case of Brazil that should be read carefully because of the high levels of protection for the population over 65 years old. Under Brazil's Constitution, all elderly poor (receiving less than ¼ minimum wage or about US\$ 155) are entitled to receive one minimum wage. More than 1.6 million Brazilians received that benefit in 2010.

Table 1 shows demographic indicators that will enable the dynamics of the two observed



**Figure 1.** Age structure of selected Brazilian populations according to household income *per capita* - 2010.

**Table 1.** Selected demographic indicators for target populations of BWEP, ZH, non-beneficiaries and total Brazilian population (2010).

Indicators	BWEP	ZH	Non-Beneficiaries	Total
Population size	15,002,814	30,937,492	159,818,307	190,755,799
Dependency ratio under 14 years old	68	70.24	29.63	35.14
Percentage of population under 4 years old	12.15	12.09	6.30	7.24
Percentage of male population over 65 years old	2.30	2.12	7.41	6.55
Percentage of female population over 65 years old	2.82	2.44	9.29	8.19

populations to be understood. The numbers related to the total population is different from the official number because it was adopted a different criteria for computing the households with zero income. However, the trends are consistent with the official statistics from MDS.

ZH and BWEP target populations are very similar. The ZH population contains the BWEP population, the latter representing half the former. They display similarities in age and gender composition. The indicators suggest lower levels of fertility in non-beneficiary populations. The

elderly non-beneficiary population tends to be larger even when bias introduced by the benefit for the elderly poor is considered. The masculinity index is not shown in the table because it produced close results for all observed groups (0.96 to 0.98).

#### Governance strategy

The governance design for ZH establishes two strong bodies for dealing with civil society and for intergovernmental liaison. The latter is



the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security (Consea) and the former is the Inter-ministerial Chamber on Food and Nutrition Security (Caisan). It is responsible for advising the President on nutrition and food security policy. Caisan coordinates and monitors implementation of nutrition and food security policy, liaising among government structures.

Consea became very influential, especially under the Lula government. Caisan was legally instituted at the end of 2007, but it is still not fully implemented.

In 2010, the Extraordinary Secretariat for Extreme Poverty Eradication was set up in the MSD with responsibility for BWEP.

Governance of BWEP also involves three other bodies: the BWEP National Management Committee; the BWEP Executive Board; and the Inter-ministerial Monitoring Team. The National Management Committee includes the Minister of Finance, the Head of the Presidential Chief of Staff, the Minister of Planning, and the Minister of Social Development, who coordinate the senior team. That body revises the whole policy agenda, including the FA and programmes that are not part of the Plan, but whose outcomes may interact with BWEP.

The deputy ministers of the 21 ministries make up the Executive Board. Representatives of the 21 ministries form the Inter-ministerial Monitoring Team. At the core of this model are the most influential ministries in the government, while day-to-day demands are left to the deputy ministers.

Compared to the ZH design, BWEP appears far more effective for achieving its operational goals. However, it seems to have lost the comprehensive framework that brought social support to the ZH. Governance of BWEP is highly institutionalised, but largely disconnected from the beneficiaries and civil society organisations. The governance strategies are very different in their philosophy, implementation and operational results.

### Key government actors

ZH relies mainly on civil society for formulation and on local public administrations for service delivery. The FA has its own model, based on local governments, for identifying and registering beneficiaries and providing health and education services. A national public bank (the *Caixa Economica Federal*) provides the cash transfer mechanism.

BWEP relies mainly on the state administrations to implement economic inclusion measures, and on the local administrations and the *Caixa Economica Federal* for measures that formed part of ZH.

### Private sector and civil society

Initially civil society mobilisation to contribute to ZH was at the core of the strategy. The federal government used numerous mechanisms to raise political support for the policy, and to monitor the programme's implementation using local capacity to inform regular auditing. Re-creation of the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security (Consea) sealed that pact.

In some cases, as in the cisterns programme, an alliance of almost 1,000 NGOs was used to produce the equipment and transfer the technology to the beneficiary communities.

ZH saw the private sector as a donor and also a provider of jobs for ZH beneficiaries. In 2007, private firms, public enterprises and individuals donated more than US\$ 2 million in cash and food, enabling 700 tonnes of food to be distributed to the vulnerable<sup>30</sup>. The initiative had more significance as public mobilization rather than an alternative source of funding because the public investment was far higher.

The most challenging aspect of the ZH strategy was how to improve placement of the cash transfer programme beneficiaries in the labour market. This is precisely where governments have failed most.

Political mobilisation does not form part of BWEP, although it preserved the alliance with civil society through the Consea (as the nutrition and food security policy-making body), the NGOs (as the main partner in the cistern programme), and private companies and public enterprises (as job providers for BWEP beneficiaries). However, BWEP has used situation rooms managerially, to identify and organise measures to modify the labour market.

### Conclusions

Despite the differences in depth of focus, amplitude of the policy agenda and interrelationships with other ministries, both strategies coincide in their target population, key public policy actors, core policy agenda, private sector participation and funding policy. In a very continuous movement to attack different dimensions of poverty,

Brazil's policies to combat poverty have been muddling through.

The forces driving the evolution of Zero Hunger towards BWEP seem to be: 1) the recognition of the limits of conditional cash transfer programs as drivers of far-reaching structural changes; 2) The priority of focusing on cash transfer programs produced an imbalance regarding to the investment on social services provision, a problem that the government would seek to address with the new strategy 3) Some states and municipalities governments introduced conditional cash transfer programmes, posing risks of disorganising the federal model; and 4) the new federal government's endeavour to produce a distinguished hallmark in relation to the previous government.

BWEP aims to promote a more comprehensive concept of development than the ZH strategy, producing a model for allying policies both horizontally and vertically in the hope of making service provision more efficient and effective. Despite making headway as economic inclusion policy for rural populations, BWEP is as dependent on the Bolsa Família as ZH was, and has

only a vague economic inclusion agenda for urban populations.

Reorientation of the anti-poverty agenda towards social development has also meant changes in the policy tools and in relations of governance. In relation to the ZH approach, BWEP expanded the policy agenda and increased the level of institutionalization of the social protection policy. That incremental adjustment was fundamentally supported on policy learning and professionalization of the policy implementation.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Brazil is making pro-poor choices that associate economic growth with reduction of inequalities, in the endeavour to redress its heavy historical imbalances. There can be no denying the improvements in social indicators and advances in terms of justice and social rights. Nonetheless, policies to combat poverty are certainly not enough to solve the problems of social inclusion and integration into the market for sectors of its population suffering from high levels of deprivation. That will depend on other factors such as human capital development and economically and environmentally sustainable development.

## Collaborations

R Paes-Sousa e J Vaitsman participated equally in all stages of preparation of the article.

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