

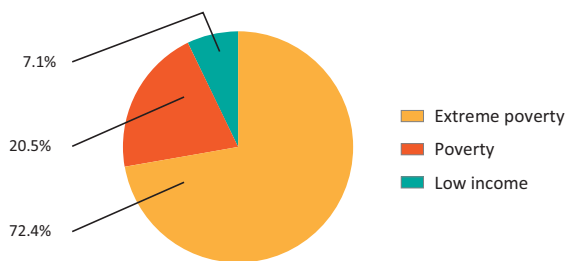
# Socio-economic Profile of Programa Bolsa Família Recipients: What Does the Single Registry Reveal?

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Camargo et al. (2013) discuss the socio-economic profile of Programa Bolsa Família (PBF) recipients based on an analysis of the information available in the Single Registry. In March 2013, the Single Registry database contained information on 24.5 million families, of which 23 million (91 per cent) had per capita household incomes of under half the minimum wage — the income bracket that encompasses its targeted group. Out of this population, 13.9 million households (or 50 million people — roughly 26 per cent of the Brazilian population) are PBF beneficiaries and receive an average benefit of R\$149.71. These families comprise 3.6 people on average. Most of them (50.2 per cent) live in the north-eastern region of the country.

Before receiving the PBF, most of the recipient families had been in extreme poverty (72.4 per cent), which means that their per capita household income was under R\$70.00.

Figure 1: Percentage of Families by Income Bracket



An analysis of the family composition of PBF recipients reveals that female-headed single-parent households represent the largest group (42.2 per cent), followed by two-parent families (37.6 per cent). This percentage suggests a trend in the coping strategies adopted by the most vulnerable families, given that, in many cases, the spouse's presence and income within a household is erratic, as demonstrated by several anthropological studies conducted on recipients. Part of this phenomenon can also be explained by the increase in the number of single mothers among Brazilian families, especially those with low incomes.

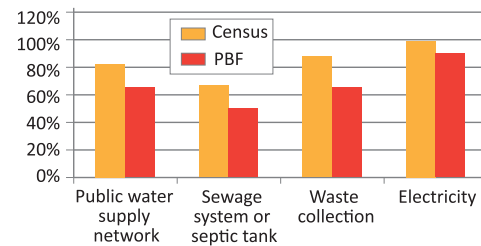
Using the 2010 census as a reference, a comparison with the national figures reveals that PBF beneficiary households have poor access to public utilities. The same result was found for all items analysed.

Only 38.1 per cent of PBF households have simultaneous access to direct or indirect waste collection services, public sewage systems or septic tanks, electricity and public water supply networks. Even in urban areas, where such services are regularly provided, only 48.9 per cent of recipient families benefit from a complete service package. In rural areas, this percentage drops to 5.2 per cent for PBF households.

The majority of PBF recipients are women, and black or mixed-race individuals. The large number of young people under the age of 17 (48.8 per cent of the recipients) is yet another noteworthy feature. This young profile is to be expected, since the social security policy and the non-contributory

benefits provided to senior citizens (BPC) cover most of the elderly population, preventing this group from being poverty-stricken.

Figure 2: Access to Public Utilities

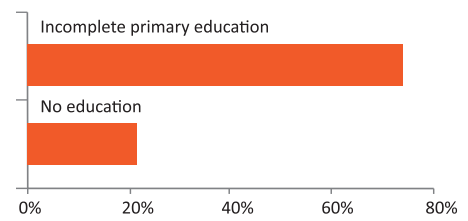


Schooling levels among PBF recipients are quite low: over two thirds (69 per cent) of programme participants have not concluded primary school. The fragility of this population is more dramatic in the north-eastern region of the country, where 20.3 per cent of the recipients above the age of 25 are illiterate.

On the one hand, the identification of these vulnerabilities in different dimensions of the lives of PBF beneficiaries confirms that the programme is adequately targeted and that the Single Registry is an effective tool to identify low-income families. On the other hand, it also reveals several challenges that must be tackled to overcome poverty.

A deeper analysis of the socio-economic condition of the poorest segments of the Brazilian population demonstrates, albeit recent positive evolution, that racial issues, gender-related aspects, schooling levels and access to public utilities must be addressed by cross-cutting actions implemented at all levels of government. It is also extremely important to coordinate cash transfer programmes with the provision of services and the productive inclusion of the poorest population groups. Additionally, local investments must be encouraged in sanitation services and waste collection systems, which are essential to improving the health conditions of this segment of the population.

Figure 3: PBF Recipients (aged 25 or older)



Notes:

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Reference:

Camargo, C. F., Currello, C.R. B., Licio, E. & Mostafa, J. (2013) Perfil Socioeconômico dos Beneficiários do Programa Bolsa Família: O Que o Cadastro Único Revela? in T. Campello and M. Côrtes Neri (eds), Programa Bolsa Família: uma década de inclusão e cidadania. Brasília, Ipea, chapter 9. pp. 157-177. <[http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/livros/livros/livro\\_bolsafamilia\\_10anos.pdf](http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/livros/livros/livro_bolsafamilia_10anos.pdf)>.

