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COOPERATION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
English/Português

The Brazil-Africa Cooperation Programme on Social Protection aims at promoting technical assistance from the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger to African countries in the development of social policies and programmes. It is an initiative financed by the British Department for International Development and supported by the International Poverty Centre.

Social Protection in West Africa: Many Challenges but Great Initiatives

Scarce social security, difficulties in prioritising investments, lack of comprehensive social protection frameworks: this is the scenario in most countries of West Africa. The region in which circumstances are as different as Nigeria and Sierra Leone is most often guided by poverty reduction strategy papers and remains highly dependent on donor resources.

Many West African countries seem to lack a clear vision of their development options—it being difficult to plan strategically when a desire for long-term investments competes with the need for immediate alleviation of extreme hunger. There are many different understandings of "social protection". Social security coverage remains very limited, and ministries of social development and labour are usually more concerned with providing the basic mechanisms for the system to work. Of course, the expansion of social security is also at the heart of the political debate, because most economic activities take place outside the formal sector. But in many countries it is still a challenge to ensure that benefits are delivered to workers who are already covered. The region has only a few cash transfer schemes, such as those in Ghana and Sierra Leone.

Ownership of public policies poses another great challenge in West Africa—in other words, ensuring that social protection strategies are nationally owned and are executed within more integrated frameworks. Development efforts must also take due account of traditional solidarity schemes. These are part of the debate, but they are still largely neglected in West Africa and, indeed, in Africa as a whole. There is a need for more research and other activities geared to determining what works and what can be done to revitalise mutual help schemes. African think tanks can play a significant role in this regard.

The lack of information in French is another issue in West Africa. Most of the "development" debate is in English, which leaves many policymakers from non-anglophone countries with little information on best practices and lessons learned. Inclusive development must address this gap and thereby facilitate the South-South and global exchange of knowledge.

Despite West Africa's substantial challenges, this mostly francophone region does have interesting initiatives to present to the world. One of these is the National Safety Net Programme in Sierra Leone. The country has endured a long civil war, from which it is slowly but confidently trying to recover. Foday Conteh, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in Sierra Leone's Ministry of Employment and Social Security, reports that the programme gives cash transfers to the elderly, as well as to those who have no regular source of income or support from family or community, or who are unable to work. This successful pilot programme undertakes targeting at chiefdom level as well as formal administrative levels. The cash benefit is US$ 68 per person for six months and about 17,000 people are covered. The community members approved the initiative and have spent most of the benefit on food and health care.

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The programme is entirely financed by the government of Sierra Leone, which demonstrates how political will is always at the heart of any development process.

West Africa: many challenges but much energy. Spread the word about the vision and commitment of many of the region's policymakers. Read about other exciting initiatives in the next newsletter of the Brazil-Africa Cooperation Programme on Social Protection.

Cash Transfer Programmes in West Africa

Country	Programme
Cape Verde	Social Minimum Pension (PSM)
Ghana	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
Nigeria	In Care of the People (being drafted)
Sierra Leone	National Safety Net

Food Acquisition from Family Smallholder Farms

Since it was created in 2003, Brazil's Programme for the Purchase of Food from Family Agriculture (PAA) has invested R$ 1.5 billion (US$ 951 million). Resources have been provided to about 432,000 producers and the products bought have reached 24.4 million people.

PAA, one of the components of the Zero Hunger initiative, acquires food from family producers and distributes the products to Brazilians affected by social and food vulnerability. The goal is to promote the right to adequate food and ensure the principle of food sovereignty in the country.

The programme pays each producer R$ 3,500 (US$ 2,200) a year and the same amount twice a year in the case of the milk programme. PAA involves actions from a number of ministries and organisations, such as the Ministries of Social Development and the Fight against Hunger, Agrarian Development, Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Education, Finance, Planning, and the National Supply Company (CONAB), as well as states and municipalities.

The programme has four components:

Direct purchase from family farms: acquisition of food directly from small producers.

Building the stocks of family producers: purchase of food from family farmers organised into groups, mainly to build stocks in their own organisations.

Purchase for simultaneous donations: the scheme links the farmers' production to local demands from schools, day care centres, orphanages and the social programmes of localities, such as community restaurants and food banks.

Incentives for the production and consumption of milk: acquisition and distribution of milk at a guaranteed price.

Several proposals were presented in the seminar "PAA: Evaluation and Perspectives", which took place in Brasilia on 16–18 June.

The proposals included an increase in resources; consolidation of PAA as a state public policy; creation of a new fund for the programme; and an increase in the maximum quota per family per year to R$ 4,980 (US$ 3,156) for each producer. Another important proposal is for the national Congress to approve bill 2877/08, which establishes that 30 per cent of the food used in the school food programme will be bought from family agriculture.

Patrus Ananias, Minister of Social Development and the Fight against Hunger, maintains that it is because of programmes like PAA that "we are able to prove that it is possible to reconcile economic development with social development."

According to Guilherme Cassel, Minister of Agrarian Development, PAA is a means of combating the exploitation of family agriculture: "the programme is particularly important today in addressing the food and oil crises."

South-South Partnerships—International Centre for Technical Cooperation on HIV/AIDS

In the area of South-South cooperation, the International Centre for Technical Cooperation on HIV/AIDS (CICT) merits attention. This is an initiative of the Brazilian government and the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Created in 2005, CICT seeks to promote international South-South technical cooperation, foster debate and increase knowledge of HIV/AIDS in developing countries.

CICT, which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Health's National Programme on STDs and AIDS, is mostly engaged in devising, monitoring and evaluating cooperation projects, as well organising conferences and national and international workshops on HIV.

CICT projects are usually developed in response to requests for cooperation from institutions in developing countries. Currently, nine projects are being implemented with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and seven others with African and Asian countries. The programme is financed by the Brazilian government, UNAIDS, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and Germany's Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

More details of CICT's work are available at http://www.cict-aids.org/

International Cooperation on Social Protection

Brazil's Ministry of Social Development and the Fight against Hunger (MDS) continues to expand its international cooperation network. At the moment it has cooperation projects with 23 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Italy, Mexico, Mozambique, Panama, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Venezuela, the United Kingdom and the United States. There are also partnerships with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO, UNDP and DFID. Programmes of particular interest are those in the areas of social assistance, food and nutritional security and, especially, *Bolsa Família*.

In the first three months of 2008 alone, 15 countries from across the world had contact with MDS representatives. In April, MDS signed an agreement in Brussels with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. In the same month, the government of Álvaro Colom in Guatemala launched the *Mi Família Progresa* programme, which is inspired by *Bolsa Família*. In its first phase the programme will benefit 7,000–9,000 families.

Regional Cooperation with West Africa

On 9–11 June a Brazilian delegation took part in the African Union's Regional Experts Meeting in Dakar, Senegal. The delegation included Aline Amaral and José César Medeiros of MDS, Mário Theodoro of the Brazilian Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), and Milko Matijascic and Melissa Andrade of the International Poverty Centre. The meeting highlighted the significant opportunities available to enhance cooperation between the two continents, since West African countries are working to develop new social protection schemes and are interested in learning from international experience. Discussion also involved the experiences of *Bolsa Família* and the Single Registry—the database used for different programmes targeting the most vulnerable. The delegation also noted initiatives in the area of food and nutritional security, observing that Brazil has a complex model of social protection that does not rely on one single initiative but on a network of programmes.

Aline Amaral (MDS) and Mário Theodoro (IPEA) in Panel 1: Case Studies.

Information and Exchange Centre for the Extension of Social Protection in Portuguese-Speaking Countries

Given the importance of disseminating knowledge and fostering the exchange of experiences for the purposes of human development and the fight against poverty, the Information and Exchange Centre for the Extension of Social Protection in Portuguese-Speaking Countries has been created.

It is a partnership between the Executive Secretariat of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), the Lisbon office of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Project STEP/ Portugal 3. Its objective is to increase the supply of information on social protection available in Portuguese.

The centre will raise awareness of current initiatives in the CPLP countries: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, East Timor, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Portugal.

It offers public access to a database containing a variety of documents on social protection strategies, policies, programmes, instruments and methodologies.

More information is available at: http://www.extensao-protecsocial.com/

Organização Internacional do Trabalho

STEP

CPLP

Call for Papers: Child Poverty and Inequality

The Egyptian cabinet's Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC) is organising the ***First International Forum for the Developing Countries' Think Tanks***.

In that context, UNICEF Egypt is arranging an international conference on ***Child Poverty and Disparities: Public Policies for Social Justice***, to be held in Cairo in January 2009.

Researchers, academics, policymakers, practitioners and students are invited to send their proposals for work to be presented at the conference.

For further information, see the following website: http://www.unicef.org/egypt/media_4579.html.

Contact: egyptchildpovertyconference@unicef.org.

Next Steps

One of the approaches taken by the Brazil-Africa Cooperation Programme on Social Protection is distance learning via a web site. The new site, to be launched during the Study Tour of African Countries to Brazil in the last week of August, will contain technical documents from Brazil's social programmes and from initiatives in partner countries. The aim is to facilitate South-South cooperation and learning on the part of governments and other partners involved in social protection. Wait for a new and resource-rich learning platform! See: www.undp-povertycentre.org/africa-brazil

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