



nourishing MILLIONS

STORIES OF CHANGE IN NUTRITION





nourishing
MILLIONS
STORIES OF CHANGE IN NUTRITION

Nutrition and Equality: Brazil's Success in Reducing Stunting among the Poorest

Meagan Keefe

Brazil

Rapid advances in economic development and healthcare in Brazil have contributed to significant improvements in child health and nutrition in recent decades. The country has also been successful in reducing socioeconomic inequality in malnutrition.

Impact

- Prevalence of child stunting reduced from 37% to 7% from 1974/5-2006/7
- Exclusive breastfeeding in infants <6 mths increased from 27% to 41% from 1999-2008 in Brazil's 27 state capitals and partial breastfeeding increased from a medium duration of 2.5 mths in the 1970s to 14 months in 2006/7
- Children from poor families were 7.7x more likely than children from wealthy families to be stunted in 1989, but by 2007/8 children from poor families were only 2.6 times more likely to suffer stunting

Brazil

Factors contributing to success

- A range of policies were implemented between 1996 and 2007 to ensure universal access to primary education and to improve the quality of primary and secondary schools across all municipalities.
- The government consolidated its cash transfers for health and nutrition and linked smallholder farmers to food-based social protection programs.
- Radical decentralization of the health sector allowed for greater stakeholder participation and support for national health policy implementation at all levels of government.
- Access to improved sources of drinking water increased and sanitation services expanded.



Ministério do Desenvolvimento social e Combate à Fome/S. Amaral

Brazil: Lessons learned



Reuters/N. Doce

- Expanding and better targeting pro-poor social assistance programs accelerated progress in reducing poverty, which contributed to reductions in malnutrition.
- A multisectoral approach to program delivery combined with funding mechanisms to promote cooperation between ministries at local levels supported poverty alleviation and reduction of undernutrition.
- Civil society played a central role in bringing food and nutrition security to the national agenda and later in designing and implementing nutrition policies.