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Brazil's New Plan to Beat Poverty

Taylor Barnes
The Christian Science Monitor
July 7, 2011

With a monthly stipend that she receives from the Brazilian government, Cleimilda dos Santos can now keep the refrigerator stocked for her 10 kids, but life for the family is still precarious. At the top of a red clayhill in Japeri, the town with the lowest human development index in the state of Rio, the one-bedroom home she shares with her whole family still floods with rainwater. Her kids need winter coats.

In the past decade, Brazil has been touted for lifting 25 million people out of poverty, thanks to macroeconomic stability, high commodities prices, and a much hailed social program called Bolsa Familia that gives families monthly cash for families that adhere to conditions such as keeping kids in classrooms. But as the nation continues to rise – it became majority middle class in 2008, according to the Rio-based Getúlio Vargas Foundation – leaders say they are determined to do more, arguing that packed homes and undocked children have no place in today's economic landscape...

...Christopher Sabatini, editor-in-chief of the policy journal *Americas Quarterly* in New York, which is published by the [Americas Society and] Council of the Americas, says that as nations get richer, they need to start improving the quality of social services – such as health-care insurance or pensions – overall, and not just targeted, cash-based programs that are individualistic.

"People are still in very fragile socioeconomic positions," he says. "There needs to be a more broad-based social safety net."

[Click here to read the complete article.](#)

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