

‘Disjointed’, ‘impossible to perform’ and ‘amateur’; experts criticize new Bolsa Família – 08/09/2021 – Market

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The government’s proposal for Auxílio Brasil, a replacement program for Bolsa Família presented this Monday (9), was received with concern by specialists in public policy.

They agree that the program must be constantly improved to reduce the vulnerability of Brazilian families, especially after the crisis caused by the new coronavirus, but the complexity of the proposal draws attention.

The MP (Provisional Measure) presented by the government includes early childhood benefits in the same basket of aid to school sports and scientific initiation and productive inclusion incentives.

For Tereza Campello, who was minister of Social Development and Fight against Hunger in the government of President Dilma Rousseff (PT), the government’s proposal is not to improve Bolsa Família, but to destroy the program.

“Bolsa Família has been improving over the past 18 years. What they are doing is destroying the program, replacing its essence with something that has never been tested,” she says.

“You can’t compare it with the program in 2014 and say that it is being expanded, it is necessary to compare it with what is happening now in Brazil — and there are 39 million receiving benefits from the federal government.”

Campello adds that the essence of Bolsa Família is to be a focused and simple-to-understand program to facilitate operationalization with municipalities. “The government wants to turn a program that is simple into something complicated, disjointed and dysfunctional.”

One of the creators of Bolsa Família, Instituto Unibanco’s executive superintendent, Ricardo Henriques, also takes a hard look at how the government is trying to change the program.

“At the time we coordinated the project, there were several transfer programs and it was necessary to create a logic that would align them all, to alleviate poverty and create a link for social mobility,” he says.

Now, he assesses that the government’s proposal goes in the opposite direction. “It is a pile of agendas for those who do not understand the complexity of social policy. It is a ‘non-program’, impossible to carry out. The secret of Bolsa Família is to be precise in its strategy.”

Henriques also considers it unlikely that the government will be able to assess the effectiveness of such different public policies, such as those for early childhood and sports performance, under the same umbrella.

“Again, there’s an amateurism to it that’s typical of those who don’t understand social policy and think that piling things up is enough to take care of several problems.”

Increasing the program’s budget has a degree of generosity, which is welcome, as poverty is higher than before the pandemic, recalls Marcelo Neri, director of FGV Social at the Getulio Vargas Foundation.

He considers, however, that the government is trying to make use of questionable sources of financing — such as resources for payment of precatório or privatization — and this puts sustainability at risk for the coming years.

“These are not sustainable sources. The risk is to deliver a generous readjustment now, as it was with emergency aid, but that doesn’t keep going forward.”

Neri assesses that the program has been readjusted coinciding with electoral years. “Furthermore, although the government does not detail what it intends to do, the novelties of this proposal, such as the scientific scholarship and that of athletes, should not be of expressive value or benefit so many people.”

“In a certain sense, the program existed before the PT, but the brand became more associated with PT governments and the name change is part of the electoral strategy. What bothers me is this instability in the rules and the amateurism in the design of

something so important for the country,” he says.

Another point of the proposal foresees a kind of payroll-deductible credit, in which beneficiaries will be able to authorize the discount of the benefit in favor of a bank in loans, up to the value of 30% of the benefit.

Coordinator of FGV’s Center for Studies in Microfinance and Financial Inclusion, Lauro Gonzalez fears that this will generate a wave of indebtedness for the poorest families and that it will be a deviation from the program’s purpose.

“Since most of the Bolsa Família beneficiaries are informal, it would be more interesting to have a microcredit program that promotes formalization over time.”

He also assesses that microcredit should be coupled with the part of the program that deals with rural and urban productive inclusion. As proposed, he says, the aid for productive inclusion for those who prove a formal employment relationship seems to ignore the situation of the beneficiaries.

“Most of the beneficiaries are in a situation that keeps them from having a formal contract, either because they live in municipalities with few jobs or because they have been in the informal sector for a long time,” he says.

HOW IS THE BOLSA FAMÍLIA

Destined to

- Families in extreme poverty (monthly income of up to R\$89 per person)
- Families living in poverty (monthly income between R\$89 and R\$178 per person) who have children or teenagers from 0 to 17 years old

How are the payments

- Basic benefit: intended for families in extreme poverty
- Variable benefit: intended for families in poverty and extreme poverty with pregnant women or people up to 15 years old (up to 5 benefits per family)
- Variable benefit: intended for families in poverty and extreme poverty with adolescents up to 17 years old (up to 2 benefits per family)
- Benefit for overcoming extreme poverty: intended for families comprising people up to 15 years of age and with a monthly income of R\$ 70 per capita. Value: what is necessary for income and benefits to exceed BRL 70 per capita

Conditions

- Prenatal exam
 - Nutritional monitoring
 - Health monitoring
 - Minimum school attendance
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HOW WILL THE BRAZIL AID PROGRAM BE

Destined to

- Families in extreme poverty (monthly income of up to R\$89 per person, according to current government standards)
- Families in poverty (monthly income between R\$89 and R\$178 per person, according to current government standards) with pregnant women or people aged up to 21

How will the payments be

- Early Childhood Benefit: intended for families with children up to 3 years old (paid by member in this situation)
- Family Composition Benefit: intended for families with pregnant women or people between 3 and 21 years old (paid by member in this situation)
- Overcoming Extreme Poverty Benefit: intended for families in extreme poverty (with a minimum value per member)

New benefits provided for by Auxílio Brasil

- Sports School Aid: to students, members of beneficiary families, with emphasis on the Brazilian School Games
- Junior Scientific Initiation Scholarship: for students in the program who stand out in academic and scientific competitions
- Child Citizen Assistance: full or partial payment of private daycare fees to be paid directly to institutions, preferably single-parent families with 2-year-old children and provided that the person has a paid activity and there are no vacancies in the public or private network. meet the family
- Rural Productive Inclusion Aid: 3-year incentive which, in practice, consists of the government purchasing food produced by family farmers for consumption by other families
- Urban Productive Inclusion Aid: for Brazil Aid beneficiaries who can prove a formal employment relationship

other points

- Emancipation Rule: families that have an increase in income that exceeds the limit of the Auxílio Brasil program may continue to receive it for up to 2 years (provided that the per capita income remains below two and a half times the poverty limit)
- Families who have reduced payments received in the creation of Auxílio Brasil will have a Transitional Compensatory Benefit for a few months
- Payroll-deductible credit: beneficiaries of federal social assistance or income transfer programs may take payroll-deductible credit in installments of up to 30% of the benefit amount
- The Food Acquisition Program, created in 2003 to encourage family farming, is renamed Programa Alimenta Brasil
- Bolsa Família legislation will be repealed in three months

Service conditions

- • Prenatal
- • Vaccinations on the national calendar
- • Monitoring of nutritional status
- • Minimum school attendance

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The article from the source