

Bolsa Familia Program: The perception of beneficiaries, public managers and community leaders as an instrument for evaluation in Urucuia-MG, Brazil

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Abstract— This work is a case study in Urucuia town in Minas Gerais state, which aimed to characterize the perception of Bolsa Familia Program(BFP) effectiveness by the conception of 64 beneficiaries, 6 public managers involved in BFP (a Social Assistance Reference Center coordinator team (CRAS); two community health agents; a municipal secretary of administration representing the Executive; a councilman representing the legislative branch and a councillor of the Social Assistance Council of the municipality) and 2 community leaders. Therefore, the research undertaken here was carried out through descriptive analysis of the primary data and the interviews by content analysis. The results suggest that the BFP has contributed to include families who, without the program, would be in extreme poverty, and without access to basic services. However, the group of families who are satisfied and frequently satisfied with the resources received is very restricted, not exceeding 15%, and for 72% of the selected sample the financial resources available are still insufficient to maintain the support of the family group. On the other hand, public managers and community leaders understand that better management in the supervision of the program is necessary, as well as adherence of the local population in the awareness and clarification actions promoted by Cras.

Keywords— *Bolsa Família Program, Public Policy, Public policies Effectiveness, Social inclusion.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bolsa Família Program (BFP) was created through a provisional measure in 2003, unifying federal government social benefits (School Bag, Food Bag, Food Card and Gas Aid) and expanding the benefited family's access (BRASIL, 2003). In January 2004, this program was transformed into Law N°. 10,836 (BRASIL, 2004).

According to Silva (2007) the program became the main instrument for transferring direct income from federal government, with objectives: (i) mitigating hunger, poverty and inequalities by transferring a financial benefit associated with ensuring access to basic social rights – health, education, social assistance and food security; and (ii) promote social inclusion, contributing to beneficiary families emancipation, building means and conditions so

they can emerge from the vulnerability situation in which they are (WEISSHEIMER, 2006; SILVA, 2007).

In Brazil, amid in its apogee, in 2013, the BFP benefited more than 14 million families, transferring about R\$ 32 billion (IPEA, 2018). In Minas Gerais state alone, in the same year, approximately 1.1 million families benefited, totaling R\$ 872.4 million of the resources (IPEA, 2018), while Urucuiatown located in the north of Minas Gerais, received approximately 2.29 million serving 1,195 families in that year.

Due to its scope and large resources linked to its execution, the program has aroused interest in the literature on efficacy. Recent studies have sought to evaluate BFP effectiveness from Brazilian society look (CASTRO et al., 2009), of the beneficiaries (COSTA et al., 2003; TESTA et al., 2013; ZIMMERMANN; ESPÍNOLA, 2015), as well as

program managers (AUXILIADORA; MONTEIRO, MR. MONTEIRO; RIBEIRO, 2017) among others, vis-à-vis inclusive public policies determined by Brazilian state. Immersed in this debate, this article is inserted in literature by seeking to identify the perception of beneficiaries, public managers and community leaders about the program, at the local level, specifically in Urucuiatown about BPF.

And its specific objectives, it seeks to analyze the beneficiary's perception about sufficiency resources to meet the basic needs stipulated by BPF and the satisfaction perception of the care performed by the program executing agency in the municipality. As for public managers and community leader's perception, it seeks to analyze BFP effectiveness perception in relation to care provided community and its execution.

Analysis the program in Urucui town is justified, both by the high participation of the population assisted by BFP in the town under analysis, as well as the resources allocated to it.

16,929 inhabitants estimated by Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2019) in 2020, approximately 24% benefited from BFP in March of that year. So, 4,063 people were directly benefited by the Program, representing 1,240 families.

As for the resources allocated to the town, in March 2020, R\$ 241,355.00 were transferred to families included in the Program, and the average benefit passed on was R\$ 194.64 per family (MDS, 2020). However, the amount and types of benefits received vary according to income profile, size and family composition.

Finally, it is appropriate to emphasize the program coverage was 73 % from estimate of poor families in Urucui town in March 2020, as pointed out in the Report of the Bolsa Familia and the Unified Registry, of the Citizenship Ministry - National Income and Citizenship Office. This estimate is calculated based on the most current data from the Demographic Census, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). In this context, it is pertinent to conduct studies that seek to understand the effectiveness perception of the agents involved in the program, as the BFP is an important instrument for mitigating the socioeconomic disparities and vulnerability of the country (MDS, 2013).

Thus, in addition to this introduction and final considerations, this work is organized into three more sections. The next section seeks to characterize the BFP as a public policy that has allowed millions of Brazilians a minimally dignified life with access to basic services, as well as greater financial autonomy of these beneficiary

subjects, in view of the structural framework of social inequality in Brazil. In the following section, the methodological procedures adopted in this research are exposed. Followed by the presentation of the main results.

II. THE BOLSA FAMÍLIA PROGRAM

The Bolsa Familia Program is a public policy that aims to ensure the human right to life, through conditional cash transfer actions. The program was instituted on January 9th, 2004, from Law 10,836 and regulated by Decree 5,209 of September 17th, 2004, through Unified Registry of Social Programs (Cad Unico) under former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (BRASIL, 2019).

The BFP unified the procedures the management and execution of the actions of cash transfer of the Federal Government, especially those of the National Program of Minimum Income linked to education "Bolsa Escola", the National Program for Access to Food - PNAA, the National Program of Minimum Income linked to health "Food Bag", the Gas Aid Program, and the Single Registration of the Federal Government (BRAZIL, 2004; MEDEIROS et al, 2017).

In these terms, the BFP can be characterized as a demand subsidy (GUERRA et al, 2012), since direct to families in exclusion economic situations, in order to improve their access possibilities to public services. Furthermore, it has as one of the main proposals the stimulus to the development of human capital, since it is necessary to keep the children and young people in schools.

In this respect, Costa (2005) argues that income transfer programs, such as the BFP, in addition to benefiting needy families, make it possible to expand monetary liquidity in the local economy. Moreover, as indicated by a study conducted by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), a federal public foundation linked to the Ministry of Economy and published by the MDS (2020), for every R\$ 1.00 transferred to the program families, the municipal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has an increase of R\$ 1.78. Therefore, it should be considered besides contributing to the families inclusion in the economic system, the BFP enables the expansion of income flow and local market.

With regard to the beneficiary inclusion, this procedure occurs from the registration in the Unified Registry of Social Programs (Cad Unico), which in the second moment is directed to the sector of the Bolsa Familia Program closest to your region / residence. The registration is carried out, preferably by the assisted family responsible woman, with a minimum age of 16 years and who is

resident in the same property as the other family members (MSD, 2011).

To have the program access, criteria are necessary for selection, among them, the per capita family income by R\$ 178.00 (updated in April 2020). It is important to mention that the registration does not imply the immediate entry of families to the program and receipt of the benefit, as this will be included, after checking the requirements proposed in the program (MDS, 2011). In moreover, the program requires some conditionalities that are necessary to ensure the right to receive the benefit of the program, which are related to education and health. Regarding education, families with children and adolescents between 06 and 15 years old must have mandatory active enrollment, with a minimum monthly frequency of 85%. Students aged 16 to 17 years must have a frequency of at least 75%. Regarding the health scope, the benefited family must make a commitment to follow up on vaccines, maintaining nutritional development for children aged up to 07 years. Moreover, women aged between 14 and 44 years should also follow-up the vaccination card, and if pregnant or nursing, perform prenatal examinations and monitor their and baby's health (MDS, 2012).

Notice that families do not comply with these conditionalities will be identified by the government and after analyzing the reasons for not performing the necessary follow-ups, will be oriented to compliance, and if there is an incidence of non-compliance may have the benefits canceled and in some cases without the reversal possibility of the benefit. Point up that the objective of these conditionalities is to ensure the provision of basic actions and enhance the family's quality life and contribute to their social inclusion (MSD, 2012; MOURÃO; FERREIRA, MR. FERREIRA; Jesus. 2012).

Also in relation to the BFP, Guerra and others (2012) and Castro et al. (2009) warn the existence of other particular program characteristics, among them highlights the BFP attendance refers to the family nucleus, and not to individuals alone and the programme management is, and should be maintained decentralized between the Union, States and Municipalities, to possible improving the program continuously.

Given the more general BFP characteristics, expected the program will also have a long way to walk and adequately meet the objectives that motivated its creation.

Moreover, the beneficiaries and managers perception investigation involved in their actions, whether in inclusion, execution, maintenance and supervision has been the study object of the pertinent literature, given the

recognition of their advances and limitations (WEISSHEIMER, 2006).

Regarding society's perception of the BFP effectiveness, Castro et al. (2009) indicate the program recognition by society, and understands it is being used appropriately, even considering problems in its execution. Additionally, the authors conclude the BFP has acquired legitimacy from Brazilian society given the policy's level knowledge and even support for its existence and argues about the importance of seeking and considering the society opinion as an important element of public policy evaluation.

Costa et al (2003) analyzed BFP effectiveness, from beneficiary's perspective in Manaus through a qualitative research with 50 beneficiaries. The results suggest the beneficiaries perceive as a result of their insertion in the BFP the increase in income and the improvement of their family's life quality. However, they observe failures occurrence of some program objectives, mainly related to the sustained families' emancipation.

In relation to the program managers perception, Auxiliadora, Monteiro and Ribeiro (2017) found from semi-structured questionnaires applied with BFP study managers, that the learning processes resulting from MDS evaluation surveys to BFP with the states were low, and the learning perception is more related to the managerial aspects (linked to the BFP execution) than more instrumental and conceptual aspects that enable these actors to assume a more active and independent with the program management.

In this context, there is still no unanimity in the studies regarding the BFP effectiveness in reducing social problems in Brazil. If, on the one hand, there is evidence that the BFP has not exercised an emancipatory function aimed at the effectuation citizenship (MENDES; Barbosa, RODRIGUES, 2009; DENUBILA; FERREIRA; MONTEIRO, 2010). On the other hand, there are findings showing that the PBF plays an essential role in ensuring initial food security and well-being of assisted families (TRALDI; ALMEIDA; FERRANTE, 2012), as well as the access application to literacy, professional training, support to family agriculture, generation of occupation and income, microcredit and health services for children (SÁ; SILVA, 2012; FIGUEIRÓ, 2010).

III. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

In view of the objectives listed, the research desired here has an exploratory nature and based on both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data are derived from the

application of structured questionnaires with representative of the BFP family nucleus residing in Urucuia-MG municipality. The qualitative data are derived from semi-structured interviews with managers and professionals related to inclusion, execution, monitoring and supervision of the BFP in the municipality under analysis.

In line with the study object, the questionnaires and interview scripts were developed based on theoretical framework (CASTRO et al., 2009; COSTA et al., 2003) aiming to identify the beneficiaries perception about the sufficiency resources to meet the basic needs stipulated by the BFP and the satisfaction perception of the care performed by the executing program agency in the municipality. As for the perception of public managers and community leaders, regarding the BFP effectiveness regarding the service provided to the community and its execution. Furthermore, the scripts were evaluated by four specialists in the area (two professors and two doctoral students) as a content process evaluated.

Regarding the questionnaires structure, it follows two formats: (i) multiple choice and (ii) five-point psychometric responses, based on Likert scale. The anchor scales of the Likert metric were: "never", "sometimes", "often", "always" and "does not apply". This scale was used to enable respondents to specify their agreement level with the statements presented and to avoid neutral responses.

The interviews follow the semi-structured format and were conducted with eight professionals involved in BFP actions in the municipality under analysis, being six public managers (one team coordinator of the Reference Centers of Social Assistance (Cras); two community health agents; a municipal secretary of administration representing the Executive; a city councilor representing the legislature and; a councilman of the municipality's Social Assistance Council) and two community leaders of the municipality.

Concerning the sample space location of the questionnaires, the research was developed in the Unified Registry Sector, together with the municipality's Social Action Assistance Office. The selected families were in the Social Action Assistance Office waiting room to update the Cad Unico information, and who were willing to answer the questionnaires. The interviews were conducted in the work facilities of the public servants mentioned, and the interviews with the community leaders took place in municipality's Social Action Office facilities.

Emphasize that before starting the questionnaires application and interview, each participant received the Informed Consent Form - TCLE, that is, to start the application of the questionnaire and the interview required the interviewee consent. This term describes the objective of the research with an academic character and the interviewees' voluntary participation, as well as present the explanations about the anonymity and confidentiality of the collected responses. In these terms, established this study results aim to understand only the perception of individuals and not identify the individuals investigated.

Additionally, since not all respondents were literate, the reading of the questionnaire was performed orally by the researcher, and the answers were recorded, since the questionnaire consisted of closed questions. The mean time of questionnaire completion was 15 minutes and each semi-structured interview was recorded and transcribed and had an average time of 30 minutes.

Once the general methodological aspects have been described, the results are treated and grouped as follows.

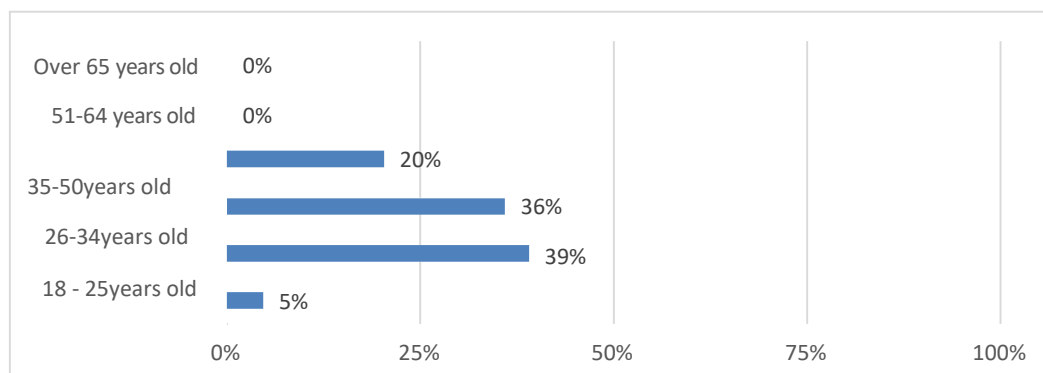
IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Selected BFP beneficiary's profile analysis

72 families that were investigated, 64 were selected for the analysis for receiving benefits from the federal government, specifically the BFP. In the group analyzed, was identified 91% of the family members were female and only 9% male. This result converges with the profile of the municipality, considering in 2019, 87.1% of the responsible families were female, as pointed out by the MDS (2020). This finding consistent with the priority of the program, considering the BFP provides for the payment of financial benefits to be made preferably to women, with the objective of contributing to the development of female autonomy both in the family space and in their communities (MDS, 2012).

Regarding the age group of the family representative, there is a concentration in the 18 to 25 years age group (39%), followed by 26 years to 34 years (36%), 35 years to 50 years (20%), 16 years to 18 years (5%), being the range of 51 to 64 and above 65 years without any representativeness (Graphic 1). This result reveals the high number of young individuals who are responsible for the family nucleus, since the share of representatives aged between 16 and 25 years corresponds to 44% of the families benefited total number.

Graphic 01 - Age group (%):

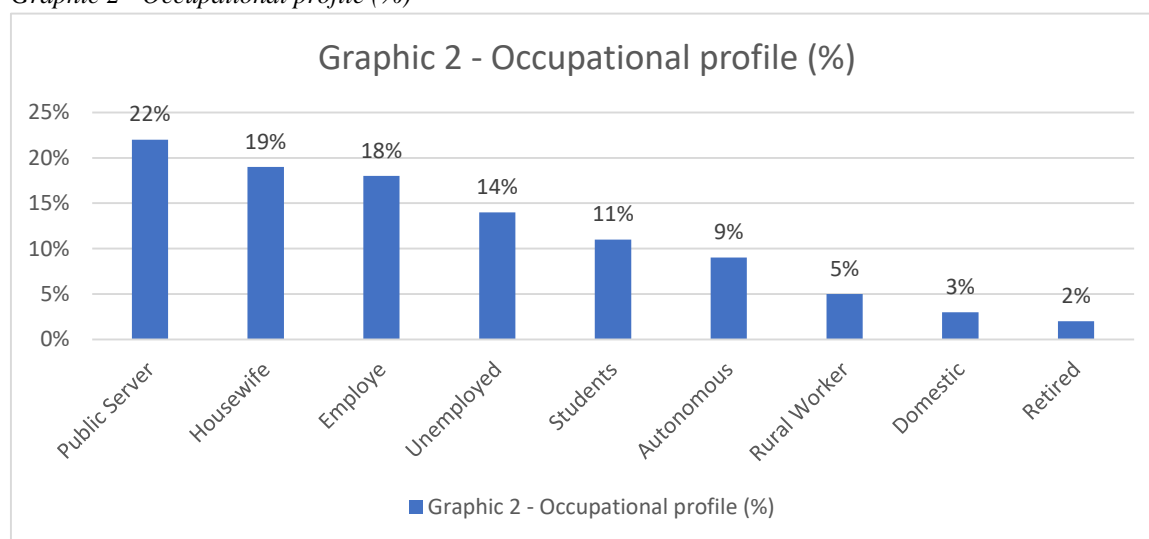


Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020

In addition to age group, 83% of the selected sample lives in the urban area and only 17% live in the rural area. This result converges to the Brazilian standard, in 75.3% of the population that benefit from the BFP live in the urban area (Cad Unico, 2013). Regarding the family group leaders, occupational profile, it is possible to note the program has

acted more on families that have representatives in greater situations vulnerability and volatility in the income stream, are the cases of people focused on home activities (19%), Unemployed (14%), Students (11%) and Autonomous (9%), which together make up 53% of the analyzed group (Graphic 2).

Graphic 2 - Occupational profile (%)

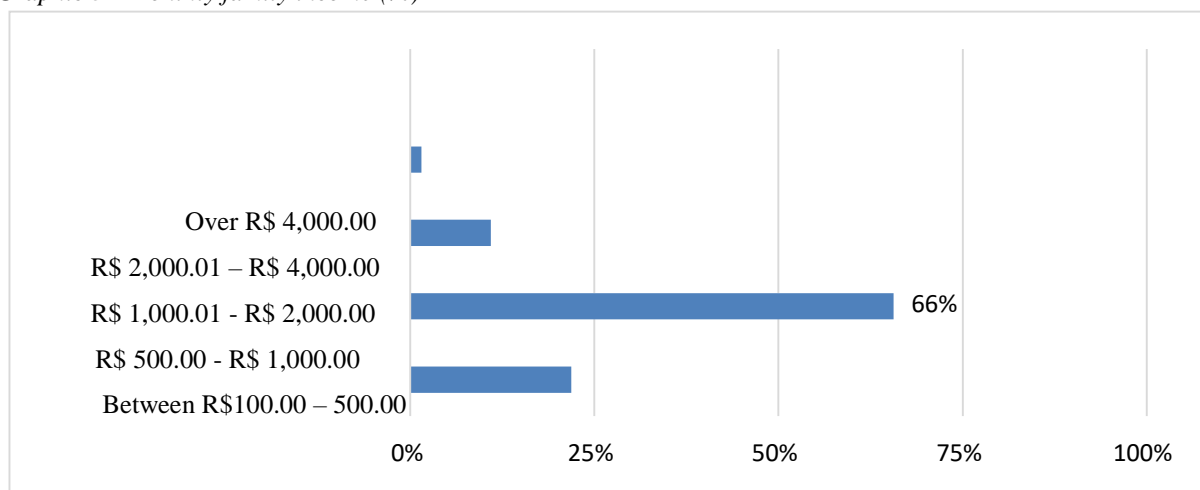


Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020.

Graphic 3 shows the income range of the BFP beneficiaries selected in this research. As can be seen, 66% of the interviewees have a monthly family income between R\$ 500.01 to R\$ 1,000.00, followed by the range of R\$ 100.00 to R\$ 500.00 (22%), which makes the condition aggravating, once 70% of the families interviewed have

three people or more in the same residence. In the highest income range, above R\$ 4,000.00, did not express any representation. Expected result, since the income range of the beneficiaries of the target group should be up to R\$178.00 per capita in the family group.

Graphic 3 - Monthly family income (%)

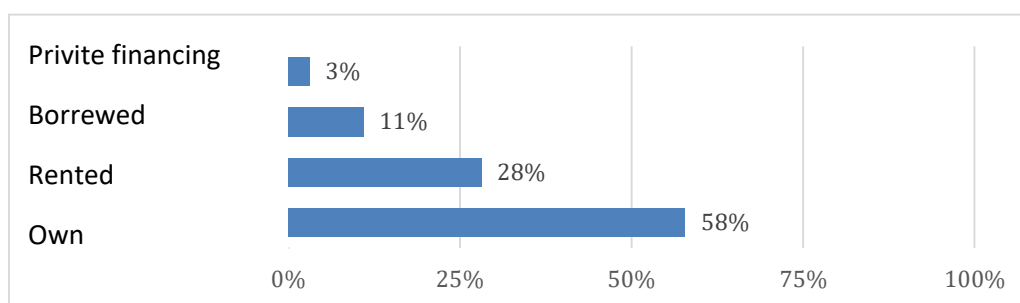


Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020.

In the aspect of the type of residence the beneficiary resides, highlights the own residence represents 58% of the sample (Graphic 4). This result opens space for future research to investigate the relationship between the beneficiaries of BF and whether these are also assisted by "My House My Life

Program", considering that this program of the Federal Government seeks to combat the country housing deficit, and the target families are those concentrated in the monthly income ranges of up to three minimum wages.

Graphic 4 - Type of residence (%)



Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020.

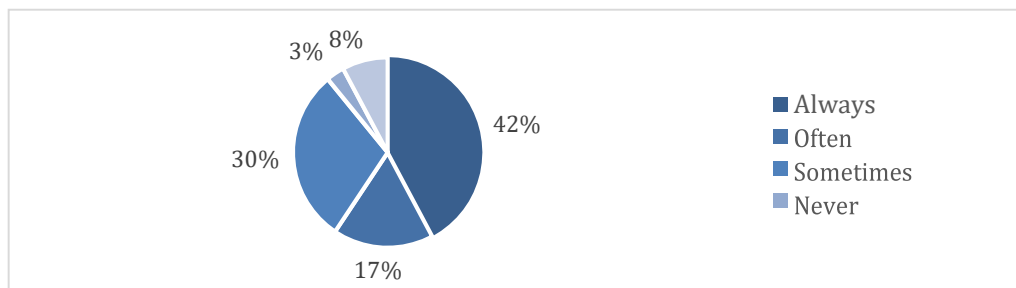
Also regarding the type of residence, 28% of the beneficiaries have monthly spending on housing, 11% are transferred and only 3% are financed by private entities (Graphic 4).

4.2 Perceptions of the PBF from the beneficiary perspective in Urucuia municipality

This section seeks to present the perception of the PBF effectiveness in Urucuia municipality under the

beneficiary's program perception. Initially, sought to analyze whether the social resource transferred helped in education and health of their family. In this respect, 42% claimed always helped and 17% frequently, this demonstrates, at least for 59% of households, the resource helps in the supply of the policy's target expenditures (Graphic 5).

Graphic 5-After receiving the social benefit helped in your family's education and health? (%)

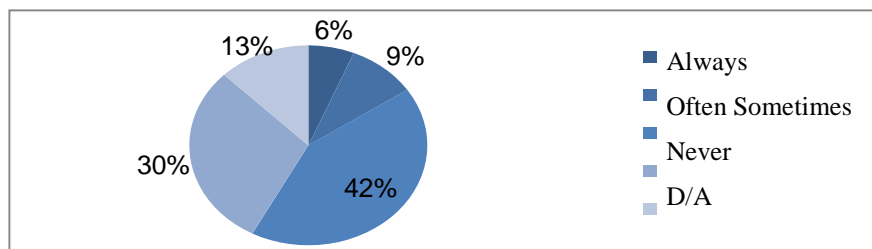


Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020

When asked if the benefit is satisfactory for the family nucleus support, for only 6% of them the benefit is always satisfactory, for 42% claimed sometimes and 30% never. In

these terms, perceived for 72% of the population the resources allocated are still insufficient to maintain the family group support (Graphic 6).

Graphic 6 –Beneficiary's satisfaction regarding the resources received (%)

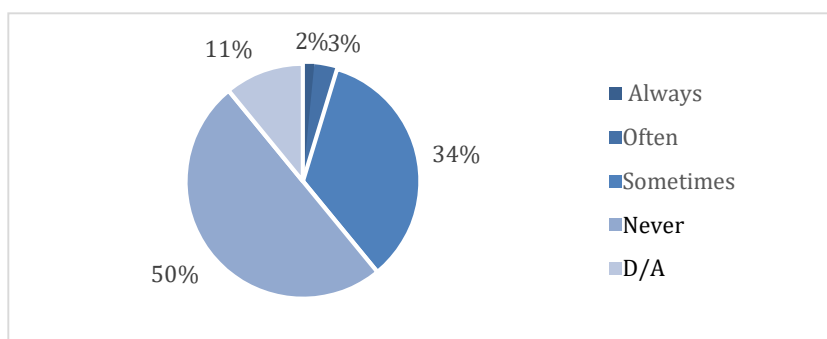


Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020.

Later, we sought to understand the interviewees' perception of reception. First, they were asked about the family's participation in socio-educational events with the municipality's Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS),

only 2% claimed they always participate and 3% participate frequently, so perceived that there is a low adherence of families to Cras clarification events (Graphic 7).

Graphic 7 –Family Participation in socio-educational events with the Social Assistance Reference Center (CRAS %)

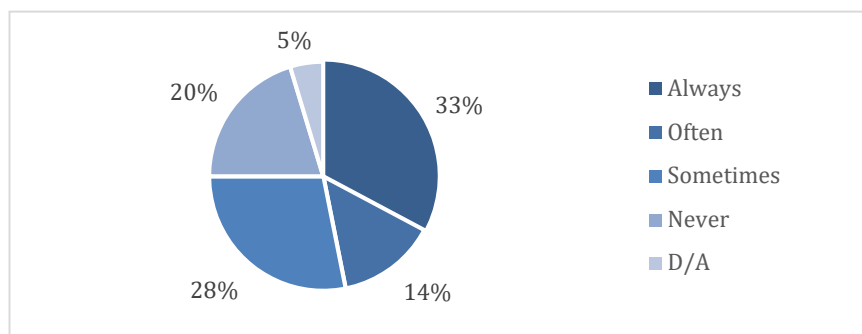


Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020

When asked about the actions city hall mobilization in order to guide families to keep the register updated, 33%

answered the city hall always performs and 14% often, that is, for 47% has demonstrated a higher degree orientation effort of the family centers (Graphic 8).

Graphic 8 – City hall mobilization action in families' guidance to keep the register updated (%)

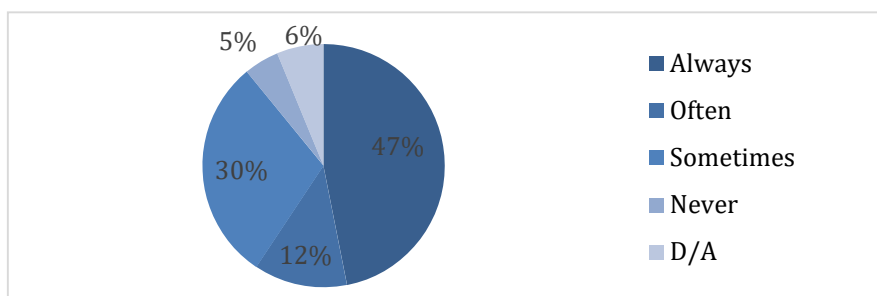


Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020

In relation to interviewees satisfaction regarding the reception received at the BFP service stations in municipality under analysis, 47% emphasize, sometimes, and 12% claim that they often have a satisfactory service.

Thus, about 59% of the interviewees have the highest perception levels of the reception effectiveness received by the body responsible for the BFP execution (Graphic 9).

Graphic 9 - Beneficiaries Satisfaction regarding the reception received (%)



Source: Own elaboration based on field research, 2020

However, 35% reported not being fully satisfied with the reception received, since the requirements not met by the beneficiaries may result in benefit blocking, this causes many to draw the conclusion that it was the reception team that performed the suspension of the benefit (Graphic 9). This perception may be linked to the lack of clarification of the beneficiaries regarding the operation of the program, considering that there is a low public adherence to CRAS clarification events (Graphic 7). In moreover, among the interviewees under the program's reception efficacy, one of the beneficiaries mentioned: "The Social Action Secretariat should propose improvement in the quality of reception for users in the sector, put people with appropriate profile for care because they deal with several people who are very needy and the family grant team cannot meet all the needs of these users, another situation

is always maintain supervision in days, because I think it has beneficiaries who have no need to receive".

In addition, we sought to identify the perception of the beneficiaries about the clarifications provided by the servers of the Cad Unico. According to the results, 66% of the beneficiaries believe that the servers have information and knowledge about the program. From this observation it is essential to express that reception can be improved so that the assisted population has greater satisfaction in terms of care provided, because this item is a fundamental factor to increase the BFP efficacy.

In this reflection, perceived that the group that is satisfied and frequently satisfied with the resources received is very restricted, not exceeding 15%, which may reflect an insufficiency of the resource to bear the needs of these families. On the other hand, 35% of the interviewees are

not satisfied with the reception provided by the executing body. Due to the fear of bureaucracy and fear of losing the benefit at any time. This high contingent may be associated with low population adherence to the clarifications provided in the program executes body events in the municipality. Perhaps, if a new strategy was adopted for clarification, with closer and direct communication with the population through schools and/or health centers, would be possible to better elucidate the program criteria and the updating registry relevance, as well as reduce the benefit fear cutting.

4.3 BFP perceptions from the public managers and community leaders perspective in Urucuia municipality

In addition to the beneficiary profile assisted by BFP, this research also sought to understand Bolsa Familia Program effectiveness perception under the view of the program managers. According to Unified Registry manager analysis, "this program has improved the population living conditions that is in poverty in the municipality, because from the receipt improved their living conditions, but it is possible to identify poverty is still prevalent in the socioeconomic families aspects, some users still say Bolsa Familia's value could be higher to help meet all the family's expenses."

At a certain point in the research, the Unified Registry manager was asked if Urucuia municipality carries out actions to raise awareness among Bolsa Familia Program users? According to the interviewee: "No, but it should. Unfortunately the municipality is flawed when it comes to being alerting and giving greater transparency to the population about Bolsa Familia benefit, since people are not always aware of informing their true reality, because it is notorious that several families do not fit, but receive the benefit".

From Bolsa Familia program it is possible to verify the improvement in the financial condition of the families analyzed. According to reports from a community leader, "before some families received this benefit things were very difficult, because many were parents and in some cases even starved. Many families faced a lot of difficulty because they had no income and today these families are already in a less vulnerable situation."

Moreover, according to an interview with the legislative power representative, when asked about the supervision by the Legislature in relation to social benefits distribution in Urucuia-MG municipality, and whether there is any investigation by the legislature in relation to Bolsa Familia. According to the interviewee (the Legislature), "To date there is no kind of inspection or investigation of the municipal legislature in relation to Bolsa Familia Program,

what has been proposed so far was a public hearing in the program that by the way has not yet happened". During the research, was possible to notice some abnormalities regarding the distribution of the values passed on to the beneficiaries, since there are people with profiles do not fit the BFP requirements and are benefited, while there are low-income families, specifically, 8 families interviewed with basic needs are not being met by the program. According to the technicians who perform a function in the control and BFP monitoring in the municipality, "this demand was already foreseen in the research, because the lack of public policies aimed at improving life ensuring social development and growth still leave to be desired in Urucuia municipality located in the North of Minas Gerais."

Therefore, notes the BFP in Urucuia municipality has gaps to be filled and improved with regard to the control and inspection process and, especially in the families inclusion should be assisted by the program and that have not been incorporated to date.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The present work investigated the Bolsa Familia Program effectiveness (BFP) by the perception of 64 beneficiaries, six public managers (one team coordinator of the Reference Centers of Social Assistance (Cras); two community health agents; a municipal secretary of administration representing the Executive; a city councilor representing the legislature and; a councilman of the municipality's Social Assistance Council) and two community leaders of the municipality. involved in the process of inclusion, execution, monitoring and supervision of the BFP in Urucuia municipality, in Minas Gerais state.

In a rough way, noted the BFP has contributed to include families who, without the program, would be in extreme poverty and without access to basic services. Regarding the BFP effectiveness perception from the beneficiary's program view in the municipality under analysis, the group of families who are satisfied and often satisfied with the resources received is very restricted, not exceeding 15%, which may reflect an insufficiency of the resource to bear the needs of these families. Furthermore, for 72% of the selected sample, the resources allocated are still insufficient to maintain the alimony of the family group. Point out that 35% of the interviewees benefited by the BFP are not satisfied with the service provided by the executing body. This high contingent may be associated with low population

adherence to the clarifications provided in the events of the body that executes the program in the municipality.

Regarding the public managers and community leaders perception in regard to BFP effectiveness in the municipality, noted the program has improved the population living conditions that is in poverty in the municipality, however to date there is no kind of supervision or investigation by the municipal legislature in relation to the program, as reported and described by the councilor interviewed.

In this respect, the managers perception is that supervision is extremely costly financially for a municipality with a small contingent of servers and financial resources. Another important finding, being convergent both by the conception of the beneficiaries and of managers and community leaders, was the low participation of the local population in the awareness and clarification actions promoted by the Cras, considering only 2% of the beneficiaries claimed they always participate and 3% who participate frequently. This behavior should not be given as structural and they see the future as an amplified present. On the contrary, there should be greater articulation with the institutions responsible for the development of such actions, and they are carried out beyond their physical facilities, such as in health posts and schools (public and private).

Finally, note the difficulties encountered in this work development, in which the insecurity of the respondents was the main cause on the part of the beneficiaries, because some expressed distrust in providing the information, due to fears of the benefits being suspended.

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