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Rural productive inclusion: the technical assistance experience and grant from the State of Ceará, Brazil

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CASE STUDY

Rural productive inclusion: the technical assistance experience and grant from the State of Ceará, Brazil

Francesco di Villarosa

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The background is a solid yellow color. Several thin, blue, curved lines sweep across the page from the top right towards the bottom left, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are of varying radii and intersect each other.

The organizers deeply thanks the
collaboration of the people who
found time in their routines to make
possible the publication of this
study.

Executive Summary

The focus of the case study is the Rural Productive Activities Oriented Cash Transfer (*Programa de Fomento às Atividades Produtivas Rurais*) of the Brazil Without Extreme Poverty Plan (BSM) in its implementation through two Public Tenders and a Technical Cooperation Agreement implemented by the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company of Ceará (EMATERCE). The Oriented Cash Transfer aims to (i) broaden and diversify agricultural and livestock production, in an effort to strengthen food and nutritional security and income generation through the sale of surpluses, and (ii) to promote access by beneficiary families to social and development policies, taking into account their specific vulnerabilities. The actions of the Programme include technical assistance and rural extension (ATER), and the transfer of non-reimbursable resources (BRL\$ 2,400) to the beneficiary families, in support of the production project of each family.

The challenge of delivering the study is: *how EMATERCE adapted its structure, organizational functions and work practices to solve the twofold challenge of managing project scale and providing service to a vulnerable constituency such as extremely poor family farmers, having due regard for difficulties relating to coordination with other policies designed to achieve social and productive inclusion.*

The analysis is also guided by three key questions:

A) What strategies did EMATERCE use for targeting, diagnostic assessment, production project design and monitoring of families in the Oriented Cash Transfer, respectively?

B) What are the positive and negative aspects of EMATERCE, as a large public enterprise engaged in the execution of the Programme, and how were these aspects strengthened and mitigated, respectively?

C) What adjustments have EMATERCE and MDA / MDS (and subsequently MDSA / SEAF) made to the Oriented Cash Transfer, and possibly other policies to be coordinated with it, based on the experience of this Programme in Ceará?

In the implementation of the Programme, EMATERCE faced three major challenges, related respectively to the novelty of working exclusively with a constituency consisting of extremely poor family farmers, the high turnover of part of their human resources (work-placement scholars or “bolsistas”) and the scale of the project. The response to these challenges by EMATERCE involved the mobilization of the company as a whole in the effort to integrate its more experienced staff with the work-placement scholars and the implementation of a coordinated strategy of theoretical and practical training, delivered at the front end and on an ongoing basis. In addition, EMATERCE hired social workers to serve families of extremely poor family farmers, and created in its structure an exclusive chain of command for the coordination of the Oriented Cash Transfer, albeit integrated in matrix fashion to the Regional Offices and the company’s management staff.

The targeting strategy adopted by EMATERCE was influenced by the scale of the Programme and the high incidence of extreme poverty. Facing a potential demand that was many times higher than the available supply of services, objective prioritization criteria were defined, in which the CadÚnico list was refined through the use of filters; however, the main criterion for targeting was the selection of poor communities already known to the technicians and, within those communities, the selection of grouped families, which served to optimize ATER’s subsequent work.

In the preparation of the diagnostic phase of families EMATERCE innovated by dividing up the performance of the analysis into three visits, in order to facilitate the gradual development of trust between the family and ATER personnel.

In the preparation of the production project, EMATERCE followed the guidelines of the Oriented Cash Transfer, in the sense that efforts were made to respect local preferences and the skills of the families, who were the ones who, after all, would select the type of planting or breeding, the ATER agent being limited to an advisory role. Already, after choosing the production project, the guidance and technical follow-up were conducted in a standardized manner, through courses and educational materials custom-made and focused on technological-productive aspects and costs.

As in the diagnostic phase, in the follow-up of the production projects, EMATERCE also made changes in the allocation of contractually allocated times for this activity, dividing the educational activities into two stages, thus eliminating the meal costs for the initially planned participants, and facilitating efforts to master content in a more gradual manner.

Problems have appeared in the handling of MDA computer systems, in part due to difficulties in the development and management of these systems in the MDA, which have been further aggravated by internal failures of EMATERCE, typical of bureaucratic organizations, such as lack of internal communication and integration within the company and obstacles to the broad-based training of its personnel.

The marketing of surpluses in the Oriented Cash Transfer in Ceará has shown that this activity falls broadly within the purview of standard behavior, which is commonplace at least in the northeastern semi-arid region, involving production on a small and local scale, through essentially informal channels.

The Programme's sustainability was pursued through a three-pronged strategy: (i) guidance to beneficiaries in their efforts to seek microcredit, (ii) integration of Programme families into routine business programming, so that they remain eligible for ATER, and (iii) coordination with other policies and programmes of productive and social inclusion (on which we have too little information to perform a conclusive evaluation).

The main benefits to families of the Development Programme consisted in the fact that they were able to gain access to public policies they had previously been excluded from, as well as the "assisted" status they acquired once they entered the routine programming of EMATERCE's ATER actions. The Oriented Cash Transfer allowed for the generation of assets that enabled the families' economic security to increase as well as enhancing their quality of life, for example through housing improvements financed by the sale of part of such assets. However, it is clear that more consistent improvements in the lives of beneficiaries depend on access to a wide range of public policies, especially credit, although borrowing is a major concern for family farmers.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDY

Historically, family farmers in the semi-arid region face numerous barriers to the development of their economic activities: water scarcity, insufficient land, poor access to credit, technical assistance, inputs to production, markets for marketing, among others.

Due to its high vulnerability, family agriculture, especially in the semi-arid region, has been a public priority of the Brazil Without Extreme Poverty Plan and has therefore been prioritized in efforts to overcome extreme poverty in the country, through actions in the areas of income guarantees, access to services and productive inclusion.

The Rural Productive Activities Oriented Cash Transfer was created in 2011 under the joint responsibility of MDA and the MDS. In May 2016, the MDA's core functions were incorporated into those of the MDS in the Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development (MDSA), and the Oriented Cash Transfer along with other MDA programmes became the responsibility of the Special Secretariat for Family Agriculture and Agrarian Development (SEAF) linked to the Civil House [Executive Office of the President of Brazil].¹ The Programme aims to (i) expand and diversify agricultural production, in an effort to strengthen food and nutritional security, such as income generation through the marketing of surpluses, and (ii) promote the integration of beneficiary families into social and economic policies, taking into account their specific vulnerabilities. The beneficiaries of the programme are families of family farmers, settled families profiting from agrarian reform, and indigenous and quilombola families [residents of Brazilian hinterland settlements founded by persons of African descent], among other peoples and traditional communities, in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty².

The actions of the Oriented Cash Transfer encompass two areas: (i) technical assistance

and rural extension (ATER), and (ii) the transfer of non-reimbursable resources - in the amount of BRL\$ 2,400, in three installments through 2013 and in two installments thereafter, on the same basis as for the Brazil Without Extreme Poverty Oriented Cash Transfer modality [*Fomento Brasil Sem Miséria*], directly to the beneficiary families, in support of the production project carried out by each family.

The implementation of the Oriented Cash Transfer is carried out through ATER services contracted by the MDA (currently MDSA / SEAF) or the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCRA), through public call for tenders or Technical Cooperation Agreements (ACT) of state governments with the Federal Government. According to the terms of reference for the calls for tender or ACT, the contracted entities must (i) train their teams (which have received MDA training) and they are responsible (ii) for the mobilization and targeting of families, through the cross-referencing of the data for the Cadastro Único Social Programmes (CadÚnico) and the Declaration of Eligibility for PRONAF (DAP),³ and possibly through the active search for families with extreme poverty profiles not yet registered in the CadÚnico itself, which should be included in that register by the municipal social assistance agencies. In addition, contracted entities perform actions involving: (iii) formulation of the diagnostic phase of the family with its social and productive characteristics and successive updates thereof; (iv) preparation, jointly by the ATER agent and the family, of a project to organize and expand production; (v) monitoring of the release of the non-reimbursable resources and monitoring through family reports throughout the development of the production project, supporting the family in its efforts to apply the resources appropriately to each plot of land received, develop the production project and seeking to market any surplus production; and (vi) intermediate evaluation and final evaluation of the actions of the contract

1 The information contained in this report was collected in October 2016. Consequently, the vast majority of events cited refer to the period prior to May 2016. For this reason, the nomenclature "MDA" and "MDS" is commonly used. Only for events that explicitly occurred after May 2016 is the nomenclature "MDSA" or "SEAF" used.

2 The Oriented Cash Transfer has two modalities: the *Fomento Brasil Sem Miséria*, for families living in extreme poverty (per capita household income of up to BRL\$ 77), and the Semi-arid Fomento, for families living in poverty (household income per capita up to BRL\$ 154) residing in the semi-arid region and with access to water for production. The focus of this case study is in the first modality of the Programme.

3 Document identifying the status of a family farmer.

Under the Technical Cooperation Agreement (ACT) modality, while the development resource continues to be financed by the Federal Government, ATER activities are now funded by state governments. For this reason, in ACT the total number of activities with families is reduced from the eighteen provided for in the Public Tenders to a minimum of six: diagnostic phase, preparation of the production project, three visits of individual accompaniment and a collective activity.⁴ In the ACT, the supervision of these activities is also the responsibility of the State Agrarian Secretariats, while the MDA (now MDSA) is limited to managing the administrative aspects of the project.

In Ceará, the Oriented Cash Transfer has been implemented mainly through the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company of Ceará - EMATERCE, initially through two Public Tenders, and subsequently through an ACT.

EMATERCE is a public organization linked to the Secretariat of Agrarian Development of the Government of the State of Ceará. It has been active for nearly 40 years in the field of technical assistance and rural extension in Ceará, and has a solid structure, composed of a Central Management Office in Fortaleza; 18 Regional Management offices; 71 Local Offices (now called CEACs, Customer Service Centers); and 89 Advanced Posts (some of which are closed due to lack of technicians). This structure allows the company to offer grass-roots coverage in the state. Of the 184 municipalities in Ceará, 182 are served by EMATERCE.

In the Regional Offices, there are Advisors (for all company activities) and Coordinators (allocated exclusively to the Programme). In addition, the company has organic links and a history of coordination with rural social movements, with a broad knowledge of the territory and its governmental and non-governmental stakeholders as well as family farming issues.

The Oriented Cash Transfer has been implemented by EMATERCE on a large scale. Between January 2012 and August 2016, 36,959 families joined the Programme (“joined” means that at least the first installment was passed on to such families). Of the total of these families, 26,400 were attended to by EMATERCE, more precisely 3,200 in each of two Public Tenders, 17,000 in ACT and 3,000 additionally.

Considering the purposes and the design of the Programme, the following **Development Challenge** is defined for the present case study:

As with the Development Programme, in the case of EMATERCE, it has contributed to overcoming the various production barriers (climatic, water, knowledge and productive inputs, credit, marketing, social capital, etc.) through the combination of technical assistance, non-reimbursable resources and coordination with other public policies.

Regarding the **Delivery Challenge** of the case study, it is possible to identify, according to the taxonomy developed by the World Bank (World Bank 2016), the relevance of issues such as Coordination and Engagement and Design of the Project. These themes are associated with (i) the nature of a large public enterprise such as EMATERCE, where considerations such as communication and outreach strategies and the bureaucratic structure of the company are especially important; and (ii) obstacles to the implementation of a project for 26,400 families of extremely poor family farmers, specifically with regard to the targeting of beneficiaries and intra- and intergovernmental relations. Therefore, the Delivery Challenge of the present case study can be summarized as follows:

How EMATERCE adapted its structure, organizational functions and work practices to address the task of solving the twofold challenge

⁴ ACT's new work plan models include at least 6 distinct activities, but with a higher frequency of visits to families: mobilization and selection of families; diagnostic phase of the family unit; formulation of the key production project and signature of the term of membership; monitoring and technical guidance in the family unit (minimum of one visit every two months after the implementation of the production project); technical training of families; evaluation.

of managing project scale and delivering service to a vulnerable constituency such as extremely poor family farmers, having due regard for the difficulties of coordination with other social and productive inclusion policies.

Such a challenge, in turn, can be broken down into the following **Key Questions**:

A) What strategies did EMATERCE use for targeting, diagnostic phase, production project design and monitoring of families in the Oriented Cash Transfe?

B) What are the positive and negative aspects of EMATERCE as a large public company in the implementation of the Programme, and how were these strengthened and mitigated, respectively?

C) What adjustments did EMATERCE and MDA / MDS bring to the Oriented Cash Transfer (and possibly other policies to be coordinated with it) from the experience with the Programme in Ceará?

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BACKGROUND

In Ceará, 92% of the territory is located in the semi-arid region⁵. The proportion of employed population in the agricultural, forestry, fishing and aquaculture sector is high (20.5%)⁶, and income fluctuations in these sectors show a significant association with the evolution of poverty indicators in the state⁷, which is also significant,

with 17.8% of the population classified as poor in 2010, divided between 13.7% urban and 36.9% rural⁸.

The implementation by EMATERCE of the Oriented Cash Transfer in Ceará occurred in several stages, as indicated in the table below.

Contracts	Period	Identity territories or municipalities served	Families benefitting
Public Tender 1	January 2012 - April 2014	Cariri and Inhamuns/Crateús	3,200
Public Tender 2	June 2013 - December 2015	Cariri	3,200
ACT	January 2013 - September 2015	182 non-state municipalities in 6 lots	17,000 out of 20,000 anticipated
Extension to the ACT Agreement	March 2016 - March 2018		3,000

Table 1 - Timeline of the phases of the Development Programme - EMATERCE

In ACT, the cost of the development resources (BRL\$ 48 million) was shouldered by the Federal Government, and the cost of the ATER (BRL\$ 37.25 million) was shouldered by the Government of Ceará. Due to a cut of personnel hired by EMATERCE, which in turn resulted from the cost reduction decided by the Government of Ceará, approximately 17,000 families were served by the programme, instead of the 20,000 planned. In 03/2016, the MDA / MDS invited EMATERCE to continue the project, in order to cater for the 20,000 families initially planned, and the ACT was extended until 03/2018 to serve 3,000 families. In the interval between the completion of ACT and the beginning of its extension, families continued to be served by EMATERCE's routine structure and activities.

In the field mission for the present case study, interviews were conducted with (i) technicians from the Central Management Office of EMATERCE in Fortaleza, (ii) with technicians from two Regional Offices (Metropolitan Region of Fortaleza - RMF and Baturité) and two Local Offices (Caucaia and Redenção), and (iii) with families benefitting from the Oriented Cash Transfer. The following is a brief description of the context of the Programme in the two municipalities where interviews were conducted with local teams and beneficiary families.

Caucaia

Caucaia is part of the Regional Metropolitan Region of Fortaleza, located approximately fifteen kilometres from the capital, but even while it is close to the city and has the third highest HDI of the state (0.682), its rural zone is characterized by a very severe drought and poverty situation, with the landscape dominated by caatinga (a form of desert vegetation). The area's population in 2010 was approximately 325,000 inhabitants. A total of 160 families in the municipality were envisioned in 2013 by the Programme, and currently, in the extension phase of the ACT, another 34 families are being assisted. The process was conducted through the diagnostic phase phase by two agents of the ATER, and in the successive phases by two other agents, as a result of the rotation of the human resources contracted.

Redenção

The municipality of Redenção, where 80 families benefitted from the Oriented Cash Transfer, is part of the Regional of Baturité, which in turn comprises twelve municipalities. Redenção is 55 km away from Fortaleza and has a population of 26,426 inhabitants (IBGE Census 2010). The predominant vegetation is the dense shrub known as caatinga. In the current phase - of the extension to the ACT - another fifteen families were attended to in the Region, of which nine are from Redenção.

5 EMATERCE 2012.

6 Reports of the Brazil without Poverty Portal in your State. Labor Market in the 2010 Census. http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/sagirms/ferramentas/nucleo/grupo.php?id_grupo=78

7 EMATERCE 2012.

8 EMATERCE 2013.

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IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Initially, three general challenges are addressed that EMATERCE was called upon to face in the implementation of the Rural Productive Activities Oriented Cash Transfer. These challenges - related to the novelty of working exclusively with a constituency of extremely poor family farmers, human resource problems and the scale of the project - are interlinked. The two initial Public Tenders represented a learning experience for EMATERCE, during which solutions were sought for such challenges, as described below.

Challenge: serving extremely poor farmers

Initially the Programme was a novelty for EMATERCE, since the company did not have specific and exclusive experience with the extremely poor, in the sense that it “did not see what was before its eyes”, it failed to distinguish this particular constituency, i.e., within the larger universe of family farmers.

This challenge was addressed, in the first Public Tender, through the hiring (in addition to 40 ATER technicians) of 20 higher-level technicians with expertise in social issues, to work also on the social dimension with a focus on the family. This represented a decision by the Technical Director of the time. Subsequently, in the ACT, no further social technicians were hired or their numbers were reduced due to the scale of the project and the fact that human resources costs are the responsibility of the state; however, the practices of the social workers were passed on to ATER agents who later replicated them in the various regions.

Challenge: Human Resources

More than half of EMATERCE’s ATER technicians are made up of work-placement scholars (technology grant) with one-year contracts, renewable for up to three years. EMATERCE itself acknowledges that scholarship holders are not the ideal solution, but represent the only way to meet human resource requirements in the face of a public company’s difficulties in hiring staff (the last public tender at EMATERCE was held back in 1982). It has been found that where EMATERCE’s career server staff are integrated with the work-placement scholars, and this establishes community trust, the work is effective (“has a beginning, middle and end”). Furthermore, it is essential, in addition to training the new work-placement scholars, to provide experience working with the farmers.

Despite the low salary (BRL\$ 1200 / month) and difficult working conditions (for example, the cost of gasoline for commuting), the quality of their work is considered satisfactory. The scholarship recipients acquired technical experience and know-how, and became sought after by several public companies (especially prefectures and Banco do Nordeste) and private companies. This phenomenon, in turn, tends to aggravate the main problem associated with the scholars, which is represented by their high rate of attrition.

Challenge: Scale

Another key factor that exacerbated the teams’ limited experience with the BSM constituency was the scale of the project, which drove decisions about the company’s organizational structure and training strategy

The general coordination of the Oriented Cash Transfer was performed at the Central Management Office of EMATERCE, and field coordinators were assigned (in the teams, the most experienced technicians were in coordination, and each ATER agent was responsible for 80 families on a full-time basis). More generally, the integration and involvement of the company as a cohesive entity was a goal pursued in the implementation of the Programme. Thus, the new contractors received the support of the staff technicians, especially the experienced ones. The Technical Director of the time argued that it was vital to support the new work-placement scholars, that they could not be isolated from the rest of the company, and that they were not to have exclusive responsibility for the ATER of the Oriented Cash Transfer, and, indeed, that they should share the execution of the latter Programme with the EMATERCE career staff members.

As for training, a team from the Central Office spent three weeks in the field with the technicians, reviewing guidelines and methodology of the Programme for them. One technician was trained per municipality, who then passed on what he learned to his colleagues. This field experience was a motivation for the new technicians, and contributed to the fact that the contact with extreme poverty did not represent a “shock” for the agents of ATER.

As mentioned, in the implementation of the Oriented Cash Transfer, EMATERCE faced three challenges of a general nature which were interrelated. The large-scale assistance of the public in situations of extreme poverty represented a relative novelty for the company and, especially, the newly hired scholars. EMATERCE's response to these challenges was to mobilize the company as a whole, to integrate the more experienced staff with the work-placement scholars, and to implement a coordinated strategy of theoretical and practical training that was both front-loaded and continuous. In addition, the existing skills in the company were complemented by the hiring of social workers in order to promote a comprehensive approach to families and the successive multiplication of such skills within the company and in various locations. Finally, the structure of EMATERCE was also complemented by an exclusive chain of command for the coordination of the Programme, which was integrated (at the Regional Management Offices) in matrix form into the company's management staff, represented by the advisors responsible for all of its the local activities.

Next, challenges and solutions are discussed following the activities of the Oriented Cash Transfer project cycle. The discussion is organized in order to first reflect the general philosophy of the programme, and then the specificities of the localities addressed by the two field visits - Caucaia and Redenção.

Targeting and selection of beneficiaries

To focus, MDS provided EMATERCE with a list resulting from the cross-referencing of the extremely poor families of CadÚnico with the DAP register, and offered a training week for the company's technicians, specifying the goal of selecting 80 families per municipality. However, there were municipalities in Ceará with up to 2,400 families on the list, so the task of selecting 80 of them became very difficult.

EMATERCE's strategy was as follows: (i) to apply filters to refine the initial MDA list, such as the family's residence (which had to be in the rural area), the elimination of people with professions incompatible with the profile (for they already have an income), settled and indigenous dwellers (for whom EMATERCE argues there are other specific programmes available - although they are part of the constituency eligible for the Programme); (ii) field visits prioritizing the communities already known to be the most deprived, and (iii) identifying

the poorest families by mirroring the list of the CadÚnico and by means of active searches. This process was executed under the supervision of an experienced technician, indicated in each team as responsible for the Oriented Cash Transfer. In this selection process, there was also an understanding with other stakeholders (prefectures, unions, associations, etc.) to create a consensus about the choice of families, while endeavoring at all times to eliminate the possibility of political influences, on the basis of selection according to objective criteria.

Since in the communities identified as most needy the EMATERCE technicians found more extremely poor families than those on the CadÚnico list, it was not difficult to fill the planned 10-20% to be identified through active search. However, many of the active search families had no documentation, including RG and CPF in addition to NIS and DAP. In these cases, the technicians had recourse to the appropriate agencies. The relationship between EMATERCE's ATER agents and CRAS for registration in the CadÚnico and NIS issuance was facilitated by the teams' social technicians.

Isolated families, including extremely poor families, were in most cases discarded in the first instance from participation in the selection process, since groups of approximately 20 families were to be favored. In addition, EMATERCE decided (it was not an indication of the MDA / MDS) not to mention, at the beginning of the selection process, the development resources, to prevent a situation from arising in which the presence of such resources would become the main motivator for the families to join the programme.

The relationship of the teams with the town halls was variable, but in general not problematic. Usually the first contact was with the Municipal Secretariats of Agriculture, with which EMATERCE has historically had a collaborative relationship, and through this channel the partnership was extended to the Mayor and to the Social Assistance Secretariat to register in the CadÚnico families coming from the active search. The Safra Guarantee Programme functioned as a lever or gateway to the Oriented Cash Transfer, since, for purposes of the implementation of the Safra Guarantee, in each municipality the Secretariat of Agriculture held meetings with many stakeholders, sometimes more than a hundred, so that when the Oriented Cash Transfer arrived on the scene, there was already an established practice of managing a

public policy on a large scale. In addition, the ATER of EMATERCE is “a brand”, which made it much easier for the project to gain a foothold within the prefectures.

In Caucaia, the process of family selection took place gradually and geographically. The list from the CadÚnico sent by MDA-MDS was worked on by two EMATERCE staff, experienced and knowledgeable in the region for more than 23 years, but after almost 30 days of searching these families for the territory, they found that the list was very heterogeneous, and that many of the families did not fit the profile of extreme poverty, and those that were included, were dispersed around the territory. The territory of Caucaia is very extensive, three times as large as Fortaleza. The technicians then decided to visit only communities they knew to be in conditions of extreme poverty, and concentrated in these areas the selection of families that would be served by the programme, in order to optimize the time of travel and work of the ATER technician. Programme mobilization and outreach were limited to these communities, on the grounds that if information about the Oriented Cash Transfer spread throughout the municipality, a large number of demands would arrive at EMATERCE, putting ATER personnel in an awkward situation (“we live here, and we were unable to accommodate a flood of demands”). The whole process was carried out in collaboration with the Municipal Department of Agriculture and the rural workers’ unions, in order to guarantee the process’s legitimacy. The families in situations of extreme poverty that were not selected due to the filters applied by EMATERCE in the CadÚnico list were given comprehensive explanations in order to guarantee the transparency of the process. Such efforts also helped to prevent problems with local leaders, such as councillors, who put pressure on certain families to be selected.

Thus, one of the communities chosen was the one of São Pedro (also known as “Formigueiro”) - a very deprived area of families settled on a private farm. In São Pedro the houses are made of taipa (wattle and daub), and only some with a “spare room” in masonry, with external plastic bathrooms. From this area of the “Formigueiro” were selected 55 families. Some of them did not have the necessary documentation for joining the project, but in cases of problems, the CRAS was approached to issue ID documents, CPF and NIS, and in the case of problems involved with the holding of such documents, EMATERCE itself issued the DAP.

In the absence of social workers (who were hired only in the 1st Public Tender, not in the ACT), it was ATER agents who made the social outreach required by the project. This process was facilitated by the fact that some of these agents had lived and worked in the municipality for many years, thus knowing each family well.

In the Redenção Regional Office, the process of identifying and targeting families was carried out with the help of local partners - City Hall, Secretariats, Municipal Council for Sustainable Development, associations, unions and leaderships, who created a commission to support EMATERCE in the selection of these families. The commission indicated the poorest communities; among these, priority was given to those communities where the technicians already worked. In some cases, these are distant and isolated communities. The objective of this strategy was to prevent a situation from arising in which the Programme’s services were provided in a piecemeal fashion within the municipality. The selected communities were visited by EMATERCE technicians and a commission representative to identify and select families. This strategy avoided conflicts in the choice of beneficiaries, and ensured that the requirements of extreme poverty were adhered to. To make up the number of families to be benefitted, the active search method was used, and in some cases it was necessary to provide documentation for the families, basically NIS and DAP. The interviewees estimate that the families selected by the active search method barely account for 10% of the total. The families without documentation were directed to look for the CRAS, which they did without great problems. CRAS, in turn, provided a satisfactory service. The families learned of the resource only at the stage of definition of the production project, soon after the diagnostic phase. Also in Redenção, the EMATERCE technicians feared that once the community learned that there would be the incentive of BRL\$ 2,400 in nonreimbursable form, there would be a race to claim this resource, which would generate situations that could prove difficult to manage.

The targeting strategy adopted by EMATERCE was clearly influenced by the scale of the Programme and the high incidence of extreme poverty. Faced with a potential demand that is often higher than the available supply of resources, objective prioritization criteria have been defined. Thus, the CadÚnico list was reduced by means of filters, but the main criterion for targeting was the selection of poor

communities already known to the technicians. On the one hand, such a choice had undeniable advantages, such as the fact that personnel would be interacting with communities that were already familiar to them, and optimizing ATER's subsequent work by concentrating its efforts on clustered families. On the other hand, however, scattered families or isolated communities were excluded in the first round (although not always - see the case of Redenção where some remote and isolated communities were attended to).

Interviews for a Diagnostic phase

According to the rules of the Oriented Cash Transfer, the visit to carry out the diagnostic phase of families and their productive activities should be done only once in a four-hour interview. However, the then Technical Director of EMATERCE argued that a diagnostic phase could not be made in a single visit, because it takes a certain amount of time to first gain the confidence of the families, and subsequently collect the information provided. It was then decided to perform the diagnostic phase gradually in three different visits, respectively from one and a half hours for the first two and one hour for the third, thus maintaining the total time of four hours.

These changes did not affect the overall project schedule

In Caucaia and Redenção, ATER agents interviewed affirmed that this division of the meeting hours with families was fundamental for them to gain confidence and to grasp the routine of each family and their abilities.

In the case of diagnostic phase, the modifications suggested by EMATERCE to the standard procedure of the Programme were simple but effective. What is interesting to note is that such modifications were evidently based on accumulated experience and in-depth knowledge of the local dynamics by EMATERCE's technicians and management.

Production project

Production projects were based on the findings of the diagnostic assessments, and the technicians were directed not to exert undue influence over the choice of the projects, but to respect the productive traditions of the families and the local contexts. For example, in Cariri, a region where there is water, vegetable projects

were prioritized, in which all family members were involved. In the drier regions, sheep, pigs and poultry were prioritized.

There was flexibility on the part of the MDA with regard to the implementation of non-agricultural production projects, which were not provided for in the terms of reference, but which had potential in some communities where families traditionally worked in activities such as clay handicrafts, making straw brooms, hats, or even beauty salons, motorcycles, freezers for storage and expansion of fruit pulp production activity, etc. But ATER's technicians, in accepting non-agricultural projects, always asked that part of the development fund be used to produce food to strengthen family food security.

To support the preparation of the production projects, very detailed records were prepared to guide the families after choosing the productive activity, for example considering the number of animals or seeds and associated needs of infrastructure, inputs, etc., along with costs and disbursement schedule. This standardization was important in managing the scale of the project and also in view of the lack of experience of the newly hired work-placement scholars.

In Caucaia, it was found that most of the families were already familiar with raising chickens, and accordingly the majority of production projects were directed to poultry farming. The projects were also described by the initial number of layers. For example, for poultry farms they had projects involving the acquisition of 25, 50, 70 and 100 layers, the necessary infrastructure, in this case the chicken coop with the measures and types of structure, and the scale of the disbursement of the resources. In this way, the technician's work gained in efficiency. Families chose autonomously from the options presented. A copy of the project was handed to the family. In the discussion of the production project, all the members of the family were mobilized, including women and young people. A very important point at this stage in Caucaia (unlike Redenção) was the presence of veterinarians who guided animal health issues. As most of the projects were based on the Caipirão-type birds, which can be taken to market when still just a few months old, vaccination guidelines, purity of drinking water for animals, food, etc. were critical to the success of rearing.

In Redenção, the choice of the production project always began with the question of the technician of ATER to the family: “you have experience in what?”. Once the project was chosen, pointers were given to improve the traditional productive activity (for example, specifications for building a pigsty, feeding the animals, etc.). Reflecting the constant emphasis on enhancing family involvement in these projects, this region had a greater focus on the rearing of pigs. Many of the inhabitants were already pig-breeding in a more rudimentary and sometimes loose manner. With the Programme, families learned to rear animals trapped in pens, divided into specific bays for each phase - small, pregnant and adult, given guidelines of what and how to plant to generate food for breeding, and in many cases were able to increase the number of livestock.

In the preparation of the production project, EMATERCE faithfully followed the guidelines of the Oriented Cash Transfer, to the effect that agents were required to respect local specialties and the skills of the families, who were, after all, the ones who chose the type of planting or breeding, with the ATER agent having a purely advisory role in this process. Already, after choosing the production project, the guidance and technical follow-up were conducted in a standardized manner, through courses and educational material focused on technological and productive aspects and costs. If, on the one hand, this option had the advantage of simplicity and clarity, and of smooth efficiency—undeniably appropriate, given the scale of the Programme and the limited experience of the work-placement scholars—on the other hand, one has the inescapable impression that there were limitations on the spontaneity of the process, the freedom of interaction with the beneficiaries, and, consequently, the possibility of individualized assistance according to the possible specificities of each case.

The reader’s attention is also drawn to the presence of support services, such as veterinary services, whose performance was crucial to the success of poultry production in Caucaia, and whose absence, on the contrary, was relevant to the failure of the same in Redenção.

[Release of the Oriented Cash Transfer](#)

Another adaptation with the MDA occurred in relation to the timing of the release of the 2nd and 3rd installment of the development

resources. Such a release was to be initially every six months but was reduced to an interval of two months because the interval was considered too long when the production project was just getting off the ground. Subsequently, the process became even more expeditious and simple, since, instead of three installments, the release of funds was modified to two installments, respectively of BRL\$ 1400 and BRL\$ 1000. It is important to note that these modifications were decided by the MDA within a programme evaluation and learning process, possibly influenced by the feedback from contracted entities, in an effort to meet the needs of the production projects of the family farmers, mainly in relation to the approximation between the time of the initial investment and the successive costing in the production projects.

One factor that was an obstacle to the ATER agents’ monitoring of the correct application of the development resource was, at the beginning of the Oriented Cash Transfer, the fact that the plots of land/parcels were released without the agent being informed. This was a strong case for MDS-MDA to make a change in the programme’s functioning, as a result of which EMATERCE was sent a list of the families that were to benefit in the month in question. With this prior documentation of the disbursement of aid, the technician visited the family, communicated that the resources were available in the account, and followed more closely the application of the resources in the production project.

Problems with the timing and information of the release of the development resources related, respectively, to the initial design of the Programme and breakdowns in communication between the MDA and EMATERCE. As such, these had to be resolved by the ministries, within an institutional learning process during the management of the Programme, but the input and the early warning coming from the field - in the case of EMATERCE - seem to have been of paramount importance in this respect.

[Monitoring production projects](#)

In the monitoring of families, EMATERCE provided more than twenty individual visits instead of the three contractually provided in the ACT or the eight provided in the Public Tenders. According to the MDA technicians interviewed, this was due to the fact that the agent, upon visiting the community, may interact informally

with more than the four families planned for each visit, and also receive calls, and take visits at the Regional Office when the family will receive the Family Grant etc. Also, the selection of beneficiaries grouped in localities reduced the time and cost of travel of the technicians, which contributed to the fact that they made more visits than initially planned.

EMATERCE also promoted some modifications in the distribution of the expected time load spent on course type activities. Activities with an expected duration of eight hours were divided into two distinct segments of four hours each. In this way, participants' meal costs were eliminated (since they started at eight o'clock and ended at noon) - costs which, it should be remembered, would be the responsibility of the State Government. In addition, the opinion of the EMATERCE technicians is that educationals benefited because the transfer of a large volume of information was broken down into steps.

At the meetings for collective activities, more than 24 families contractually scheduled for each meeting, including non-beneficiaries of the project, participated frequently - EMATERCE allowed these families to take advantage of courses given by ATER agents, and worked with two attendance lists, one for the Oriented Cash Transfer and another, unofficial, for internal use.

In Caucaia, once the families were selected, activities began of meetings in groups and individuals, where instruments such as data show, were passed on guidelines on citizenship, associativism, techniques for the creation and management of birds, sheep, pigs and goats, and planting of vegetables. In Redenção the courses for implementation and follow-up of the production projects were given to groups of producers and by theme (type of stockbreeding or farming), according to the chosen projects, and were granted in two stages as well as in the other regions, with the first day being devoted to agriculture and the second to livestock. The content of the courses was prepared by regional technicians. Handouts were left with the farmers - although their effect may have been limited due to the high illiteracy among the beneficiaries. As the Programme progressed, a positive demonstration effect was created among neighbours from those individuals who had already implemented their production project.

As in the case of the Diagnostic phase, in monitoring the production projects EMATERCE also made changes in the allocation of contractually anticipated times for this activity. Although these changes were primarily motivated by cost reduction issues, the general opinion of the respondents is that they have had a positive educational effect for the beneficiaries. It is also important to emphasize that the initial decision to work with clustered rather than dispersed families had positive consequences in the time management of ATER agents, allowing for a more frequent follow-up of production projects.

Challenges with computerized systems

The changes in the times allowed for diagnostic phase and monitoring of production projects had implications for the use of the SIATER system. SIATER is the system for the management of costs and ACT with the executing entities, whose implementation was defined by the ATER Law no. 12,188 of 2010. In SIATER, we note the implementation of the activities of the executing agencies and the number of beneficiaries served by these agencies. The diagnostic phase and follow-up of production projects are among such activities. However, the fact that such projects may have a multistage character has generated problems with SIATER, where such activities can only be registered once. These problems had to be overcome by EMATERCE, launching the activities just once, with the date of the last event occurring when the required workload was totalled, and thereby entailing the completion of the activity.

In addition to SIATER, the SIG @ Livre BSM system is used in the Programme, where the data of each family are stored, from the diagnostic phase and the production project through to the monitoring of the implementation of the project. This process is documented by means of reports prepared and entered in the system by the ATER agent. The release of the portion (s) of the development resource (s) subsequent to the first disbursement is conditional on these reports. The SIG @ Livre was a requirement of the Planalto Palace [Official workplace of the President of Brazil] that wanted a system for monitoring and reviewing goals. However, ministries in general, including MDA, historically have little flexibility in hiring information technology (IT) services. In this way, the MDA had to make adjustments to a system that already existed, which was therefore cumbersome and inefficient, requiring corrections over time.

These difficulties were compounded by internal problems within EMATERCE. Training by MDA in these systems was evaluated by EMATERCE as insufficient. However, there was no pass-through by the EMATERCE group (two people) who had been trained in Brasilia in the use of the systems to the other technicians of the company. This group was "isolated" to prepare the proposal for the MDA / MDS without the participation of those who would later execute it. In fact, there was no replication or transmission of knowledge within the company.

Against this background, EMATERCE tried to find a solution, even if temporary and informal. Initially, a professional from EMATERCE paid a visit to the state of Piauí, which had already entered into a contract with the MDA / MDS Oriented Cash Transfer a few months before Ceará, to try to clarify and learn issues related to these systems. In addition, the RMF Regional Manager was the one who, within EMATERCE, learned (as a self-taught person) the operation of SIATER and SIG @ Livre, and subsequently disseminated such learning within the company, including through a Manual that he himself prepared. For initial data entry, EMATERCE gathered within its coordination framework the agents in Fortaleza and organized a mutirão (meeting)

The interviews in Caucaia and Redenção confirmed these difficulties. In Caucaia, the entry of diagnostic data into SIATER was indicated by the agents as a time-consuming process. In Redenção, for the first 80 families served, the SIG @ Livre was not used locally (because there was a shortage of technicians to travel to Fortaleza for training), and the person who entered the data in the system was the RMF Regional Manager. Subsequently, the situation has normalized and the data is now entered locally. Even so, even today in Redenção information about each family and their production performance is also stored in handbooks that are passed on from one technician to another when one work-placement scholar completes his contract and is replaced by another.

Another adaptation to the SIG @ Livre system was linked to the individual reports that had to be entered in the system, which were very extensive and complex. Nowadays, partly due to EMATERCE's insistence, these reports are collective, and therefore simpler and faster to prepare. The EMATERCE already gathered the reports by municipalities, so that the release of

the resources was also given by municipality, thus facilitating the monitoring by the agents. With the collective reporting, this process became automatic.

Problems in the handling of MDA's computer systems were in part caused by difficulties in the development and management of these systems in the MDA, but were aggravated by internal failures of EMATERCE, such as a lack of communication and integration within the company and obstacles to the diffuse training of its agents. Problems of this nature are typical of bureaucratic organizations. However, even within a bureaucratic environment, creativity and personal initiatives emerged to solve the problems confronting computerized systems.

Marketing

The promotion of the marketing of any surpluses resulting from the production project, after satisfying the food and nutritional security of the families, is among the objectives of the Programme.

The success of commercialization depends in large part on local hydroclimatic conditions and on the presence of market channels structured and appropriate to the reality of very poor family farmers. As a result, commercialization was higher (EMATERCE technicians estimate that it reached 50% of families) in poultry and vegetable projects (the latter, in turn, more frequent in regions with greater availability of water, such as Cariri), which normally produce surplus. In these cases, the marketing channels are basically informal, in the community itself, door to door, and eventually in local fairs. In the case of sale of animals, due to difficulties of access to slaughterhouses that comply with the public health requirements in force, producers of the Oriented Cash Transfer tend to market live animals instead of slaughtered ones, even if this way, the gain is lower. The same health requirements pose an obstacle for extremely poor family farmers who seek to access government procurement programmes, such as the PAA or the PNAE.

In Caucaia, most of the production projects generated some surplus for sale, which was normally absorbed by the community itself, and in a few cases it was marketed at local fairs. Eggs are traded at BRL\$ 0.60 and chickens between BRL\$ 25 and BRL\$ 35. In Caucaia, EMATERCE technicians do not have records of families from

the community of São Pedro who have had access to the PAA due to the barriers imposed such as the requirement to obtain a public health seal, among others. Already in another community, Poço Verde (also in Caucaia), it was reported that there is a producers' association, which is attended by some farmers from the Muquém Oriented Cash Transfer (Caucaia locality served by the Programme), which it markets to the PAA.

In Redenção, respondents estimate that half of the families are able to market part of their production. Most families trade within their own community, or at local and regional fairs. Due to the obstacles of commercialization by the PAA, they usually slaughter the animal and sell it to families in the community itself. Courses were given on associativism and cooperativism to strengthen the collective purchase of inputs and marketing, but these courses had little impact. One technician even helped a group of beneficiaries in the collective purchase of chickens, but this was in the nature of an ad hoc experiment.

The marketing of surpluses in the Programme in Ceará falls broadly into the category of standard behavior, commonplace at least in the northeastern semi-arid area, and entailing local, small-scale production pursued through essentially informal channels. Scale could be achieved basically through the formation of associations, including for slaughter in structures where health requirements were met, but this would require a less marginal investment and a more specific focus on actions to strengthen social capital.

Sustainability and intersectoral coordination

The sustainability of the Programme and the continuity of its effects are among the priorities of EMATERCE. At first, there are three strategies designed by the company for this purpose.

First, the agents advise family farmers to seek credit through Pronaf B or AgroAmigo. The latter is a microfinance programme for family farmers in Pronaf in the Northeast of Brazil and in the north of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, and is implemented by the Instituto Nordeste Cidadania, an OSCIP linked to Banco do Nordeste (BNB), which adopts a participatory approach methodology. However, in practice it is often not the agent of ATER who makes the referral, but it is the agents of the BNB (who have goals to fulfill) that visit the municipalities and promote membership in AgroAmigo. Even so, the propensity of family farmers' families to

borrow is low, resulting from fear, mainly due to uncertainty about rainfall. The EMATERCE technicians know that in Cariri (which has more water) the number of families that access credit is higher. In addition, the fact that many of BNB's agents have been EMATERCE scholarship holders helps because they already know the families in the region and are aware which ones are better able to borrow. In Caucaia, some beneficiaries of the Oriented Cash Transfer seek microcredit when the project ends, mainly BNB and Banco do Brasil (BB), which do door-to-door capillary work. This is a work considered "serious" by the agents, who report a low default.

Unfortunately, we do not know how many of the Programme families accessed credit, since EMATERCE does not have access to the BNB database. It would be important to promote the cross-referencing of the databases of the Oriented Cash Transfer and the BNB (which would be simple, through the CPF of the beneficiaries), to obtain this data.

The second pillar of EMATERCE's sustainability strategy is achieved through the integration of the families of the Programme, after the two years during which they are served, in the routine schedule of the company, so that they continue to receive ATER, although more sporadically than in the Oriented Cash Transfer. EMATERCE has its own system of monitoring families (which, once inserted in the same, go from "attended" to "assisted"), where each agent has a caseload of 120 families.

As in the rest of the state, in Redenção, the families of the Programme were incorporated, after the project was completed, into the routine ATER actions of EMATERCE. Having continuity of ATER is considered vitally important by both families and agents, even if such continuity occurs in a more sporadic fashion. Redenção's experts consider that it would be equally important for families to have access to other policies, especially credit, but, as has already been said, EMATERCE has no cross-information on this.

The third component of the sustainability strategy would be coordination with other policies and programmes of productive and social inclusion, but such efforts, apparently, are very limited. Within the state policy, the families of the Oriented Cash Transfer were directed to access the "It's Time to Plant" seed distribution programme, but again, there is no data to indicate to what extent such access has materialized.

4

RESULTS

Measuring the effective impact of the Oriented Cash Transfer on the beneficiaries is difficult, due to the lack of systematized and representative data. In addition, it is implicit in the programme design that what is expected is not so much an immediate result in terms, for example, of increased production or monetary income, but rather the beginning of a process of social and productive inclusion that has many dimensions, such as awareness, strengthening of social capital, insertion in public policies, and some degree of improvement in production, income and consumption.

Estimates of Programme results, in the absence of data, are necessarily formed on the basis of impressions.

In Caucaia, of the 55 families served in the community of São Pedro, ATER agents estimate that only ten (or about 20%) managed to change their economic level. The remaining 45 families were unable to press ahead with tangible results under the Programme. Several families used the resources for immediate priorities such as “burial of the husband” or “illness of a child”, among others.

In Redenção, the evaluation of the local technicians is that the impact of the Programme for the families was due to a more focused and effective ATER as associated with the development resources, and resulted in improvements in the technical aspects of the production, better food, a little more income, and changes in attitudes that translate into a greater willingness to apply technologies, improve management, and so on.

Both in Caucaia and in Redenção, as described in the examples below, the increase in animal husbandry when provided by the Oriented Cash Transfer did not necessarily result in a better diet, let alone in an increase in income through marketing, but rather through the creation of assets—to be precise, something that, at times of need, can be sold – this constituting an insurance, which, in situations of extreme vulnerability, represents an important element in the lives of these families.

More generally, there is a consensus among the interviewees that the main benefits for the FIP families came from the fact that they were now able to gain access to the public policies they had previously been excluded from, as well as to acquire the “assisted” status they gained once they joined the programme of routine scheduling of EMATERCE’s ATER actions. The Programme allowed for the generation of assets that made their economic security increase as well as improving their quality of life, for example through housing improvements financed by the sale of part of such assets. However, it is clear that more consistent improvements in the lives of beneficiaries depend on access to a wide range of public policies, especially credit, although borrowing is a major concern.

Such dynamics are reported as illustrated below in interviews with beneficiary families (fictitious names are used).

Dona Carla and her husband Antônio (Community of São Pedro)

They have an area of one hectare to produce. They rent part of it for extraction of the carnauba about 4 months of the year and they cultivate corn, beans, manioc, chayote, squash. They do not have a cistern for consumption⁹ (they did not want to dig the hole for implantation and feed the masons who would build it), and they get water from a nearby pond or buy it. They had already raised chickens loose and free-roaming. They initially purchased 50 chickens for the Oriented Cash Transfer and with the release of the second lot they acquired an additional 70 chickens. The difference in raising chickens is that they are now protected in the chicken coop, receive vaccines periodically and appropriate feed. As a result, they have improved their eating habits and can sell the eggs that were previously eaten by dogs and other animals on the property or in the neighborhood (they sell on average 10-20 eggs per week for BRL\$ 0.60 each and two chickens per month or when they need it for R BRL\$ 25-30, totalling an extra income of around BRL\$ 90 per month). The idea of building the chicken coop came from ATER’s agent, but the decision was made by the family.

⁹ The programme for the implantation of cisterns of the MDS in the semi-arid area includes two mechanisms: the 1st water method, for human consumption; and 2nd water method, for the implementation of social technologies for collecting and storing rainwater for agricultural and livestock production, on the properties of family farmers.

Dona Carla had a daughter eight months ago and that made her abandon the project a little. There are still 12 birds left and she hopes to resume rearing in the coming months. They receive Bolsa Família and the two receive rural retirement (they retired after the beginning of the Oriented Cash Transfer - it became explicitly clear that what improved their lives was their pension, which they used to move from a house of mud to one in masonry). The area has PACS coverage.

Before the Programme they accessed microcredit (they say it is AgroAmigo, but probably it was Pronaf B when the latter was brokered by EMATERCE), but then they did not contract other loans because they are still paying off the first loan. The visits of the EMATERCE technicians continue even after the end of the Oriented Cash Transfer.

To the question “where did the Programme make a difference in your life” they mentioned the BRL\$ 2,400 “yield” when there is a willingness to work seriously, and that ATER effectively helps to improve production - this was even more effective in the Oriented Cash Transfer where they received information on the material of the fence, the management of the animals, etc., which went beyond the guidelines they had previously received about the cultivation they practice. However, the main reason why farmers are looking for EMATERCE is that being registered as assisted by EMATERCE is considered more than enough proof to guarantee a rural pension.

Joseane and Maria (Community of Muquenzinho - Caucaia)

In the community of Muquenzinho there are about 10 families. Most of the houses have drinking tanks for consumption. Initially the houses were of mud, but now most are made of bricks. Several families benefitted from this community were identified through active search.

Joseane and Maria are two young sisters and their respective families were contemplated by the Oriented Cash Transfer, where both chose to raise sheep, which was a tradition in the family. They decided to raise sheep also because the father works on a farm where he plants free grass, which is used to supplement the animals' feed.

With the aid of the development resources they built a pen each, and still they acquired 4 breeders and 1 stud animal. Today one has fifteen heads and the other has nine heads. They also breed some birds, and use eggs and some ewes for sale. The one with nine heads sold three females and one male (for BRL\$ 150 each) to supplement the income and improve the house where she lives, which happened to be masonry and no longer wattle-and-daub. The other sold only one male, but also managed to make the masonry house. They never killed the animals to eat. The improvements did not come only from the Oriented Cash Transfer, but the latter did represent a contribution. Besides the sheepfold, in the Programme they learned about sheep feeding and management.

Both participate in Bolsa Família and Garantia Safra social welfare programmes. Neither of them has a cistern for consumption, one because at the time of the introduction of cisterns she did not live here, the other because she was traveling, though she wanted to have one. Their parents contracted PRONAF more than one year ago, where among other investments they acquired a cow, which they later sold to improve the house. In addition, instead of buying the stakes and hiring labor to build the sheepfold, they even did with wood taken in the bush, and thus saved \$ 600 which they used to make the floor of the house.

They are also receiving visits from EMATERCE, but less regularly since the end of the programme in 2015.

The Oriented Cash Transfer “opened their eyes”, including with regard to the possibilities afforded by other programmes (eg My House, My Rural Life - federal social housing programme) - if other projects appear, they would be interested, but they say they lack information about such programmes. Before the Oriented Cash Transfer, the residents were “forgotten, programmes did not make it here”. What has changed in their lives and in their expectations?: one person wants to reap a harvest; another person has had his or her security increased, while having animals represents a “safe option” for times of hardship (because they can be sold, “people from outside come and buy”).

“The progress of this community is visible, not only because of one project, it is the whole that brings social inclusion”

Dona Val
Community of Poço Escuro - Acarapé
(municipality next to Redenção)

With the support of the family, Dona Val built a sheepfold for the goats she acquired - four females and one male. The goats reproduced, she sold two goats and one died. In the morning, she releases the goats in an area near the house where a river passes for them to eat, later in the afternoon, holds them in the sheepfold and puts some corn to supplement the food. The manure she guards, in a separate covered area of the fold, waiting for rain to plant and or sell to third parties.

Today it has a consumption cistern and a production of the boardwalk type¹⁰ is ready for the rain. She also creates two pairs of hens, whose males are of breed, sells eggs, and plants corn and beans for her own consumption. The child helps in rearing the chickens after school.

She receives assistance under the Bolsa Família social welfare programme and has never taken out a loan. She is keen to grow her business but she does not know if she wants to get into debt by borrowing. The uncertainty of the rains does not allow her to build future plans.

Seu Jorge
(Community of Poço Escuro - Acarapé)

Seu Jorge had previously reared pigs, but in a rudimentary way, without technical guidance. With the encouragement and guidance of ATER he built two pens and acquired three pigs. Today he has four almost adult sows, one pregnant sow and one breeder pig. He sold the last four heads to a person in the community who wants to start his own rearing practice, gave his son a head, and he expects this new sow to give birth.

He plants cassava that assists in the rations of feedingstuffs for the animals. He hopes to be able to boost his stockbreeding activities. He believes that his success is due to the guidance he receives from EMATERCE and to his efforts and work. The Project made possible the acquisition of more animals and this allowed him to develop. He has never slaughtered an animal, but has always sold live animals to a person in the community.

He would like to access rural credit but is afraid of getting into debt.

¹⁰ A type of production cistern (or 2nd Water) where the rainwater is collected on a cement board of 200 m², shallow, so that with 300 mm of rain the cistern - which is connected to the boardwalk by means of pipes - is full.

5



LESSONS FROM THE CASE STUDY

EMATERCE is a large public company, with a technical staff largely close to the retirement age and a forty-year tradition of ATER, with limitations on the hiring of human resources, which has made a great effort to adapt its work practices for the implementation of the Development Programme. ATER companies such as EMATERCE rely on well-established protocols and have a habit of working with little diversification and with a market-oriented approach, which had to be adjusted for the BSM target audience.

This adaptation also had to face the challenge of the scale of the Programme. The objective of the Government of the State of Ceará to serve 26,000 families was very ambitious, even for a company with a capillary structure such as that of EMATERCE, and was motivated by the desire to boost the local economy in rural areas.

For the implementation of the Programme, there was a mobilization drive to foster the integration of the company, which resulted in (i) training that was broad-based (but which faced communication breakdowns, typical of a bureaucratic organization, in the dissemination of knowledge for use in computerized systems) and; (ii) the setting up of a structure for the supervision and technical support by the most experienced staff for the work-placement scholars.

More specifically, EMATERCE designed a strategy where at the same time some rules and provisions of the Oriented Cash Transfer were relaxed, and others standardized. More flexible rules mainly sought to tailor work practices to the characteristics of the target public, while standardization sought efficiency gains in response to the scale of the programme and the problems generated by the need to hire scholars.

For example, in targeting beneficiaries there was a standard filtering process from the CadÚnico list and the a priori choice of poorer communities in an effort to categorize the families to be served by ATER, thus making the agents' work more efficient. This essentially top-down process has been somewhat mitigated and legitimized through partnership with local stakeholders and the pursuit of transparency and communication with potential beneficiaries, including in an effort to avoid political influences on household selection.

Examples of more flexible treatment of rules and provisions of the Programme can be found:

in the methods of diagnostic phase of families (broken down in three stages); in the choice of non-agricultural production projects; in the modification of the times of release of the development resources; in the division in two stages of the courses to the families; and in the requirement of information to the agent of ATER upon the release of portions of the resources. These adaptations - which were not only generated by the demands of EMATERCE, but also by a learning process for the MDA / MDS, sought to meet the needs of the target audience (for example, for a transmission of guidance in a manner that was more spread out over time, or greater respect for existing local production preferences), as well as of the ATER agents (greater control over resource use) and the company as a whole (elimination of meal costs in courses that would otherwise last for eight hours).

At the same time, standardization was achieved primarily in the adoption and communication of standard models of production projects / budgets and courses, and in the adoption of collective award models. These adaptations sought to facilitate and simplify the work of ATER agents in relation to the scale of the programme (and in part due to the lack of experience of the younger scholars).

The results seem to be part of the traditional ATER mainstream, with a certain success in adopting more efficient technologies and productive practices, but also with a limited impact on strengthening social capital and coordination with other policies. Such an outcome may have been promoted by the fact that the ACT was designed with fewer activities compared to the public tenders.

Two positive aspects related to the nature of the public enterprise of EMATERCE deserve to be highlighted: firstly, with regard to the institutionality in relation to municipalities, having as their "gateway" well established partnerships with the municipal secretariats of agriculture; in addition, in relation to the continuity of ATER care of the families of the Oriented Cash Transfer (whose impact, however, could be enhanced if data were crossed with other policies - especially microcredit¹¹). In comparison with the implementation of the NGO Development Programme, EMATERCE has the advantage of stability, continuity and the fact that it does not depend on the same Programme for its maintenance and survival.

¹¹ MDA respondents indicated that meetings with BNB are taking place in order to achieve this cross-referencing between databases.

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