Human Development Income Transfers in the Longer Term

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Maintaining poverty at zero or near zero levels requires strong, innovative and dynamic welfare institutions, in addition to economic growth and the provision of quality basic services.

In the context of human development income transfer programmes in the region, this involves managing two key progressions and satisfying one condition.

First, it requires a progression from flagship programmes aimed at driving poverty to zero to stable and permanent institutions capable of sustaining zero poverty.

Second, it entails a shift in perspective, placing greater emphasis on the role of social assistance in ensuring human development and opportunity as a means of achieving social and economic inclusion for disadvantaged groups.

A condition for these two progressions is the presence of positive policy-to-politics feedback effects capable of sustaining political support for social assistance.

The evolution of Bolsa Familia in its first decade provides important lessons for other countries regarding these two transitions.

The growing institutionalisation of Bolsa Familia, and social assistance more broadly, including the formation of the Ministry of Social Development and Zero Hunger in 2004, point in the direction of stable and permanent institutions capable of sustaining zero poverty.

Debates around the role of social assistance, including Bolsa Familia, identify the options ahead in terms of extending social and economic inclusion in Brazil. Human development income transfer programmes have a promising future at the centre of emerging welfare institutions in the South.

Reference: