
Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood

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In 2003, Brazil launched the Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood—a pilot initiative in the Millennium Fund for Early Child Development (ECD), a World Bank program. The Bank proposed this program in 2002 as an international effort to support community-based initiatives for the well-being of children from 0 to 8 years of age. Brazil is the first country to take up the initiative and to obtain private sector support for a Millennium Fund for ECD.

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Background

The concept of a millennium fund for ECD was developed in 2002 at a meeting convened by the World Bank to address private sector investment in ECD services. The idea was that a millennium fund could galvanize private sector participation and increase the level of effort and investment in early child development. In contrast with large-scale donor programs (e.g., World Bank lending), a millennium fund also could be more timely, responsive, and flexible to community requests for ECD support. Often, 1–2 years are needed just for the planning and design of large donor efforts.

Subsequent to the meeting, the World Bank established the Millennium Fund for ECD. The overall goals are: (a) to strengthen capacity for ECD initiatives and (b) to support development of ECD programs. The specific aim of the program is:

To provide small grants to communities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to establish and maintain quality ECD services for young children.

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Initially, the World Bank approved a small developmental grant to explore the mechanism and operation of a Millennium Fund for ECD and to support three pilot efforts—in Brazil, Gambia, and Honduras. For many countries, the Millennium Fund for ECD may be an innovative way to stimulate and finance ECD initiatives and programs. The fund—

- Relies on partnerships and commitments among local, regional, national, and international participants
- Integrates the contributions of individuals, communities, corporations, and NGOs to build capacity for ECD and to deliver ECD services to children and families, alongside government.

Several multilateral agencies are involved in Millennium Fund for ECD programs. Leading organizations, in addition to the World Bank, include the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

Objectives, Strategies, and Activities

Brazil’s Millennium Fund for Early Childhood has three primary sponsors: UNESCO, the World Bank, and the Mauricio Sirotsky Sobrinho Foundation, which is linked to RBS—the largest media conglomerate in the south of Brazil. Two states—Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina—participate in the pilot effort.

The objectives of Brazil’s fund are to—

- Improve the quality of early childhood education provided by communitarian, philanthropic, or public institutions
- Ensure that children at risk will have opportunities for playing and learning, broadening their cultural universe, socializing, and building positive values—that is, having a better and healthier early childhood.

Major emphasis is placed on equitable promotion of full early child development for all children. The four strategies to accomplish the objectives are:

1. Mobilize companies to invest in early childhood education by donating funds.
2. Mobilize society to develop initiatives and undertake social commitments aimed at promoting educational policies for early child development.
3. Promote in-service training for teachers, coordinators, and principals of selected day-care centers and preschools.
4. Improve the infrastructure of institutions by purchasing pedagogical materials and equipment relevant to higher-quality education and care.

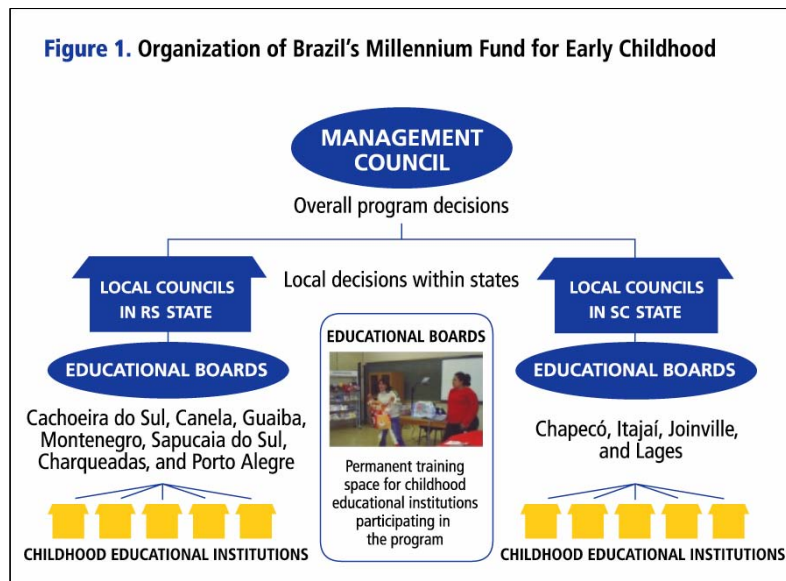
A variety of activities are under way. For example, to raise political awareness of the importance of investing in early child development, the sponsors have teamed with a Brazilian broadcasting corporation to develop a media campaign that promotes ECD policies. This effort includes television advertisements in which corporate leaders call on the business community to invest in ECD programs.

Two main informational efforts are (a) development of a library of ECD information and (b) establishment of a center of ECD information and education. Some library and center resources are already available to the public, whereas others, for the time being, are available only to those involved in the fund program.

Organization

Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood is organized into four interactive layers (figure 1), as follows:

- Management Council—which makes overall program decisions
- Local Councils —which make decisions locally in each municipality
- Educational Boards in towns and cities—which provide technical coordination and assure permanent space for training in child education for individuals who work with children
- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Institutions—which deliver ECD services to children.



The creation of Educational Boards is the main strategy for improving quality education and early child development. The Educational Boards assure permanent space, with learning materials and pedagogical tools, which serve for the promotion of teacher-training activities and

pedagogical mentoring. Each Educational Board accommodates up to five ECCE institutions and is coordinated by an ECCE expert who, in many cases, is a civil servant of the Municipal Education Secretariat.

The functioning of each Educational Board is supported by a Local Council consisting of representatives from at least three local entities, including the municipal government. The Management Council is responsible for following up on the activities of all Local Councils and Educational Boards.

Financing: Millennium Entrepreneur Certificates

UNESCO Brasília Office is the technical and managerial implementing agency for Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood. To encourage private sector participation, the sponsors award "Millennium Entrepreneur Certificates" to enterprises (e.g., steel, sanitation, and energy corporations, trade organizations) that contribute to the fund. Two levels of participation are recognized:

- Corporations providing US\$8,000 annually are designated "Entrepreneurs."
- Corporations providing US\$48,000 annually are designated "Master Entrepreneurs."

Other organizations and groups also may contribute or provide in-kind support, which may include provision of equipment, human resources, and technical or administrative services.

Early Results and Future Goals

As of September 2005, Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood had achieved the following participation:

- Investments by 11 partner enterprises (8 Entrepreneurs and 3 Master Entrepreneurs)
- Cash donations totaling US\$294,700 (from the World Bank and private corporations)
- In-kind contributions amounting to US\$200,000 (from Local Councils)
- Involvement of 110 partner institutions in 11 Local Councils.

Through this participation, Brazil has been able to improve the quality of early childhood education in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina by:

- Implementing 11 Educational Boards (7 in Rio Grande do Sul, and 4 in Santa Catarina).
- Training 960 educators from 81 ECCE institutions in in-service training programs—12 percent (100) of the educators returned to formal education to continue their studies.
- Providing ECD services for 6,000 children under age 6 years.
- Developing four pedagogical course books.
- Publishing and disseminating an "Educational Board Manual," instructive video, and printed materials.
- Launching a media campaign to raise institutional awareness about early child development.

- Establishing a website <www.fundodomilenio.org.br> for educators and the public.

Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood has set forth the following goals for 2003–06 and 2006–07.

By 2006, the sponsors plan to have worked with 100 ECCE institutions, established 20 Educational Boards, trained 1,000 educators, and provided ECD services for 9,000 children.

For 2006–07, the sponsors plan to increase the number of partner enterprises and to begin expanding Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood to other parts of the country. Efforts are being taken to systematize the experience so as to enable dissemination of the technology to other countries.

The support provided by international multilateral agencies has been essential for launching this pilot effort, and it continues to underpin activities. The increasing role of Brazil's private sector, in partnership with local communities and government, is particularly exciting and encouraging.

This partnership between the private sector and the public authorities at the local level (which is facilitated by international cooperation agencies) provides the basis for assuring that the ECD initiatives and programs are sustainable and can be scaled up regionally and nationally throughout Brazil.

Web Resources [as of November 2006]

Brazil's Millennium Fund for Early Childhood: <www.fundodomilenio.org.br>

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