

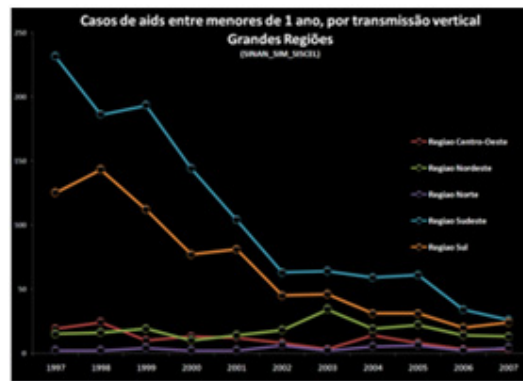
Brazil Shares Key Principles Behind Growth in DevInfo Use at National, Sub-national Levels (July 2010)

Brazil has emerged as one of the leading examples of healthy DevInfo implementation and use at the national and sub-national levels. In a special interview with the DevInfo Support Group, Lucio Goncalves, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Brazil, shared several key principles undergirding successful DevInfo implementation across the country.



The main reason behind the active promotion of DevInfo within Brazil, according to Goncalves, is its outstanding usefulness as a tool for data harmonization and dissemination, capacity development, and advocacy for children's rights. In line with these objectives, DevInfo has been deliberately promoted within Brazil as a "lever" rather than as a "database system" in order to maximize its use. In other words, systems already in place can capitalize on DevInfo and use its features to achieve better results in planning, monitoring, reporting and program implementation. Similarly, DevInfo has also been deliberately promoted as a "concept" rather than as a "tool to monitor indicators." As such, the focus has been on neither the software nor the features of the tool, but rather on the fundamental principles on which the tool is based, such as:

- Information should be publicly disseminated.
- Ease of access and visual appeal can widen the door for the effective use of data.
- Data carries more meaning when connected to different classification schemes and results frameworks.
- Metadata is necessary and should be easily accessible.
- Data should be entered according to national and international standards.



In the Brazilian context, presenting DevInfo as a lever and a concept has been instrumental in maximizing its receptivity among partners and stakeholders, in light of the size of and competition within the domestic information technology market, the increasing numbers of competing systems available, and the constant quest for innovation.

UNICEF Brazil began using DevInfo 4.0 in its initial year of launch in 2004. In 2006, the system was upgraded to DevInfo 5.0, although limitations in speed prevented it from being used more widely. With the launch of DevInfo 6.0 in 2009, UNICEF Brazil was able to capitalize on lessons learned as well as the strengths of a much faster and significantly more powerful database tool to initiate a nationwide programme for DevInfo deployment and implementation. In particular, UNICEF Brazil conducted three types of DevInfo-related activities in 2009: showcasing DevInfo in strategic forums, developing relevant products to encourage DevInfo use and forging strategic partnerships.

Showcasing DevInfo proved to be a very successful method for broadening possibilities

for DevInfo implementation. For example, DevInfo was effectively presented to the Pacto pelo Semi-árido (a coalition of governments of the eleven States in the Northeast Brazil Semiarid Region as well as other leading civil society organizations), the Ministry of Education, Casa Civil (Civil House), and the North Region State representatives. Participation in each of these strategic forums was instrumental in getting key stakeholders to consider using DevInfo as a social monitoring and evaluation tool in their own organizations.

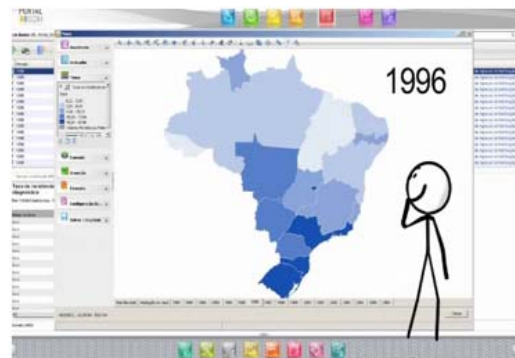


UNICEF Brazil also concentrated in 2009 on developing relevant products to encourage DevInfo use. According to Goncalves, "In order to provide data for all, DevInfo should provide data for each." In other words, disseminating databases containing sector-specific information can enhance receptivity of the system and expedite capacity building, as compared to disseminating more general databases aimed at a large, mixed audience.

As a result, strong emphasis was put on creating tailor-made thematic adaptations for specific reports, projects and partners. These included several adaptations and customized galleries, such as the Situation of Brazilian Children and Adolescents, the Index of Homicides among Adolescents, and SISVAN (Government of Brazil early warning system on the situation of nutrition).

Finally, forging strategic partnerships has proved key in furthering DevInfo use at the sub-national level in Brazil. Explains Goncalves, "Instead of just having DevInfo implemented and being used, the intention is to have others also seeking the development of DevInfo in the country. This can happen when the growth of DevInfo is linked with the growth of other partners' initiatives and projects."

In 2009, DevInfo focused on strengthening relationships with two main partners: ORBIS and Observatório Amazônico da Criança e Adolescente (OCA, which stands for Observatory for Children and Adolescents in the Amazon Region). Both have produced high-quality DevInfo products, and the added value of these is that they were not produced for UNICEF but rather for their own organizational initiatives. For example, ORBIS has produced the widely-used MODELO adaptation containing local data for all 399 municipalities of Paraná State, the Portal ODM adaptation containing municipal-level data on MDGs for all 5565 Brazilian municipalities, and a very effective DevInfo tutorial video. OCA has produced a UNICEF Seal adaptation containing data at the municipal level related to UNICEF Seal's activities as well as the PROPАЗ adaptation containing results of a study on sexual exploitation in the Amazon region.



These innovative strategies and approaches have cemented Brazil as one of the world's best examples of DevInfo ownership and usage at the sub-national level. For more information on DevInfo implementation in Brazil, please contact Lucio Goncalves, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Brazil, at lgoncalves@unicef.org.