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**THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND NGOs INTO THE
FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL INEQUALITIES.**

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*To the greatest experience I have ever done,
To my dad, who has always supported my initiatives,
To Brazil, which has opened my eyes,
To IPOM, my second family who I will never forget.*

Introduction

Social protection programs are meant to support people in maintaining an adequate standard of living. This set of social policies intend to grant income security, essential healthcare, and access to nutrition and education. Social protection has been recognized in 1948 as a human right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This means that States have the duty to guarantee a minimum level of social protection and general wellbeing.

In a country where social disparities are higher than average, social programs play a fundamental role in decreasing poverty, ending hunger, and ensuring inclusive quality education. Such achievement is done through cash transfer programs which enable people to alleviate the cost of living which would otherwise be too expensive for them.

In the last decade, Brazil has made great economic improvements. Nowadays, it is the seventh largest economy in the world. Despite this evolution, the level of income inequality is still too high. Even though Brazil has made huge progresses to lift around 40 million people out of poverty, this has not affected the income imbalance in the same way.

In a country where, the richest 5 percent hold the same income as the remaining 95 percent, social protection programs are the last chance to reduce social injustices and distribute wealth fairly. It is at the heart of this research to analyze why it is so important for Brazil to promote a set of focused strategies whose outcome would combat the main social problems. The development of social programs is necessary to guarantee free access to sanitation such as vaccines and basic medicine. These would ensure to the poorest gain equal access to quality food therefore decreasing malnutrition and obesity.

Arguably, if the various programs are properly integrated and interconnected amongst themselves, this would create a positive spillover effect. A system of planned social intervention would benefit the less privileged in several areas hence paving the way for better living conditions.

This paper aims to illustrate how Brazil has been dealing the social crisis it is enveloped in. In order to do this it will present how social programs are helping to reduce poverty and

hunger, which are the main actors in this situation and which measures have been taken until today to overcome this crisis.

The first chapter will introduce Brazil's outlook considering various aspects, such as its economic and demographic situation, the political shift from authoritarian regime to a social welfare state, and will consider the environmental responsibility it has in preserving its natural resources.

It will also present the main government initiatives to fight hunger and poverty in the last thirty years, through the development of social programs addressed to those poorest in society.

The analysis will continue assessing the effects and main achievements these programs have brought about, making further consideration for future challenges.

The second chapter's main focus is on a regional level, therefore it will give evidence of different local initiatives supported by non governmental organizations. The sphere of action of these organizations is directly addressed to the poverty-stricken neighborhoods of cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and San Paolo. It is exactly in these big cities, where the economic activity is concentrated, that the social gap extremely evident and persistent.

The chapter would not treat the topic exhaustively without mentioning the role played by two universal conventions. These are based on the assertion of unalienable human and child rights and helped promoting different social projects aiming to grant quality education.

Additionally it will conduct an accurate analysis about the main obstacles current NGOs face. It will then consider some potential solutions in order to reach higher standards and operate effectively in the field of social welfare.

Finally the third chapter will concern my personal experience of an internship within a non governmental organization located in the city of Fortaleza, in north-east of Brazil. I will present the internal structure and the main activities it conducts. Moreover I will explain how the work of the NGO is helping the community in which it operates but I will also explore its main weaknesses, therefore proposing how it could improve its performance.

Chapter One: Government' Social Programs

The aim of this chapter is to present a general framework about the Brazilian government's intervention in the formulation of public policies during the last thirty years. Before doing so, it is necessary to present a general outlook of the country's profile and the historical development in the last fifty years. This will explain why few initiatives, especially from a legislative point of view, were produced in the early period. In fact, most literature focuses on the last period of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. During this short period, it seems that Brazil has made more improvements than in the whole 20th century.

1. Brazil's General Outlook

Brazil is one of the largest countries in terms of population, size and GDP (US\$1.8 trillion). Characterized by a huge amount of natural resources, the trends in the last decade have shown a gradual but unsteady improvement in its socio-economic conditions. This is mainly due to its opening into the world commerce and its achievements in reducing poverty and hunger. Nonetheless, many challenges / issues still need to be addressed in order to reduce the large social gap.

Brazil's population of roughly 200 million has a per capital monthly nominal household earning of US\$ 379 and an extreme poverty rate of 2.8%; the population growth rate in 2000-2010 was of 1.17% by year and the fertility rate of 1.6 child.

From an economic point of view, it has a trade balance of US\$ 48 billion, where exports exceed imports by US\$ 47 billion.

In fact, different studies highlight the increase throughout the last twenty years in heavy agriculture, the rise in commodity prices and the long term growth in agricultural productivity. Apparently, hidden behind Brazil's success in reducing poverty and hunger and thus improving education and health care, an opposite trend still remains unanswered (Oxfam, 2005). Despite the fluctuations in the financial and agricultural sectors, today Brazil seems to be the fourth-largest food exporter of soybeans, iron ore, chicken meat and beef and crude petroleum oil. Theoretically this means that it has sufficient productive capacity to meet its internal and external demand (The Voluntary National Review,2016).

However, statistics show how in 2009, about 30% of Brazilian households were categorized as food insecure (Government of Brazil 2019). Of these 66 million people, about 12 million live in extreme poverty and hunger (FAO, 2011).

Therefore, the real concern is not whether Brazil needs to increase its production, but rather its issue of access to food which does not allow the country to overcome the social concern and thus maintain the poverty line below the average. What is often left unconsidered is the internal economic struggle the country is facing. If the production side has to be considered, the country seems divided into “big”, or international, and “small”, or national, agricultural activities.

A closer analysis of the theoretical benefits brought by both sectors shows that on one side the “big”, or international trade, is helping the country to grow internationally as a point of reference for many countries in terms of food supply and natural resources. However, on the other side, it is also damaging small and local farmers, those who seem to be at the heart of government based social policies, not to mention the irreparable environmental damages of a State which has always been the Lung of the Earth. As a consequence, one can question the long term utility of this economic approach. From one point of view, these strategies might secure for Brazil a place in the top ten exporters of natural resources. From another point of view, its utility is questionable when considering the irreparable environmental and social damages it is causing to itself. (The Fight Against Poverty and Hunger in Brazil, Patrus Ananias de Souza, 1997).

2. Historical Patterns

Brazil has a particular story regarding its independence and development. Being the only Portuguese speaking country in South America, the effects brought by many years of colonization, are more evident than elsewhere. 7The Portuguese colonization was based on the exploration and expansion of the new territories for the crown of Portugal. This colonization brought together the oppression of the native populations and more than three centuries of bloody slavery. Analyzing its history, one can understand more about the actual situation: Brazil is dominated by a white elite that enjoys the larger amount of wealth. According to a study made by Oxfam, six Brazilians hold the same amount of wealth as half

of the poorest member of society (100 million people). The same study revealed that the 5% of the richest part of the population has the same income as the other 95 % (Oxfam, 2017).

A relevant historical improvement is represented by the democratic transition which took place during the 1990's. In fact, it has played a significant role in the creation and consolidation of Brazil's public policies. Arguably, during 1960 the country was under a Military Dictatorship, and as a consequence, social policies were not considered a priority. By the end of the century, the military regime gradually disappeared, leaving the floor for a democratic transition towards a liberal regime who reached the edge of consolidation with the election of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, followed by Luis Ignácio Lula da Silva in 2002. In other words, the last thirty years of political control can be divided into three phases: an initial one of military control (1964-1974), a second period of gradual transition (1974-1989) and a final phase in which democracy was fully implemented (1989-2002) (Adriano Nervo Codato, 2006).

The new regime, more socially oriented, succeeded in strengthening public policies and already existing legislation for the protection of human rights, especially those of the children. Together with other States, Brazil ratified in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a protocol which served as a basis for the future convention on the rights of the Child, which would be adopted, thirty years later, by UN General Assembly in 1989 (Law Library of Congress, 2007). This historical development definitely clarifies how, although Brazil signed the 1848 Conference, in that period it was still far away from granting those basic rights. Further improvements were made later on, when, by the end of the 21 first century, the "Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption" and the "International Labor Organization's Convention", instituted the National Program on Cooperation on International Adoption and created the National Council of Brazilian Central Administrative Authorities.

In addition, the new Constitution amended in 1988 represents not only one of the longest in the world, but also a political milestone. The decentralization of power was finally leading to a gradual shift towards social benefits. However, one part of the document still remained as

authoritarian as the previous constitution of 1969, focusing on the importance of military forces and military judicial system (Jorge Zaverucha, 1997).

What constituted the real change, was the recognition, *inter alia*, that health is not only a duty, as mentioned in the previous document, but also a social unalienable right of the family and the society. Within this perspective, it is the State whose main task is to guarantee, with absolute priority, the right to life, health, nourishment, education, professional training, culture dignity, respect, freedom, and community life (Law Library of Congress, 2007).

Ever since the 1988 amendments, Brazil has made significant steps towards liberalization and implementation of public social policies. An example of this was a policy made in 1966 which institutionalized, through the creation of a national program of human rights, the National Secretary of Human Rights which, during Lula's government became an important component to monitor and consolidate social rights and policies.

It must be emphasized, however, that the healthcare reform in Brazil was never at the top of government's agenda, at least, not until recently. During the first part of democratization, there was no direct relationship between the political and organizational innovation within the health care system, nor were these a priority of state reforms. Surely the changes in the reorganization of the public and private sector and the increasing of financial resources were a clear consequence of the ongoing process of decentralization of power and liberalization. However, the intensity of these changes differed greatly from one region to another (Celia Almeida, Claudia Travassos, Silvia Porto, and Maria Eliana Labra, 2000).

What clearly stands out is that throughout the last decade Brazil has lifted around 40 million people out of poverty, with income increase especially for the lower strata of population. This is mainly due to government investment in healthcare, education and poverty reduction, which have helped the country to successfully improve the socio-economic conditions. Statistics show that from the beginning of the 21st century, around 50 million low income families were receiving a financial support from the government's public policies. This phenomena brought about a poverty reduction of 28% in ten years, namely from 2002 until 2012 (The Guardian, 2006). However, the disproportion between rich and poor people is still huge. Furthermore, all the progress made by the last socialist government seems to have been left behind by the current president Michael Temer and his plans on the Government Budget,

which have spent in 2018 three times more money on public debt interest than on Health and Education (Vermelho,2018). This reduction in health, education, science and technology budgets directly impacts the poor Brazilian class. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics over 50 million people (25,4% of the population) are poor and have an income equivalent to R\$387,07 per month or US\$5,5 per day (IGBE, 2017).

Finally, one cannot deny that Brazil is today submerged in a political crisis. As previously mentioned, the president Michael Temer took the power after the doubtful impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. However, President Temer seems to be linked to corruption scandals too. With the forthcoming election,2018 is a fundamental year for the improvement or decline of the political scenario for the coming years.

3. Government' interventions to fight poverty and hunger

Economic development has always been an objective of Brazilian governments. But this development with its ups and down does not necessarily mean it is equally distributed. This is closely linked with other structural problems such as health-care and education.

The literature review suggests that the most popular government program to fight poverty and hunger is the Fome Zero (Zero Hunger). In this program the government's focus is on reduction of hunger and poverty in order to create a spillover effect that would see an improvement in life conditions, such as healthcare and education, so as to stimulate the decrease in violence and corruption. Being a multi-sectored problem, it was necessary to promote an integrated, cross government action. In fact, the first acknowledgment of Zero Hunger was the recognition that poverty reduction, access to quality food and support for small scale agriculture are all inter-connected among them.

Definitely, the program's most successful initiative was "Bolsa Familia".

The social project was proposed by Lula's first government in 2003, as a re-evaluation and improvement of previous social policies. In fact, in 2001, the "Programa Bolsa Escolar" (School Assistance Program) was the first attempt to improve education and health to a municipal level, promoted by the federal government. Its main scope was to support

those families that were in the line of extreme poverty and therefore excluded from social life due to lack of opportunities. Today, the program is part of the bigger project Zero Hunger.

The initiative Bolsa Familia (PBF) is a conditional cash transfer program (CCT) which has been implemented by the federal government in 2003. Its focus is on health and education improvements and it is managed by the Ministry of Social Development and to Combat Hunger (MDS) which is responsible for the eligibility criteria and guarantees payments to families through a unified mechanism (Cadastro Único). The program is addressed to those families who receive less than R\$154.00 per month (US \$40.00) and the amount received directly depends on the size and age of its components.

The program provides R\$85.00 (about US \$20.00) to all families under the previously mentioned budget, provided that certain requirements are met. In fact, in order to take advantage of the PBF the children must be enrolled at school and the parents have to pursue an agenda of basic health care (vaccination and school attendance). Surely, these conditions represent an enforcement method for public health and education goals because those parents who fail to have their children vaccinated are penalized with reduced payments or directly excluded. For what concerns the framework of the project, there are surplus payments included whenever certain circumstances are met, for instance, an additional R\$ 30.00 for nine months is included for every family who has a pregnant woman. Whereas, the age range of 0 to 15 years includes an extra R\$39.00 (US \$10.00) for a maximum of five children. In addition, teenagers of 16 and 17 may enjoy a benefit of R \$46.00 (US \$12.00) only for two children per family. Finally, all children under six months receive R\$39.00 to provide good nutrition. As a result, on average, a traditional family composed by a teenager, a child between 0-15 years and a pregnant mother or a baby under six months, receives each month about R\$200.00 which represents about US \$50.00.

In 2009 the spent budget was around US\$4.95 billions. Further studies have demonstrated the benefits of the program in decreasing hunger since most families have used the cash they received to buy food. However, the subject remains open for discussion if one takes into consideration the quality of the food. In fact, being the third country in terms of income inequality means there is a marked disparity between the price of good quality and low

quality utilities. As a consequence, the buyer is left to decide, or forced by its economic limitations, whether to spend an elevated amount of money for high quality food or safer housing, or alternatively spend less money on low quality food and unsatisfying living conditions, health care and education. This phenomena is key to explaining the critical issues such as obesity and malnutrition, since less privileged families have no choice.

However, overall literature seems to underline the positive benefits brought by PBF. There are several factors which contributed to its success, surely, the main one is the strict collaboration among the State, Municipalities, the Federal District and the inclusion of civil society. In addition, the program was introduced by Lula da Silva's first term of presidency in 2003, and thus its great political commitment has played a crucial role for its implementation. On a lower level, since it is the responsibility of the Municipality to gather data and carry on the Cadastro Unico, and controlling if the required conditions are met, this means there is a good deal of collaboration among the various municipalities and with the Single System for Social Assistance (SUAS). In fact, the SUAS plays a relevant role for the implementation of the Cadastro Único at a local level, such as direct interface with beneficiary families, through its public teams and equipment, especially in the Social Assistance Referral Centers (CRAS) (Jaccoud, 2014).

Statistical evaluation of the improvements made during the decade 2003-2013, showed a marked reduction in the extremely poor population, an increase of 40% in income and a reduction in income inequality confirmed by the decrease in the Gini coefficient from 0.57 in 2001 to 0.54 in 2018 (Methods for the evaluation of the impact of food and nutrition, 1984). Moreover, the data provided by the "Cadastro Unico para Programas do Governo Federal" (Register for Social Programs of the Federal Government) for the period 2004-2010 estimated that the proportion of families that received the benefit increased from 11% to 34%. In 2010, roughly 70% of the families were beneficiaries among the 20% of the poorest people, whereas, when considering household income statistics, about 29% of families were eligible in 2004. However, in 2016 the percentage decrease to 16%, showing the improvement of the social program in reducing poverty.

Ever since the creation of Bolsa Família, periodic interviews to monitor the program's trends have been carried out. Particularly interesting is to consider the years 2005 and 2009 (Paes-Sousa and Vaitsman, 2007, Tapajós and Quiróga, 2010). Both rounds of interviews included beneficiary families of the program, families that were not program's beneficiaries but were included in the Cadastro Único, and families not included in the Cadastro Único, but with a profile that matched that of registered families. In total, the evaluation interviewed 15,426 families in 269 municipalities and 23 states. The reason to conduct two evaluation rounds was to determine if there had been changes in the living conditions of the beneficiaries and whether those changes could be attributed exclusively to Bolsa Família. The results of the 36 evaluations, for the most part, involved improvement conditions of the program related to health and education.

The comparison between the results in 2005 and 2009 showed significant positive changes in the lives of the families interviewed.

For what is more, child vaccination coverage greatly improved according to the comparison between the two evaluations. Although the vaccination level was high in both periods studied, beneficiary families had higher levels than non-beneficiary families.

Participation in Bolsa Família also had a positive impact on the education of children and youths. School attendance among children 6 to 17 years of age from beneficiary families was 4.4 percentage points higher than that of children in non-beneficiary families. In the Northeast region, attendance was 11.7 % higher for children from beneficiary families. In addition, promotion from one grade to the next among children 6-17 years of age was 6 % higher in beneficiary families than in non-beneficiary families. The impact was greater among girls of 15 and 17 years of age (Aline Gazola Hellmann, 2015).

As already pointed out, the Ministry for Social Development to Combat Hunger (MDS), is responsible for determining the quality of information of registries, established that "the awarding of the benefits of Bolsa Família is of a temporary nature and does not generate a required right, making it necessary to review the eligibility of families to receive these benefits every two years."

In 2011, Bolsa Família was integrated with the Brazil Without Poverty Plan (PBM), this plan adds various programs to combat poverty. It is organized along three axes: an income

guarantee; access to public services, especially in the areas of education, health, social assistance, sanitation, electricity and energy. Considerably, the program granted a surplus to the Bolsa Família budget so as to extend the coverage to more families. In December 2014, for example, Bolsa Família benefited 14 million families that received an average amount of R\$ 169.03. According to the MDS, more than R\$ 2 billion in benefits was transferred by the federal government to beneficiary families.

For its great improvements, Bolsa Família was cited in 2014 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as one of the main strategies adopted by Brazil that resulted in overcoming hunger, and the consequent exclusion of the country from the world hunger map. In the same year, Brazil won the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Social Security given by the International Social Security Institute as a result of its innovative efforts under this program to reduce poverty. (FAO,2014)

So, from an overall perspective, Bolsa Família has been effective in both increasing school attendance and decreasing dropout rates, as other CCTs tried to do in previous years. However, the decrease in dropouts has had an unfortunate side effect: it has led to more children lagging behind in school. Such findings confirm that the program, as a demand-side intervention, is not able, on its own, to have a positive impact on certain education outcomes. Namely, the program does not necessarily enable disadvantaged children to break the inter-generational transmission of poverty in educational policies. So, on one hand, school attendance might have increased, but on the other hand, the performance of such children did not improve. This problem underscores the need to better organize the educational quality or provide special attention for underachieving children. Moreover, according to the AIBF survey, a substantial number of poor children (23-25 percent) have failed to show their vaccination cards. That is, they have probably not attended health centers. In addition, beneficiary children are no more likely than non beneficiary children to have their vaccination card updated (Fábio Veras Soares, Rafael Perez Ribas and Rafael Guerreiro Osório, 2018).

Finally, it is important to underline the evaluation made by several scholars and journalists, whose skepticism was motivated by the dependence that those aid programs might create.

Many believe that granting a fix surplus income does not empower families to engage in school education and job training, rather it creates a condition of addiction which does not allow the poorest to come out of extreme poverty conditions.

However, opposite views argue that, the real problem lies in the fact that poverty is just a consequence of a random lack of opportunities which hits most Brazilian families. As a consequence, these social redistributive programs have the scope to grant what should and does constitute a pure right under the Constitution (Join LiveJournal).

From a legislative point of view, many international initiatives enabled the country to implement several Conventions into the domestic realm. In addition, the Joint Parliamentary Front to Support the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was created in December 2016. This nonpartisan action brings together more than 200 house representatives and senators, and was structured to address the demands arising from this theme. Among other objectives, the Front has consolidated joint action in favor of SDGs focused policies, to foster the regulation and discussion of laws to encourage sustainable development.

As previously mentioned, an important step towards raising awareness about global concerns is represented by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). They are the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), which took place in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro. These targets launched a process to develop a set of goals, built upon the Millennium Development Goals set out in the Paris Conference in 2000, where Member States engaged themselves to fight eight global challenges by the end of 2015. However, the failure to accomplish the goals was due partly to a lack of power in the national legislation and institutions to monitor and promote their implementation. When the Rio Conference was settled, a new wave of optimism spread among Member States and Civil Society.

The Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals, published a review in order to introduce the 2030 Agenda. To this regard, the Brazilian government adopted a participatory model trying to address social and environmental responsibility by restoring order in public finance so that the State could fulfill a role of efficiency to provide basic services and to ensure sustainable means of production, to maintain and eventually improve the necessary income transfer and housing programs.

The 2030 Agenda should represent an opportunity for Brazilian Government and NGOs to strengthen priorities and optimize strategies towards action and public policies that promote an inclusive and sustained development model. The Multi-Year Plan (PPA) is the main instrument for medium term planning of government actions. Provided for the 1988 Federal Constitution, the PPA is composed of the program's goals, targets and initiatives and includes public administration guidelines for a four years period. To internalize the goals, experts made a comparison between the SDGs and the attributes established in the 2016-2019 PPA, so as to identify the congruence between the targeted Goals and the Federal Government planning instrument. For this to be done, a database was created allowing to relate each SDGs to one or more attributes of the PPA. The analysis shows that public policies in the 2016-2019 period, promoted by the PPA cover a large part of the targets and indicators proposed by the 2030 Agenda, almost 90% of the targets are in convergence of purpose with the attributes of the current PPA. This shows the positive governmental activity in addressing critical issues and organizing social initiatives in order to eradicate Brazil from poverty and income inequalities.

The main initiatives for the achievement of the SDG rely on the participation of both Government Agency and Civil Society.

In order to mobilize and engage the Brazilian society, many networks have been created. These means of information are intended to broaden, democratize and enhance the debate on the SDGs; they serve as a platform to propose effective means, and discuss the improvements or obstacles which can both delay or improve the process of implementation. Among the main networks, fora , social movements and political coalitions, it is worth mentioning the Civil Society Working Group, the SDG Statelty, SDG Brazil Network, and the Nos Podemos (We Can) National SDGs Movement.

Considering the international framework, there are plenty of actions taken by the government itself, and supported by international agencies whose aim is to monitor the continuous progress and keep the country motivated to improve its standards. Whereas, from a national point of view the Zero Hunger Program is the main ongoing project. This network of government social initiatives includes several programs concerning different levels of public

policies. As a consequence, this program worked in parallel with other social projects which have succeeded to reduce social inequalities and operated throughout Juan Inácio Lula da Silva presidency, and continued with President Dilma Rouseff, until 2016 when she was doubtfully impeached due to the Petrobras scandal.

Some examples worth mentioning are the Brazilian Program for the “Eradication of Child Labor” (Programa para a Erradicacao do Trabalho Infantil, PETI), whose aim is to eradicate children under 16 years old from illegal work. Another important initiative is the Fundamental Education Development Fund (*Fundo de Desenvolvimento do Ensino Fundamental*, FUNDEF, 1996) to improve equity in funding of the education system. Initially focused on primary and lower secondary education, the FUNDEF was reformed in 2006 through the Basic Education Maintenance and Development Fund (*Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica*, FUNDEB) to include early childhood education and upper secondary education. In 2007, FUNDEB introduced different spending floors based on specific student populations, such as indigenous communities, youth and adult education. Conditional cash transfers were expanded to cover 15-17 year-old students with the aim of further encouraging participation in upper secondary education. FUNDEB also increased its funding by 25% to support the full-day schooling initiative. Spending was increased from 15% to 20% of total revenues from the State and municipalities. In addition, both FUNDEF and FUNDEB led to the development and implementation of a census of students and schools to gather and consolidate information.

Moreover, the National School Meal Programme (PNAE) provides school meals in rural areas, and the National Programme of Support to School Transportation (PNATE, 2009) provides funding to states and municipalities for transportation of students in rural areas.

In addition, Brazil has implemented the National Pact for Strengthening of Secondary Education (Pacto Nacional pelo Fortalecimento do Ensino Médio, 2013) and the Innovative Secondary Education Programme in 2009 (Programa Ensino Médio Inovado), a strategy to redesign the upper secondary education system. The National Vocational Education and Employment Program (Programa Nacional de Acesso ao Ensino Técnico e Emprego, Pronatec, 2011) aims to consolidate various national VET initiatives, such as increasing the

supply of VET courses in upper secondary education and for workers, and providing training grants (Bolsa- Formação Pronatec). According to national statistics, more than 8 million Brazilians took technical courses and Initial and Continuing Education (FIC) from 2011-14. Finally, the National Agenda on Decent Work for Youth (Agenda Nacional de Trabalho Decente para a Juventude, 2011) aims to support, coordinate and monitor both working and internship opportunities for university students (Education OECD, 2015).

So to conclude, there is a great deal of public policies and government activity which supported the creation of social organizations. Most of these were promoted during the last decade, especially from the beginning of the 21st century, when dictatorship ceased to exist. What immediately stands out is a concentrated proliferation, during the last twenty years, of government programs enclosed in a single project which works in collaboration with International NGO's, such as the FAO, the World Bank Group, and the International Labour Organization. Of equal importance is the global commitment which arose in the last fifty years, promoted by the United Nation's Conventions and further multilateral treaties.

On one hand, it is true that, the various international aids do represent an important support for financing and monitoring; however, on the other hand, one cannot deny the significant contribution which comes from regional and national non-profit organization, especially in activating awareness and promoting social consciousness not only in the country itself, but also in the whole world.

So to conclude, it can be said that, despite an initial phase of highs and lows in the consolidation of the Social State, Brazil has made great strides in the past few years.

Chapter Two: Regional Social Programs

This chapter will introduce the main regional and national initiatives throughout the last twenty years. To do so, special attention will be given to the Law enacted in 1999 by the Federal Government to strengthen the partnership between State and Civil Society. Subsequently, it will present the role played by the Civil Society during the 1980s, to spread awareness and promote projects which became NGO's and social agencies in the 20th century.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning some International Conventions whose outcomes were definitive in outlining the criticality of issues concerning human rights. In this regard, special attention will be given to children's rights in less privileged areas where income inequalities do not allow to the poorest to access quality education. Finally, the paper will address the current challenges faced by NGOs so to asses some potential solutions.

1. The Effects of the Non Profit Law on Civil Society

Between the years 1995 and 2000, the federal Government decided to take the lead in a process to consolidate a new legal framework for non-profit organizations. This change was meant to give the possibility to organizations, to formulate and execute public policies in a innovative way, so as to enforce the partnership between the State and the Civil Society. As a result of this process, on 24th March 1999, the President of the Republic Cardoso, passed Law No.979/99, known as the Nonprofit Law, which established the legal concept of public Interested Civil Associations (OSCIPs).

During the following years, contrary to what might be expected, the new institutional mechanism was unable to triple the expected adhesion. As a consequence, the government took further initiative to promote a legislation more attractive to nonprofit organizations, passing the Provisional Measures No.2143-33, and No, 2113-32 in 2001. Evidently, there was a problem on the basis of the mechanism which was not favoring the spread of non-governmental activity. The main aim of the Law Nonprofit was to facilitate partnership with the public power, by means of criteria that were more closely related with the verification of the organization's effectiveness and efficiency.

Moreover, to foster partnership with OSCIPs, the Law established the Letter of Partnership, a transparent and democratic instrument to encourage nonprofit organization activities and projects.

Once the mechanism introduced by the Nonprofit Law began to spread, the role of NGO's gradually consolidated until reaching standards of democracy and transparency. Surely, this played a crucial role to engage civil society and regional municipalities.

However, it has been assessed that the degree of commitment differs from place to place. There are, in fact, some States whose activism is greater than others. This is strictly connected to the socio-economic and geo-political conditions every region is characterized by. Despite the several corruption scandals which still today characterize the political scenario, civil society activists have exploded in Brazil as democratization has progressed over the last thirty years. Among the factors that led to this shift, surely the strengthening of the Integrity System, the middle class growing activism and the increasingly efficient federal public servants, all contributed to its consolidation. However, this process is less apparent at State and municipal level. Notably, the framework for National Integrity System started with the 1988 Constitution amendments, whose main goals were to grant expanding social control over state action.

From a Constitutional point of view, government bodies' actions are improving in terms of legitimacy. This can be seen by giving a look to the new legislation concerning fiscal responsibility act and anti-corruption bills. Investigations like "Car Wash" surely contributed to the strengthening of the system being a positive sign for a better public management of practices, even though the investigation involved Brazil's largest state oil company "Petrobras", and politicians of the Workers' Party. Allegations included bribing companies and many officials, including Brazil's former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. This surely provoked a strong reaction of disillusionment from the electorate (Leia Wang, 2016).

In addition, the improvement in public policies and decision-making has also been affected by pressures from a more active civil society, represented by NGOs, Advocacy Groups, and Public Policies Research Institutions. Those groups, who work in collaboration with the media, know how to deal with bureaucracy and have close academic contacts, both in Brazil

and abroad. According to a study by IBGE (*Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics*), there were 291 thousand non-profit organizations in Brazil, most of them dedicated to social issues. Of these, roughly 55 thousand were looking into public policies in Health, Education, Research and Social Welfare. Moreover, the political involvement of the middle-class is getting more professional, aiming to influence regulatory acts and formulation of public policy. The efficiency in using technology, such as social media is important in bonding with public policy formulators (Riccardo Sennes, 2017). However, this aspect will be later discussed when dealing with the challenges of today's NGOs.

To conclude, it is important to say that organizational fields (Scott&Meyer,1991) as noted by Misoczky (2001), are not neutral institutions which simply appear and lend legitimacy to a specific public. Organizations are power fields (Bourdieu,1996) with different and asymmetric dispositions of power over other actors in the same field (Bourdieu,1996). To this regard, it is hardly common they manage to survive counting only on their personal efforts. What is important to point out, is the contribution given by the international framework to consolidate the State's actions to fight the most relevant global concerns. Even though the problem might seem very severe in less developed countries, such as Brazil, Africa and Asia, many international conventions succeeded in engaging the whole international community to help face a problem which seems to threaten some countries more than others, but would have devastating consequences for the whole world. To this purpose, it is important to see which are the main international conventions who succeeded in raising awareness and unified the main players into one big team of action.

2. The main Obstacle for Education' development

Probably, the most universally accepted instrument is the United National Convention on Human Rights, promoted in 1989 and ratified by 193 countries. In Brazil the project has been developed in partnership with the National Campaign for the Right to Education, a civil society network that has been active since 1999 for the implementation of the Constitutional Right to Education.

According to the report "Situação da Infância e da Adolescência em Brasil", 2009 (The State of Children and Adolescents in Brazil, 2009), school exclusion is a deep rooted phenomenon.

Unfortunately, the State, while trying to fulfill its Constitutional duty, cannot succeed on its own. It is necessary, therefore, to have participation and commitment of the entire society. This explains why the project has involved public managers of three governmental levels, more social policies, several local institutional arrangements and the agencies of the United Nations.

In 2001, a special Working Group was created for the implementation project to be carried out. To this regard, the Group collaborated with representatives of the Secretariat of Human Rights (SDH), UNESCO, the Ministry of Education (MEC), the Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Researchers (INEP), the National Union of Municipal Heads of Education (UNDIME) and the National Council of Secretaries of Education (CONSED), with the aim of deepening the multidisciplinary and inter-institutional nature of the phenomena of school exclusion. According to the UNESCO Convention (1960) any exclusion or limitation of educational opportunities shall be eliminated. This is one of the main barriers that children face when trying to access to quality education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

Inclusive education is not a simple matter. Statistical indicators show that the most vulnerable group are the Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous population living in rural areas and coming from low-income families.

For what concerns racial inequalities, almost 20% of the Afro-Brazilian children from 4 to 6 years old are not attending school, compared to the 17 % of white children. But the strongest inequalities are found when comparing the location. While 16% of the children from 4 to 6 years old are out of school in the urban areas, in the rural zones the numbers reach 26%. When we consider income inequalities, the disparity even goes further. More generally, the data gathered by PNAD 2009, outlined that 375.177 children between 6 to 10 years old are out of school and this number corresponds to 2.3% of the total children in this age range. More shocking is the fact that 0.9% of these children are already working.

Among the adolescents aged 15 to 17, roughly 15% are out of school. As before, most of these teenagers have Afro-Brazilian origins.

Studies revealed that the main socio-cultural barrier is the practice of racial discrimination, such as humiliation and aggression. This is relevant when considering school attendance or in the worst of cases, school evasion and drop-out. Equally alarming is the situation related to

pregnancy during adolescence. To this regard, the INEP researcher Carlos Eduardo Moreno Sapaio, conducted a study on the educational situation of the Brazilian youth in the age group of 15 to 17 years old, who based its analysis on the data of the PNAD 2005. According to the gathered data, 1.6% of girls students within the age group 15 to 17 are mothers, and almost 30 % are mothers among the adolescents who are out of school. This, clearly explains the link between dropping out of school and premature pregnancy.

Furthermore, another factor which highly pushes children to leave studies early is the violence which comes from conflicts among factions of drug dealers. Accord to the research *Violence e Desempenho Escolar: Evidencias do conflictos entre Traficantes de Drogas no Rio de Janeiro*, in the last decade, the schools nearest the favelas have experienced a decrease in school attendance when compared to the schools located int he center of the city.

There are still numerous barriers linked to the provision of education, which are a key explanation for low standards in school attendance. Basic examples are the lack of transportation, the inadequate infrastructure, the low qualification of teachers and problems linked to violence and child exploitation. From this point of view, it can be affirmed that International Aids Programs have failed to address these needs, and it is thus under the responsibility of regional initiatives to emerge from within society and demonstrate which instruments and methods are needed to improve the situation.

3. Regional and International Initiatives to promote Social Programs

Notably, in the last thirty years Brazil seems to have reinforced its network of IGO's, thanks to the synergy between several community actors whose actions are reflected in regional cooperation agreements with several entities. Moreover, several polices and programs are currently in execution to overcome these barriers.

For instance, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) is a global network of more than 8.500 educational institutions in 180 countries. This partnership does not only legitimize UNESCO's action, but also permits than to deal with sensitive themes in a more effective and broader way. This is of fundamental importance when considering the enormous Brazilian territory and the regional differences. Also, together with the government and civil society, UNESCO has cultivated a close relationship with the private sector in activities such

as literacy programs, and in implementing environmental actions. These institutions frequently provide resources, experiences, and knowledge that generate important results for the social development of the country.

Moreover, the UN system agencies represent an international organism which operates in close partnership with other entities. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) can be quoted as an important example of this initiative. It was created to maximize the efforts of the agencies in order to reach universal objectives, fight the main global challenges focusing on the issue of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice (About the Sustainable Development Goals - United Nations Sustainable Development).

Statistics show that Brazil has almost 2,000 NGO's associated with the protection of the environment, education, racial discrimination, community development and gender issues. (Developments in Latin American Political Economy: States, Markets and Actors, 2006).

There are plenty of initiatives spread around Brazil, so as to have a general outlook the main one will be presented according to its given contribution to one of the main social problems outlined earlier.

Concerning education, in order to combat the presence of racial discrimination, the civil society has made an important contribution. Among their actions, there is the Educar Prize for Racial Equality, created in 2002 and promoted by the Center of Studies of Work Relations and Inequalities (CEERT).

A similar initiative is the "Camping For a Childhood Free from Racism" undertaken by UNICEF in partnership with the SEPPIR. It seeks to mobilize civil society for the need of securing ethnical-racial inclusion.

On this topic, the project Education and Social Relations, promoted by the organization "Ação Educativa" with the support of the European Union, has the goal of developing a methodology to promote racial equality in schools, with the participation of educators, students and communities, favoring the transformation of the curriculum and of the schools' policies.

For what concerns indigenous education, the "Secretariat of Continuous Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion" of the Ministry of Education, is developing several initiatives to

improve the quality and the inclusion of indigenous people. Among these, it is worth mentioning the “Quilombola Education Program” which has provided since 2006 technical and financial support to State and municipal projects but also training teachers and other basic professionals as well as the construction and distribution of didactical material.

Also important on a regional level, is the National Programme for Rural Education (*Programa Nacional de Educação do Campo*), whose aim is to provide technical and financial support through multiple policy actions in Brazil’s rural areas. These include training teachers in rural areas, provide learning materials, and adequate infrastructure.

Moreover, according to the “ngolist”, there are several Non governmental organization which actively operate in a cross-cultural way in the fields of education and healthcare. The website presents an accurate list of the main non-profit organizations located in the outskirts of the most developed cities like San Paolo and Rio de Janeiro, known as Favelas, whose main scope is to reduce violence, promoting school attendance and civil inclusion. One of them, is the “Associação Comunitária Monte Azul”, which is active among three Favelas in the southern part of San Paolo. The first Núcleo Monte Azul was founded in 1979 by a German Teacher, Ute Craemer, collaborating with the residents of the Favela Monte Azul. Thereafter, in 1983, another Núcleo was open in the Favela Peinha and in Blue Horizon, all based in the southern edge of the city of Sao Paulo.

The main task of the organization is to promote Development Cooperation. In fact, the main areas of work are slum renovation, health care and environmental conservation. The Associação Comunitária Monte Azul today has more than 260 employees and receives around 70 foreign volunteers per year. The Monte Azul organization has successfully inspired similar social projects based on Development Aid, such as the street theatre group “Paidéia”, the cultural and social centre Aramitán in São Paulo, or the NGO Associação Comunitária de Barra de Lama.

All these associations have many common traits, but one of them, clearly stands out. Their methodological approach supports the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, known as Waldorf Pedagogy. This anthropomorphic approach emphasizes the importance of imagination and creativity while learning, so as to combine practical, intellectual and artistic skills of pupils.

Another important entity registered as social organization is the “SER Alzira de Aleluia”, a non-governmental organization located in a shanty community in Rio de Janeiro. SER’s mission works alongside the community of Vidigal, promoting moral values and educating its members to improve good citizenship and providing professional and educational training to enter the employment market, as well as promoting spaces of reflection, tolerance independence and empowerment. The motto SER signifies “educate to begin anew” and since 2003, thanks to its founder Antonio de Aleluia, the organization has fought to overcome critical issues due to the lack of opportunities which unfortunately, Brazil is characterized by. The main activities, which are free of charge, are carried out by a social committee who coordinates groups of volunteers who carry out on activities to teach mathematics, Portuguese and English, geography, football, volleyball and ballet, as well as psychological counseling sessions and family support groups.

For what concerns the phenomena of street children, the “Project Favela” , located in Rocinha, probably the largest favela in Rio De Janeiro, has the main scope to remove children from the street and monitor their progress in decreasing violence attitudes through an organized network of volunteers that help provide education teaching subjects like English, science, art, maths, geography, engineering, and demonstrating that, despite the violence which characterizes these areas, this population is always ready to accept external help to overcome the problem of lack of opportunities.

Also, “Mais Caminhos” (My Path) is a non-government organization focused on addressing the social inequalities that affect the lives of Brazilians every day. It was founded in 2009, striving to promote education and maximizing the potential of underprivileged children and teens from Rio de Janeiro’s Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cantagalo communities.

Finally, dealing with the issue of healthcare, the Dental and Medical Care program, located in a small city called Aquiraz in the state of Ceará, hosts volunteers who attend private health clinics for children and adults in those areas which have restricted access to adequate medical attention due to limited supplies and few medical professionals. Many of the procedures will be surgical and there are volunteering opportunities for individuals and teams. Also, those

who are interested but don't have a medical background can still apply to assist the dentist or doctor. This surely represents a training opportunity for both local and foreign students.

More recently, in October 2016, a new initiative called “the Happy Children Program” was established and included in the institutional arrangement of the National Policy for Social Assistance. The Program seeks to promote comprehensive development of children in early childhood, considering their families and contexts. The strategy aims to stop the vicious circle in which malnutrition and poverty affect early childhood and jeopardize the future of generations, limiting the opportunities of a large share of the population.

Among the objectives of the Happy Children Program, one points out the strengthening of family and community ties. So far, 2.547 Municipalities have joined the Program, which aims to include about four million children by the end of 2018.

Another relevant initiative was the creation of the Cross-sector Committee on Public Policies for Early Childhood, in March 2017. It aims to coordinate the actions for the protection and promotion children's rights during early childhood.

The Home Renovation Card Program, for example, grants subsidies for the purchase of building materials and technical assistance of civil construction professionals to beneficiary families, enabling renovation, expansion or conclusion of housing units. An initial investment of R\$ 1 billion (US\$ 313.83 million), covering 170 thousand people, was expected for 2017. It is worth noting that the program assists families not included in the “Minha Casa, Minha Vida Program” (My home, My Life), which has ordered over 4.5 million housing units and delivered more than 3.2 million units, benefiting approximately 13 million people by December 31st, 2016. The investments, in the order of R\$ 332 billion (US\$ 104 billion), have had a strong impact on the country's economy in terms of income generation and direct and indirect jobs. In 2017, the goal was to order 600 thousand units. In addition, one can highlight the establishment of the National Rural Housing Program, targeted at family farmers and rural workers.

These are just some examples of regional and national initiative to support the needy. There are even more or rather even too many social projects spread all over the nation. The elevated number of initiatives it is not necessary a positive aspect. The system of social assistance seems to be extremely fragmented and disorganizes. This does not permit the proper

consolidation of their activities. The next section will therefore introduce which are the main challenges today's NGO face and how these can obstacles can be eliminated in order to achieve greater results.

4. Main Challenges and Potential Solution for the success of an NGO

Even though important steps have been made for the consolidation of NGO's activities and State participation, still today, there are several critical issues which unable the total consolidation or either cause the failure of many nonprofit organizations.

First of all, the most common problem is the limited access to funds. Many NGOs find it difficult to gather sufficient and continuous fixed funding for their activities. Gaining access to appropriate donors is a major component of this challenge. They may have limited resources and limited mobilization skills. A common phenomenon is when current donors shift priorities and withdraw funding, due to the inability of the NGO to carry out a framed project. This is linked with the second obstacle: the absence of a strategic planning procedure. Notably, many NGOs suffer from the lack of a cohesive, strategic plan that would facilitate success in their activities and mission. This renders them unable to effectively raise and capitalize on financial support.

Secondly, the lack of effective governance and the absence of working network channels can be decisive for the failure of an NGO. In fact, a poor or disorganized network can cause time inefficiencies, conflicting strategies and the inability to learn from experience. The more NGOs communicate among one another and with the community, the more effective they all can be. However, many NGOs perceive INGOs as hindering or even threatening their goals and missions and so prefer to work isolated counting only on their personal efforts and resources.

Moreover, many NGOs do not maximize the use of current technologies that could facilitate better communication and networking. More effective use of technology can assist NGOs in staying abreast of important regional, national and global concerns, sometimes, this can be due to the limited available capacity.

Finally, many NGOs often lack the technical and organizational capacity to implement and fulfill their mission, and few are willing or able to invest in training for capacity building.

Weak capacity affects fund-raising abilities, good governance, and undermines the figure of leadership and technicians.

What stands out is that this set of challenges are interconnected, consequently, one problem can often trigger others, making the organization totally inefficient. However, from the same perspective, a targeted action and a strategic plan can assess the solution to most of the issues. For instance, in order to receive a funding grant, any NGO should allocate the opportunities, this means it has to find an appropriate grant and funder for their focus and mission, and keep it motivated and emotionally attached to the NGO's mission.

In addition, technical expertise should be able to answer all criteria and provide all of the information the donor requires. An important step is the process of application for funding. In this moment, the proposal must be well-written and error-free. Most importantly, it must contain all of the necessary elements to show the donor that the NGO has a strategy and high-quality team members.

For what concerns the problems of poor governance, lack of strategic planning, and poor networking, these can all be addressed by improving the capacity building within the NGOs. In fact, a trained and cultivated staff can provide the necessary skills to address challenges and attract donors or volunteers. It is the access to qualified experts that inspires confidence in donors and contributes to the project's success.

Moreover, any respectable NGO should take care of the information, communication and technology' sector. The real difference can be made in an organized web-site. This might allow them to raise the public profile and gain international awareness. There are many valuable examples of non profit associations which, thanks to a targeted network, manage to attract volunteers from everywhere to join their community and work together with core values such as religious tolerance, gratefulness for life and an infinite sense of recognition for just the minimum benefit obtained by these initiatives.

Finally, what can really make a difference in income generation, is the capacity to use any surplus to generate further income. Notably, renting buildings, offering training, providing consultancy, creating and selling products during events.

To sum up what has been said until now, one can affirm that NGOs are a relevant component both in the Brazilian domestic sector and in the international framework. Ever since the creation of a Social State, a growing collaboration among State agencies, civil societies and

International Organizations have surely contributed to improve their efficiency and legitimacy, and this can be seen in the various analysis' made up until now which proved the achievements made in reducing income inequality and poverty rates.

On one hand, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have moved from backstage to center stage in world politics, and are exerting their power and influence in every aspect of international relations and policymaking.

On the other hand, NGOs have been a positive force, working to alleviate poverty, protect human rights, preserve the environment, and provide relief worldwide.

Few, therefore, have felt the need to take a critical look at the effectiveness and accountability of these organizations (James McGann and Mary Johnstone, 2006). However, as the NGO sector grows, it is also facing a new array of organizational challenges that it must address, such as the growing demand for information, analysis, and action; the globalization of NGO funding; the paralysis and poor performance of the public sector; and the efforts to increase transparency. The combination of all these factors are key points for the credibility and legitimacy of an NGO.

To conclude, it is worth restating how important the role played by NGOs is in coordinating, collaborating and bridging the communication between the government, private sector and local inhabitants towards a concerted effort. This communication enables issues to be raised as well as community voices to be heard by the government for intervention in building support in the development project purposes. Regarding this, it has been repeatedly proved that NGOs are often much more effective than governments in monitoring and promoting the governance reform process (Tolondü Toichubaev).

Until now, we have analyzed the effects and conditions under which the non-governmental sector has developed in Brazil, together with some examples of social initiatives which both operate within a regional and international framework. However, everything that has been said until now, only takes reference from literary reviews. Therefore, in order to provide a wider perspective, it is necessary to present my internship experience as a volunteer in a local NGO, whose project is focused on a community in the city of Fortaleza, in north-east Brazil. Thanks to this experience I have acquired sufficient knowledge to evaluate the effects and the impact this social project has had on the lives of the inhabitants of the Serviluz Community.

3. Chapter Three: My Internship within a local NGO

The motives and origins of my research are strictly tied to one of the most important experiences I have ever done in my life. For two months my life drastically changed and gradually adapted to those of the people I worked with. When I came back home I felt a change within myself from a moral point of view. The things I had always taken for granted were now seen in a different way; I understood how important values such as love, tolerance and dedication to a common purpose are; how these goals can be better attained with the support of a family, close friends. Most of all, I learned to appreciate every single moment in its simplicity, and finally not to give up when facing a problem but rather to find an alternative strategy in order to overcome it.

Once I came back in Italy I found my self a stranger in those common situations which constituted my daily life before leaving for Brazil. Gradually I managed to adapt myself into those daily situations, but there is always a sense of lack and discomfort which makes me question my daily life and future goals. I could not find a way to bridge the gap I was feeling, so I decided to dedicate my thesis to commemorate this experience with the hope to be an inspiration to those students who would like to address their studies in the field of Political Science for the Cooperation and Development.

This chapter will firstly introduce the contextual framework where I lived for two months, considering some statistics about violence and the main social obstacles to development in the city of Fortaleza; than I will present the NGO I worked for, namely, its structure, the people who worked with me and the activities it organizes with the children; finally I will evaluate the impact it has on its community's members and assess some suggestion in order to improve its work and help overcome the challenges it is still facing today. In this regard, one has to specify that the project is not open to everybody, not because it aims to be an exclusive organization, rather because their strategy is to begin in a small area, consolidate itself and then spread to other areas of the city. Only in this way are there higher possibilities to reach greater achievements.

1. Contextual Framework of Fortaleza

Brazil is a country that I was already familiar with. Before doing the volunteer experience I had lived for six months in San Paolo for an exchange program. On this occasion, I took the opportunity to visit places which definitely gave me a wider perspective about Brazil's social, political and environmental situation. In fact, most countries in Latin America have suffered the effects of Colonialism and lately dictatorial governments. These events, together with the recent economic crisis are the main causes for the huge gap between rich and poor people. Nonetheless, traveling around the country, I had the possibility to see, not only its vast nature, but also the humbleness of its people and their diversity in custom and traditions according to every state.

I spent two months in the city of Fortaleza, state of Ceará, Brazil, as a volunteer sent by the nongovernmental organization AIESEC (International Association of Students in Economics and Management). Its sphere of action is dedicated exclusively to university students. In fact, the project's aim is to recruit and to place them in an internship in different NGOs spread all over the world in order to help drive positive changes, empower young people to develop a leadership attitude and have a worthwhile experience.

According to a study made in 2017 by UNICEF, the government of Ceará and the legislative assembly, conducted an analysis to estimate the amount of adolescents murdered in Fortaleza. It found out that, the majority of the cases concerned black males of 17 years old who lived in the poorest neighborhoods (favelas) of the city. It is interesting to highlight that "The majority of the families that were part of the research, in Fortaleza and other six municipalities of the State of Ceará, are beneficiaries of the program "Bolsa Familia" (68,7%). (Trajetorias Interrompidas, 2017). In these communities, public services are scarce, ineffective and often non-existent, and as a consequence the circulation of arms and drugs is a common phenomenon.

Moreover, factors such as teenage pregnancy, drug consumption, structural precariousness of homes and low levels of schooling are the main causes of the issue of social exclusion that many Brazilian families are afflicted by. Violence and crime in Brazil and in the specific case

of Fortaleza is a very complex problem that involves the government, the police and people from different social classes. Drug trafficking has fertile ground to develop in the poorest regions of the cities, the favelas, where the Brazilian State seems to be missing. Lack of opportunities, together with the need of a source of income to overcome difficulties, is the perfect combination for crime and drug dealing. It is exactly this socio-political scenario that encourages local people to work and fight against this social scourge. For me it was a pleasure to be part of one institution that is fighting against social exclusion and every day is trying to drive the change in a positive way and is empowering people to overcome this critical issue.

2. Instituto Povo do Mar : the internal structure and main objectives

The place where I worked from March until May 2018, and from which I took inspiration for my research, is a Non-profit organization called Instituto Povo do Mar (IPOM) which was founded in 2010 by four friends united by the passion for surf. As mentioned above, the project's origins lie behind the high percentage of violence and murders in the Favela of Serviluz, the effects of which would have been devastating for future generations. The main scope was to trigger a drastic change in the adverse reality the children of the community were facing, and this was done by consolidating a space, not only to develop their abilities and capacities, but also to remove these children from the streets where they are easily targeted for violence and drug trafficking. In fact, in most Brazilian's families, in which there is an average of three children per family, both parents are workers, which means that the children are left home alone for half of the day since school attendance is either in the morning or in the evening.

To help transform the lives of the children, IPOM has as its main motto: "eu acredito que o amor transforma vidas" (I believe that love transforms lives). Love is the essence on which the education of the institution is based and this is something I immediately realized when looking at the educators' attitudes while conducting their activities.

The project promotes a set of socio-educational actions offering an alternative method of education which aims to stimulate inner feelings of the child, with the final scope to educate them to being good citizens. In fact, the main values which the Institution promotes are

humanity, love, respect and altruism. These values are cultivated through a process of personal transformation between the educator, the educated, and the whole community.

What differentiates IPOM from other institutions is definitely the educational approach.

The methodology is based on the theory of the famous Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire known as Liberating Education (*Educação libertadora*, Freire 1987). Apart from the aforementioned values the institution promotes, IPOM aims to develop in their students a critical way of thinking that will break down social barriers imposed by a hierarchical and elitist society. In this way, pupils will feel more empowered in their life choices, and will have more awareness about their role within society. In a country where social inequalities are so marked, it is fundamental for them to comprehend that they are individuals in this world, and not predestined to a certain kind of life, just because they were born in a poor area. With love, respect and dedication to their passions, they can overcome any adverse situation and choose how to address their life.

The structure of the Instituto Povo do Mar is conformed by a President who has a lot of influence and business in Fortaleza and consequently many contacts with other entities. The administrative staff, founders and exclusive professionals are in charge of the bureaucratic work as well as marketing, public relations, attracting funds and finding links and partnerships with other institutions and NGO's. Additionally, there are Educators who are residents and non-residents of the community, who do not necessarily hold a university degree but, exclusively rely on their personal experience. There are also the cleaning and kitchen personnel, who provided the staff with two meals per day. These moments were extremely important for me when integrating myself. Lunch time was the moment in which we gathered together to discuss about daily challenges, and the main worries, but most of all, where we shared the main meal of the day with gratefulness and happiness.

Finally but most importantly, there are the pupils.

The project targets children from 5 to 17 years old and has recently included professional courses for adolescents from 15 to 30 years old. In total, there were roughly 200 students divided into the morning group and the evening group. There were subsequently divided into four subgroups whose activities rotated every hour and half starting from 8am until 1pm and

from 2pm until 7pm. In order to participate in the activities, the student has to be enrolled in school and regularly attend it. In this way, the children have a full day composed of morning lessons at school and evening recreational activities at IPOM, or vice versa.

The education program is different for the two age ranges.

On one hand, younger children from 5 to 17, attend courses such as Visual Arts (arts, crafts and graffiti); Digital Science (computer science); Wide Open Minds (English course); Environmental Responsibility; Speaking Groups (psychology and pedagogy); and finally Sport activities (capoeira, volleyball, basketball and most of all, surf).

On the other hand, the professional courses for adolescents, aim to give more academic knowledge concerning Eco-tourism activities; Environmental Responsibility, how to construct and repair surf boards and finally a course about Printing and Product Designing.

As already stated before, the methodology used by the institute, which is connected with the philosophy of Freire, aims to improve, from an integrative point of view, the relationship between theory and practice. The educational project has three main principles.

First of all the concretization of the project, so as to teach children a critical way of thinking; secondly the socialization aspect which aims to remove the barriers of marginalization and finally it promotes the process of “subjectivation” that is the process of becoming a subject in the choices of one’s personal life and not a victim of the restricted opportunities they have.

The Instituto Povo do Mar was founded eight years ago inside the Favelas of Serviluz, then, only two years ago it expanded its range of action to Praia do Futuro, the most popular beach of Fortaleza. Notably, the two places have extreme different realities. The favela of Serviluz has to deal with problems of marginalization, prostitution and drug trafficking. However, within their favela, there is one of the best beaches to practice surf: Titanzinho. This place brings together people who share the same passion and values which this humble sport encourages. In this scenario, I had the perception that all the hostilities vanished once people jumped into the water, and this made me understand that, no matter how oppose people can be, once they share a passion all aversions can disappear.

My perception was different when I first stepped into the Favela of Serviluz. It was not the first time I entered in a Favela in my life, however, this time I was seen as a foreigner who was dedicating herself to help the community. The first day, I was accompanied by the project coordinator and four more volunteers of other nationalities. Upon arrival the community members could not understand the reason for our visit, therefore, I felt very uncomfortable and intimidated. However, as days passed by, the atmosphere became more friendly, as people started to recognize us and our mission. A definitive moment of acceptance, was when the institution gave us a t-shirt of the IPOM so that I could be recognized around the community and better welcomed. After spending the first week in Titanzinho, I felt more secure there, than in other places of the city.

Contrastingly, in the other headquarter of IPOM I experienced a different scenario. In this case, IPOM is located out of the favela, in a square granted by the government of Fortaleza. As a consequence, I didn't have any contact with the communities that surrounded it. The atmosphere was more detached, yet I found the structure in Praia do Futuro better organized. In fact, it had wi-fi access, film projectors, air conditioning (the average temperature is 28° in winter and 35°- 40° in summer) and several small building which hosted the group of children according to their age range. The original space in Titanzinho is smaller and enclosed, with only four classrooms and a small open area where children played volleyball and football during recreation.

Concerning my experience as a teaching assistant, I found the organization very flexible and well organized at the same time. We could count on the pedagogic coordinator to organize our eight weeks, so as to try every kind of activity. He was also a point of reference for every problem we were facing. At the same time, we had strict rules to follow (timetables, wear the uniform, speak academic Portuguese) and it was important to follow these rules in order to give credibility to the whole organization.

3. IPOM's Impact on the Community of Serviluz

The work carried out until today has definitely improved the living conditions of the community to which the project is addressed. It has succeeded in transforming the patterns of social inequality thanks to innovative and environmental education. Surely, the main achievement is a decrease in the population of street children. Statistics carried out by the Institute show that roughly 67% of children living in Serviluz are enrolled in the project. Of these, about 80% regularly participate in the activities (IPOM, 2017).

In addition, what coordinators have figured out, is that there is a constant shift in the children's attitude, and this means that their educational approach is successfully changing the way people interact with them. This is something I noted too, both during the activities and when I was going around the favela. Also, I had various interesting conversations with the surf teacher, who told me that before IPOM was created, the beach of Titanzinho was exclusively reserved for the community members, so no other people had the courage to go surfing there. However, as the NGO started to organize surf competitions, gradually they became more prone to welcoming other surfers. Nowadays, the space is open to everybody and there is no fear, nor even monopolization of the beach.

Improvements have been noted in the field of education, sports for full development of physical condition, studies in foreign languages, namely English and Spanish, arts, culture, and access to citizenship. All these factors contributed in the fight against poverty and in the preservation of the environment.

What really surprised me, is the way people welcomed me and other volunteers. I have never felt so much solidarity, positivism and humbleness at the same time. Everywhere I went, including around Fortaleza, whenever I was wearing the IPOM t-shirt, people were staring at me with gratefulness and respect. If Fortaleza is one of the most dangerous cities of Brazil, when I was in San Paolo I felt so much more at risk. In fact, in two months of volunteering, I was never threatened by anyone. However, during my exchange experience, a couple of times I found myself in danger due to homeless people hanging around my neighborhood which was located in a rich area.

From what I saw with my own eyes, Fortaleza does not seem like a dangerous city. However, statistics seems to reveal the opposite. According to Numbeo, the world's largest database

which provides current and timely information on world living conditions, the crime rate in Fortaleza is 92.56% compared to 84.92 % in San Paolo and 90.56 in Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, the database shows an increase of 89.29 % in the past three years compared with 83.46% in Rio de Janeiro.

In contrast, the statistics regarding ethical discrimination seems to have decreased in the last three years, roughly by 30% in Fortaleza, compared to 57% in Rio de Janeiro.

What is also shocking, is the data regarding the safety in walking alone at night. In fact, during my stay in Fortaleza I rarely used to hang out at night, and if that was the case, I was always accompanied by local people I could trust, however, I never felt totally safe.

Unsurprisingly the percentage of safety is only at 7.65%. Moreover, one should consider that about 70% of Brazilian tourism is national, therefore a local who hangs out alone is not treated the same as foreigner who does not look Brazilian at all, nor even speaks fluent Portuguese.

So, to conclude, one can say that on one hand, IPOM succeeded in increasing school attendance and therefore in decreasing the amount of street children. On the other hand, many newspaper articles report on how drastic the situation is in Serviluz. The main critical issues concern child prostitution, teenage mothers from the age of 13, crack addiction and armed conflict between drug dealers. However, what is often left unconsidered is that, murders and violence are crimes committed by adults, in most cases. This means that the efforts made by the NGO to create a new wave of citizens, will be evident in the coming years.

So one can say that the Instituto Povo do Mar has improved greatly throughout the eight years, both in terms of capacity and activity management, however, more can be done. By participating in regular meetings and living every day within the institute, I made my personal evaluation and assessed the main challenges it faces regarding enhancing its credibility and gaining better services.

First of all, there is the necessity to consolidate the institution in order to have a steady and gradual growth. In Praia do Futuro I felt a cold atmosphere which was definitely more detached and less integrated, whereas, in Serviluz the community is far more unified but at the same time the space is poorly organized from a structural point of view.

Secondly, even though IPOM analyses its performance every year and monitors its activities every month, they still do not have a model of reference to follow. In fact, the evaluation consists of random meetings between educators and coordinators to discuss the topics, challenges and extra scholastic activities for the coming month.

In addition, from an economic perspective, IPOM lies on the donations of the local government and different companies, the main one being the major Brazilian oil company “Petrobras”. Surely, one of the future goals they have, is to become economically independent. For this purpose, the institution organizes monthly extracurricular activities such as music concerts, sport competitions and local markets to sell their products. There is plenty of work behind the fund-raising activities, especially in the effort to involve all the inhabitants of the city so as to attract those entrepreneurs who could give significant contributions to the non-profit organization.

Another challenge the institution should overcome concerns the technology capacity. Most of the time, the number of students is superior to the available material they have, thus leaving part of the group with nothing to do. The technology is insufficient or not working in a proper way. Practical examples are the fact that during surfing class, there are only four boards available, however, each group is composed of ten children; also the number of computers is limited, and the film projector is lacking an adequate sound system, and this was a source of distraction for students.

Concerning the institutional capacity, IPOM has not yet the full capability to grant high-quality education. This is probably linked to the lack of trained teachers. Even though they know the language, the codes of communication and are very respected, sometimes their personal experience is not sufficient because, some of them are very young. In fact, I met people of around 20 years old who already had one or two children. However, one has to consider that the main scope of the organization is not to improve the students’ education. In fact, the activities are complementary to school, with the purpose to remove children from the street and uncover the inner potential they have but are not yet aware of.

In addition, IPOM plays a relevant role in giving a job to those young parents who were forced to stop studying because they needed to earn money for their family. One has to say that, even if limited, there is a professional team composed of a psychologist, a pedagogic

educator and an English teacher with a solid academic background. Moreover, many volunteers are university students who carry out research projects for their own studies which at the same time provide knowledge and contribute to the consolidation of the institution.

Another ongoing challenge is the transformation into a sustainable organization.

As is shown from the activities, the NGO has a special interest regarding environmental responsibility. In fact, IPOM 's work is far from harming the environment, rather it is highly committed to preserving it and raising awareness to students about the importance of its preservation. In this regard, different campaigns and classes have been organized, in order to raise awareness within the students and community.

So to conclude, it is evident the efforts to promote a set of strategies and objectives for the coming year, but not having a framed model to constantly refer back to, seems to be the major challenge. Along with this, the greatest obstacle lies in the lack of capacities needed to assist every child, however, the problem is alleviated thanks to the work carried out by volunteers whose main task is to assist the part of the group which stays with their arms folded for half of the activity time.

Finally, what I want to highlight, is the human factor, the love and extreme dedication that differentiate IPOM and make it a successful example of a non-profit organization operating inside a community. This is surely the most valuable aspect of the institution. In fact, the majority of educators and coordinators, come from the Serviluz community. This means they have strong bonds and a sense of belonging. This makes their involvement with the project even stronger, as it is their place of origin.

Conclusion

The thesis's main purpose is to present how government and regional interventions all contributed to decrease poverty rates, hence improving standards in education, health care and hunger. The whole analysis has been conducted taking into consideration the economic, political and social situation which has characterized Brazil's history over the last thirty years. It is therefore, important to consider the changes which came after the country's democratization and consolidation into the world economy.

From this research can be drawn three main conclusions about the features of social programs in Brazil.

Firstly, Brazil has made greater improvement in the last ten years than in the whole 20th century.

During this time, a defining moment was the shift from the Democratic Party to the Socialist and later the Worker's Party. Surely, the various political scandals never contributed to create a consolidated electorate, not even a trustworthy political party. But, for what concerns social policies, the government of Lula has shown a great deal of commitment to reduce poverty. Unfortunately, one cannot say the same about income inequalities, which are still too marked. These social policies were not created as redistributive programs, but rather as a monthly support for those families whose opportunities are limited. Even though Brazil was removed from the UN World Hunger Map in 2004, the country still needs to find a solution in order to alleviate the marked gap between rich and poor.

Secondly, the Cash Transfer Program "Zero Hunger" was crucial in ending hunger and therefore reducing poverty. What cannot be left unconsidered is the positive side effects this project has had.

In conjunction with Bolsa Familia, the most important assistant program, a series of actions were also taken in order to improve the level of inclusion in education and healthcare. What is an important part of these social programs is the introduction of preconditions in order to receive the monthly monetary aid. It is thanks to the enforcement method that families were constantly engaged to take care of their children's health and keep them enrolled at school. This aspect is crucial in understanding how successful these policies are.

Thirdly, one must consider the efforts made by the government in order to create a stronger civil society through legislative initiatives such as the Non Profit Law. This law has played an important role, especially during the end of the 20th century, in strengthening civil society's action and consolidating a new legal framework in which many NGOs had the possibility to develop and find support from the government and municipalities. Also, it has contributed in educating citizens on how to take care of their country, to help those in need and to show solidarity to those who, unfortunately, do not enjoy the same possibilities.

Additionally, my experiences as a volunteer gave me the possibility to see with my own eyes the positive effects that external aid can bring to isolated communities whose access to basic commodities are limited. In my opinion Brazil has an excessive amount of non profit organizations who operate at a regional and local level. Sometimes, especially when funds and capacities are limited, it is difficult to carry out the social mission in an efficient manner. This is why I have dedicated part of my research to outlining the main challenges most NGOs face. More specifically I proposed in which ways, the NGO where I worked, could improve its plan of action.

In conclusion, it is difficult to define who is the major player or which is the best strategy to adopt in order to overcome these social problems. Issues such as poverty, violence, drug addiction and low levels of education and sanitation are grounded in centuries of political corruption and economic and environmental exploitation.

These factors contributed greatly in discouraging society and leading people to accept their predetermined conditions. This attitude is most evident amongst the poorest people, who wander around developed cities, begging for money, food and clothes. Even though there is a great deal of commitment to support less fortunate people by giving them necessary utilities and daily food there is still a marked disparity between rich and poor. Therefore what I want to underline is that it should be up to the affluent members of society to take action supporting the various initiatives.

Summary

Negli ultimi anni, il Brasile si è gradualmente integrato nell'economia mondiale, fino a raggiungere standard molto alti. Ciò che costituisce il maggior ostacolo per il superamento di queste problematiche è l'enorme disuguaglianza di reddito tra ricchi e poveri.

Diversi studi evidenziano che, nonostante le fluttuazioni nel settore finanziario e agricolo, oggi il Brasile si trova al quarto posto come esportatore di materie prime. Teoricamente, ciò significa che ha sufficiente capacità produttiva per soddisfare la propria domanda interna. Contrariamente a ciò, il paese è tutt'oggi immerso nella crisi economica che non permette alle popolazioni più povere di trarre beneficio dalle sue risorse. Pertanto, la vera preoccupazione riguarda il limite accesso ai beni comuni e la distribuzione ineguale.

Queste problematiche derivano da secoli di colonizzazione e dipendenza da parte dei paesi più sviluppati i quali hanno sfruttato le sue risorse e non hanno permesso una crescita indipendente e sostanziale. Tuttavia, nel corso delle vicende storiche, ci sono stati dei momenti decisivi nell'affermazione di diritti universali i quali, hanno sicuramente contribuito nel miglioramento delle condizioni sociali ed economiche.

Quando nel 1988 una nuova Costituzione è stata adottata, il paese ha cominciato una graduale trasformazione da Regime dittatoriale a Stato Sociale. Questa transizione si è consolidata anno dopo anno con la presa di potere in un primo momento da parte del Partito Sociale, dopodiché dal Partito dei Lavoratori.

Figure contraddittorie come quelle di Cardoso, Lula e Dilma Rouseff, hanno sicuramente svolto un ruolo fondamentale nella lotta contro la povertà, ma allo stesso tempo non sono stati in grado di conferire sicurezza e trasparenza nello svolgere una corretta attività politica.

Di fatto, gli scandali di corruzione sono uno dei fattori decisivi per comprendere a fondo quali siano le cause che non hanno permesso la creazione di una solida e conforme società, disposta a impegnarsi collettivamente per abbattere le disuguaglianze sociali.

La tesi in questione ha come scopo principale quello di dimostrare in quale modo un'azione mirata da parte del governo, in collaborazione con organizzazioni non governative, sia regionali che internazionali, abbiano contribuito nel migliorare la acuta situazione che colpiva il paese anni fa. Ciò non significa che il Brasile odierno non stia vivendo una

situazione disastrosa, ma vuole evidenziare che, nel arco degli ultimi trenta anni, grandi progressi sono stati fatti.

Il tema principale della ricerca riguarda il ruolo svolto da programmi di assistenza sociale nel diminuire il tasso di povertà e creare un terreno più fertile per il miglioramento del sistema educativo e sanitario. Una volta raggiunti questi obiettivi, sarà più facile affrontare problematiche correlate riguardanti il traffico di droga, la prostituzione infantile, il fenomeno dei “bambini di strada”, l’analfabetismo e le varie problematiche collegate al corretto funzionamento del sistema sanitario come malnutrizione ed obesità.

Per dimostrare come questo problema sia stato affrontato, il primo capitolo introduce innanzitutto il contesto storico per evidenziare i progressi ottenuti fino ad ora. A tale proposito, ci sono stati dei momenti decisivi, come l’adozione di una nuova Costituzione nel 1988 e l’attiva partecipazione da parte del Brasile in Conferenze Universali mirate a garantire diritti inviolabili del uomo e dei bambini.

Dopodiché, la ricerca si è focalizzata sul ruolo svolto dal governo brasiliano negli ultimi trenta anni nel promuovere la legislazione necessaria a implementare i vari progetti sociali cui scopo era quello di mettere in atto ciò che era stato affermato nella Costituzione modificata.

Decisamente, il programma sociale che ha riscosso più successo nella storia del Brasile è Fame Zero, promosso dal primo governo di Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva nel 2003. Il progetto racchiude più programmi sociali cui scopo è quello di portare avanti un’azione mirata che colleghi le varie criticità. Lo scopo è quello di creare un effetto spillover che possa apportare miglioramenti nel condono di vita. L’iniziativa che ha riscosso più successo è decisamente il Programma “Bolsa Família” (PBF). Il programma prevede regolari trasferimenti di denaro per quelle famiglie cui reddito mensile è inferiore o pari a R\$154.00 (Us\$ 40.00). Dal 2003 in poi, il governo si è impegnato a garantire un’entrata aggiuntiva di R\$85.00 (Us\$ 20.00) ogni mese. In aggiunta a questo valore, sono state previste dei pagamenti aggiuntivi nel caso in cui determinate circostanze si fossero riscontrate. Un fattore decisivo per il successo dell’iniziativa è rappresentato dal rigido metodo di applicazione che prevede l’esclusione di tutte quelle famiglie cui figli non fossero iscritti a scuola o non fossero propriamente vaccinati.

Nel 2009 il budget speso era di circa Us\$4.95 miliardi. Diversi studi hanno dimostrato i benefici apportati nella diminuzione del tasso di povertà. Ciò nonostante, il programma ha

riscontrato un successo inferiore nel miglioramento del sistema educativo. Se da un lato il tasso di iscrizione è leggermente aumentato, dal altro lato, non si può dire lo stesso del livello di educazione ricevuta. Ad ogni modo, le ricerche statistiche condotte negli anni 2003 e 2013 hanno constatata una crescita del 40% nel reddito delle famiglie più povere e una riduzione del coefficiente di Gini da 0.57 a 0.54 (Methods for the evaluation of the impact of food and nutrition, 1994).

Il secondo capitolo illustrerà il ruolo altrettanto importante svolto dalle numerose organizzazioni non governative, tanto regionali che internazionali, le quali, tutt'oggi sono impegnate nella lotta contro la povertà. Senza il loro contributo, gli obiettivi che sono stati raggiunti, non sarebbe stati di ugual misura. A tal fine, un fattore contributivo è sicuramente stata l'adozione della Legge Non Profit tra il 1995 e il 2000. Lo scopo principale della legge è quello di favorire una collaborazione tra poteri pubblici col fine di avvicinare e coordinare il lavoro svolto tra governo, municipi e società civile. Una volta ingranato il meccanismo introdotto dalla Legge Nonprofit, il ruolo di molte NGOs si è gradualmente consolidato fino a raggiungere standard di democrazia e trasparenza. Una volta spianato il terreno su cui tali organizzazioni si sono evolute, è necessario analizzare quali siano i principali ostacoli per un corretto miglioramento del sistema educativo. Diversi studi hanno sottolineato che la maggior barriera socioculturale è legata a fenomeni di discriminazione razziale come umiliazione ed aggressione all'interno delle mura scolastiche. Altrettanto importante è la questione di gravidanza prematura e prostituzione infantile che colpisce le ragazze fin dalla tenera età dei 15 anni. Questo è un fattore cruciale per comprendere come mai i livelli di frequenza scolastica siano così bassi. Una statistica condotta dal ricercatore Carlos Eduardo Moreno Sapaio, direttore dell'INEP, ha rivelato che circa 1.6% delle ragazze tra i 15 e 17 anni sono già madri, di questa, circa il 30% non frequenta più la scuola. (Diretor at Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira - INEP). Fortunatamente, in Brasile vi è una fitta rete di associazioni che si impegnano a tutelare i diritti dei bambini. Ciò è anche dovuto alle misure adottate a un livello universale e promosse nella Dichiarazione Universale dei diritti del Uomo e del Bambino. Sono circa 2000 le NGOs regionali che svolgono un'azione di assistenza e protezione dei bambini e sviluppo delle comunità. Alcuni esempi sono le attività di "Camping For a Childhood Free from Racism", il progetto "Education and Social Relations" promosso dalla associazione Azione Educativa con il supporto dell'Unione

Europea hanno lo scopo di sviluppare una metodologia educativa per eliminare atteggiamenti di discriminazione razziale, soprattutto nei confronti della popolazione afro brasiliana.

Per quanto riguarda la limitata educazione all'interno delle comunità indigene, il Segretariato della Continua Educazione, Alfabetizzazione, Diversità e Inclusione del Ministero dell'Educazione, ha promosso il progetto "Quilombola Education Program". Dal 2006 in poi, il comitato si è impegnato nel garantire i fondi necessari per acquistare materiale didattico e insegnanti professionali.

Inoltre, secondo la "ngolist", ci sono diverse organizzazioni non governative che operano attivamente in modo interculturale nei campi dell'educazione e della sanità. Il sito web presenta un elenco accurato delle principali organizzazioni non profit situate nella periferia delle città più economicamente sviluppate come San Paolo e Rio de Janeiro, conosciute come Favelas, il cui scopo principale è quello di ridurre la violenza, promuovere la frequenza scolastica e l'inclusione civile. La "Associação Comunitária Monte Azul" è una realtà attiva tra le tre Favelas di San Paolo. Il primo Núcleo di Monte Azul è stato fondato nel 1979 da un insegnante tedesco, Ute Craemer, collaborando con gli abitanti della Favela stessa. Successivamente, nel 1983, un altro Núcleo fu aperto nella Favela Peinha e in Blue Horizon, sempre a San Paolo.

Il compito principale dell'organizzazione riguarda l'ambito della cooperazione e dello sviluppo. A tale fine, le principali aree di lavoro sono la ristrutturazione delle baraccopoli, l'assistenza sanitaria e la conservazione dell'ambiente. Oggi l'Associação Comunitária Monte Azul ha più di 260 dipendenti e riceve circa 70 volontari stranieri all'anno. L'organizzazione Monte Azul ha ispirato con successo progetti sociali simili basati su Development Aid, come il gruppo teatrale di strada "Paidéia", il centro culturale e sociale Aramitán a São Paulo, o l'ONG Associação Comunitária de Barra de Lama.

Tutte queste associazioni hanno molti tratti comuni, ma uno di essi, chiaramente, si distingue. Il loro approccio metodologico supporta la filosofia educativa di Paulo Freire, noto come L'Educazione Liberatoria. Questo approccio antropomorfo sottolinea l'importanza dell'immaginazione e della creatività durante l'apprendimento, in modo da combinare le abilità pratiche, intellettuali e artistiche degli alunni.

Per quanto riguarda i fenomeni dei bambini di strada, il "Progetto Favela", situato a Rocinha, probabilmente la più sviluppata favela di Rio De Janeiro, ha lo scopo principale di rimuovere

i bambini dalla strada e monitorare i loro progressi nel diminuire gli atteggiamenti di violenza attraverso una fitta rete organizzata di insegnanti di sostegno e volontari stranieri che aiutano a fornire conoscenze educative come inglese, scienze, arte, matematica, geografia, ingegneria e sono la prova evidente che queste comunità sono sempre pronte ad accettare un aiuto esterno quando si presenta una valida occasione.

Inoltre, "Mais Caminhos" (My Path) è un'organizzazione non governativa incentrata sull'affrontare le disuguaglianze sociali che colpiscono quotidianamente la vita dei brasiliani. È stato fondato nel 2009, con l'obiettivo di promuovere l'educazione e massimizzare il potenziale dei bambini e degli adolescenti svantaggiati delle comunità di Pavão-Pavãozinho e Cantagalo di Rio de Janeiro.

Anche se sono stati fatti passi importanti per il consolidamento delle attività delle ONG e la partecipazione dello Stato, ancora oggi, ci sono diverse questioni critiche che non permettono il consolidamento e spesso caricano il fallimento di molte organizzazioni non governative.

Prima di tutto, il problema più comune è l'accesso limitato ai fondi. Molte ONG trovano difficile trovare fonti fisse e continue per le loro attività. Questo è legato al secondo ostacolo: l'assenza di una coerente pianificazione strategica il quale faciliterebbe il successo nelle loro attività e missioni. Ciò li rende incapaci di sollevare e capitalizzare in modo efficace il sostegno finanziario.

In secondo luogo, la mancanza di una governance efficace e l'assenza di canali di rete funzionanti possono essere decisivi per il fallimento di una ONG. Di fatto, un network disorganizzato può causare inefficienza nelle strategie. Più le ONG comunicano tra loro più efficaci possono essere tutte. Inoltre, molte ONG non massimizzano propriamente l'uso delle tecnologie attuali che potrebbero facilitare una migliore comunicazione e networking. Un uso più efficace della tecnologia può aiutare le ONG a rimanere al passo con importanti preoccupazioni regionali, nazionali e globali, a volte ciò può essere dovuto alla limitata capacità disponibile.

Infine, molte organizzazioni no profit, mancano delle capacità tecniche e organizzative per attuare e adempiere correttamente alla loro missione. Nell'era digitale, è di fondamentale importanza avere un modello di riferimento sul web, come un sito internet o la presenza su social network che possano attirare eventuali volontari e insegnanti. Se questa capacità non è

propriamente sviluppata, allora l' influenza e le capacità generale dell' NGO saranno messe a rischio a tal punto da compromettere l'intera attività da loro promossa.

Ad ogni modo, è importate affermare quanto sia importante il ruolo svolto dalle attività non governativa nel coordinare a creare dei link di comunicazione tra il governo, il settore privato e gli abitanti locali. Questa comunicazione permette di portare allo scoperto le maggiori criticità che si nascono all' interno delle comunità più isolate. A questo riquadro, è stato più volte dimostrato che le attività no profit, avendo un unico obiettivo da compiere, siamo nella maggior parte dei casi, più efficienti del governo stesso nello svolgimento di attività di monitoraggio e nei processi di riforma.

Dopo un' attenta analisi dei pro e contro all' interno di una associazione no governativa è necessario mettere in atto ciò affermato fin ora. Di fatto, il letto capito evidenzia la mia esperienza personale all' interno di una NGO chiama Instituto Povo do Mar (IPOM). In realtà, è stato proprio questa esperienza che ha ispirato l'oggetto della mia ricerca. Per due mesi la mia vita è così è gradualmente adattata a quelle delle persone che, come accennato in precedenza, vivono al limite delle possibilità. La comunità interessata si chiama Favela di Serviluz e si trova nella periferia della città di Fortaleza, nel nord est del Brasile. Secondo uno studio condotto dal UNICEF nel 2017, Fortaleza è considerata una delle più pericolose del paese per quanto riguarda la violenza tra gang rivali di trafficanti di droga e armi. L' NGO in cui ho lavorato si trovata all' interno della comunità, la quale si trova in uno stato di degrado più totale, se comparata con il resto delle strutture nel centro-città. L'associazione fu fondata otto anni fa da quattro amici uniti dalla passione del surf, essi si ritrovavano ogni giorno a vivere in una realtà che non li caratterizzava. Così facendo, decisero di impegnarsi e trovare uno spazio che potesse accogliere i bambini che vagavano tra le strade della comunità senza aver uno scopo giornaliero. Al giorno d'oggi, l' IPOM accoglie tra i 100 e 150 bambini ogni giorno e organizza attività sia educative che ricreative, come ad esempio, Arte Visuali, Sport, Inglese, e Informatica. Ciò che distingue l' IPOM da altre istituzioni è sicuramente l'approccio educativo.

La metodologia si basa sulla teoria del famoso teorico brasiliano Paulo Freire, noto come Educazione Liberatoria (Educação Libertadora, Freire 1987). Così come altre NGOs, l' IPOM mira a sviluppare nei propri studenti un modo di pensare critico che possa abbattere le barriere socioculturali imposte da una società gerarchica ed elitaria. In questo modo, gli

alunni sentiranno una maggiore responsabilità nelle loro scelte di vita e avranno una maggiore consapevolezza del loro compito all'interno della società come cittadini. In un paese in cui le disuguaglianze sociali sono così marcate, è fondamentale per loro comprendere il loro ruolo come individui, abbandonando l'idea di essere pre-destinati a un certo tipo di vita, solo perché sono nati in un'area povera e con opportunità limitate. Grazie a valori come l'amore, il rispetto e la dedizione alle loro passioni, è possibile superare qualsiasi situazione avversa e scegliere come indirizzare le loro scelte di vita.

Al termine dell'esperienza, tornai a casa diversa. Qualcosa era cambiato dentro di me da un punto di vista morale. Le cose che avevo sempre dato per scontato non lo erano più. Ho capito quanto siano importanti valori come amore, tolleranza e dedizione per una lotta comune; come sia più facile e gratificante raggiungere questi obiettivi con il supporto di una famiglia, e degli amici più stretti. Soprattutto, ho imparato ad apprezzare ogni singolo momento nella sua più totale semplicità e, infine, a non arrendermi di fronte a un problema apparentemente irrisolvibile, ma piuttosto a trovare una strategia alternativa per superarlo.

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