

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Country Context	2
3. Background of the Initiative	2
4. Management of the PCU	2
5. Current Cycle (2017-2020)	3
6. Results (Cycle 2013-2016)	4
7. Challenges and Lessons learned	5

1. Executive Summary

The Platform of Urban Centres (Plataforma dos Centros Urbanos - PCU) is a UNICEF initiative dedicated to ensuring the rights of children most affected by intra-urban inequalities in major Brazilian cities. The current cycle of the initiative (2017-2020) is being implemented in 10 cities: Belém, Fortaleza, Maceió, Manaus, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, São Luís, São Paulo and Vitória. The populations of these cities vary from 300,000 in Vitória to 12 million in São Paulo.

The four objectives – or agendas - of the current cycle include: 1) promoting early childhood development; 2) preventing school exclusion; 3) promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive rights; 4) reducing homicides of adolescents. To meet these objectives, the main strategies include collecting disaggregated data, focussing on public policies for the most vulnerable children, promoting adolescent and community engagement and networking, and measuring progress in reducing intra-urban inequalities. Strategic partnerships to strengthen inter-sectoral planning and services are also a key part of the initiative.

Participating Cities



São Paulo	12,000,000	Recife	1,600,000
Rio de Janeiro	6,400,000	Belém	1,400,000
Salvador	2,900,000	São Luís	1,000,000
Fortaleza	2,600,000	Maceió	1,000,000
Manaus	2,000,000	Vitória	300,000

2. Country Context ¹

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world both in terms of both population and landmass. Even though the country has one of the tenth largest economies in the world, it faces major challenges in reducing social and economic inequality. In recent years, Brazil has made impressive advances in promoting and protecting children's rights, yet many children remain subjected to extreme vulnerability and violence.

Challenges include poverty, violence, teenage pregnancy, obesity and low school attendance for the most marginalized. Almost 26 per cent of children in the country live in poverty. Homicide is the leading cause of death in Brazilian capitals among adolescents aged 10 to 19, and in particular affects black boys from urban peripheries. Teenage pregnancy among girls aged 10-14 increased between 2004 and 2012 and obesity is increasingly becoming a challenge that affects one third of children aged 5 to 9. While the school drop-out rate decreased by 64 per cent between 1990 and 2014, 3 million children remain out of school. Young children and adolescents who live on the peripheries of large cities are particularly affected, as are children with disabilities.

3. Background of the Initiative

The PCU was launched in 2008 and is in its third four-year cycle. The first cycle (2008-2012) was implemented in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The second cycle (2013-2016) included six more cities: Belém, Fortaleza, Maceió, Manaus, São Luís, and Salvador. The current cycle (2017-2020) included two more cities: Vitória and Recife – making a total of 10.

4. Management of the PCU

The PCU initiative is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNICEF and the local government of each city participating in the initiative. The MOU formalizes the commitment of the local government to the initiative and defines the role of each partner in implementing it. The PCU is managed by UNICEF and an inter-sectoral group nominated by City Hall in each city. The local government provides data for the baseline indicators and commits human and technical resources for the design and implementation of the initiative's Collective Impact Plan. It also participates in the PCU's National Meetings.

UNICEF provides technical guidance and capacity building for local managers and shares previously tested methodologies. Additionally, UNICEF facilitates youth participation and networking among civil society and different sectoral partners. At the end of each cycle, UNICEF oversees the evaluation of progress made in reducing intra-urban inequalities in the participating cities.

Specific steps to implementation include:

1. Cooperation: The local government expresses its commitment through a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**. City Hall nominates an inter-sectoral group to manage the PCU in partnership with UNICEF.

2. Data collection: UNICEF and the local government selects and analyses **baseline indicators** to identify vulnerable communities.

3. Collective Impact: In partnership with the local government, UNICEF organizes **Inter-Sectoral Thematic Dialogues (ITDs)** and, based on these, a **Collective Impact Plan** is developed. Each partner in the initiative implements the Plan. A **Policy Brief** is prepared summarizing the evidence, strategies, policy options, and case studies discussed during the ITDs.

4. Final Evaluation: UNICEF organizes an ITD and a final evaluation is prepared measuring the reduction of intra-urban inequalities. An external evaluation of PCU methodology is conducted to inform and increase the efficacy in the next cycle.



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¹ Unicef Brasil. 2016. Documento Do Programa de Pais: 2017-2021. Unicef Brasil.

5. Current Cycle (2017-2020)

a. Objectives (priority agendas)

The objectives – or agendas - for the current cycle include:

1) promoting early childhood development; 2) preventing school exclusion; 3) promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive rights; 4) reducing homicides of adolescents.

b. Strategies

The main strategies used to meet the objectives include: collecting disaggregated data, promoting adolescent and community engagement and networking, focussing on public policies for the most vulnerable children, strategic partnerships to strengthen inter-sectoral planning and measuring progress in reducing intra-urban inequalities.

Below are some specific examples of how the strategies are used in practice.

- **Collecting disaggregated data**

Four baseline indicators were selected for the PCU 2017-2020 cycle to measure the situation of the city and its local communities. Disaggregated by territorial units, the indicators measure changes against the four priority agendas. Additional variables are used to help clarify the situation (i.e. race, prevalence of a type of disease).

Capacity building: Local authorities receive training on how to use disaggregated data to reduce inequalities and plan for collective impact based on an analysis of determinants across sectors.

Link to indicator and variables

- **Child and community participation**

Inter-sectoral Thematic Dialogues (ITDs): Organized by UNICEF in cooperation with the local government, the ITDs bring together the different stakeholders working on the four priority agendas, including representatives of government agencies, private and public organizations, specialists, community representatives and adolescents. The participants look at the baseline indicators and the priority agendas, analyse the problems, and suggest possible action points to improve public policies and service delivery.

Adolescent initiatives: Adolescents participate in forums, conferences, councils, student groups, and youth networks organized by the PCU. They also engage with their communities through artistic activities, such as theatre, music and poetry, among others.

In the 2013-2016 cycle of the PCU, more than 15,000 adolescents participated in forums, training, and campaigns. In addition, 635 adolescents engaged in research, training and education, and peer-to-peer rights advocacy.

- **Public policies for vulnerable children**

Inter-sectoral Thematic Dialogues (ITDs): The ITDs generate two outputs: the Collective Impact Plan and Policy Briefs - the Briefs include lessons learned from the implementation of previous ITD recommendations to help create and improve public policies.

- **Coordination and partnerships**

Inter-sectoral Thematic Dialogues (ITDs): The ITDs bring together representatives of government agencies, private and public organizations, specialists, community representatives and adolescents to analyse problems in the identified communities and suggest possible action points to improve public policies and service delivery in these areas.

National meetings: UNICEF coordinates three National Meetings throughout the full cycle of the initiative. Representatives from the cities participating in the PCU attend the meetings to network and exchange experiences.

The main partner of the PCU is the local government - or City Hall - of the participating cities and its various secretariats. The PCU also has partners with state governments, civil society actors, universities and the private sector.

- **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting**

Progress is measured against the baseline indicators assigned in the four priority agendas. For a city to be seen as having improved it must show:

1. Improvement of the main city-wide indicators for each agenda in at least half of the territorial units in the city that fall below the median. These units are considered priorities for PCU implementation.
2. Improvement of the main city-wide indicators for each agenda that reach or surpass the reference value for the assessment year. The reference value indicates the progress the municipality needs to make to be on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal associated with the related indicator by 2030.

- City-wide improvement in two additional variables selected for each agenda.

PCU 2017- 2020 indicators and variables

The evaluation assesses the results attained against each of the four agendas in each city participating in the PCU. After the conclusion of the cycle, an external evaluation of the PCU methodology is taken to inform and increase efficacy in the next cycle.

6. Results (Cycle 2013-2016)

Objectives for the PCU Cycle 2013-2016 focused on the right to 1) survival and development; 2) growing up without violence; 3) adolescent participation; 4) education; and 5) engaging in sport. Ten indicators were used to measure progress against these objectives.

PCU 2013-2016 Methodology (Portuguese) PCU 2013-2016 Monitoring Guide (Portuguese)

Below are examples of results for children achieved by some of the cities participating in the 2013-2016 PCU cycle and PCU strategies that worked towards these results.

Objective 1: Survival and development

Rio de Janeiro

Result achieved by city: The percentage of women that received prenatal healthcare at least 7 times during pregnancy increased from 67.9% (2012) to 74.1% (2015)².

Disaggregated data collected during the situation analysis of the PCU revealed that four neighbourhoods in the city have the highest concentration of children and adolescents living in vulnerable conditions. The PCU committee that included the Secretariat of Education, Health and Social Assistance used an intersectoral approach to reach out to the most vulnerable pregnant women to ensure they had adequate health care.

Objective 2: Growing up without violence

Fortaleza

Result achieved by city: The homicide rate among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years decreased from 136/100,000 (2013) to 98,2/100,000 (2015)³.

Implementation of the PCU in Fortaleza, the capital city of Ceará State, led to the creation of the Ceará State Committee for the Prevention of Adolescent Homicide (Comitê Cearense pela Prevenção de Homicídios na Adolescência). In 2016, the Committee, in partnership with UNICEF, published *Trajetórias Interrompidas*, a study on the homicides of adolescents in seven municipalities in 2015. The study used interviews with the victims' families and focus groups with specialists to reconstruct the stories of the victims before their death. The study includes recommendations on how to prevent the homicides of adolescents.

Additionally, an adolescent group involved in the PCU in Fortaleza organized awareness-raising campaigns on various topics including on growing up without violence in partnership with the local media. They held discussions on the radio and hosted web documentaries entitled *Diálogos Urbanos*.

Manaus:

Result achieved by city: The death rate by external causes among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years decreased from 69.9/100,000 (2012) to 22.4/100,000 (2015)⁴.

Disaggregated data analysed during the PCU's situation analysis identified two neighborhoods with the highest concentration of adolescent death by external causes in Manaus. The community forums revealed that traffic accidents are a common problem. The Municipal Health Secretariat in partnership with the traffic department worked together to design an action plan to address this problem. This plan included driver training, awareness-raising campaigns and activities, and workshops in schools and communities. The plan also created an inter-sectoral committee comprising 16 institutions which together developed the Manaus Inter-sectoral Road Safety Plan (Plano Intersetorial de Segurança Viária).

Objective 3: Adolescent participation

São Luis

Result achieved by city: The rate of teenage pregnancy decreased from 18.1/100 (2013) to 17.2 (2015). The difference between the intra-urban territories with the highest and lowest rates also shrunk⁵.

The PCU committee in São Luis set up a special forum to discuss sexual and reproductive rights with key local actors, including members of social assistance centres (Centros de Referência de Assistência Social), public

² National Health System (SINASC/DATASUS - Sistema Nacional de Nascidos Vivos).

³ National Health System (SIM/DATASUS - Sistema de Informação de Mortalidade).

⁴ National Health System (SIM/DATASUS - Sistema de Informação de Mortalidade).

⁵ National Health System (SINASC/DATASUS - Sistema Nacional de Nascidos Vivos).

officials of the primary health care units (Unidades Básicas de Saúde), adolescents and the local community. The information generated by discussions in this forum was used to improve the delivery of healthcare services and to train healthcare workers.

The PCU committee also initiated the Baby Week initiative in partnership with UNICEF. During Baby Week 500 adolescents participated in more than 80 workshops and events. The activities focused on topics related to sexuality, teenage pregnancy, responsible parenthood and early childhood care.

Objective 4: Education

Belém

Result achieved by city: The school attendance of children receiving the Benefício de Prestação Continuada (BPC) (Continuous Cash Benefit) increased from 30.22% in 2013 to 40.34% in 2015⁶.

The BPC is an unconditional cash transfer for the elderly and extreme poor with disabilities. Disaggregated data collected during the situation analysis of the PCU revealed that people living in vulnerable areas usually did not receive the BPC because they do not have the required documentation. The municipal government facilitated cooperation between the Secretariat of Education and the Secretariat of Health in comparing their data on disabled children receiving the BPC in school and on the number of disabled children receiving BPC that are currently not enrolled with the aim of improving both the percentage of disabled children receiving the BPC and attending school.

The Secretariat of Urban Planning (Secretaria de Planejamento) was charged with implementing the PCU because of its experience in cross-sectoral cooperation among municipal agencies. Additionally, the programme Rios de Inclusão was introduced, which also aims to ensure that children with disabilities receive BPC and go to school.

Objective 5: Right to inclusive and secure sports

Belém:

Result achieved by city: The percentage of public primary schools with sports facilities increased from 79,41% in 2013 to 85,92% in 2015⁷.

The project Portas Abertas para a inclusão was implemented in the six cities that participated in the PCU in partnership with Instituto Rodrigo Mendes, a non-governmental organization that promotes inclusive sports for disabled children. As part of the project educators received specific training to promote the inclusion of girls and boys with disabilities through safe sports practices.

7. Challenges and lessons learned

The Inter-Sectoral Thematic Dialogues (ITDs) were introduced in the 2017-2020 cycle based on lessons learned from the experience of Community Forums used in previous cycles. The ITDs were constructed to be more effective and strategic with a focus on consolidating the assessment of intra-urban inequalities and the Collective Impact Plan. The priority agendas became more focused on specific themes and the partners are now more strategic in their approach and closer to the local authorities. The 2017-2020 cycle also provides more opportunities for the exchange of good practices and experiences between partners, especially local authorities.

The number of indicators used to establish a baseline and measure progress was reduced from the previous cycles and the indicators are now more directly related to the four priority agendas. This has helped to focus efforts on reducing intra-urban inequalities. The greater number of indicators in the previous cycles were found to be obstacles for direct accountability and evaluation.

⁶ Municipal Office of Social Assistance and Municipal Office of Education (Cadastro de beneficiários PcD - Programa de Atenção a Pessoa com Deficiência e Cadastro de Matrículas da Rede Municipal de Educação).

⁷ National School Census.