

Victoria Ewing
Central Decatur High School
Leon, IA
Brazil, Factor 13: Demographics

Poverty in Brazil

Brazil is the largest country of South America. Brazil also has the largest population of all the countries in South America with approximately 195,632,000 people (South American Countries By Population. (n.d.)). With Brazil having such a large population, that also means they need a large production of crops and livestock due to their increasing rates of poverty. Cattle farming is one of the country's key industries producing millions of tons of beef every year. With Brazil inhabiting a great rainforest known as the Amazon Rainforest, they don't have the same resources as the United States to grow and produce food. As many animals and plants the rainforest contains, many are poisonous or endangered making them dangerous or illegal to consume. So how do they produce enough food to sustain their population? As dangerous as it is for the people of the Amazon, what about those people living in the rural or suburbs of Brazil? There are many of people living in poverty in all of Brazil, and there are many different ways we can fix that solution.

Many societies have inhabited and survived in the Amazon Rainforest. They have learned to clear select sections of the rainforest to use for agricultural use and also manage parts of the forest to cultivate the useful species. Today, however, many of the inhabitants go to the city to sell food at the market for money. They still maintain their cultivation of crops as their number one source of food, but have hunting and gathering berries, etc. as a secondary food source. For every family that lives within the rainforest, there are two gardens. The way they cultivate the land is not damaging or harmful to the rainforest if conducted correctly, with the traditional manner of slash and burn. Although this is an easy solution to their poverty, the people are losing this traditional practice due to loggers. The land they hold for agriculture is slowly decaying (Butler, R. (n.d.)).

The solution to this problem could be new laws put in place to stop or slow loggers. The laws could prohibit the loggers from logging certain areas of the land. Other laws could give ownership of some of the land to the people of the tribes in order for them to be able to decide what happened to the land- logging or agriculture.

Southern Brazil has the most fertile ground of the country. It succumbs to high rainfall levels that allow crops to be well irrigated and fed. It is also home to the advanced technology used in farming and allows the production of the country's grains, oilseeds, and exported crops (BRAZIL. (n.d.)).

The Northeastern region of Brazil, which is also home to the Amazon Basin, is the area that is least suitable for production. There are crops that can grow there that is essential for export such as the following: cocoa, tropical fruits, and other forest products. This region is vulnerable to droughts due to minimal if any rainfall. Because of the vulnerability to droughts, this area lacks good soil, meaning crop production is minimal. The farmers there are subsistence farmers who survive off their own produce (BRAZIL. (n.d.)).

Central Brazil used to be known as unsuitable for farming, but some areas are becoming known for mechanized crops, meaning it is produced with machines instead of by people or animals. The area that can be used for crop production is mainly pasture, but has the potential to become excellent for farming as well as exporting crops. This area was once isolated because of no roads and other infrastructures that are important. Although in the 1960's, livestock farming began. Since the soils were poor quality, livestock was

thought to be the only viable type of agriculture until it was discovered soybeans were able to survive in the soil conditions (BRAZIL. (n.d.)).

Brazil is the second- largest producer of soybeans on the planet. Two of their cities produce almost half of its entire soybean production. Brazil is also the global leader of sugarcane, harvesting more than 600 million tons a year. The states responsible for these productions are apart of the southern region of Brazil (BRAZIL. (n.d.)).

As the hunger and poverty rates have decreased and gotten better, there is still one- third of the people in Brazil living in hunger and poverty, eighteen million of them living in rural areas. About thirty- five percent of the people within the country live on less than two dollars per day, increasing to fifty-one percent within the rural areas. There is a strategy in place called Fome Zero, in English it is known as Zero Hunger, which consists of about fifty initiatives. These Initiatives include transfers of cash to poor families and help to the small- scale food producers. The small- scale food producers in place to help support them by buying their products for government feeding programs and local food banks (Lindert, K. (n.d.)). But, where is this money coming from?

For the Fome Zero program, the World Bank has provided financial support of this program as well as other international financial institutions. In 2010, the World Bank allowed the US to loan two hundred million dollars in support of the Bolsa Família. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization, also known as FAO, has provided not only financial support, but also technical support. With this help, Brazil was able to lower their poverty and hunger rates, but not to where the majority of their population is not in poverty. Other countries have begun to adopt this method in Latin America and Africa as well (Lindert, K. (n.d.)).

The population with food insecurity is about sixty- six million people. About twelve million people are experiencing extreme food insecurity and sixteen million living in extreme poverty. In north- eastern Brazil, there is sixty percent of people living with food insecurity. The number of people benefitting from the Bolsa Família cash transfer, however, are about fifty million, and forty- seven million free meals are provided at school (Lindert, K. (n.d.)).

As this program is helping millions, how will it continue to help as the population grows as well as the demand in food? Although Brazil has a thriving economy as they export food and other economical advantages, is Brazil keeping enough food in supply for their own country? What if there was a way to produce another crop that's not apart of their major exports?

Many people ask the question, 'If Brazil is the richest country in South America does it make them weak or strong to accept money from other programs to help their program?' Personally, I think that it would make them both weak and strong. They have the money to put aside into the accounts of these programs this country has put in place for poverty, but they don't. They accept it from foreign countries. On the other hand though, accepting the help of other countries shows that they are willing to work with other countries. It is a positive view for foreign aid if a disaster was ever to happen there or else where, because they would help those who help them.

With population increase comes urbanization. Due to urbanization, they begin to wipe out farming and homes for people. They would not wipe out all farming. With less farm land, there is less crops being produced. It will put many farmers out of work and have less income in the country as a whole.

Not only could the population increasing affect the well-being of families, but with limited water and rain in some areas of Brazil, such as the Northeastern area, they can go through droughts and not be able to

grow. With this comes more poverty in that area with not only no food, but less money to the farmers, who are losing their income.

Climate volatility could affect the poverty of Brazil as well. With the change in a climate, that means the plants aren't receiving the conditions they need or are used to. Whether the change is in temperature, lack of rain, or too much rain, they may be collecting too many or not enough nutrients. The climate change could change how the soil releases nutrients as well, ceasing the needed nutrients to the plants.

Pollution could cause problems as well. With both factors already stated, urbanization could create pollution, and without the consistent rain, it would just stay in the soil. When it rains, the runoff of water helps move the pollutants around. Although, in the areas they do have rain, the urbanization could put pollution not only in the soil, but also the air; therefore, when it rains, it causes more pollution to the soil and the plants. When the roots absorb the nutrients from the rain water, it would also be soaking up the pollution.

To affectively address this issue is by understanding they have an issue. Knowing they have the Bolsa Familia in place is understanding they have an issue. This program is a step to ending the situation, and is a great way to approach the issue. Another approach would be to help the small farms grow by using some money to help them buy more land instead of just buying their products.

The integrity plan of agricultural aid to farmers includes financial aid programs. These programs can contribute to a higher food production by increasing the export of foods. One program is by giving fertilizer in combination with changes in farming practices to farmers that will increase the yields. Fertilizers have improved seeds and water management. The use of fertilizers of increased between 1993 and 2005 by ninety percent. However, there are measures put in place to avoid the use of harmful and polluting fertilizers (WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS? (n.d.)).

Extra costs come from the need of interventions and the cost of increasing the size of the environment. Adaptation is necessary due to the fact of inconstancy in agricultural production. This inconstancy is a result of increased unpredictable weather, such as intense droughts. Although higher food prices help poor farmers if they are able to benefit from the increased international prices, a large number of rural households are net buyers of staple foods (WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS? (n.d.)).

In the Andes mountains, the people there developed a way of producing crops as the Inca people did. They have found a way to change the land to make suitable for crop growth, and to change the crop to make it suitable for different types of climate and soil. The people of the Andes have been able to develop pliable breeds of crops. This means the crops are pliable and ready to change and adapt. The crops they have been able to do this to are the following: potatoes, quinoa- a type of grain, and corn. The only way they change the land is by putting terrace's into hillside that are steeper.

Brazilian farmers could do Inca technique, if they had the resources. The resources being equipment to help make the terraces, and the ability to obtain these crops. At first, this way of cultivating may be expensive. But in the long run, it could really work. With having crops that can adapt to climate change and different soils, these crops have the potential to grow in even the Northeastern part of Brazil where the soil is harsh. If the people and farmers of Brazil took up this way of producing crops, there could be more potential exports of food as a whole to supply their growing population. Not only could they make money on exports, but help with their own hunger and poverty problems.

A growing population is hard to stop so a person would have to work around it. With the growing population and growing urbanization, how are those communities and families able to stay out of poverty and live with enough food for everyone? One way is to start a community garden or family garden. Gardens

can be expensive at first, but they could save their seeds for the next year. They would be growing their own food, know it is safe, know where it came from, and can access it easily.

Having a community garden isn't as hard as it sounds. If everyone puts in the effort, it's actually really easy. Volunteers could buy the seeds the first year. A few volunteers to till or dig the holes and others to plant the seeds. Other volunteers could check every night or every other night on water. Doing this ,can ensure having food and connect neighbors.

Climate change is another problem, along with a growing population. Another way to ensure food for communities is having a greenhouse. Greenhouses can be pretty expensive to build, but it doesn't have to be. There are many different types of greenhouses that can be designed from an inexpensive one, to an expensive one. For a year round greenhouse, it can be built underground. The underground greenhouse isn't as expensive as some of the above ground, and they don't have to wait until the spring to begin their garden. Due to it being underground, the soil always stays the same temperature so the plants wouldn't freeze. The same expectations, mentioned above, of the community garden could go for the greenhouse.

As the World Bank and FAO have already donated enormous amounts of money to an organization already in place, I think they just need to change the goals of the Fome Zero, also known as Bolsa Familia programs. Other organizations such as nonprofit organizations could either help by transferring money to actions already put into place, or try to implement their own funding program, such as the greenhouse or community gardens.

As it is their community, neighborhoods, and health involved, I believe the families of the urban areas and farms should be aware of acts being put into place. I also believe that they should have knowledge of the different options available, such as the community gardens and greenhouses. The farmers should be aware of different options that could affect their crop production and business, and different ways that they could potentially reverse damaging effects.

Brazil, being the most populated country, is also considered the most well off country in South America. Brazil is using its resources to try and take care of problems outside of their own country and use them for other Latin American countries. Focusing on other countries, and only a little on its own problems, is what is setting them back. Fixing their own country first is what needs to happen. Then, they can establish those techniques in other countries to help.

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