INTRODUCTION

The Mulheres Mil Program first began as a project in 2005. The project was designed, in collaboration with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and Canadian colleges, to work with the specific marginalized population of young and mature women in Northern Brasil, many who are poorly educated, socially and economically vulnerable, and excluded from the labour market. The initial goal of the Mulheres Mil project was to provide vocational training to 1000 women in the North and Northeast regions of Brasil in order to improve their quality of life and remove them from their position of vulnerability. Based on the success of the project, in 2011, it was extended into a nation-wide program which now aims at graduating 10,000 women by 2014. The program, thus far, appears to have had a significant impact on participants by helping them to discover their citizenship, restore their self-esteem, and improve family and community relations. The Mulheres Mil Impact Assessment project seeks to provide tools and techniques to help key stakeholders determine the impacts realized from the Mulheres Mil program.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This research project is funded by the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC). IDRC has provided two years of support for the development of research tools and methods that will allow stakeholders to gain insight into the impact of this important economic and social policy initiative that, since its launch in 2005, has influenced the lives of so many marginalized women in Brasil. The tools will be designed in a way that will facilitate an impact analysis involving the perspectives of the multiple stakeholders involved with the program.

GOALS OF THE RESEARCH

The intended outcome of this project is to provide stakeholders with instruments that will permit the impact assessment of the Mulheres Mil program and further support the ongoing assessment of social inclusion programs in Brazil, and potentially beyond. In addition, through quantitative and qualitative analysis of this program, researchers will contribute to a body of literature that demonstrates the benefits and impact of social inclusion programs on participants, the community, and the institutions themselves.

By examining the impact of this program, researchers will gain a broader understanding of the value of government initiatives that seek to support individuals from an economically disadvantaged population, by providing access to vocational training and education according to the needs of each community and region. It will provide insights into the long-term economic and social value of social inclusion programs to communities, participants, and societies. By exploring the impact on the institutions participating in delivering the Mulheres Mil program, the research may reveal partnerships, processes, resources, tools, and services that could be considered as possible best practices. The research may also reveal possible recommendations for program enhancements, which may provide meaningful data and insights that could promote future success of similar programs.

“I can say that today I have a future. Is it still a challenge? Yes, I know it is hard, but I’ll get there.”

—Mulheres Mil Participant, 2011
PARTICIPANT PROFILE

The women involved in this program have a number of different characteristics. They may be young or mature; however, most have limited education and are socially and economically vulnerable. Many are excluded from the labour market.

By becoming involved with the Mulheres Mil program, participants are given the opportunity to be trained in basic educational components such as reading, writing, math, and technology. In addition, they receive training in an in-demand trade to assist them in finding employment in their region. All participants are provided with some kind of financial assistance, with additional assistance provided to those demonstrating a higher level of need.

STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders identified thus far are the participants themselves, their families and their communities; the Federal Institutes (IF’s) including management, faculty, administration, and support staff; government partners at federal, provincial and municipal levels; community agencies including associations, cooperatives, NGOs and syndicates; and the employers of graduated students.

PROJECT STATUS

As of June 2013, the project is just over half way into its workplan. The project team has completed the project startup and a comprehensive literature review. All members of the team and their roles in the project have been identified and invitations from the Ministry of Education in Brasil have been sent to the Institutions to participate. The development of the conceptual framework is currently underway, and is expected to be completed shortly. The framework for Ethics is also in progress. Work on both of these components is scheduled for July 2013. From there, the tools and techniques will be developed and piloted by the project completion date of March 2014.

RESEARCH TEAM

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For up to date project status, visit: MulheresMilProject.wordpress.com