

The UNICEF Certificate – Approved Municipality

UNICEF Brazil
State of Ceará
BRAZIL

<http://www.unicef.org/brazil/selo.htm>

Short description of the programme

This project is proposed to be a strengthening agent of the child and adolescent's rights in the State of Ceará, Brazil by taking advantage of the local advanced legislation (The Statute of the Child and Adolescent – SCA) that comprises provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Starting from the institutional mission of the UNICEF, the *UNICEF Certificate – Approved Municipality* was created in 1998 as a wide and permanent strategy of the society mobilisation in Ceará to know, value, establish and guarantee child rights. The UNICEF Certificate concerns a quality certification system of the public administration, awarded to the municipality that has improved its performance and management as for policies regarding childhood and youth, evaluated by the improvement effectiveness of the social indicators. Such certification favours the public acquaintanceship and recognition of those municipalities provided by the Certificate, that constituted the decisive element to guarantee the interest, the adhesion and commitment of the local leaderships with the evaluation process that precedes the official recognition. Thus, the idea of gathering the municipalities into 5 homogenous groups in terms of income and development, so that the comparison could be possible starting from a certain condition level and that the municipalities with more difficulties would not feel under-stimulated towards the accumulated capacity of the stronger ones. The might-idea is less bureaucracy and more cultural entertainment. Those factors can help understand the surprisingly high adhesion level of the municipalities to the Project: out of the 184 municipalities of Ceará, there have been 170 registrations in the First edition of the Certificate (1998-2000) and 180 in the Second edition (2000-2002).

PARAMETERS

Establishment of Indicators and Information Acquisition

The methodological choice was for an evaluation strategy around social indicators that would allow the evaluation of the municipalities under two dimensions: *performance* in the education and health policies and administrative *management* in the areas of Health, Education, and Child and Adolescent's Protection.

1. Performance:

The development evaluation has been structured from the follow-up of conventional statistical indicators annually organized by the State Government for the Health and

Education fields, which were exactly the municipalized areas of public policies, according to a resolution of the Federal Constitution of 1988. It has also been guided by the political challenge of organizing the Councils foreseen by the SCA (The Guardianship and Rights Councils).

The *performance* in the health field has been evaluated in terms of:

- children's weight at birth;
- nutrition;
- up-to-date vaccination;
- breastfeeding; and
- infant mortality rate.

The *performance* in the education area has had its evaluation done through data related to:

- school grade level;
- approval;
- failure; and
- dropouts.

2. Management:

The public administration was evaluated, through municipal visits, starting from the organization and management of education, health and the child and adolescent's protection services, with distinction to the existence of Councils foreseen by the SCA. In that evaluating dimension, there have been visits to all the municipalities, by teams of three researchers each. Those researchers, in a total of 57, were graduated professionals with work experience in dealing with children and adolescents, employees from governmental or non-governmental organs, and – to implement that evaluation – they received a 40-hour training.

A prerequisite for the researchers' participation in the work is that they should not have any ties with the municipalities that would be under their responsibility. To have that guarantee, the UNICEF has requested its researchers to sign a Commitment Term in order to keep them from getting involved with the municipalities' evaluation, where some special interest could darken their necessary neutrality posture.

In those visits there have been:

- registration of the information provided by the municipalities;
- application of questionnaires made up by 6 local consultants, masters and doctors of recognized knowledge in the areas of Health (2), Education (2) and Protection (2),
- interviews, and
- *in loco* observation of the projects developed by the municipality in attending children and adolescents.

The municipal administration evaluation, accomplished through the visits, has been reviewed by a group of 6 external consultants, being 3 from Ceará and 3 from other states, who have tested the coherence of the results through statistical resources.