

# Facts and figures

**Land area:**

8.5 million square km  
(47 per cent of South America)

**Population:**

163 million (1999)

**Population growth rate:**

1.4 per cent p.a. (1996)

**Urban population:**

78 per cent (1996)

**Average life expectancy:**

men 63 years, women: 71 years

**Households without piped water:**

24 per cent

**Households without mains sewerage:**

30 per cent

**Adult literacy:**

83 per cent

**Infant mortality:**

36 deaths per 1000 live births  
(59 in Northeast)

**Number of children under 18 in poverty:**

21 million (living in families with per capita income of less than half the national minimum wage)

**Number of children of primary-school age (7–14) not in school:**

1.3 million

**Number of children aged 5–14 working:**

2.9 million; aged 10–14: 5.7 million

**Proportion of deaths of young people in São Paulo aged 15–24 caused by violence:**

67 per cent (road accidents, murder, suicide)

**Gross domestic product:**

US\$ 775 billion (1998)

**Income per capita:**

US\$4,790 (1998)

**Foreign debt:**

US\$200 billion (1998)

**Economic growth:**

0.1 per cent (1998)

**Principal exports:**

manufactures, iron ore, soybeans, coffee, meat, sugar

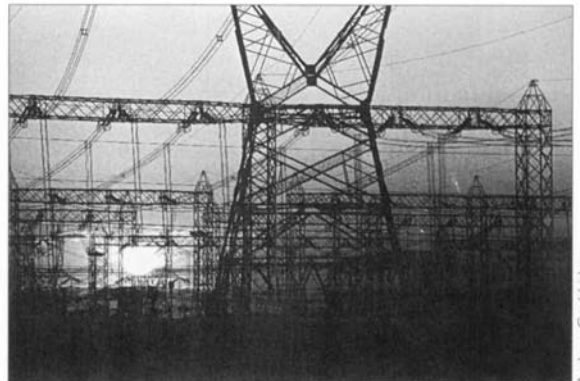
**Main trading partners:**

USA, EU, Argentina

**Currency:**

the Real; average exchange rate:  
R\$1.83 = US\$1.00 (1999)

(Sources: Economist Intelligence Unit: *Brazil: Country Profile 1999-2000* and *Brazil: Country Report, Last Quarter, 1999*; UNICEF: *The State of the World's Children, 1999*.)



Andrew Coultrage

# Dates and events

- 10,000 BC** First known presence of human beings in the Americas.
- 3000 BC** Probable beginning of *tupi-guarani*, one of the main Brazilian indian language systems
- 22 April 1500** Portuguese explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral, looking for passage to the spice islands of the East, lands on coast of Bahia, names it Vera Cruz and claims it for the Portuguese crown
- 1549** Colonial rule established in Bahia
- 1695** Gold discovered in Minas Gerais
- 1768** Capital moved from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro
- 1792** Tiradentes, leader of failed uprising against Portuguese, executed
- 1808** Portuguese royal family flees to Brazil to escape Napoleon
- 1822** Independence declared by Pedro, Crown Prince of Portugal, who becomes Emperor of Brazil
- 1850** Slave traffic stopped
- 1888** Slavery abolished
- 1889** Monarchy abolished. Brazil becomes a republic
- 1930** Getúlio Vargas takes power after military coup; dictatorship lasts until 1945
- 1955** Juscelino Kubitschek elected; launches programme of industrialisation, and construction of Brasilia
- 1960** Capital moved from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia
- 1964** Military coup and beginning of 21-year dictatorship
- 1980** Workers' Party (PT) founded
- 1984** Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) founded
- 1985** Return to civilian rule: President Tancredo Neves dies before taking office, succeeded by Vice-president José Sarney
- 1988** Chico Mendes shot dead
- 1989** PT presidential candidate Lula loses to Fernando Collor
- 1992** Collor resigns to avoid impeachment for corruption
- 1993** Annual inflation exceeds 2000 per cent
- 1994** Real Plan launched; Fernando Henrique Cardoso elected President
- 1998** Cardoso re-elected
- 1999** Brazil devalues currency: economic crisis

# Sources and further reading

- Amnesty International: *Beyond Despair: Amnesty International Report on Human Rights in Brazil*, London: Amnesty International, 1994
- Medea Benjamin and Maisa Mendonca: *Benedita da Silva* (the story of Brazil's first black woman senator), London: Latin America Bureau, 1998
- Beyond All Pity: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus*, London: Earthscan, 1990
- Sue Branford and Oriel Glock: *The Last Frontier: Fighting over Land in the Amazon*, London: Zed Books, 1985
- Sue Branford and Bernardo Kucinski: *Brazil: Carnival of the Oppressed – Lula and the Workers' Party*, London, Latin America Bureau, 1995
- Gilberto Dimenstein: *Brazil: War on Children*, London: Latin America Bureau, 1991
- Fala Favela*, photographs and booklet, Dublin and Birmingham: Trocaire and the Development Education Centre, 1991 (for 11–18 year olds)
- Gilberto Freyre: *The Mansions and the Shanties: the making of modern Brazil*, University of California, 1986
- Duncan Green: *Silent Revolution, the rise of market economics in Latin America*, London: Cassell, 1995
- Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn: *The Fate of the Forests: Developers, Destroyers and Defenders of the Amazon*, New York: Harper, 1990
- Robert Levine and John J. Crocitti (eds): *The Brazil Reader*, London: Latin America Bureau, 1999
- Gordon MacMillan: *At the End of the Rainbow? Gold, Land and People in the Brazilian Amazon*, London: Earthscan, 1995
- Stephen McCarthy: *In Search of Eldorado*, Dublin: Trocaire, 1996 (for 12–18 year olds)
- Chico Mendes and Tony Gross: *Fight for the Forest: Chico Mendes in his own words*, London: Latin America Bureau, 1992
- Fr Ricardo Rezende: *Rio Maria: Song of the Earth*, London and Dublin: CIIR and Trocaire, 1994
- Jan Rocha: *Brazil in Focus*, London: Latin America Bureau, 1997
- Jan Rocha: *Murder in the Rainforest: the Yanomami, the Goldminers and the Amazon*, London: Latin America Bureau, 1999
- Thomas Skidmore: *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999
- Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith: *Modern Latin America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992
- Alison Sutton: *Slavery in Brazil*, London: Anti-Slavery Society, 1995
- Views from Brazil: Introducing Development Issues*, Dublin and Birmingham: Trocaire and the Development Education Centre, 1990
- Women in Brazil*, London: Latin America Bureau for Caipora Women's Group, 1993

---

## Sources

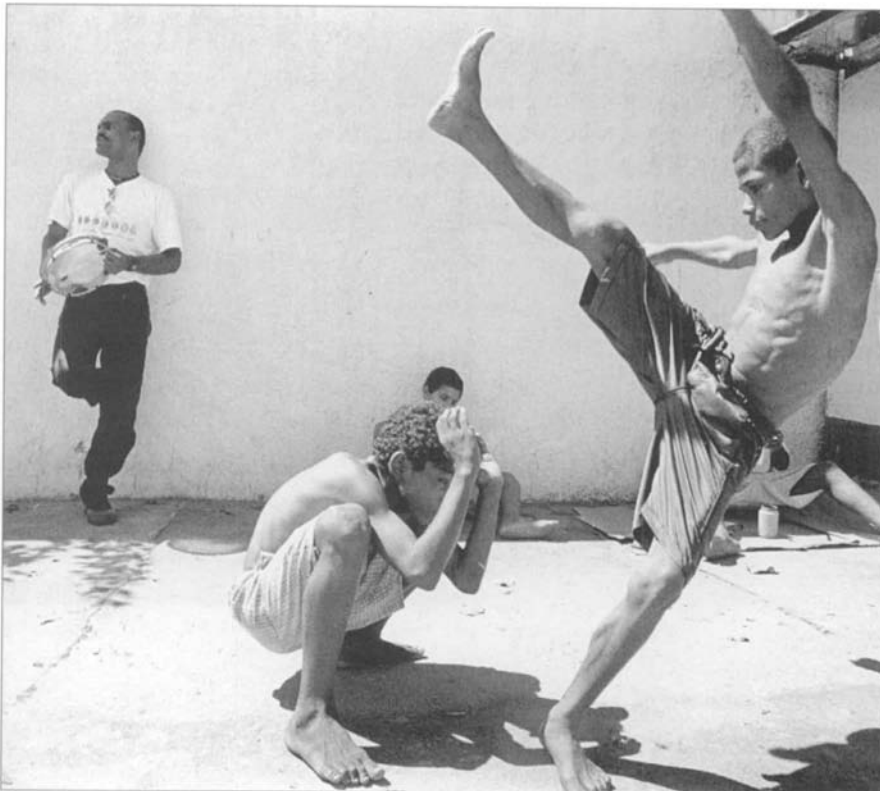
Comissão Pastoral da Terra, *Trabalho Escravo no Brasil Contemporâneo*, Edicoes Loyola 1999

Bernardo Kucinski: *O Síndrome da Antena Parabolica: Etica No Jornalismo Brasileiro*, Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo, São Paulo 1998

Bernardo Mançano Fernandes: *Gênese e Desenvolvimento do MST*, Editora Peres, 1998

UNICEF: *The State of the World's Children*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

Alfredo Wagner: *As quebradeiras de côco de babaçu*



< Boys in Recife practising capoeira, a martial-art dance-form popular with street children

# Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to photographer Daniel Berinson, for being an excellent travelling companion, considerate and cheerful. ... To the families with whom we stayed while researching the book – Maria da Luz and João Pedro in Lagoa Comprida, Zuleide and her daughters in Esperantinópolis, Francisco and Celia and their family in the Apuriná village at Boca do Acre – for allowing us to share their homes, their meals, and their lives for a few days. ... To the members of Oxfam’s partner organisations who organised our trip and found time to accompany us and inform us, especially Lucineide and Salles at FAMCC, and Luciene and Maria Alaide at ASSEMA. ... To Claude St-Pierre and the staff at the Recife Oxfam office, especially Jessica Pelham, for their painstaking correction of the first draft. ... And last but not least to editor Catherine Robinson, for her patience and understanding throughout.

∨ *Work can be fun: children of the Pedra Vermelha settlement, Northeast Brazil*

*Jan Rocha*



Daniel Berinson

# Oxfam in Brazil

Levels of inequality between rich and poor are higher in Brazil than almost anywhere else in the world, and Brazil is the largest country in the world with an Oxfam programme of social development. Oxfam works in the poorest regions: the Amazon and the Northeast, which are comparable with some of the poorest countries in the world in terms of their income per capita, and the quality of their health and education services. Most of the people and projects featured in this book have received support from Oxfam, and the stories illustrate how poverty affects a wide range of social groups.

Since 1968, Oxfam has been working with the most vulnerable groups in Brazilian society, including indigenous peoples, descendants of runaway slaves, the urban poor (including black communities, women, and street children), the landless and the rural poor. Oxfam has a wide range of partners, including grassroots organisations, community groups, trade unions, and local and national non-government organisations and networks. Most of Oxfam's work is geared towards long-term sustainable development, but it also undertakes emergency relief work in times of severe drought or flooding.

In the Amazon, Oxfam helps indigenous peoples to campaign for the demarcation of their traditional lands, thereby securing legal tenure to them. Oxfam also defends indigenous peoples' cultural rights and languages. In addition, several Oxfam partners deliver essential health services to indigenous groups. Other beneficiaries in this region include communities who collect brazil and babassu nuts, who are helped in their efforts to reach new markets and to defend their rights to access the forest.

In the semi-arid zone of Northeast Brazil, Oxfam helps small-scale farmers and indigenous groups to make a living in what is a harsh and drought-prone region. Ensuring access to a safe water supply is the top priority, but secondary activities include developing goat rearing, planting drought-resistant crops, and campaigning for land tenure. Oxfam helps to influence local and national policies, and works in partnership with international charities and other funders, maximising efforts to reduce abject poverty in the region.

Urban poverty is increasing in both the Amazon and the Northeast. Oxfam supports a series of initiatives, including lobbying local municipalities to provide urban services such as basic sanitation, clean water, sewage treatment, and rubbish collection. Oxfam also supports communities in shanty-towns, helping them to secure land tenure and decent housing.

Brazil's democracy is young and fragile, and most of its voters are ignorant of their rights, unaware that a generous but largely overlooked constitution already exists to protect them. Oxfam believes it is vital to voice the needs of the forgotten poor, helping them to assert their right to a say in their futures. Oxfam is helping local organisations to develop their in-country fundraising skills, reducing their dependency on international sources of funding. Oxfam's partners are developing their supporter bases, which in turn will improve their lobby work, helping them to raise awareness among Brazilians of the country's critical social problems and practical solutions to them. Local organisations receive training in campaigning methods and communications, and Oxfam provides financial support for fundraising activities.

Because Oxfam believes that it is not possible to reduce poverty by working alone, it continues to forge and strengthen partnerships in Brazil. It also lobbies international financial institutions to adopt and implement policies that will benefit impoverished people.

▽ 'Together we are strong':  
a Macuxi community in  
Cantagalo village, Roraima



# Index

- Acre 13, 14–15  
agriculture 5–6  
  agribusinesses 10, 25, 73, 74  
  Caatinga 64–6  
  small farmers 10, 20, 24, 25, 63–6  
  soya 73  
alcohol fuel 30, 47  
Amazon Basin 5, 10, 12, 58, 70–4  
Apuriná 13, 14–15  
ARENA 42  
ASSEMA 68
- babassu palm 67–9, 85  
Bahia 9, 18  
Barros, Lucineide 27  
biodiversity 74  
biopiracy 12  
BNDES 51, 62  
Boca do Acre 14–15  
Brasília 32, 40, 47, 72  
brazil nuts 15, 85  
Brizola, Leonel 42, 45, 55  
Buarque, Chico 35  
Buarque, Cristovam 59
- Caatinga 64–6  
Cabral, Pedro Alvares 9  
Câmara, Helder 34  
candomblé religion 6, 78  
CAPOIB 12  
car industry 50  
Cardoso, Fernando Henrique 22,  
  39, 45, 50, 51, 53–4  
Carnival 77–8  
Catholic Church 9, 20–1, 34–5,  
  54, 62  
censorship 34, 35, 36, 52–3  
CEPAL 51  
CEPLAC 30  
charcoal 58, 73  
child labour 41, 58–9, 80  
Children's Pastoral 54, 62  
CIEP 55  
citizens' budget 32  
COIAB 11, 12, 57  
Collor de Mello, Fernando 44
- colonisation 9, 20  
commodity exports 5–6, 49, 51  
constitution (1988) 11, 19, 43–4  
coup 33–6  
CPT 20–1, 38  
crime 45, 77  
cultural identity 11–12, 18, 77–8, 85
- dam-building 10, 11, 20, 35, 70, 71  
debt 22, 35, 47, 48, 49–50, 80  
debt bondage 21  
deforestation 10, 14, 48, 70–1, 73  
demarcation 9, 11, 12, 85  
democracy 19, 41–5, 56, 63–4  
Democratic Alliance 43–4  
Democratic Forum 32  
direct action 23–4, 29, 41  
disease 10–11, 60–1  
displacement 10, 20, 31, 67, 71  
dissidents 34, 35  
drought 6, 63–6, 85
- Earth Summit 12, 74  
economy 5–6, 46–51, 53–4, 80  
education 55–7  
  Caatinga 66  
  child labour 59  
  indigenous peoples 12, 13, 15, 57  
  MST 24, 57  
  *see also* literacy; schools  
empowerment 7, 86  
energy 6, 9–10, 20  
Engenho Pasmado occupation 22–3  
environmental issues 43, 73–4  
Esperantinópolis 68  
ethnicity 18–19: *see* race
- FAMCC 27, 29–30  
Figueiredo, General João 42, 54  
financial crisis 45, 50–1, 53–4  
food 18, 24–5, 61  
food supplements 66, 68  
football 18, 75–6  
foreign investment 50  
Franco, Gustavo 51  
Franco, Itamar 44, 45, 49
- FUNAI 10, 13, 14  
FUNASA 13
- Geisel, Ernesto 35, 48  
gender issues 17, 41, 43  
globalisation 51  
gold-mining 6, 10, 11, 38, 46, 73  
Goulart, João 33–4  
GTA 74  
Guaraní 9, 12  
Guimarães, Ulisses 44
- handcrafts 15  
health care 12, 13, 28, 60–2  
history 80  
homelessness 29, 78  
housing 17, 26–7, 28, 29  
human rights 37–9  
hydro-electricity 6, 9–10, 20  
  *see also* dam-building
- IBAMA 73–4  
illness 28, 60–1, 69  
IMF 25, 48, 50, 59  
IMIP 62  
immigrants, European 9, 17, 20  
INCRA 10, 21  
indigenous peoples 6, 9–15, 41, 57,  
  66, 74, 85  
industrialisation 31, 35, 47, 61  
inequalities 6, 17, 31–2, 38–9, 56,  
  79, 85  
inflation 47, 49  
INPE 73  
Inter-American Development Bank  
  56–7  
iron-ore 46, 73
- Josué de Castro research centre 58
- Kaiowá 12  
Kubitschek, Juscelino 47
- Lago dos Rodrigues 68  
land ownership 19, 20–1  
land reform 21, 22, 24, 41, 67–8



- land theft 6, 9–12, 22, 30, 37–8, 67  
liberation theology 34, 43  
literacy 27, 41, 52, 56, 58, 69  
logging 11, 15, 71  
Ludovico 68, 69  
Lula 42–3, 44–5, 45, 53
- Macuxi 57, 86  
Madeira river 14, 73  
malnutrition 10–11, 61  
Manaus 70, 71  
Maranhão 67, 68, 69  
Mato Grosso do Sul 58  
MDB 42  
media ownership 52–3  
medicines  
    traditional 12, 66, 74  
Mendes, Chico 72  
migration 21, 31  
military regime 33–6, 47–8, 52  
mining: *see* gold; iron-ore  
moringa seeds 66  
MPA 25  
MST 21–5, 40, 57, 77–8  
Mura 57
- Nambiquara 10  
newspapers 54  
NGOs 54, 58, 63, 66, 68, 74
- Olinda 78  
Oxfam 79, 85, 86
- palma cactus 66  
Palmares 17  
Pantanal 5  
Paraguai river 5  
Parakaná 10  
Paraná river 5  
PDT 42, 55  
Peasant Leagues 20  
Pelé 18, 75  
Pernambuco 24, 61  
PFL 45  
pharmaceuticals 74  
Pilot Programme to Conserve the  
    Brazilian Rainforest 12, 74  
Pinheiro, Paula Sergio 38  
PMDB 45  
police 20, 23–4, 32, 37–9  
POLIS 32  
political parties 41, 42  
politics 7, 33–6, 41, 53–4, 77–8  
Porto Alegre 32
- poverty 6–7, 51, 63, 80, 85  
Prezéis programme 32  
privatisation, state industry 51  
prostitution 59, 73  
protests 33, 35–6, 41  
PSDB 45  
PT: *see* Workers' Party  
PTB 42  
public policy 79
- quebradeiras* 67–9  
*quilombos* 17, 19
- race 16–19, 38, 41, 75–6  
radio 13, 54  
rainforest 12, 70, 72–3, 74  
Real Plan 49–50  
Recife 30, 32, 33  
religion 6, 21, 34, 43, 78  
    *see also* Catholic Church  
resettlements 67–8  
Rio de Janeiro 17, 30  
Rio Grande do Sul 32, 57  
road-building 9, 35, 71  
rubber 71–2
- Salvador 78  
São Francisco river 5, 63  
São Francisco Valley 66  
São Paulo 19, 30, 31, 37  
Sarney, José 54  
school meals 50, 56, 59  
schools 26–7, 55  
    *see also* education  
seed banks 65  
self-help projects 23–4  
shamans 15  
da Silva, Benedita 19  
da Silva, Zuleide 69  
slavery 16–17, 71  
small farmers 10, 20, 24, 25, 63–6  
soap-making 68  
social service 31, 50  
soya 10, 73  
street children 37, 59, 83  
SUDENE 50  
sugar 12, 46, 58  
Suruí 10, 11  
sustainable development 72–3, 85
- taxation 51, 61  
television 19, 36, 52–4  
Teresina 26, 27  
Tikuna 11
- Tocantins-Araguaia river complex 73  
trade unions 47  
transport 31  
TV Globo 19, 36, 53
- UDR 21  
UN Human Development Index 7  
unemployment 25, 48  
Uni-Acre 13  
UNICEF 59, 68, 80  
universities 19, 55–6  
urban population 26–32, 80, 85
- Vargas, Getúlio 47  
Vargas, Yvette 42  
Viana, Jorge 13  
Vila Irmã Dulce 26, 28–9  
Vila Padre Cícero 29, 30  
violence 38–9, 73  
    *see also* police  
voting 19, 41, 63–4
- wages 17, 58, 80  
Waimiri Atroari 10  
waste recycling 7, 59  
water resources 5, 63  
water supplies 26, 28, 60, 63–6, 80  
women  
    activism 15, 19  
    Carnival 78  
    health care 62  
    reproductive rights 43  
    sexual exploitation 17  
    violence against 39  
Workers' Party 13, 32, 42–3, 59  
World Bank 22, 72
- Xavante 11  
Xucuru 57
- Yanomami 6, 10, 11, 38, 57  
Zumbi 17, 19

