

## In Brazil, Rural Illiteracy Is 27%

Contributed by Vitor Abdala  
Friday, 25 February 2005

There was a decline in Brazil's illiteracy rate between 1993 and 2003, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics' (IBGE) Synthesis of Social Indicators, 2004, released yesterday.

According to the study, approximately 11.6% of the Brazilian population 15 years of age or older was illiterate in 2003, compared with 16.4% ten years earlier.

The rate is higher among men (11.7%) than among women (11.4%). The disparity is far greater when urban and rural areas are compared. While illiteracy in cities is only 8.9%, in rural areas it amounts to 27.2%.

For the head of the IBGE's Division of Social Indicators, Ana Lucia Saboia, there is room for improving the illiteracy rate, but the current index is already favorable.

"The group considered illiterate includes many elderly individuals. In the decade of the '50's, there wasn't all this availability of schools, so the elderly population exerts a big influence on our rate."

According to Mirian Paura, professor of the Faculty of Education at the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Uerj), the campaign against illiteracy should involve all spheres of society.

"Illiteracy is not just a temporary problem. We have to organize projects and programs to make literacy permanent all over Brazil, in an effort in conjunction with churches, unions, and associations," she said.

Translation: David Silberstein  
Agência Brasil