

Brazil to Reserve 300,000 Places in College for the Poor

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Brazil's Ministry of Education (MEC) plans to add 180 thousand places by 2006 through the University for All Program (Prouni) and, in the long run, wants to offer a total of 300 thousand openings in Brazilian universities. The program, which was launched yesterday September 13, is intended to reserve places in private universities for low-income students.

In accordance with the program, private universities will be exempted from four taxes in exchange for 10% of their available openings.

The four taxes are: the Corporate Income Tax, the Social Contribution on Net Profits (CSLL), the Social Integration Program (PIS), and the Contribution to Finance Social Security (Cofins).

Charitable universities, which already enjoy exemption from taxes, are expected, for their part, to set aside 20% of their openings for low-income students.

"We wanted to combine two things: tax relief, on the one hand, and access to people who are unable to pay the monthly fees," explained the acting Minister of Education, Fernando Haddad.

To be eligible to participate, students are required to have completed their secondary education exclusively in public schools. The selection process will be done in two stages.

The first will be carried out by the Ministry, which will analyze the scores obtained and the socio-economic profile presented in the National High School Exam (Enem).

The second will be performed by the institutions, which will use the names sent by the MEC to define the final list of candidates.

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