

Brazil Offers Working Children US\$ 8 to US\$ 16 a Month to Lure Them to School

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Over half the children and adolescents who entered the federal government's Program for the Eradication of Child Labor (Peti) abandoned activities related to agriculture and sidewalk commerce.

43.59% of a total of 568,608 beneficiaries came from agriculture, and 12.06%, from sidewalk commerce.

These data may be found in a pioneer study of the characteristics of Peti beneficiaries, released today by the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation (MDS).

According to the survey, 247,871 children worked in the agricultural sector, and 68,558 were street vendors.

The third largest quantity was engaged in domestic labor (38,972 or 6.85%), followed by trash sorting (36,236 or 6.4%), and the food sector (4,433 or 4.3%).

Children were also removed from the areas of shining shoes, fishing, brickyards, porters, watching and cleaning cars, charcoal kilns, and mining.

The research was carried out between December, 2004, and April, 2005, with information from 2,011 municipalities, representing 72% of the municipalities in which the program is operating and 61% of the children and adolescents who are receiving assistance.

The data that were gathered will be used to facilitate the inclusion of all of the government's social programs in a single register.

At present, the Peti is helping 930,824 children and adolescents between the ages of 7 and 15.

The program withdraws youngsters from unhealthy, dangerous, strenuous, or degrading activities and offers them a stipend of US\$ 16.12 (40 reais) in urban zones and US\$ 10.07 (25 reais) in rural areas.

The program also provides cultural and athletic activities during the period when the children are not at school by transferring US\$ 4.03 (R\$ 10) per Peti beneficiary to municipalities in urban zones and US\$ 8.06 (R\$ 20) in rural areas.

The government plans to extend coverage to a million youngsters by the end of the year.

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