

Child Labor Still Serious Problem in Rural Brazil

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The number of school-age children and adolescents who work has been in decline in Brazil for a number of years even though the situation is still grave mainly in rural areas. The latest Household Survey (PNAD) by the government statistical bureau (IBGE) shows a slight decline in the use of child work.

According to the survey, which classified youngsters in three age groups, between 2002 and 2003, the percentage of children between the ages of 5 and 9 who were working fell from 1.7% to 1.3%.

The percentage of children between the ages of 10 and 14 who were working fell from 11.3% to 10.4%; and the percentage of children between the ages of 15 and 17 who were working fell from 31.8% to 30.3%.

For the sake of comparison, in 1993 the percentages of those working in each of the three age groups were 3.2%, 19.6% and 46%, respectively.

The numbers show a positive picture of the situation in which fewer young people of school age are working and more of them are in the classroom.

"The number of children in school in all the age groups has risen," says Angela Jorge, of the IBGE. "And that means more people are getting an education."

However, the PNAD found that in rural areas children continue to work in large numbers. The IBGE reports that child labor is most predominant on family farms where the children are needed to help with the work.

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