

Brazilian Blind Children Will Finally Have School Manuals in Braille

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For the first time in Brazil, all visually deficient students who attend public schools or specialized non-profit institutions in the eight years of fundamental education will receive books in braille in mathematics, Portuguese, history, geography, and science.

An agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Dorina Nowill Foundation for the Blind is providing US\$ 1.07 million (2.6 million reais) for the edition of 70 thousand books in braille, which will be distributed to around 5 thousand students, starting in August.

According to Maria Glória da Mota, technical consultant in the Special Secretariat of the Ministry, experiences have been underway since 2000 to introduce books in braille in schools.

She said that, beginning in 2007, when publishing companies that supply books to the Ministry launch new editions, they will have to publish them in braille as well.

Maria Glória says that the lack of access to books in braille leads to learning differences between children who can see and those who suffer from visual deficiencies.

"Children who can see learn to read very young. Blind children only get in touch with reading materials when they're made available to them in braille. Blind children sometimes lag behind children that see, because they lack access to books in braille."

Mota also commented that by the end of Lula's term in office, students in high school and Youth and Adult Education will also have access to books in braille. Digitalized versions will also be produced, for students to be able to listen to the contents of books.

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