

## 70% of Brazil's Fishermen Are Illiterate

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The Literate Brazil Program is expected to benefit another 2.2 million youths and adults this year. This information comes from the coordinator of the project, Tancredo Maia. According to Maia, the total number of individuals benefited will total 5.4 million by December.

The program, which was inaugurated in 2003, is aimed at people who are 15 years old or more. According to the coordinator, 55% of the literacy students are women, most of them between the ages of 30 and 45, an age bracket that embraces 48-50% of the total number of students enrolled in the program.

To ensure that this year's goal is met, according to the coordinator, US\$ 94.8 million (220 million reais) will be allotted to literacy instruction and the training of literacy teachers. "We need to invest heavily in literacy instruction," he declared.

The project counts on partnerships with state departments of education, municipal governments, social institutions, non-governmental organizations, and central labor unions.

The collaboration with the Ministry of Health, for example, provides for the distribution of eyeglasses to students who have visual problems, "especially those who belong to older age groups." This kind of problem, Maia added, is one of the reasons that students desist.

The coordinator also referred to the agreement with the Special Secretariat of Aquiculture and Fishing to teach fishermen to read and write. A survey conducted by the Secretariat indicates that 70% of this population is illiterate.

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