

## Child Labor in Brazil Is Part of Family Culture

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The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics' (IBGE) Household Survey (PNAD) reports that child labor has fallen in Brazil, but still continues to be a serious problem.

In 2004, 11.8% of children between the ages of 5 and 17 were working, 75% of them on farms. More young boys (15.3%) than girls (8.1%) work.

The problem has regional differences. The rate is lowest in the Southeast (7.9%), and highest in the Northeast (14.8%) and South (14.9%).

But, according to Angela Filgueiras Jorge, of the IBGE, children work in the Northeast to add to family income, and in the South it is part of the local culture for families to work together.

The Brazilian Program for the Eradication of Child Labor (Peti) will be incorporated into the Family Grant by the end of the year.

In a radio interview, Brazil's Minister of Social Development, Patrus Ananias, said that the change will make it possible to look after all the country's children and adolescents whose working conditions are unsuitable.

"With the consolidation, the transfer of resources will be done through the Family Grant, and all of Peti's resources will be devoted to socio-educational activities, to this program of partnership and cooperation with municipal administrations," he explained.

The Minister estimates that Brazil has 3 million working children and adolescents who are underage and exposed to unsalutary conditions. All of them should receive assistance from the Peti by the end of 2006.

At present the Peti benefits one million youngsters. The families that live in cities receive R\$ 40 per child. In rural areas the grant is worth R\$ 25.

Municipal administrations also receive funds from the Peti to offer the youngsters socio-educational activities, such as school reinforcement and cultural and athletic activities.

Ananias said that consolidation of the lists of the two programs will be carried out by the Ministry itself.

"The benefits will be very great. We are facing and overcoming challenges as a result of their being different programs, with different matrixes and lists. So we are performing the consolidation with security and determination, but with prudence so that no harm is done to the families that are served," he affirmed.

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