

Firearms Quite Common in Brazilian Public Schools

Contributed by Aécio Amado
Monday, 27 March 2006

A Brazilian survey entitled "Daily Life in Schools, Amid the Violence," which was presented at the World Education Forum on Saturday in Nova Iguaçu, state of Rio de Janeiro, found that firearms are common in schools and that parents, teachers and students are no strangers to the problem.

The survey was conducted in 2003, and interviewed 9,744 students and 1,678 adults in six large cities (Belém, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre and Brasília).

As guns are used to settle disputes at school, it is not all that surprising to find that a gun may be carried by a boy or a girl.

What is surprising is that over 30% of the students, and 29% of the adults, interviewed said they had seen a firearm at school. A small percentage of the students (less than 5%) admitted to carrying a weapon (firearm or knife) to school at one time or another.

All of them said they carried a weapon to protect themselves and had no intention of attacking anyone or committing a crime.

The survey was conducted in public schools in urban areas with more than 500 students. According to Miriam Abramovay, a sociologist, such schools usually have a lack of human and material resources, high levels of failure and repetition, little upkeep and greater variation in student family income and background. She says private schools are more homogeneous and were not surveyed.

Agência Brasil