

## Brazilian Expert in Portugal Teaches How to Fight Child Labor

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The Portuguese-speaking countries want to learn strategies from Brazil to combat child labor. The exchange of experiences will occur at the conference, Combating the Exploitation of Child Labor in the Portuguese-Speaking World, which gets underway this Thursday, May 11, in Lisbon, Portugal.

At the encounter the national Social Assistance secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation, Osvaldo Russo, will give a presentation on the Program for the Eradication of Child Labor (PETI).

According to Russo, countries such as Portugal, Angola, Mozambique, and East Timor have already expressed an interest in adopting policies similar to Brazil's. "This integration is essential," he observed.

Last week the International Labor Organization (ILO) praised what Brazil has done to combat child labor and characterized the country as a model for the rest of the world.

From the ILO's perspective, Brazil has earned this status as a result of various strategies, including social and economic policies that have raised families' living standards and enabled children to remain in school, away from the workplace.

A report released by the ILO last month shows that the number of working youth in Brazil between the ages of 10 and 17 decreased by 36.4% from 1992 and 2004. This percentage is even greater in the 5-9 age bracket: 60.9%.

By integrating the PETI with the Family Grant program, the government intends to increase the number of children benefited from 1 million to 3.2 million by the end of this year. The PETI is a direct income transfer program for families with children and adolescents prematurely engaged in the workplace.

Through the PETI, families in urban areas are eligible to receive monthly grants of US\$ 19.12 (R\$ 40) per child, while the monthly grant for families in rural areas is US\$ 11.95 (R\$ 25).

In return, parents must keep their children enrolled in school and in extracurricular activities when they are not in school, as well as participating themselves in vocational courses to improve their income.

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