

Brazilian Volunteers Teaching to Read Win UNESCO Award

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A Brazilian educational project carried out in Curitiba, capital of the southern Brazilian state of Paraná was one of the winners the International Reading Association Literacy Prize of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Curitiba was awarded for its Alfabetizando com Saúde (Literacy with Health) program, conducted by the city hall. The project teaches adults to read and write, free of charge.

The unique feature is the fact that teaching takes place within the municipality's healthcare units, in the afternoons and evenings. Teachers are volunteers from within the community itself, housewives, university students, retired and self-employed persons.

The program currently has 31 student groups, totaling over 300 students and 48 volunteers. "Literacy with Health" was created in 2002 and, since then, 1,900 people have learned to read and write, divided into 212 groups, in a process involving 100 volunteers.

The learning material, elaborated at municipal healthcare and education secretariats in Curitiba, educate people for disease prevention, in addition to teaching them to read and write.

According to information disclosed by the UNESCO, the Brazilian program has proven its success over the years, and is a result of the collaboration among organizations in the healthcare and education areas in the city of Curitiba.

Winners were announced last week in Paris, France, and the award will be granted on September 8, also in the French capital, to celebrate the International Literacy Day. Winners should receive US\$ 20,000.

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