ACHIEVING GOAL 02 OF THE UNITED NATIONS' MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

To help fight inequalities and other factors that negatively affect its education system, the Brazilian government has signed many agreements with international agencies, among which are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established by the United Nations (UN). Through analysis of the world scenario and the global initiatives towards education, this study aims to draw a correlation between the completion of Goal 2 of the MDGs, i.e., achieve universal primary education, and the problems and prospects for Brazil.

Indeed, the importance of education to society is unquestionable as it influences many different aspects of life, by helping combat poverty, aiding in development and assisting in health issues, among others. Furthermore, it is crucial not only to the personal development of individuals, but it also provides greater understanding of social rules, which increases understanding of diversity. In a country as big and diverse as Brazil, it is fundamental to take into consideration the cultural, geographic and socio-economic differences in order to find solutions that can be used towards the development of the country.

Although the Brazilian government has taken effective measures to ensure that all children have access to primary education, the same cannot be said about its quality, as the numbers in educational exclusion in the country are staggering, with more than 16 million illiterates. The major issues relating to education in the country have to do with the poor quality of what is being provided to the students, and the present study points to many factors that help explain this situation. High repetition and dropout rates mark the country's education system, making it crucial to develop strategies and measures that will assure that students learn effectively. Nevertheless, Brazil's decentralised education system makes it hard to put in practice national changes and implement policies that could help improve the quality of education.

Drawn widely from analysis of figures from the Brazilian 2005 school census, the findings revealed that there are many issues that still need to be addressed in order to guarantee that Brazilian students have an equal and just opportunity to learn.

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"Quality is indispensable to guarantee the social and political role of education"

Tarso Genro (author's translation)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANEB	National Basic Schooling Evaluation
ANRESC	National Academic Achievement Evaluation
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DDE	Money Directly to Schools
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ENC	National Course Exam
ENEM	National Upper-Secondary Education Exam
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FNDE	National Education Development Fund
FUNDEB	Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Schooling and Appreciation of Education Professionals
FUNDEF	Fund for Development and Maintenance of Primary Education and Teaching Valorisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IBGE	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
INEP	National Institute for Education Research
IPEA	National Institute of Applied Economic Research
LDB	National Education Guidelines and Framework Law
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAE	Centre for Strategic Matters
NERs	Net Enrolment Rates
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PNAD	National Household Sample Survey
PNLD	National Textbook Programme
PPP	Purchasing Power Parties
SAEB	National Basic Education Evaluation System
UN	The United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The following study will firstly provide an outline of the global scenario and offer information pertaining to the United Nations Organisation's (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their importance to the improvement of developing countries and consequently the world, and subsequently will explain how it reflects on the reality of schools in Brazil, one of the biggest and most populated countries in the world. The present chapter aims to provide background information on the status of the world in present days and outlines some of the pressing issues related to developed and developing countries and explains the importance of education for the world, within the framework of the MDGs. This initial examination was based on analysis of previous literature on the different topics covered in this study, i.e., the global scenario, the MDGs, educational issues and the situation in Brazil.

The methodology adopted in this study is covered in chapter II, which refers to the research problem and questions, identifies previous research on the subject, states the research design adopted and the data collection methods used. Furthermore, ethical issues as well as validity and reliability matters are also mentioned, along with the limitations encountered during the elaboration of this study.

Chapter III analyses the Millennium Development Goals and Goal 02 specifically. The educational scenario in Latin America in general, and Brazil in particular, is addressed, before furthering discussions on where the region and Brazil stand in relation to the prospect of achieving universal primary education. The three indicators related to the Goal, i.e., net enrolment ratio in primary education, proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5, and literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, are then discussed in this chapter.

Subsequently, background information on Brazil and its education system will be provided in chapter IV and further discussion on how Brazil is coping with achieving Goal 02 of the MDGs, which focuses on ensuring that all children have access to

primary education by 2015, will be done. Furthermore, it will address the situation of the quality of the education being provided in Brazilian educational institutions. In the final chapter, discussions and conclusions are drawn, along with possible relations between the government's desire to fulfil the objectives set out by the United Nations and a disregard for the quality of the education being supplied.

1.1) The Global Agenda

At the turn of the new century, the world found itself in a stage of high development and even higher inequalities. While developed countries continued to soar in the international scenario with prosperous economies, developing nations struggled to keep up and improve their living standards, creating a world that has been the richest ever, but with the larger part of the population living on the margins of society. This is likely the result of economic growth and development that did not necessarily focus on combating poverty and social inequities, consequently increasing the gap between rich and poor, and fomenting social exclusion.

While in the past, these issues were restricted to the countries which suffered from them, with globalisation and the ability to cross borders and communicate with different cultures easily, problems created by the lack of development are now a concern for the entire world because they have global repercussions. This is why both extremes of this economic pendulum – developed and developing countries – have been summoned to work together to ensure the survival of all mankind. It became clear that combating poverty required more than local political policies.

One of the main reasons for the constant poverty indices in the less developed countries, and Latin America in particular, has to do with slow and unstable economic growth and the lack of qualified jobs, i.e. jobs that require technical training or tertiary education. The UN estimates that 43% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean is classified as poor, with 19% being at the level of extreme poverty (United Nations, 2005a). With such high poverty rates, and taking into consideration that these poor communities are deprived of services and conditions that can help improve their social

status, it seems unthinkable that the gap between rich and poor nations can narrow. This means that in order for progress to take place, developed countries should work with these developing nations to allow the development of the entire world.

One of the main weapons to fight this scenario is through education. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) estimates that in the 20% poorest population in Latin America, one of every four youngsters ranging from 15 to 19 years does not conclude the basic schooling, while in the 20% richest, only one in every 25 youngsters of the same age does not finish this cycle (United Nations, 2005a, p. 90). While there are other regions around the globe – as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean – which are in an even worse state, this study will focus only on Brazil, and its current situation.

Knowing the importance of education in the fight against poverty and inequalities, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has established the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an evaluation that occurs every three years and aims to measure the skills of 15 year-olds in schools, regardless of the grade they are enrolled in. This evaluation is a valuable tool to help measure the quality of what is being taught to children in more than 40 countries. As can be seen in Figure 1.1, in the mathematics evaluation Brazil has presented the worst performance of all, while in reading, Brazilian students did not fare much better, placing in one of the last positions, as observed in Figure 1.2[1].

Brazil, along with China, India and Russia is currently said to be one of the promising rising nations of the new global agenda (the so-called BRIC group). However, the country will only rise to its potential if changes occur in the system to ensure that the inequalities that prevail in the country diminish. While the figures above point to serious issues in the Brazilian education system, they also show that all countries, even the most prosperous ones, still present deficiencies in their systems. This is where new global policies come into focus, in order to help reduce inequities in the world and create a fairer place for all. These initiatives have been gaining momentum, and have found, through the United Nations, a new force: the Millennium Development Goals.

[1] It should be noted that although Brazil is not a member of the OECD, it takes part in the studies due to its commitment to improve the quality of life in the country.

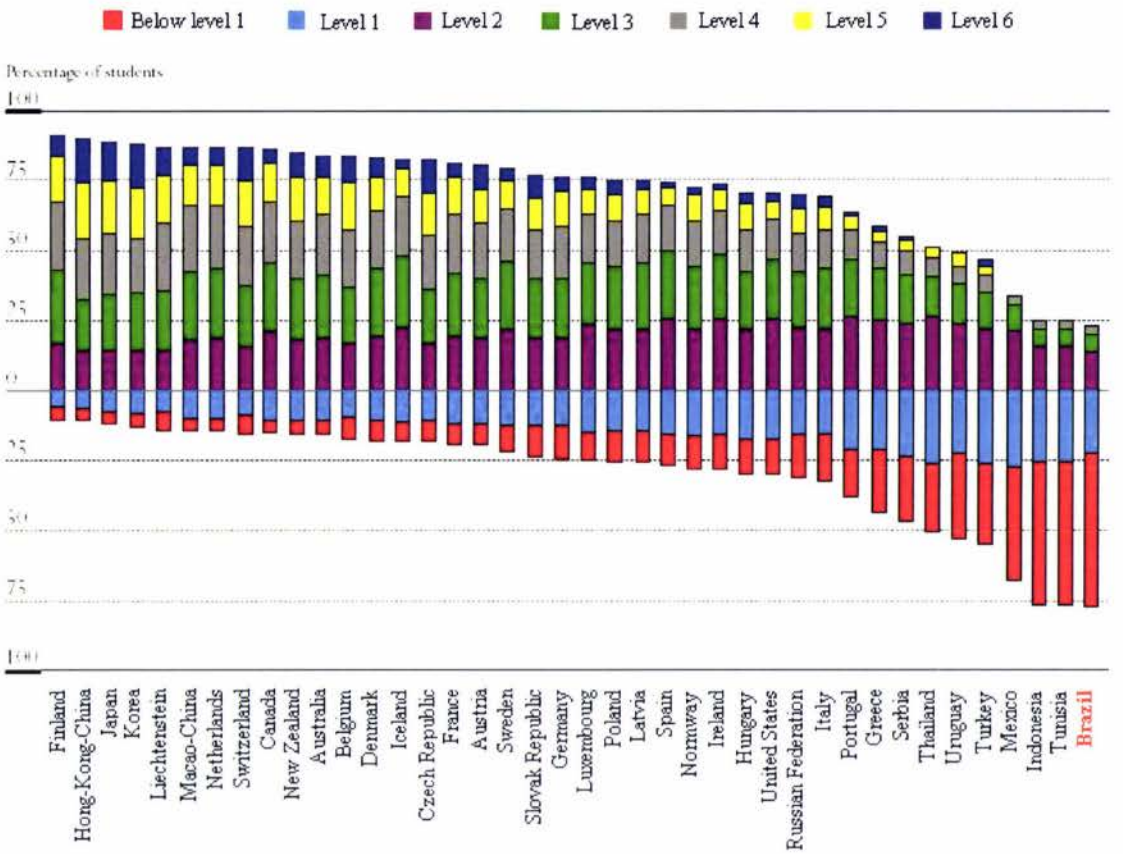

Figure 1.1: PISA 2003 results: Percentage of students at each level of proficiency on mathematics – OECD countries

Note: Countries are ranked based on order of percentage of 15 year-olds in Levels 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (descending)
Source: OECD PISA 2003

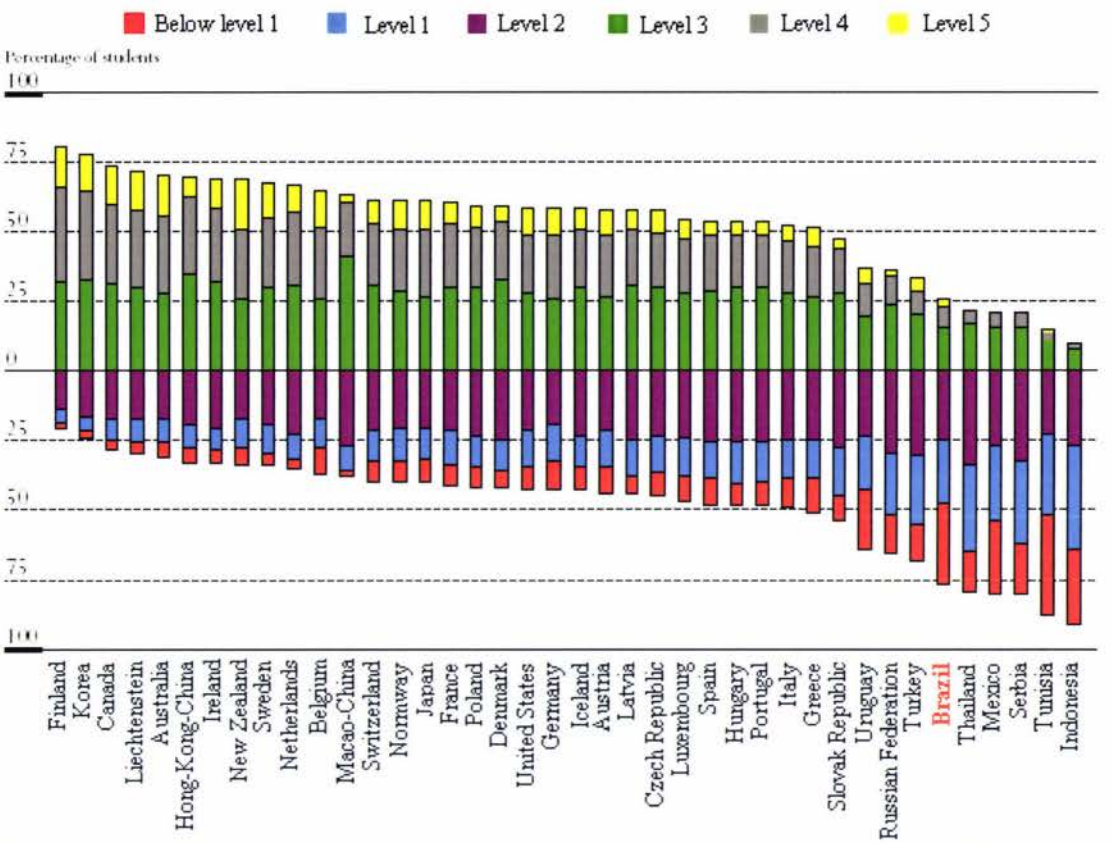

Figure 1.2: PISA 2003 results: Percentage of students at each level of proficiency on reading – OECD countries

Note: Countries are ranked based on order of percentage of 15 year-olds in Levels 3, 4 and 5 (descending)
Source: OECD PISA 2003

1.2) The Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established in 2000 as a commitment to try to improve international co-operation and guarantee a more equitable and fair life status for countries around the world. It serves as a map that aims to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, universalise primary education, promote gender equity, improve health, reverse environmental deterioration and foment a global alliance for development by 2015. In order to determine which were to be the goals for the millennium, the United Nations put together a series of international conferences on different subjects. By the year 2000, the complete list of objectives, targets and indicators was introduced and 147 chiefs of State and Government along with 42 ministers and heads of delegation signed the Millennium Declaration (United Nations, 2000). Brazil was one of them.

Prior to the creation of the MDGs, other major initiatives were put in place to help promote education, from the conception of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, to the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, as can be seen in Table 1.1. The Millennium Declaration, however, became a benchmark for all countries committed to the current and alarming state of the world.

Table 1.1: International forums for universal primary education, 1934-2002

YEAR	FORUM
1934	International Conference on Public Education, Geneva
1948	UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, New York
1951	International Conference on Public Education, Geneva
1952-54	UNESCO Regional Conferences on Free and Compulsory Education, Bombay, Cairo and Lima
1960	UNESCO Meeting of Representatives of Asian Member States on Primary and Compulsory Education, Karachi (Karachi Plan)
1961	UNESCO Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, Addis Ababa (Addis Ababa Plan)
1962	UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning, Santiago (Santiago Plan)
1966	UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning, in the Arab States, Tripoli
1970	International Development Strategy for the Second UN Development Decade, New York
1979	UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning of Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City
1980	International Development Strategy for the Third UN Development Decade, New York
1990	UNICEF World Summit for Children
1990	World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien (Jomtien Declaration)
1993	Education for All Summit of Nine High-Population Countries, Delhi (Delhi Declaration)
1995	Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action)
1996	Shaping the 21st Century, OECD Development Assistance Committee
2000	World Education Forum, Dakar (Dakar Declaration)
2000	Millennium Summit, New York (Millennium Declaration)
2001	Road map for the Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration
2002	UNICEF Special Session on Children
2002	UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child

Source: UN Millennium Project, 2005

There are eight Goals divided into 18 targets and more than 40 indicators which outline what needs to be done in order to fulfil them, as seen in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: The Millennium Development Goals

GOAL 1	Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger	*TARGET 1* To halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US$1 PPP[2] a day. *TARGET 2* To halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
GOAL 2	Achieving universal primary education	*TARGET 3* To ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.
GOAL 3	Promoting gender equality and empowering women	*TARGET 4* To eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.
GOAL 4	Reducing child mortality	*TARGET 5* To reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.
GOAL 5	Improving maternal health	*TARGET 6* To reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate.
GOAL 6	Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	*TARGET 7* To halve, by 2015, and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. *TARGET 8* To halve, by 2015, and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
GOAL 7	Ensuring environmental sustainability	*TARGET 9* To integrate principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and to reverse the loss of environmental resources. *TARGET 10* To halve by 2015 the proportion of people without permanent and sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. *TARGET 11* To have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
GOAL 8	Establishing a global partnership for development	*TARGET 12* To develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.

[2] Purchasing Power Parties.

(cont.)		*TARGET 13* To address the least developed countries' special needs. *TARGET 14* To address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing states. *TARGET 15* To deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term. *TARGET 16* To develop decent and productive work for youth, in co-operation with the developing countries. *TARGET 17* To provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries, in co-operation with pharmaceutical companies. *TARGET 18* To make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies, in co-operation with the private sector.

Source: MDG Report/UN, 2005

These objectives and targets are crucial to help measure progress and shift focus to the most deficient areas of development. The targets are important because they provide a clear image of what is expected of the world by 2015, the final year established for the accomplishment of all Goals. The indicators help understand where exactly each country stands, that is, how far along the line they are in achieving each of the Goals. The Millennium Development Goals therefore set a beginning and outline an end, leaving the middle to be obtained by each individual government. For this reason, all countries that signed the Declaration agreed on having regular reviews in order to measure the progress being made towards the fulfilment of the Goals.

It should be noted that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) points out that some of the Goals are no longer applicable to Latin America (United Nations, 2005a). Gender equity (Goal 3), for example, has been nearly met in the region and in Brazil, where there is practically an equal share of boys and girls enrolled in Brazilian schools. In fact, a little over 50% of the students enrolled in Brazilian schools are women. In relation to Goal 2, this is true with indicator 1, where universal access to primary education has been almost accomplished in the Brazilian education system.

The Millennium project is an important initiative to help reduce the 'poverty trap' in the world (United Nations, 2005a, p. 259). This poverty trap has been called a "vicious cycle": extremely poor individuals are faced with having to use their entire income for consumption, without being able to save any money or invest it. This consequently stalls economic growth, making poverty levels high to the point where individuals cannot save any money to try to improve their social condition (United Nations, 2005a). To state an example, the United Nations estimates that more than 25% of the Brazilian population situated in urban areas are living in slums and with the current policies, have no means of improving their way of life (United Nations, 2005a, p. 277). To free the world of such a situation it would be necessary for more developed countries to provide assistance in order to get the developing nations out of this trap. Poverty in the Northeast is almost twice the Brazilian average and today, almost a third of the Brazilian population lives below the poverty line established by the Brazilian National Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) (World Bank, 2004).

It is important to remember that the MDGs are a commitment not only by governments and international agencies, but most importantly, by all levels of administration: international, national, regional, municipal, communitarian, family and individual. In order to be successful, they must be a vow of both developed countries and those still in development, taking into consideration that many of the developing nations require external aid from other countries or the international community to help fight their existing problems. The wealthier nations should understand the importance of helping the developing countries for the benefit of the entire world, and the latter should understand how to better use their resources in order to improve their standards, and consequently, the global scenario.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), five solid pillars sustain the efforts towards the MDGs: research, reports, campaigns, people participation and country support (UNDP, n.d.). Only when all these factors are put together will there be any results in the attempt to universalise assistance to complete the objectives. This means that governments should combine to ensure that global policies reach all levels of society. For this reason it is crucial that different nations have the same commitment over issues that will affect the world in general. This is where the MDGs come in and show their value. The MDGs are a landmark in the international scenario,

as they demand joint efforts from both developed and less developed countries in order to work. In fact, the countries' commitment to the MDGs has been growing consistently as other international conferences and summits bring to light their importance in ensuring equal and proper living conditions for all.

1.3) Quality Education

The benefits of education to society are indisputable and assume the centrepiece in the fight for an equal and just global agenda, as better-educated individuals ensure higher living standards, which consequently help economic growth. For this reason, education is a right that enables more than just the personal development of individuals. It provides a better knowledge of social rules, which increases understanding of diversity and acceptance and enables a better quality of life to all those who benefit from it.

Education helps individuals become more informed about different matters in daily life. Health issues vary considerably according to how educated the population is. This is because better informed individuals can prevent diseases and make knowledgeable decisions. Education also affects family planning, as higher levels of education usually result in more care and concern over family health. In addition, more educated women have fewer children and are more likely to go through prenatal care, helping prevent child mortality. This is why it is crucial to guarantee that it reaches all levels of society. Nevertheless, in order for it to be effective and assume its part in society, education must be tightly bound to quality. Schooling cannot be beneficial to students if it lacks quality because they will not learn properly.

With that in mind, it is crucial to define quality, and what quality education entails. An education that is of high quality focuses on an individual's basic learning needs, and can enable people to develop their cognitive and social competencies appropriately. On this matter, the Jomtien Conference states that:

> *Basic learning needs comprise both essential learning tools and the basic learning content required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their*

> *full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning (United Nations, 1990, article 1, paragraph 1).*

Therefore, universalising education is of extreme significance to the development of a country, as seen in the 2003 Human Development Report, which states that

> *Lack of education robs an individual of a full life. It also robs society of a foundation for sustainable development because education is critical to improving health, nutrition and productivity. The education Goal is thus central to meeting the other Goals.* (UNDP, 2003b, p. 6)

Colin Brock and Simon Schwartzman (2005) claim that *"There is no doubt that a quality universal basic education is a requisite and a major requirement of every modern society, for the sake of social equity, cultural values and economic functionality"* (p. 15) (author's translation). With that in mind, it should be noted that quality relates to many different factors and is fundamental for the education environment because it should help enlighten people to fight discrimination and establish laws of cohabitation and respect for all. For this reason, academic practices should focus on motivation and collective work; school management should be able to get students, teachers, parents and the community working together for a common purpose and teachers should have proper salaries, a good working environment and stability and participation in school life, aligned with continuous learning in order to entice students' participation and development.

As will be seen in Chapter IV, Brazil has taken positive measures to ensure that all children have access to school. The problem however, is that many of the students are faced with an education that is extremely low in quality, as seen by the results of the 2003 PISA shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2. It can be said that the country currently faces more difficult issues in regard to the problems of education then it did in the past. Dealing with the quality of education is, at some levels, harder than dealing with the lack of it. This is because it is easier to build schools, pay the teachers to be there and put children in them, than it is to properly run a school, motivate teachers to have better training and knowledge and make children effectively learn how to read and write. Furthermore, as Vinod Thomas (2005) points out, it is easy to monitor and control

enrolment indices and to supervise the amount of enrolments in educational institutions, but it is far harder to control the quality of what is being taught.

Both managerial and financial issues should be taken into account if the government is to change the quality of the education being provided to Brazilian students. When children do not learn how to read and write properly in the first years of their academic life, then all other policies become compensatory and focused on trying to repair the damage done by the lack of quality in education, and even though students may continue to climb the education ladder, they are not equally equipped to benefit from the higher levels (Oliveira, 2004, p. 130). The problem, therefore, is not that students who do not learn will fail the academic year, but the fact that many who do not learn, actually pass.

1.4) Education in Brazil

Maria Lúcia de Arruda Aranha (1996) traces a parallel between the major events in world and Brazilian history with those of the education scenario in order to provide a detailed outline of how education affects the social, political and economic aspects of daily life, from tribal times to present days. The author then traces a comparison between the global educational scenario and the Brazilian one and states that during the period of tribal society, education was passed on from the elders to all the individuals in the tribe, through very informal ways. As time passed and civilisation started to advance, education started to have a more formal approach and assume a more intellectualised profile, which helped set apart the different groups within society. In Brazil this division was clear, as the elite class received formal instruction while the lower classes were given – if any – only the basic knowledge that would allow them to perform their jobs appropriately. This meant that children from the elite would receive all the proper education to learn and get a higher degree, while the workers' children received only sufficient instruction to learn how to read and write and be prepared to perform daily tasks. This created a 'dualist school' system that separated the teaching skills of the rich and the poor (Aranha, 1996). Although times have changed and

education has become a primary right that is – or should be – guaranteed by the government to all citizens, Brazil is still faced with the division between its classes. This is mainly because educational policies – and consequently the provision of funds – are uneven, with federal, state and municipal governments struggling to find common ground.

This serves to show that education cannot be separate from other daily issues, as it is highly influenced by social, political and economic factors, which reflect many of the discrepancies present in society (Aranha, 1996). Antonio Ibañez Ruiz (2004) claims that the elite was always responsible for running the country and for that reason was never really concerned about offering the rest of the population proper conditions for a peaceful, equitable and democratic development. This helps explain the extremes in Brazil, where approximately three-quarters of the population has fewer than 11 years of study (that is, has not concluded secondary education) and yet has a highly structured postgraduate system which graduates approximately six thousand PhD's a year (Ruiz, 2004, p. 78).

Indeed, the disparities in the country are clearly noticeable in the education system. João Batista de Araújo e Oliveira (2005) also points out the pressing contradictions in the system, where the private education sector ranks close to those of industrialised countries but is available to roughly 10% of the population, while the public sector, which is accessible to most of the individuals, is of a considerably lower quality. Furthermore, despite having a postgraduate system that is classified as the most productive among the emerging economies, more than 75% of the adult population is considered to be only functional literates[3] (Balbachevsky, 2005).

Oliveira (2004) further states that public policies should focus on reducing inequities and promoting more equality through education (p. 28). Sadly, the Brazilian education system is a social and economic divider, which currently has been responsible for increasing the social gap in the country. To make matters worse, the government spends too much money trying to mend flaws in the education system instead of focusing on

[3] It is understood by functional literates those students who have been through a cycle of study but, are incapable of reading or writing a long paragraph in their mother tongue.

doing it right the first time around. This observation is supported by the large number of students who finish 4th grade without being able to read and write properly.

The challenge with the education system in Brazil is not to provide schools for children, but to keep them in it, especially 14 and 15 year-olds, because it is estimated that one-third of the 15 year-olds and two-thirds of the 17 year-olds are either working or looking for a job (Oliveira, 2005, p. 72). Because the Brazilian education system is part-time only, many students are able to study and work, but as a result they start their careers with fewer years of study, and consequently lower wages. Often, the attempt to continue studying, despite having to work, comes from the general knowledge that more years of instruction result in better salaries, but conciliating both is a harsh reality for many and the need to earn money ultimately surpasses the necessity to learn, causing many to leave school.

Without a doubt, Brazilian children are still faced with early labour and fewer years of study. Compared with OECD countries, where the majority of youngsters enter the labour market with 11 years of study, and with east Asian countries with eight years of study, Brazilian youngsters frequently start their working careers with only six years of instruction (World Bank, 2004, p. 38). As a consequence, they have to endure less technical jobs with lower salaries, which means significant loss to the development of the country. Table 1.3 shows numbers of years of study in the Brazilian population by gender and domicile situation according to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD). It can be seen that 11% of the population 10 years old and higher does not have any instruction. These numbers help reinforce the need to change education policies in the country so that Brazil can develop and ensure better conditions for its population.

Table 1.3 – Years of study of population 10 years old and higher, according to domicile situation and gender – Brazil, 2004

Years of Study	Individuals 10 years or higher								
	Total	Men	Women	Urban			Rural		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
No instruction or less than 1 year	**16,973,674**	8,253,177	8,720,497	**11,301,580**	5,086,666	6,214,914	**5,672,094**	3,166,511	2,505,583
1 year	**3,873,836**	2,131,529	1,742,307	**2,635,781**	1,384,039	1,251,742	**1,238,055**	747,490	490,565
2 years	**7,048,239**	3,627,587	3,420,652	**4,993,935**	2,482,081	2,511,854	**2,054,304**	1,145,506	908,798
3 years	**10,732,922**	5,379,764	5,353,158	**8,020,296**	3,935,712	4,084,584	**2,712,626**	1,444,052	1,268,574
4 years	**19,635,995**	9,600,797	10,035,198	**15,314,273**	7,365,965	7,948,308	**4,321,722**	2,234,832	2,086,890
5 years	**11,791,363**	5,804,384	5,986,979	**9,748,680**	4,785,709	4,962,971	**2,042,683**	1,018,675	1,024,008
6 years	**7,612,061**	3,738,465	3,873,596	**6,429,112**	3,143,358	3,285,754	**1,182,949**	595,107	587,842
7 years	**8,082,035**	4,058,541	4,023,494	**6,958,390**	3,486,559	3,471,831	**1,123,645**	571,982	551,663
8 years	**13,924,632**	6,856,996	7,067,636	**12,493,292**	6,140,864	6,352,428	**1,431,340**	716,132	715,208
9 years	**5,216,440**	2,503,350	2,713,090	**4,701,882**	2,259,306	2,442,576	**514,558**	244,044	270,514
10 years	**5,181,140**	2,454,345	2,726,795	**4,743,614**	2,244,199	2,499,415	**437,526**	210,146	227,380
11 years	**25,339,351**	11,438,674	13,900,677	**23,979,540**	10,840,262	13,139,278	**1,359,811**	598,412	761,399
12 years	**2,112,463**	920,006	1,192,457	**2,040,739**	893,165	1,147,574	**71,724**	26,841	44,883
13 years	**1,673,516**	756,327	917,189	**1,631,083**	742,848	888,235	**42,433**	13,479	28,954
14 years	**1,623,396**	675,850	947,546	**1,585,316**	663,207	922,109	**38,080**	12,643	25,437
15 years or more	**8,164,834**	3,628,448	4,536,386	**8,026,485**	3,567,931	4,458,554	**138,349**	60,517	77,832
Undetermined or not declared	**773,900**	370,924	402,976	**682,512**	326,246	356,266	**91 388**	44,678	46,710
Total	**149,759,797**	**72,199,164**	**77,560,633**	**125,286,510**	**59,348,117**	**65,938,393**	**24,473,287**	**12,851,047**	**11,622,240**

Source: IBGE, PNAD 2004.

Many authors (Brock & Schwartzman, 2005; Ferreira & Barros, 2000; Aranha, 1996) point out that when the inequity is significant, there is also inequality in educational resources available to the population. This is because the social and economic environment to which students are exposed largely influences their academic progress. In a country like Brazil, with such a huge income disparity, it is easy to see how the rich benefit from well-equipped schools and well-trained teachers, while the poor are frequently deprived of these items. This brings into light the direct relation between good schools and availability of resources, as well as social-economic conditions and school performance. Nevertheless, it is wrong to imply that only the schools with high

resources are good, but it certainly helps explain why private schools in Brazil are frequently better than public ones.

João Batista de Araújo e Oliveira (2005, p. 59) also emphasises the matter of the quality of education and points out the difficulty in collecting data referring to this issue, because the Brazilian government only started to address this problem in the beginning of the 1990s. Nowadays, there are specific instruments to measure quality in Brazilian educational institutions, such as the National Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) for grades 4 to 8 of primary education and the last level of secondary education; the National Upper-Secondary Education Exam (ENEM) for grades 9 to 11; and the National Course Exam (ENC), for tertiary education. Furthermore, Brazil is an active participant in many international evaluation programmes, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and others.

The main question of this study is not whether Brazil can achieve Goal 2 of the MDGs on the due date (2015), but if it can do so and still ensure that the education provided is of high quality and equitability. As a matter of fact, if the country continues on its current trend, it is very likely that it will fulfil the Goal, provided special attention is given to all the indicators, not only indicator 6, which measures the number of enrolments in primary education. The central point relates to what implications this action brings to the education scenario in Brazil and how it affects the socio-economic development of the children, and consequently, of the country.

1.5) Summary

Brazil is ranked among the largest countries in the world in relation to its people, landmass and economy, but it is also one of the most unequal worldwide. Reducing inequity and exclusion is a major challenge because Brazil is one of the countries with the biggest income disparities in the world. Reducing poverty will depend on economic

growth, and for the latter to occur it is necessary to have a well-founded literate adult population that will work towards the development of the country. This is because education is crucial to all aspects of development and is largely associated with social inequity. It has influences on environmental policies, social programmes and economic growth, among others. Furthermore, it is important to help reach social inclusion, which must underpin the country's economic performance.

There are many reasons that help explain why Brazil is faced with an education system that lacks quality and commitment to the career of teaching, and the subject has been extensively discussed among education experts. Explanations come from early on, as the government in the past was more concerned with the availability of seats and enrolments of students than with what was happening inside the classrooms. After a successful campaign that brought most of the children to school, only recently has the government started to focus on the quality of what is being taught. However, it should be noted that although the lack of quality of teachers is still very present in the Brazilian education system, often having good skills and knowledge is not enough to guarantee that students learn accordingly. Many teachers are put in schools and institutions that do not give them feedback or conditions to teach because many municipalities lack sufficient funding to provide proper working conditions. This is most common in poor communities, precisely where guidance is most needed.

It is crucial to focus and give priority to the basic education and the literacy of children because without this emphasis, equity in Brazilian society will be impossible[4]. In this sense, educational programmes being proposed are beneficial and distinctive because the concept of equity is associated with a rescue of the social debt and the inclusion of individuals in society through all levels of education. Now that the government is finally focusing on the quality issue of education, it is likely that new policies will be implemented towards its improvement. This brings to light the commitment to increase the level of education, not only through internal measures but also adhering to international efforts, such as embracing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

[4] In the present study, it is referred to equity in the education system as the equal opportunity of entrance, progress and successful accomplishment in school.

The reason why education in Brazil currently serves as a divider in society, making it less equitable, is exactly because the system itself separates individuals based on opportunities and social conditions. Even though everyone should benefit from years of education, some profit a lot more than others. The richer population normally has access to the best schools and teachers, while the poor struggle with badly trained – and frequently poorly motivated – teachers in ill-equipped institutions. The system creates a vicious cycle that frequently benefits those who already have more opportunities.

For this reason, the Brazilian government's commitment to the United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals has been a strong and positive one. By signing the Millennium Declaration, and putting a lot of effort in trying to accomplish the different targets, the country is definitely headed in the right direction towards development and prosperity. Indeed, if Brazil continues on this path, it is very likely that it will achieve Goal 02 of the MDGs and guarantee universal primary access to all students. It is vital, however, to look beyond the Goal and provide universal access to all levels of education in order to allow every Brazilian child to climb higher on their academic ladder. But most importantly, the education provided should be of a high standard, with enough quality to make sure that students actually learn accordingly. Good education enlightens citizens and is vital for an equitable and just society.

CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

The following chapter describes the research methodology. It addresses the research problem and the questions that delineate the importance of this study, along with the research design, the data collection methods and analysis, the strengths and limitations and the ethical considerations. Furthermore, it also focuses on issues of validity and reliability that were present during the organisation of this research.

2.1) Research Problem and Questions

The primary aim of this study is to consider whether Brazil can achieve Goal 02 of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To do this, it is necessary to elaborate on the importance of the MDGs to the world in general and to developing countries (i.e., Brazil) in particular. Moreover, an overview of the Brazilian education system is necessary in order to examine the prospects of achieving Goal 02 of the MDGs and the quality of the education available to Brazilian students. It should be noted that Brazil was chosen as the target country of this study not only because it is the researcher's home country, which brings obvious concerns about its development, but also because of Brazil's increasing role in the international scenario.

With this in mind, the major questions to be considered are:

- Can Brazil achieve Goal 02 of the Millennium Development Goals, which established that all countries must achieve universal primary education and ensure that by 2015, children everywhere will complete a full course of primary schooling?
- What are the likely consequences of achieving Goal 02 on the Brazilian education system?

- What are the causes of poor quality of education in Brazil and what measures should be carried out in order to guarantee that all students are enrolled in an education system of high standard?
- What changes could the government implement in order to guarantee that Goal 02 is achieved and quality education is ensured?

2.2) Identification and Review of Previous Research

The research literature on the quality of the Brazilian educational system and on Brazilian progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is extensive. Nevertheless, there are few studies that link both factors – that is – the effects on the quality of education in Brazil and its relation to the attempt to successfully accomplish Goal 02 of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

2.3) Research Design

The following research is an explanatory case study, which aims firstly to describe the importance of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with specific emphasis on Goal 2, which relates to universal access to primary education, and then to outline the state of the Brazilian education system during a specific period of time (from the late 1990s to present days) and further on to explain how they are interrelated. The goal was to collect, organise and summarise data about how Brazil is dealing with fulfilling Goal 02 of the Millennium Development Goals while trying to ensure quality education to all the students and then account for and explain the descriptive information gathered and how they relate to each other.

Quantitative and qualitative measures were both used in this case study: quantitative data related to the education system in Brazil; and qualitative methods were used to gather and interpret data from interviews and draw conclusions from their meanings.

Furthermore, it is concerned with validation – and triangulation, where different methods of data collection were used in order to trace links between the many aspects covered in the research. Moreover, this research is said to be evaluative in the sense that it judges the effects of policies and governmental measures towards an improvement in the quality of education in Brazil and the completion of the Millennium Development Goal in education.

The research is centred on theoretical and qualitative methods, which focus on interpretations of the information gathered through different data collection techniques. Some quantitative methods were used to pull together data that was significant for the account of achievements made by the government in relation to improvements in the educational system or to show the deficiencies present in the educational system and how they affect the Brazilian population.

2.4) Data Collection

Before data collection measures are enumerated, it is important to note that the researcher is the main 'instrument' for data collection (Punch, 2000). This meant primarily that it was up to the researcher to gather facts in a way that would allow correct interpretation of the numbers related to the education being provided in Brazilian schools. With this in mind, data collection was organised in an attempt to minimise issues of access, accountability and ethics, through interviews and analysis of documents, censuses and statistics.

Primary sources (such as statistical data released from different agencies of the Brazilian government and international organisations) were the most utilised sources during data collection and secondary sources were used when there was the possibility of cross-checking the validity of their contents. This is not to say that all information is 100 per cent valid, as this would be a gross overstatement, taking into consideration that no research is free of bias and misinterpretations. Indeed, to some extent bias was

present, as the researcher was dealing with the situation in her home country, but these issues were constantly observed so to reduce their occurrence as much as possible.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) bring attention to the use of triangulation, or *"the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour."* (p. 112). This helps reassure that the data collected is indeed valid because it is being compared with other sources. In this study, triangulation was vital, as the outcomes of the interviews have given the researcher reassurance from the findings emerging from document and statistical analysis regarding the Brazilian education system.

Data collection was done in two different stages. Firstly, data were collected from books, government publications, educational non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations and relevant internet sites regarding international policies in education and the way the Brazilian education system functions. This primary research was fundamental to gathering statistical information related to literacy, schools and teachers in Brazil. It also aimed to determine if any previous study had been made in relation to the completion of Goal 02 of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and its direct impact on the quality of Brazilian education.

After data collection for the introduction and literature review was completed, the researcher went to Brazil and relevant information in relation to the education system was collected, mainly through interviews with teachers both from public and private Brazilian institutions and through recently released official documents from the Brazilian Ministry of Education (such as the 2005 School Census, the Teacher Census, etc), international organisations (such as the United Nations) and other significant sources (such as articles from leading authorities on the Brazilian education system and in the international community).

In fact, document analysis was the most important form of data collection during this research and documents were gathered mainly from official sources. Merriam (1998) points out that "*Documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated"* (p. 126). Additionally, Finnegan (1996) states that:

> *Existing sources, whether in writing, figures or electronic form, are (also) important bases for research. They can function both as the main source for the researcher's conclusions and to supplement information from other sources. The use of existing sources comes in at various stages of the research process (in so far, that is, as these stages are separable).* (p. 138).

Another effective form of data collection is through interviews with relevant participants of the topic being covered by the research. There are three distinctive types of interviews that can be carried out, and each has its advantages and disadvantages. They can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured, depending on their content and on the way they are presented (McKernan, 1996). Structured interviews are similar to questionnaires in the sense that interviewers develop a specific set of questions which respondents are required to answer orally. These types of interviews often limit the responses of the interviewees because they are bound to stick to the specific subject being asked.

Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, give the interviewee the opportunity to respond to questions the best way they deem fit. This is because in this type of interview there is no set of questions that should be answered. Instead, they only revolve around the main topic without being restricted by specific questions. Contrary to structured interviews, where the interviewee is given a predetermined set of questions, with unstructured interviews, it is up to the interviewer to mould the questions as they go along. This means that respondents are free to answer whatever they feel more appropriate in the given subject. The disadvantage of this type of interview is that it is more subject to bias as it is up to the interviewer to select the best responses for the study. Often, this means that the researcher will focus more on his or her personal beliefs or experiences in relation to the topic.

Lastly, interviews can be semi-structured, which means that interviewees are free to talk about the topics but interviewers have some control over what is important and should be addressed in the course of the conversation. This way the interview does not get out of control, and the researcher can be certain that the topics he or she wants to cover are indeed being answered by the respondent.

On the importance of interviews as a method of data collection, Parlett and Hamilton (1977) state that *"Discovering the views of participants is crucial to assessing the impact of an innovation"* and further state that *"While brief, structured interviews are convenient for obtaining biographical, historical or factual information, more open-ended and discursive forms are suitable for less straightforward topics (e.g. career ambitions and anxieties)."* (p. 16).

Taking this perspective into account, semi-structured, open-ended interviews were carried out in Brazil with teachers both from private and public sectors in an attempt to examine more closely the current state of the education system in the country. They were carried out by face-to-face techniques and answers were recorded and summarised in the course of the interviews. Furthermore, the information gathered was subjected to the constant comparative methods used in data analysis. This data collection method was a very effective way of understanding the context in which the research is placed. Listening to the opinion of professionals that deal daily with education in the country was crucial to help the researcher understand the issues and concerns of teachers in Brazilian schools.

The semi-structured technique was chosen to allow participants to express themselves openly and provide their personal vision of the main concerns teachers face inside Brazilian classrooms. The interviews were based on the research questions, but also had unstructured segments with the objective of having teachers mention their personal experiences in teaching. For this reason it was crucial to inform participants beforehand that they were free to answer the questions whichever way they found suitable, without constraints. The interviewees were asked to give a brief history of their teaching careers and were then asked to talk about the current situation of the schools they work in. Specific questions about the schools' infrastructure and environment were asked, and teachers were requested to talk about their views on the major problems of the Brazilian education system. The open questions allowed teachers to discourse on any of the issues related to education in the country and specifically in their schools.

It should be noted that prior to meeting with the interviewees, contact was done by email and phone in order to schedule appointments and to give the respondents an awareness of what topics the interview would cover. Furthermore, all of the interviews

were carried out outside the school grounds, in a neutral environment where teachers felt at ease to talk about their concerns and frustrations. In fact, most of the appointments were done in public places, over a cup – or many more – of coffee, far from judging eyes.

Throughout the interviews, participants were reassured of confidentiality and anonymity, which was crucial for their participation, given the fact that some showed a fair amount of resentment towards the teaching career or co-workers in particular. Furthermore, it was stressed to the interviewed teachers that their experiences would serve as examples of the reality of the situation in Brazilian schools.

2.5) Validity and Reliability Issues

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) draw on the importance of validity in research and state that if that is not present then the research is worthless. Wagemaker (1992) goes on to state that

> *"The concept of reliability deals with whether or not the instrument can measure the same trait consistently upon repeated uses (measurements), while validity deals with whether the instrument is truly measuring the specific trait that it is supposed to be measuring."* (p. 40).

A crucial element of the research was that the researcher was the interviewer, which meant that the person interviewing had a better understanding of the topics covered by the study and could therefore be more accurate in the interpretation of the outcomes. This has positive repercussions on the validity of the study. Reliability, on the other hand, is traditionally harder to identify because it relates to how well the data can be replicated. In quantitative studies, this is fairly easy to measure, but qualitative research, as here, deals with individuals' beliefs and circumstances, and is therefore virtually impossible to replicate, as each person is different. Merriam (1998) therefore suggests that reliability issues in qualitative research should be measured by how accurate the findings are in relation to the data gathered and that was the primary aim of the researcher.

2.6) Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount at all times during the research. Michael Bassey (1999) describes three issues that should be taken into consideration when conducting research: respect for democracy, respect for truth and respect for persons. Respect encompasses having a clear understanding of the liberties and duties the researcher has towards the assessment and handling of information. Bassey (1999) claims that

> *freedoms are essentially subject to responsibilities imposed by the ethics of respect for truth and respect for persons: provided that these responsibilities are honoured, researchers can expect the freedom to do these things without endangering themselves or their livelihood.* (p. 74).

With that in mind, truthfulness and validation were sought at all times, both when dealing with people and with data. Issues such as privacy, ownership of information, honesty, trust, harm and risk were taken into consideration in an attempt to have no – or almost no – occurrences during the elaboration and completion of the study. Furthermore, the research proposal was submitted to Massey University's Human Ethics Committee and ethical approval was obtained before the fieldwork in Brazil was carried out.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that all through the pre and post interview period, participants were reminded that they could:

- refuse to participate;
- decline to comment on any question or any matter related to the research;
- withdraw from the project at any time, even after having answered the interview; and
- ask any question related to the topic at any given time.

2.7) Research limitations

The present research focuses not only on educational aspects, but also concentrates on economic, political and social perspectives, giving the reader an opportunity to understand the reality of the country being studied. A major advantage is the fact that there have been very up-to-date data on educational tendencies and recent follow-up reports on the progress of Brazil toward the completion of Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals, which serves to illustrate how current and important the subject is to the country and the United Nations.

Nevertheless, a major problem encountered during the analysis and execution of this work relates to the concept of quality education itself. The problem arises because in Brazil, literacy numbers relate to the number of students enrolled in classrooms and not to the extent children are learning. In fact, children are in class, but are not learning properly, or according to the right age-grade proportion. Therefore, numbers can be very deceiving when relating to the number of students who are considered to be literate and those who have indeed acquired good reading and writing skills.

Another problem seen during the initial research regards the different statistical numbers obtained through the different sources researched. At times, different government agencies came up with different figures relating to the education system, especially the number of teachers currently working in Brazilian schools. Close analysis of information was made in order to guarantee that the appropriate numbers were employed in the research and acknowledgements were made throughout the study when these issues were present. Furthermore, the Brazilian basic schooling system entails eight years of study, and for this reason indices from the Brazilian government and Brazilian agencies are frequently calculated taking into consideration groups of children from seven to 14 years of age, a different measure than the UN, which can cause misinterpretation of data.

A potential drawback with interviews is that they are time-consuming and demand appointments. This was a problem at times, as many of the interviewees were not available when the researcher was in Brazil, mainly due to the school holidays. Furthermore, many governmental agencies failed to respond to the researcher's request,

or rescheduled so many times that the researcher had to return to New Zealand without being able to meet with them. Nevertheless, as the interviews were used solely as a comparison and confirmation of the findings from other data collection methods, it was still possible to gather significant data from the interviewees that were more than willing to participate, especially teachers. Indeed, due to its flexibility, interviewees welcomed the idea of semi-structured questions as they were able to freely express themselves and highlight their concerns and points-of-view in relation to the topics covered by the research.

Time was also a determining factor in the writing of this research. Analysis had been previously done with the data initially gathered in the beginning of 2005, such as the 2003 School Census. However, later during the year, new data was released by governmental agencies and the researcher felt compelled to replace previous analysis with the new data related to the 2005 School Census. This took considerably more time than expected.

Lastly, the fact that the researcher had no prior educational training was a factor in the beginning of the study, as a lot more background reading was required to ensure understanding of the reality of educational systems in general and the Brazilian scenario specifically. This issue however, although time consuming, was overcome with extensive reading and careful analysis of education figures.

2.8) Summary

During the preparation of this thesis, a case study research design using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was used to explore and explain issues related to education both in Brazil and worldwide. Data were gathered essentially from document analysis and interpretations. Through semi-structured interviews, this study was able to obtain information from teachers about their personal beliefs, frustrations and expectations towards their jobs and their opinion and views on the current situation of the Brazilian education system. These findings made it possible to

contrast the importance of the Millennium Development Goals – and Goal 2 in particular – to Brazil's development and the consequences to the education system in the country.

CHAPTER 3

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

3.1) The MDGs and Goal 02

Following a series of successful conferences in the 1990s on various social themes, the United Nations (UN) held in September 2000 its 55th session, which was responsible for the creation and ratification of the United Nations' Millennium Declaration. As previously mentioned, the Declaration was signed by 189 State Members of the UN and constitutes a global commitment from both developed and developing countries in an attempt to reduce world poverty and hunger, and increase education, gender equity, peace, security, protection of the environment and human rights. In order to make the commitments achievable, a series of goals and targets was elaborated the following year, during the 56th session of the General Assembly, to serve as a map for development. The Secretary-General then broke down the Declaration into eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators that would effectively help the world become more equitable and fair (United Nations, 2005a).

According to the Declaration, 2015 was established as the target year for the completion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and 1990 became the baseline year to help measure progress during the achievement of the objectives. Furthermore, in order to guarantee and monitor the progress being made towards the completion of the goals, the nations have agreed that regular follow-ups and accountability mechanisms would be established and that each country would report back to the UN on a regular basis. This is a crucial measure in order to guarantee that countries are on the right path to the achievement of the Goals.

Indeed, keeping track of developments towards the completion of the MDGs is fundamental to a guarantee of its success. Having said that, the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 is a key tool because it assessed the progress being made towards the achievement of the MDGs and establishes what still needs to be done in order to ensure that all countries achieve the goals in the prescribed

time. Kofi A. Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, points out that the MDGs are different from other previously established vows, because of a series of characteristics. They are people-centred, time-bound, measurable, based on a worldwide collaboration of developed and developing countries, have political support from different levels of society and, most importantly, are achievable (United Nations, 2005c).

Of the eight Goals established by the MDGs, the present study will focus exclusively on Goal 02, related to education, due to its importance and significance in combating inequities in the world. The Goal comprises three indicators, which are used to measure the access to education and the effectiveness of the education system based on retention and literacy rates, as described in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Goal 02 of the Millennium Development Goals

Achieve universal primary education
- Target 3:
Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
Indicators:
6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education
7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
8. Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds.

Source: UN, 2000

Indicator 6, which measures the net enrolment ratio, consists of the percentage of students enrolled in primary education, giving a clearer idea of the educational system's coverage and efficiency. Indicator 7 relates to the survival rate in grade 5 of students who have been enrolled in school since grade 1 (because it is supposedly a sufficient amount of time to make children literates). This indicator serves to show how much the education system is capable of retaining children in school (i.e., the survival rate). Lastly, Indicator 8, relating to the literacy rates in youth and young adult population serves to show how effective the basic education system of the particular country is in the long run. These indicators are crucial because they set marks that make it possible to trace development in the goals.

There have been numerous international meetings, forums and discussions that point out the importance of education in life. Indeed, since 1948, education has been recognised by the United Nations as one of its primary rights. Article 26 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that

> *(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the primary and early childhood stages. Primary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.*
> *(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and primary freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.*
> *(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children* (United Nations, 1948, article 26).

As described by the Universal Declaration, education plays a primary part in social development and freedom, and is a key element to guarantee equitable opportunities and a good quality of life to all individuals. It affects many aspect of life, such as income (with better paid jobs), health (education provides more awareness) and family structure (family planning is more efficient among educated individuals). It is therefore clear why education is a primary right of all citizens, which should be guaranteed by the government.

In relation to Goal 2, the UN's Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 concludes that most countries are well on their way to completing this goal, except sub-Saharan Africa, southern and western Asia and Oceania (United Nations, 2005c). Latin America is on the right track to achieve universal enrolment in primary education, as can be seen in Tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, relating to each individual indicator.

Table 3.2: Net enrolment ratio in primary education, 1991-2004 (Primary-level enrolees per 100 children of enrolment age)

	1991	1999	2004
World	81.2	83.5	87
Developing Regions	78.8	81.8	85.8
Northern Africa	80.6	88.3	94
Sub-Saharan Africa	53	55.7	64.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	85.8	93.4	94.9
Eastern Asia	97.7	98.9	94.1
Southern Asia	72.2	78.2	89.3
South-Eastern Asia	92.3	90.3	92.9
Western Asia	79.7	81.6	82.9
Oceania	74.4	80.8	79.6
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	88.8	85.2	90.9
CIS, Asia	84.1	88.6	91.8
CIS, Europe	91	82.6	90.1
Developed Regions	96.4	96.7	95.6
Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	52.1	58.2	69
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)	51.7	61.1	69.4
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	66.5	81.5	82.8

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, "World and regional trends", Millennium Indicators Database

Table 3.3: Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 (Percentage of students enrolled in the final grade of primary school[1])

	1999[2]			2004[2]		
	Total	Boys	Girls	**Total**	Boys	Girls
World	**82.8**	85.8	79.5	**86.1**	88.4	83.6
Developing Regions	**80.4**	84	76.5	**84.4**	87	81.7
Northern Africa	**90.2**	97.6	82.5	**91.2**	92.6	89.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	**50.7**	55.1	46.2	**56.4**	61.1	51.7
Latin America and the Caribbean	**96.2**	95.7	96.7	**98.3**	97.9	98.8
Eastern Asia	**101.8**	101.6	102	**98.1**	98.3	97.9
Southern Asia	**70.9**	78.2	63.1	**82.3**	86.5	77.9
South-Eastern Asia	**88.2**	89.1	87.3	**95.3**	95.4	95.2
Western Asia	**78.9**	84.8	72.7	**81.6**	87.6	75.5
Oceania	**64.2**	64.8	63.4	**64.4**	67.5	61.1
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	**93.3**	93.7	92.8	**91.4**	91.8	91
CIS, Asia	**97.6**	98.2	97	**99.2**	99.8	98.5
CIS, Europe	**90.9**	91.3	90.5	**85.9**	86.2	85.7
Developed Regions	**98.6**	98.1	99.2	**98.8**	99.4	98.2
Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	**48.6**	53.2	43.9	**53.4**	57.2	49.5
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)	**55.3**	61.5	48.9	**60.6**	65.6	55.5
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	**73.3**	73	73.6	**75.1**	75.4	74.7

[1]No global data are available for the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5
[2]The primary completion rates correspond to school years ending in the years displayed.
Source: United Nations Statistics Division, "World and regional trends", Millennium Indicators Database

Table 3.4: Literacy rate (percentage)

	1990			2000/04[1]		
	Total	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women
World	**84.3**	88.2	80.1	**87.2**	90.4	84
Developing Regions	**80.9**	85.8	75.8	**85**	88.7	81.1
Northern Africa	**66.3**	76.3	55.8	**84.3**	89.9	78.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	**67.4**	74.9	59.8	**73.1**	78.1	68.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	**92.7**	92.7	92.7	**96**	95.6	96.4
Eastern Asia	**95.5**	97.6	93.3	**98.9**	99.2	98.5
Southern Asia	**61.5**	71.1	51	**72.2**	80.3	63.3
South-Eastern Asia	**94.3**	95.5	93.1	**96.2**	96.5	95.9
Western Asia	**80.1**	88.2	71.5	**91.3**	94.9	87.6
Oceania	**73.5**	78.5	68	**72.8**	74.9	70.5
Commonwealth of Independent States	**99.2**	99.2	99.2	**99.7**	99.7	99.8
CIS, Asia	**97.7**	99.7	99.7	**99.8**	99.8	99.7
CIS, Europe	**99.8**	99.8	99.8	**99.7**	99.7	99.8
Developed Regions	**99.7**	99.7	99.6	**99.3**	99.3	99.3
Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	**56.3**	65.6	47	**63.7**	71	56.8
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)	**65**	72.3	57.8	**70.3**	75.7	65.5
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	**84.8**	85.8	83.6	**85.3**	85.5	85.1

[1] Data refer to the latest literacy estimates and projections released by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) for the reference period 2000-2004.

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, "World and regional trends", Millennium Indicators Database

However, having access to education and being enrolled in school is not sufficient to ensure that children will become literate. If the system cannot retain children in school, they will likely leave before obtaining the necessary skills to become fully literate, which would eventually annul the effectiveness of the Goal in ultimately combating poverty. Some children leave at the level of functional literates, while others do not even get the chance to learn the basic skills to be capable of writing their names or understanding the four basic mathematics operations. Therefore, completion rates of primary education are a crucial mark in order to access the quality of the schools, but only when associated with effective teaching and appropriate learning environments that will assure that the children in school are actually learning. This seems to be the major issue with the Brazilian education system.

3.2) The MDGs and the Brazilian Situation

Brazil is very committed to the UN and the MDGs and has signed all the major international human rights conventions (UNDP, 2005, p. 321). In light of the importance of education and its status as a primary right that is crucial for the development of a country, the United Nations Development Programme points out that *"with the right government priorities and policies, high social development is possible even without a thriving economy"* (UNDP, 2003a, p. 87).

Indeed, economic growth is no guarantee of prosperity in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially in a country such as Brazil, where economic growth is not done evenly, benefiting some and harming others. Changes in all levels of government and society should occur in order to help bring equity that will lead to growth and development. Only by reducing inequalities can policies – whether social, political or economic – be implemented effectively. For this reason investments should focus not only on economic matters, but primarily on human capital, through social and cultural programmes that will keep children in school. Examples in the country can be seen with school meal and nutrition programmes, which help keep children in school and increase their academic performance. These are just some of the important measures taken by the government that help bring Brazil closer to fulfilling the education Goal.

Nevertheless, although Brazil is very close to achieving Indicator 6 of the MDGs, it should be noted that the closer the country gets to the Goal, the harder it is to fulfil it. This is mainly because special assistance needs to be given to marginalised populations. This includes people that live in more secluded areas or places in which access to schools is harder. Moreover, because this group is placed in less developed regions, they normally present higher evasion indices and repetition rates (United Nations, 2005a). Along with suffering extreme poverty, violence is another obstacle faced by these families and the government in keeping children in school, especially in more remote or poorer areas. Brutality in schools and around them is a major concern because it keeps parents from sending their children to attend these institutions. Moreover, the presence of gangs and guns in and around schools scares the population and is an

important determinant in the child's attendance in class. This can have drastic effects on the completion of Indicator 7 and 8 in the long run.

It requires a lot of structure in order to pinpoint who these people are and where they are situated. Only then can special policies be carried out in order to guarantee that these children are enrolled in school and receive proper education and opportunities. It is therefore crucial to combine Goal 2 with the attempt to achieve other Goals, such as reducing poverty and hunger, in order to help children have a more equitable life and greater opportunities. Furthermore, specific policies should be created to address Indicators 07 and 08, because they are the ones that relate specifically to the quality of the education and are the measures in which Brazil is most deficient.

Universal access to education is frequently associated with the necessity to assure gender equity (i.e., Goal 3) and as previously mentioned, Brazil has already successfully achieved this Goal. As a matter of fact, girls currently represent most of the enrolments in the education system. As seen on Figure 3.1, until the age of 50, female enrolment rates are higher than male ones, meaning that girls are having more opportunities to study and get an equal education. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this does not necessarily mean that women get equal job opportunities or better wages because of their higher completion rate. Indeed, gender disparities still exist in the work environment, with women sometimes receiving less for the same jobs as men.

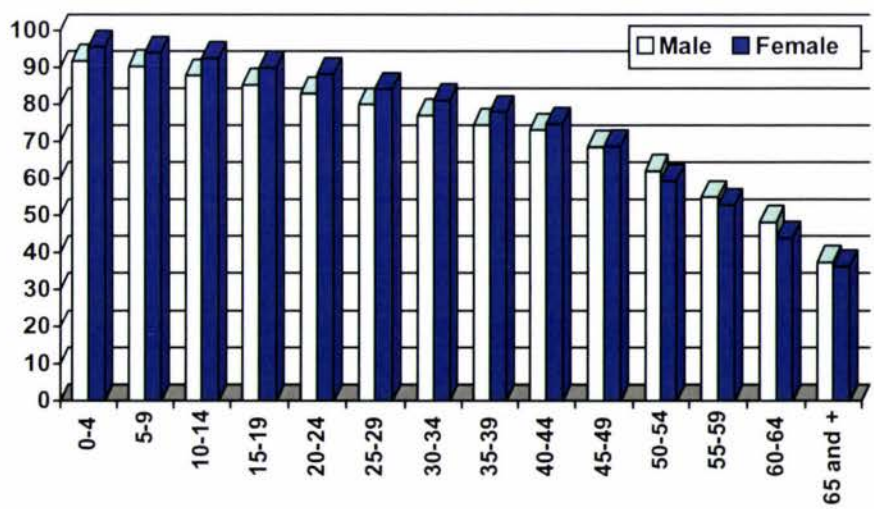

Figure 3.1: Completion of primary education by gender - Brazil, 2002 (%)

Source: UNESCO, 2004

The importance of expanding efforts to guarantee that students finish secondary education can be seen later on in their lives because with higher education comes higher opportunities and chances of remaining above the poverty line. A major concern in Brazil in relation to secondary studies is the high dropout rates and the fact that not many students get the opportunity to climb this far up the education system. The United Nations' report which focuses on the Latin American and Caribbean perspective states:

> *Every education policy should have an equity-seeking component incorporated in its design." (...) "one of the missions of the education system is to help improve the distribution of opportunities; thus, equity is not an add-on or a complement to the system, but instead is an integral aspect of its quality.* (United Nations, 2005a, p. 101).

Progress towards Goal 2 of the MDGs has been ambiguous in Brazil. While net enrolment ratios (NERs) have increased considerably, as seen in Figure 3.2, dropout rates and repetition are still a preoccupying matter related to education in the country. While Indicator 6 (NERs in primary education) is being covered, Indicator 7, i.e., proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 is still very deficient, as demonstrated in Figure 3.2. This shows that the country is still unable to retain children in school at least for a minimum cycle of study, with an estimate that between 7% and 12% of children in Brazil will not complete primary education (United Nations, 2005a).

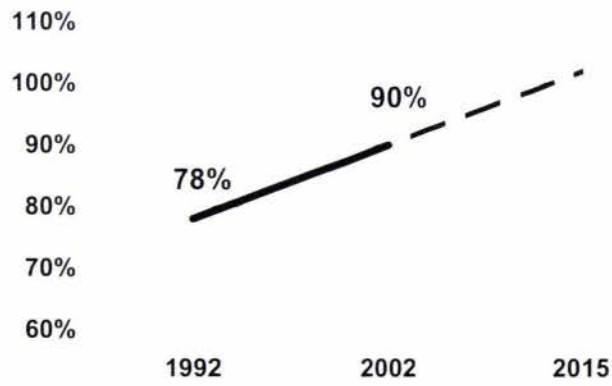

Figure 3.2: Indicator 6: Net enrolment ratio in primary education – Brazil, 2015 projection

Source: IBGE/PNAD 1992, 2002.

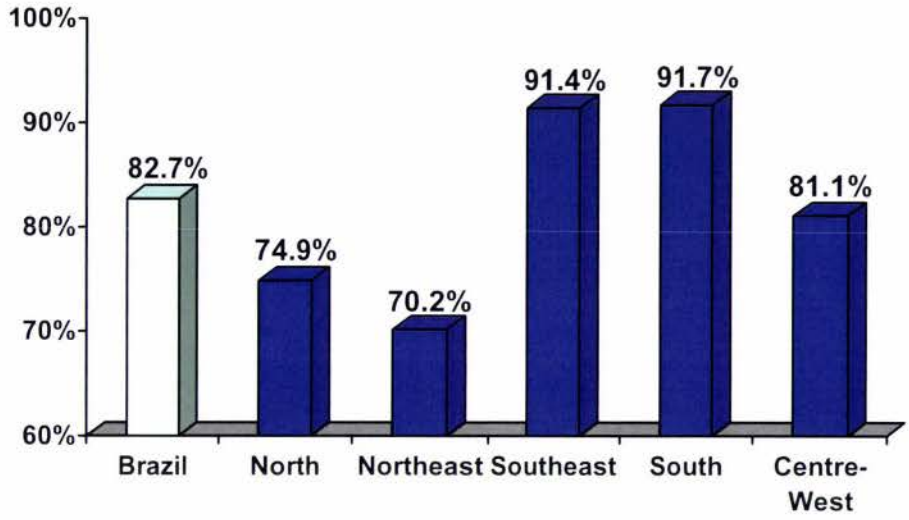

Figure 3.3: Indicator 7: Proportion of students starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 – Brazil, 2002 (in percentage)

Source: MEC/INEP

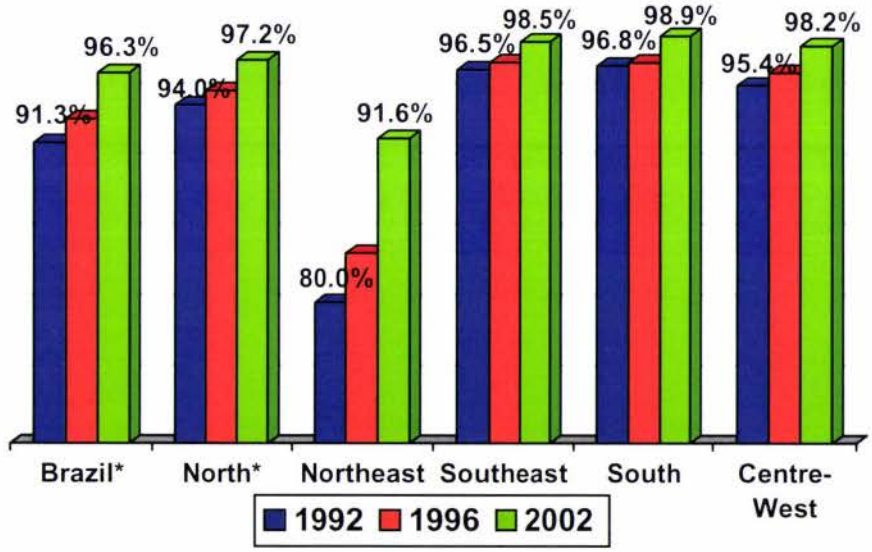

Figure 3.4: Indicator 8: Literacy rate of 15 to 24 year-olds – Brazil (in percentage)

* Not all states are included

Source: IBGE/PNAD 1992, 2002

In relation to the literacy rate of 15 to 24 year-olds, the country has shown great progress, especially in the Northeast, the poorest region of the country, which presented the highest increase, from 80% in 1992 to 91.6% in 2002, as seen on Figure 3.4 above.

It should be noted, however, that some data regarding to education in Brazil are not available, especially those concerning the year 1990, i.e., base year for the measure of progress. Since the Brazilian government in the past did not see quality as a major concern, the government at the time did not have an effective system that could keep track of the data pertaining to this matter, and for this reason some of the data consist of estimates from partial information and backward extrapolations.

3.3) Summary

It is essential to take measures that will help children stay in school and finish the necessary schooling years. In light of this, incentives and aid to increase family income and reduce child labour are of primary importance to keep children in school. It is even more important to improve the quality of the education being provided in schools in order to help decrease repetition rates.

Political discussions should focus on social issues, and address the needs of the population because economic growth alone cannot be responsible for successful development measures, as educational issues play a vital role in the progress of a country. However, being concerned only with guaranteeing universal primary education is not enough in Brazil anymore. With almost all the children in school at that level, it is crucial now to aim higher, broadening school attendance to pre-primary and secondary schooling. This could considerably help reduce inequalities in the education system, and consequently in the country.

Indeed, if considering that attaining Goal 2 of the MDGs is feasible in Brazil, the aim should once again shift in order to cover all aspects of education. While access to schools was a primary concern that was later replaced by the quality issue, a goal should be established in order to guarantee not only universal primary education, but also pre-school education and secondary schooling, for they are crucial tools in helping individuals develop. As a matter of fact, it has been proven that children with pre-school

education tend to perform better in the next stages of schooling (United Nations, 2005a). This reflects on lower dropout rates and less repetition indices.

It is important to note that many policies should be put in place to ensure that students from all economic backgrounds are guaranteed proper and meaningful education. Goal 2 of the MDGs is crucial for their development, but only when associated with other Goals, such as reducing poverty. Only then can the government provide these children with equitable opportunities to progress in life, and ensure that the country successfully accomplishes the Millennium Development Goals.

CHAPTER 4
THE CASE OF BRAZIL

4.1) Overview

The Federative Republic of Brazil is the fifth biggest country in the world, both in land mass and in population and is currently the 14th biggest economy on earth (Thomas, 2005). Statistics show that the country has approximately 180 million people, of which 83% live in urban regions (IBGE, 2005). This shows remarkable growth when compared to the 17.4 million inhabitants the country had in the year 1900, where only 10% of the population lived in urban areas. It is a nation of impressive proportions. Among other traits, Brazil holds the largest tropical forests in the world, has one of the largest varieties of mammals and birds and the largest fresh water reservoirs on the globe.

The country has 26 states and a Federal District, where Brasília, the capital, is located. It is divided into five distinctive regions: North, Northeast, Southeast, South and Centre-West. Nevertheless, Brazil is not only known for its remarkable size, but also its diversity. Socio-economic, racial and cultural differences can be seen throughout its regions, where the Northeast and Southeast represent the extremes in poverty and wealth, respectively. The income disparity in the country is known to be the biggest in the world, where 20% of the richest population holds 64% of the total revenue, while the poorest 20% hold only 2% (Thomas, 2005, p. 55). In fact, according to the 2005 Human Development Report, if 5% of the income of the richest 20% of the Brazilian population were to be transferred to the poorest portion of the population, approximately 26 million people would leave the status of being below the poverty line, which would mean a reduction in poverty numbers from 22% to 7% (UNDP, 2005, p. 65).

However, this gap seems to only increase with time, as the poor become poorer and the rich become richer. The richest regions in Brazil could easily be placed alongside regions of most developed countries, while regions with the highest concentration of

poor could be compared to those of the most undeveloped regions in the world. Indeed, discrepancies are so substantial that the Northeast, which accounts for a little over 30% of the population, has an average income of one-third of the Southeast region. To help understand how poverty rates are high in the Northeast, if the region was not taken into consideration, the remainder of the country would be considered relatively equitable.

With such great disparities in the country, it is obvious that ethnic differences will also be present in the Brazilian education system. The National Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) distinguishes the population between white, black, mulattos, Asians and indigenous, as described on Table 4.1. A little over half of the population (51%) declares itself as white, 42% consider themselves mulatto, almost 6% are blacks and the remaining 1% is of Asian descent or indigenous.

Table 4.1: Resident Population in Brazil, according to colour or race, and domicile situation and gender – Brazil, 2004

Domicile situation and gender	Resident Population						
	Total	Ethnicity					
		White	Black	Mulatto	Asian	Indigenous	Undeclared
Urban	**151,124,470**	81,295,121	9,369,192	59,478,962	720,715	248,124	12,356
Men	**72,547,797**	38,283,517	4,611,069	29,216,804	326,099	103,989	6,319
Women	**78,576,673**	43,011,604	4,758,123	30,262,158	394,616	144,135	6,037
Rural	**30,935,638**	12,309,314	1,370,517	17,156,279	42,741	56,787	-
Men	**16,125,936**	6,328,655	735,148	9,008,218	22,135	31,780	-
Women	**14,809,702**	5,980,659	635,369	8,148,061	20,606	25,007	-
Total	**182,060,108**	**93,604,435**	**10,739,709**	**76,635,241**	**763,456**	**304,911**	**12,356**
Men	**88,673,733**	44,612,172	5,346,217	38,225,022	348,234	135,769	6,319
Women	**93,386,375**	48,992,263	5,393,492	38,410,219	415,222	169,142	6,037
	100%	51.41%	5.90%	42.09%	0.42%	0.17%	0.01%

Source: IBGE, PNAD 2004

4.2) The Brazilian education system

With more than one-third of the population living below the poverty line, government assistance is primary to guarantee the minimum living conditions of its citizens. However, this aid is not always present, especially to the older population. For this reason, more focus is now being given to education, and programmes are now addressing the younger population in an attempt to help them grow older in better living conditions. To help ensure this, the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 established rules that guarantee, among others:

- free public learning in official institutions;
- free and compulsory primary schooling;
- expansion of free and compulsory education, progressively to secondary education;
- crèches and pre-school to children age 0 to 6;
- access to free and compulsory education as a public right, i.e., failure to guarantee this right by the government, or its irregular offer, falls on the responsibilities of competent authorities (may even be subjected to lawsuit);
- valorisation of the education professional, with career plans for teachers in the public sector;
- annual usage by the federal union of no less than 18% and states, the Federal District and municipalities of no less than 25% of the revenue from taxes towards education;
- a National Education Plan aiming for the development of learning in its different levels and the combining of governmental actions that leads to the eradication of illiteracy, to universal access to school, to enhancement of the quality of education, to preparation for the work environment and to humanistic, scientific and technological promotion in the country; and
- the distribution of public resources, assuring priority to the attendance of the necessities of the compulsory education under the terms of the National Education Plan (Brazil, 1989) (author's translation).

Education policies in Brazil are regulated by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), which was first drafted in 1948 but was promulgated only in 1961. The project of the law was a joint effort of educators to change the basis of education at the time. Nevertheless, with 13 years having passed between its draft and its promulgation, the law number 4,024 was already outdated when it was established.

With the changes imposed by the new Constitution of 1988, the old law became significantly irrelevant to the current scenario and a new National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), number 9.394, arose in December of 1996 and regulated not only the teaching career, but also stipulated, among other things, that 25% of the income of each individual municipality and the Federal District should be destined for primary education. This money comes from different taxes paid by the population and is much needed to improve education in the country.

Due to its distinctive terminology, it is important to explain how the Brazilian education system is divided. It consists of basic education and tertiary education. The basic level comprises crèches (day-care centres), pre-school, primary (fundamental) education, secondary education, special education, youngster and adult education (YAE), and technical education. Tertiary (higher) education relates to the university years and is divided according to the different topics the student chooses to study. Table 4.2 better illustrates how the education system is set up.

Table 4.2: The Brazilian Education System

Level	Subdivision	Age group	Years of study
Basic Education	Early childhood education (Crèche)	0-3 years	4 years
	Early childhood education (Pre-school)	4-6 years	3 years
	Primary Education (compulsory)	7-14 years	8 years
	Secondary Education	15-17 years	3 years
	Special Education	Variable	-
	Youngster and adult education (YAE)	Variable	-
	Technical	Variable	-
Tertiary Education	Various courses	18 and over	Variable

Source: LDB, 1996

When referring to education in Brazil, it should be mentioned that up until the beginning of 2006, the Brazilian primary education system consisted of eight years of study, in segments from 1st to 4th grade (lower primary) and from 5th to 8th (upper primary). After much deliberation from education authorities, an extra academic year has been established. The 2005 School Census released by the National Institute for Education Research (INEP) from the Ministry of Education (MEC) has included few numbers related to the primary system of nine years. Due to the fact that it is still too recent to determine the impacts of this extra academic year in the Brazilian education system, this study will focus on – and hence refer to – primary education as grades 1 to 8 only.

It should be taken into consideration that one of the most respected and renowned data collection institutions in Brazil – the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) – considers the literate population as those who are able to read and write at least a simple note on their own language. This definition, however, is currently not accepted by most of the international institutes that evaluate the degree of knowledge of the population, because what IBGE calls literate population is nowadays classified as mere functional literates. Indeed, calling an individual who can – barely – read or write as functional literate is more adequate to the reality of the contemporary world. This means that the original 16 million Brazilian illiterates considered by the IBGE study would jump to an astonishing 30 million Brazilians among the population over 15 years and older.

Even though the country has considerably improved its educational conditions in terms of universal access to primary education, reduction of school evasion and an increase in the number of enrolments, Brazil still occupies one of the worst positions in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). To better understand the gravity of the problem, while the percentage of students from countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) who reach the median score in reading and mathematics is close to 50% in each of these subjects, only 11% of Brazilian students reach the median in Portuguese, and an astonishing 4% do so in mathematics (World Bank, 2003).

In the present days, white and non-white have the same chances of going to school. Nevertheless blacks typically come from less privileged backgrounds and live in poorer communities with fewer resources and frequently less educated parents who tend to give less value to the academic life. According to the World Bank, there is a stronger relation between parents' education and how far their children progress in the education system in Brazil than in any other country in Latin America (World Bank, 2004, p. 88). The United Nations points out that among families where parents did not complete primary education, only 20% of the children go on to complete secondary education, while in families where the parents have gone through 10 or more years of schooling, this number jumps to 60% (United Nations, 2005a). These numbers, associated with the different factors responsible for Brazil's low quality of education, point to the importance of implementing measures that will help the country develop and ensure that low levels of performance, such as the ones seen on the 2003 PISA evaluation, are a thing of the past.

The number of children inside classrooms is also an important factor when it comes to students' achievements. In primary education the average number of students per class is 27.1, while in Brazilian secondary schools, there are on average 36.7 students inside the classroom (INEP, 2005). Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the average number of students in Brazilian classrooms according to the different administrative levels and demographic regions, respectively. It should be noted that despite being higher than most OECD countries, these numbers are considered adequate to the schooling system in Brazil.

Table 4.3: Average number of students per class in basic education, according to administrative level – Brazil, 2005

	Federal	State	Municipal	Private
Pre-school	17.7	22.7	24	15.9
Primary	29.7	31	26.2	21.5
Secondary	33.2	37.5	35.1	32.1

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

Table 4.4: Average number of students per class in basic education, according to demographic region – Brazil, 2005

	Urban	Rural	**Total**
Pre-school	21	21.9	**21.1**
Primary	28.8	21	**27.1**
Secondary	36.9	30.6	**36.7**

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

In relation to the number of hours the children spend in school, the LDB establishes that students should have at least 200 days of school and a minimum of 800 hours per year. In Brazil, children spend around 4.1 to 4.7 classroom hours per day, which satisfies the law (INEP, 2002). Many education experts regard increasing the number of hours a student spends in class per day as a good alternative to help combat poor quality. Indeed, more hours would give students with low academic performances opportunities to work on their shortcomings during extra classes, but only if effective programmes could ensure proper teaching. Furthermore, an increase of school hours would provide children with more extra-curricula activities, which help in their development and learning, but does not necessarily guarantee better academic outcomes for students.

In terms of income rates, the disparities have decreased significantly. Despite inequalities in the country, children from low and high income levels are now very close in terms of enrolment numbers, as can be seen in Figure 4.1. It should be noted however that these enrolment rates apply to primary education and that secondary enrolment rates between rich and poor still present a significant gap.

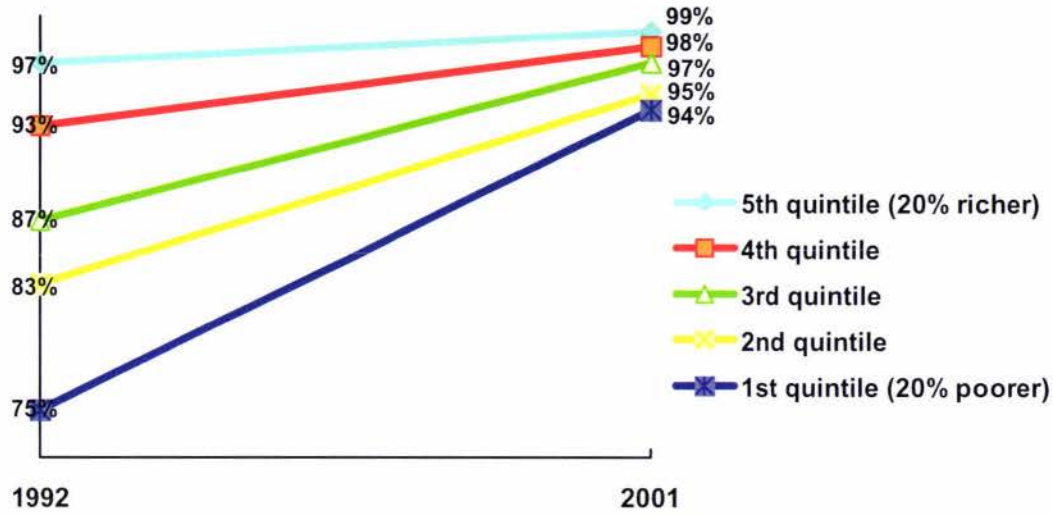

Figure 4.1: Net enrolments in primary education by income – Brazil, 1992-2001

Source: World Bank, 2003

Responsibilities in the country in regard to education are divided by the different governments. Primary education is the responsibility of municipalities; secondary education is a duty of state governments; and tertiary education is a responsibility of the federal government. The major problem with this system is a lack of interaction and joint effort from all the parts. To better understand how decentralised the Brazilian education system is, Figure 4.2 shows the number of enrolments in the education system according to the federal, state, municipal and private administrative authorities.

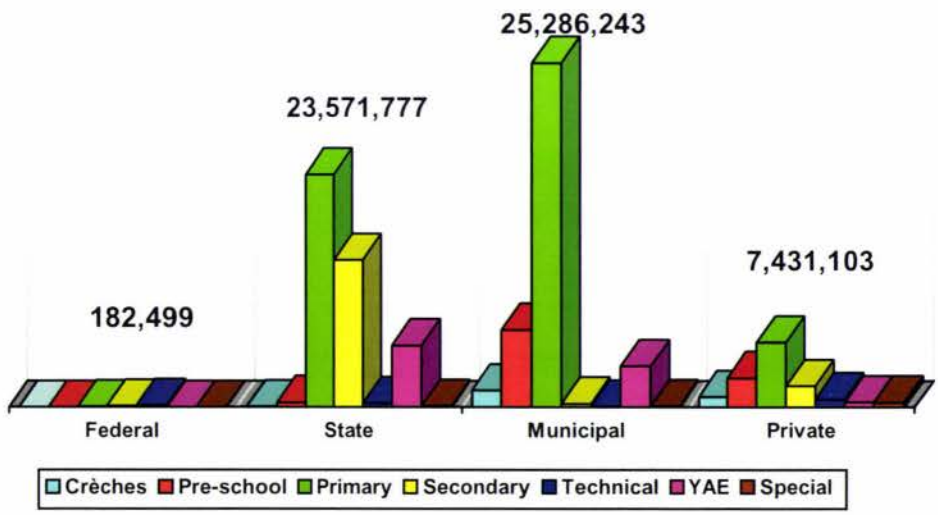

Figure 4.2: Number of enrolments in basic education by administrative level – Brazil and regions, 2003

*YAE: Youngster and adult education

Source: World Bank, 2003

The majority of crèches and pre-schools in Brazil are run by municipal governments (61% of the first and 70% of the latter), with the private sector being responsible for 38% and 26% respectively. Municipal governments also run most of the primary schools – 54% – while the different state governments are responsible for 36% of them. This leaves the federal government to care for the vast majority of the secondary enrolments in Brazil, i.e., 85%, with only 12% for private institutions. However, more than 58% of the enrolments in specific technical courses and 64% of the special education enrolments are in private institutions. Therefore, as demonstrated on Figure 4.3, it is clear to see how the public sector is responsible for the majority of enrolments in the Brazilian basic education, with almost 87% of the students in public institutions.

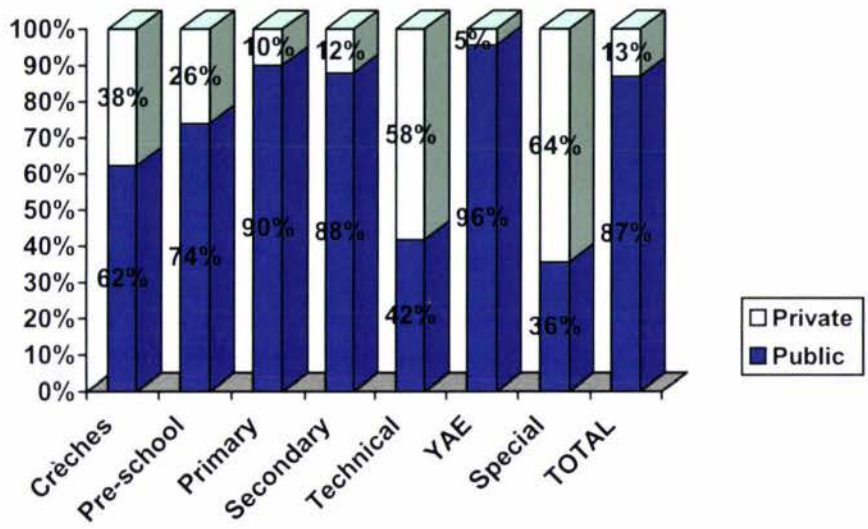

Figure 4.3: Percentage of enrolments in basic education in public and private sectors, according to level of study – Brazil, 2005

*YAE: Youngster and adult education

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

Geography also plays a fundamental role in the distribution of enrolments throughout the country. Table 4.5 shows the division of the Brazilian population according to geographic region and gender during the last Population Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2000. As can be observed, the Southeast region, which is the richest, is the most populated area, while the poorest, i.e. the Northeast, is the second most populated, with almost twice the number of people than the South.

Table 4.5: Population numbers and percentage according to sex and unit of the Federation – Brazil, 2000

	Percentage	Total	Men	Women
North	7.6%	**12,900,704**	6,533,555	6,367,149
Northeast	28.11%	**47,741,711**	23,413,914	24,327,797
Southeast	42.65%	**72,412,411**	35,426,091	36,986,320
South	14.79%	**25,107,616**	12,401,450	12,706,166
Centre-West	6.85%	**11,636,728**	5,801,005	5,835,723
Brazil	**100%**	**169,799,170**	**83,576,015**	**86,223,155**

Source: IBGE, Demographic Census 2000.

As previously mentioned, the discrepancies present in the different regions have large influences on the education scenario. By comparing Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5 it is possible to measure the participation of the regions in education. While almost 43% of the population resides in the Southeast, that region accounts for 38% of the students enrolled in all levels of basic education. And while in the lower levels of education the distribution is as expected, that is, the majority in the most populated regions, i.e., the Southeast and the Northeast, only 9.8% of the students enrolled in technical education are in the Northeast and 18% of those in special education are in the same region.

Nevertheless, heavy emphasis has been given to youngster and adult education in the Northeast, which comprises 36.8% of enrolments at that level. This is likely a consequence of past outcomes where most of the older illiterate population lived in that region. Notwithstanding, focusing on abolishing adult illiteracy might not be the correct priority for the country, as most of this population is concentrated in rural and poor regions and are not likely to use their reading and writing skills in their day-to-day life. Furthermore, a decrease in the number of the older population means a decrease in the number of illiterates.

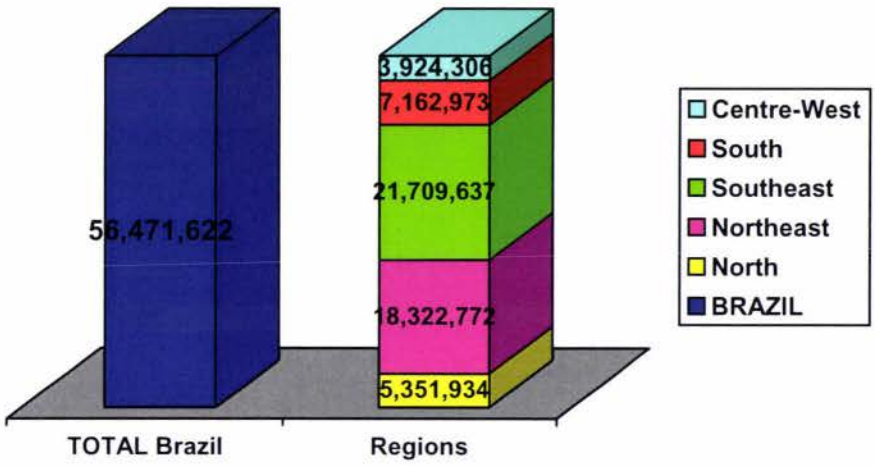

Figure 4.4: Number of enrolments in basic education according to administrative region – Brazil, 2005

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

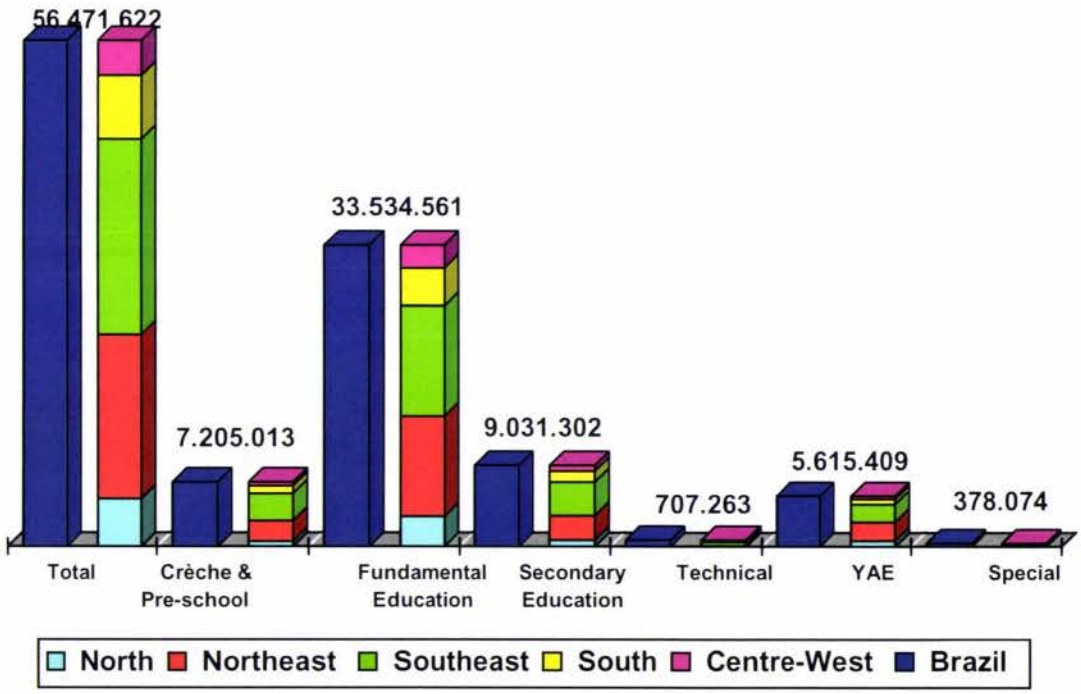

Figure 4.5: Number of enrolments in basic education according to level of study and administrative region – Brazil, 2005

*YAE: Youngster and adult education

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

However, regardless of regional discrepancies, lack of resources remains as one of the major concerns in education in the country. Newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* states that while the government allocates between R$446 and R$468.30 per year to each student, education specialists stipulate that the minimum expenditure should be R$1000 (as cited in Brock & Schwartzman, 2005). However, allocating more money is not likely to resolve the issue and certainly not expected to happen, as the government struggles to combat national debt and find money to pay its pension system.

4.3) The Brazilian reality

Tarso Genro, former State Minister of Education, was able to summarise what the present situation of the Brazilian education system is. He states that:

> *The Brazilian education system should be one of the most important instruments of promotion of equitable development in the country. Nowadays it does not take care or conform to the requirements of democratisation with quality. Inequities mark the education system (...). Primary education reaches more than 96% of our children, but its quality is below what is necessary. Secondary education is restrictive and lacks resolution capacity. The technical and professional education system is still beyond the reach of most of the youngsters that should profit from it. The tertiary system is faced with an increase in enrolments without guarantee of quality, and in it, the federal system, although endowed with large competence, faces huge restrictions, both related to financing and autonomy* (Genro, 2004, p. 39). (author's translation).

The 2005 School Census has revealed the magnitude of public access to schools[5]. Of the 56,5 million enrolments in basic education in 207,000 educational institutions, 49 million students are studying in public schools. Some 53.4% of the total number of institutions is located in urban regions, accounting for 86.4% of enrolments and the remaining 46.6% of educational institutions are located in rural regions and account for 13.6% of all the enrolments in 2005. Figure 4.6 shows the percentage of enrolments and of institutions in basic education in urban and rural schools, and shows that despite

[5] It should be noted that the 2005 School Census did not cover numbers relating to tertiary education. Numbers related to this academic level are from the 2004 Tertiary Census.

having almost the same number of schools, urban and rural areas present a significant difference in enrolments numbers.

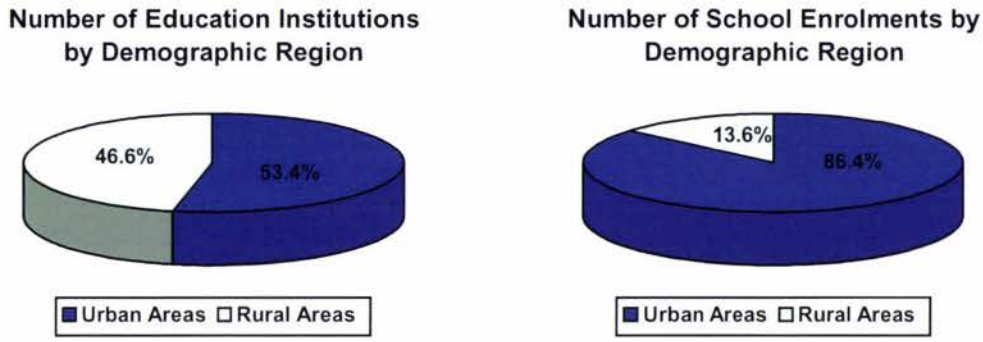

Figure 4.6: Percentage of enrolments and schools in basic education by demographic region – Brazil, 2005

Source: MEC/INEP, School Census 2005

However, the big gap is not limited only to enrolment numbers. As can be seen in Table 4.6, there is also a huge discrepancy between the different levels of education in relation to demographic location, especially in secondary education and technical education where an astonishing 94% and 95.6% of the schools, respectively, are in urban regions.

Table 4.6: Schools and enrolments according to demographic location and level of instruction – Brazil, 2005

Type / Instruction	Education Institutions			Enrolments		
	Urban	**Rural**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Total**
Crèches and pre-primary education	87,172	50,740	**137,912**	6,302,210	942,703	**7,245,013**
Primary education	72,314	90,413	**162,727**	27,736,174	5,799,387	**33,534,561**
Secondary education	22,184	1,377	**23,561**	8,824,397	206,906	**9,031,302**
Special education	6,814	239	**7,053**	373,340	4,734	**378,074**
Youngster and adult education	24,959	20,474	**45,433**	4,921,400	694,009	**5,615,409**
Technical education	3,088	142	**3,230**	674,933	32,330	**707,263**
Total	**110,677**	**96,557**	**207,234**	**48,831,554**	**7,680,068**	**56,511,622**

Source: MEC/INEP, School Census 2005

Moreover, Figure 4.7 gives a clear image of the disparities among enrolments in urban and rural areas, showing how the latter have a very small participation in the number of students in Brazilian schools.

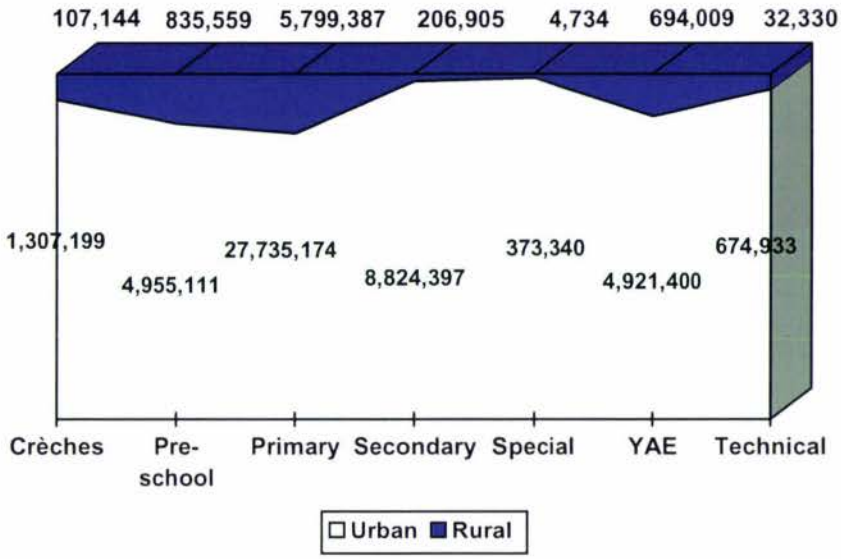

Figure 4.7: Number of enrolments in basic education according to level of study and demographic region – Brazil, 2005

*YAE: Youngster and adult education

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

Despite the geographic region, there has been a considerable increase in the number of schools since 1999 to the present day, as demonstrated in Figure 4.8. Only at the primary level has there been a decrease in numbers, which is probably because universal primary access at this level is almost fully completed and pass rates are slowly – but consistently – increasing, which consequently decreases the number of enrolments, and as time progresses, fewer new schools are needed.

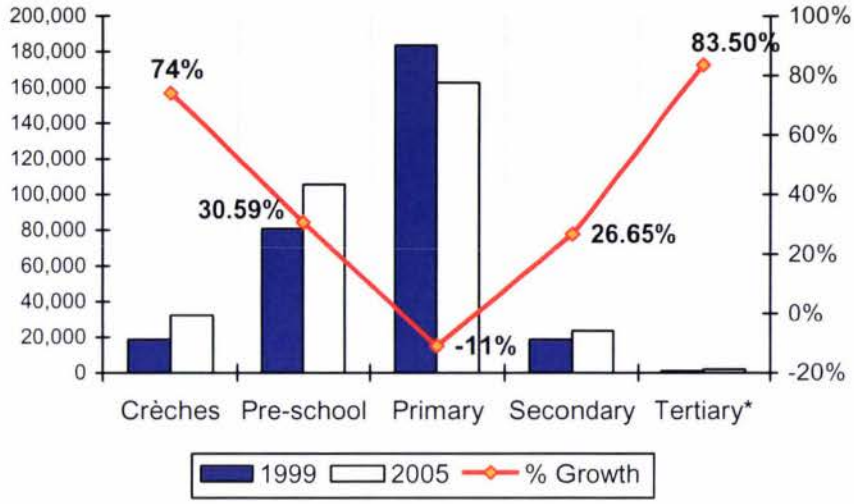

Figure 4.8: Number of Brazilian schools in urban and rural regions during 1999 and 2005, by academic level and percentage of growth

*Percentage of growth from years 2000-2004

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

With a general increase in the number of schools and the possibility of access to these institutions, enrolments have followed the trend and presented an increase in most of the levels of basic and tertiary education. Table 4.7 shows how enrolment rates in the Brazilian education system have increased over the years. Special attention can be brought to enrolments in crèches, which have increased by 70%, and tertiary education, which grew almost 55% in five years. The numbers come from the 2005 School Census and the 2004 Tertiary Census, two key reports on the situation of education in Brazil. Nevertheless, it can be seen that despite the increase in pre-primary and tertiary enrolments, these levels still reach a small number of students.

Table 4.7: Evolution of Brazilian enrolments by level of study (1999-2005)

Level	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Crèches	831,978	916,864	1,093,347	1,152,511	1,237,558	1,348,237	1,414,343
Pre-school	4,235,278	4,421,332	4,818,803	4,977,847	5,155,676	5,555,525	5,790,670
Primary Ed.	36,059,742	35,717,948	35,298,089	35,150,362	34,438,749	34,012,434	33,534,561
Secondary Ed.	7,769,199	8,192,948	8,398,008	8,710,584	9,072,942	9,169,357	9,031,302
Tertiary Ed.	-	2,694,245	3,030,754	3,479,913	3,887,022	4,163,733	-
Total	**48,896,197**	**51,943,337**	**52,639,001**	**53,471,217**	**53,791,947**	**54,249,286**	**49,770,876**

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

Indeed, the government has gone to great lengths to provide school to all children. As a consequence, all of the levels of education have presented significant growth in enrolments since 1999, except for primary education, as noted in Figure 4.9. Nevertheless, this is likely the result of positive policies which are responsible for decreasing the amount of enrolments by repetition, consequently improving the flow of students throughout this level of study. In all other levels, an increase in enrolments means that more children are having access to schooling. This has placed an enormous demand for trained teachers at all levels of education.

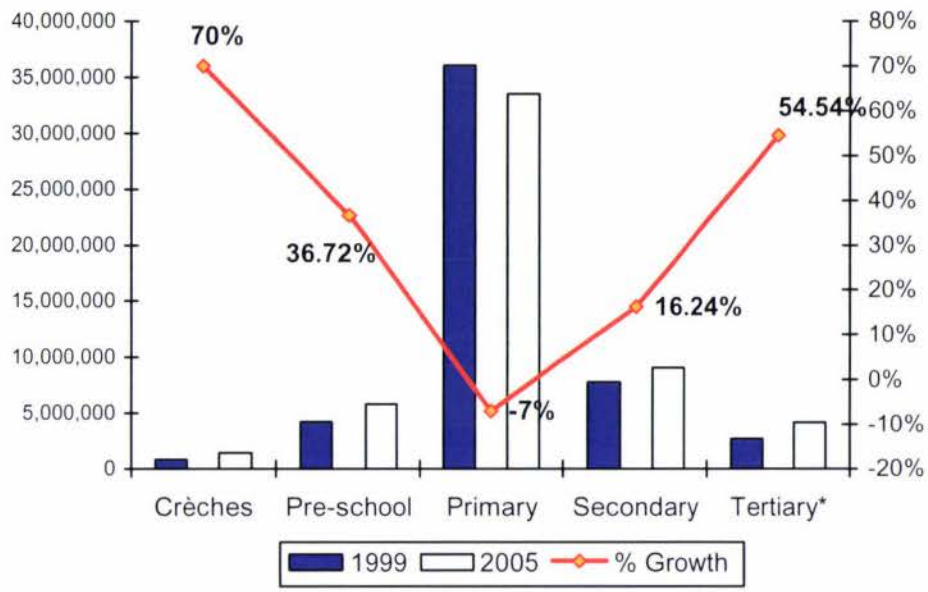

Figure 4.9: Number of enrolments in Brazilian schools during 1999 and 2005, by academic level and percentage of growth

*Percentage of growth from years 2000-2004

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

With the majority of the population (83%) living in urban regions, the remaining 17% of children in rural areas are the most affected by the poor quality of the education system in Brazil (IBGE, 2004). They are often faced with one of two discouraging options: to attend small nearby schools with poor infrastructure and very unmotivated and poorly trained teachers; or having to commute long distances to attend bigger – and not necessarily better – schools.

In either situation, there are many difficulties to overcome. Rural schools are faced with poor administration, lack of resources and very frequently, terrible infrastructure. Many

classrooms are equipped with broken chairs and tables, inadequate learning materials, poor ventilation and lighting structures, unsafe environments and lack of potable water and toilets. One measure adopted by the government to help combat low quality is to close down small schools that could not be properly assessed and monitored and transfer the students to bigger schools, which means that more funds are being transferred to fewer schools. This concentration of students helps implement proper infrastructure for the institutions and helps in the training of staff.

The small numbers in early childhood education are mainly because this level is frequently more common in urban and richer areas, meaning that it reaches only a small percentage of the population. Once more, disparities between rich and poor are seen, which shows that the population that could benefit the most from it, that is, have pre-primary education that could help with their development in the future, is the one that is deprived of it. The same happens with secondary education, where students from families in poor regions are more likely to drop out before getting to secondary schooling or, once there, to not complete it. The major issue lies in the fact that degrees and diplomas are a requirement in Brazil, if one is to secure a decent job with a reasonable salary.

Furthermore, many of these children are forced to travel long distances, sometimes even on foot, to reach the schools. This is because many municipalities do not have enough funds to provide proper transportation and when some do, many of the buses available to students are old and unsafe. Teachers interviewed from rural or poor schools have all attested to these factors and have all brought attention to the difficulties these children are exposed to. Faced with so many challenges since the early stages of their academic life, it is not hard to see why most of these children in rural and poor communities do not progress higher on the education ladder.

Undeniably, the problem with education in the country is not lack of schools or low enrolment numbers. Brazil is one of the top ten nations with the highest increase in the number of enrolments in the basic education of 1st to 4th grade, since 1980 (Thomas, 2005, p. 61). The major issue relates to poor quality in the system and the huge social gap that increases as the education level grows higher. Universities are a distant reality to many of the less privileged children, as the number of students from this group who

actually make it to the tertiary level is very low, or significantly lower than those of richer communities that present better social conditions. According to the World Bank, while many of the middle-class students are able to continue their studies on through tertiary education, lower income children have only a 15% chance of doing the same. In fact, of these lower income children, only 4% actually complete the secondary level and most of them are not able to subsequently study in the public universities (World Bank, 2004). Two major factors that can help explain such disparity are the inequality in education and the big income gap related to qualified and non-qualified workers (Thomas, 2005).

Although the 2005 School Census has shown that 87.9% of the students enrolled in secondary education are in public schools, statistics show that most of the enrolees in tertiary education come from private institutions, rather than public high schools. This means that most of the students from the latter are not having the opportunity to progress in their academic careers and enrol in public universities. A major reason for this is that many of the students in public secondary schools do not learn enough to be able to pass the *vestibular* in public universities, which are normally harder than private ones.

The *vestibular* is a combination of tests that students are subjected to in order to enter university. This major examination involves all the subjects covered in academic life up to that point. Upon making the registration to the test, the student must choose what course he or she plans to study, and after the decision is made, the student will compete with others of the same major for one of the few seats available in the universities[6]. Each institution has its own *vestibular* and every time a student decides to change courses, he or she must take another test (which only happen every six or 12 months) and restart their studies. As a result, students who do not pass the test are forced to wait at least a semester in order to try again. Many find low paying jobs to increase their income while they wait for the test period. Consequently, some end up not having time to study and continue not passing, entering a cycle of low paying jobs and lack of study or just giving up trying to enter tertiary schooling. Furthermore, all universities charge a

[6] Courses usually have more applicants than openings available, especially in public universities.

registration fee each time the student signs up. Only in some cases can poor students apply for an exemption of the fee by proving they come from low-income families.

To make matters worse, these tests are often very demanding and are famous for having questions that are extremely hard or even impossible to answer. It is common to have questions annulled because they are ambiguous or do not have a solution. As a consequence of this high requirement and selection process, all of the curriculum for secondary education is shaped for those tests, getting the students to try to learn impossible or very technical programmes which do not entice students' willingness to learn (Velloso & Albuquerque, 2004). On this matter, Cláudio de Moura Castro (2004) says that *"... the risk of teaching too much is learning too little."* (p. 25). (author's translation)

Seeing that most of the private secondary schools are frequently of a higher quality than public ones, private students often are better prepared for the big exam to enter university. For this reason, of all the students enrolled in private secondary schools – which comprise 12% of the enrolees in this level – 51.7% go on to study in public universities and 33% in private ones (INEP, 2005). Additionally, because family income has major influences on students' learning, the percentage of students from families of wealthier backgrounds that finish tertiary education is significantly higher than those with lower income. The 2005 School Census shows that students from families that earn a maximum of 10 minimum wages comprise 73.9% of entrants in universities throughout the country. This percentage is understandable since the majority of the population fits in this category. The remaining 26.1% comes from families with more than 10 salaries. Nevertheless, proportionately fewer students from lower income families graduate in comparison with the wealthiest families, as can be seen in Figure 4.10.

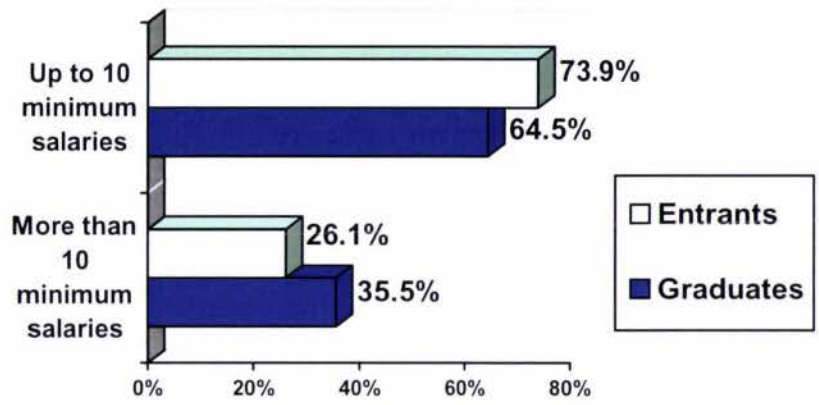

Figure 4.10: Percentage of students entering and concluding tertiary education, by family income – Brazil, 2004

Source: MEC/INEP

Furthermore, the Census clearly shows the influence parents have in children's academic life. As demonstrated in Figure 4.11, in families where the parents have gone through higher education, children tend to finish this level of study more than those whose parents studied up to secondary education at most.

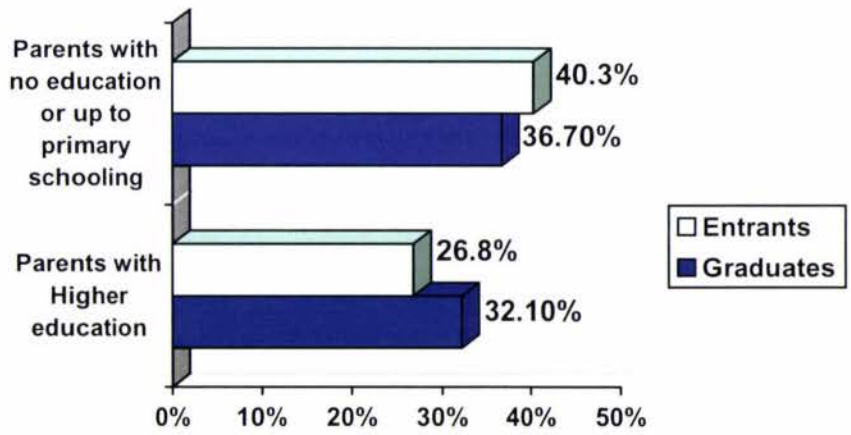

Figure 4.11: Percentage of students entering and concluding tertiary education, according to parents' education – Brazil, 2004

Source: MEC/INEP

As previously mentioned, gender equity in education has been successfully accomplished in Brazil. At the basic level of education, men and women are almost equally represented, with men comprising 51% and women 49% of primary education enrolments. In secondary schooling, women are the majority, reaching 54% against men's 46%. Figure 4.12 gives the figures of enrolments in primary and secondary education according to gender and region.

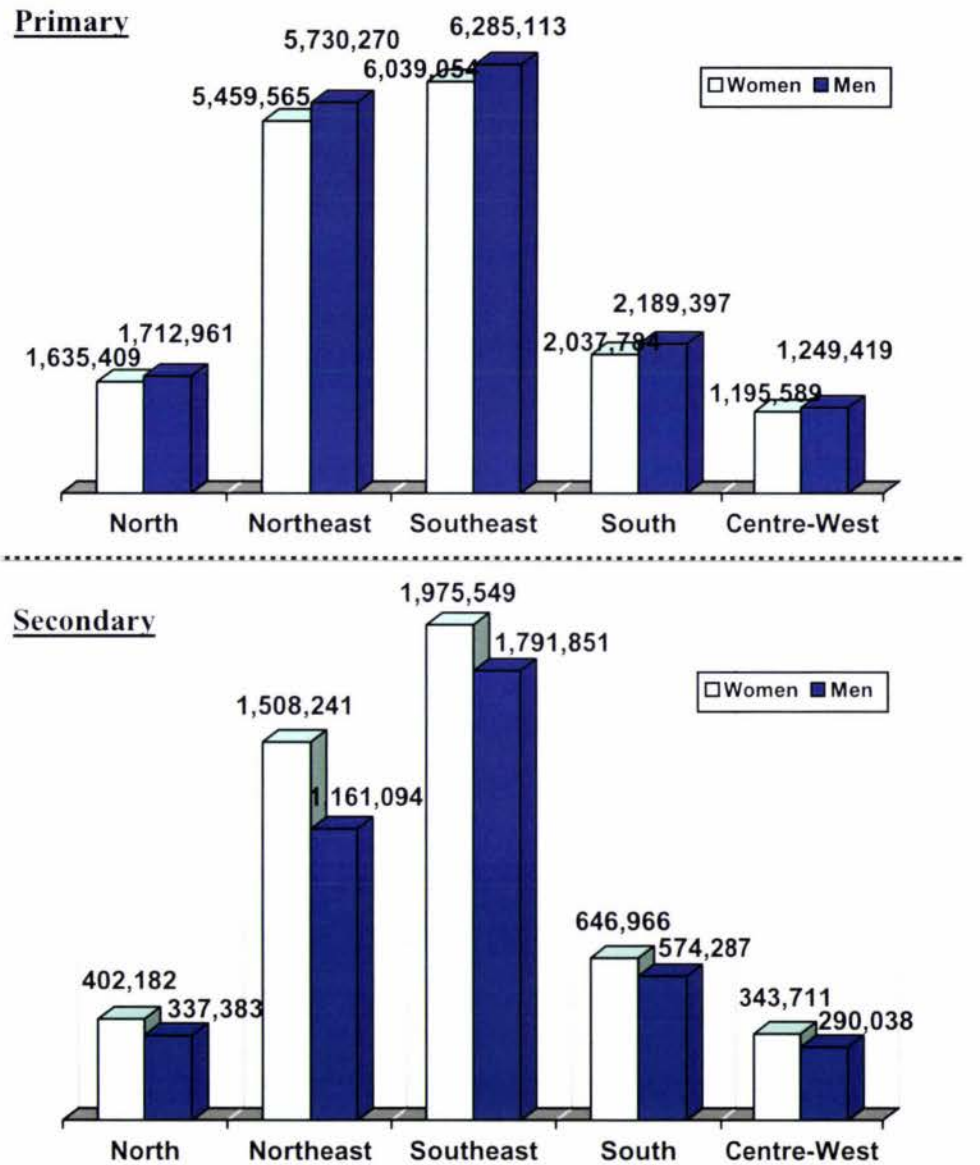

Figure 4.12: Number of enrolments in primary and secondary education, according to gender, by demographic situation and region – Brazil, 2005

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

Despite gender equity, once again the ethnic diversity in Brazil should be noted. According to the 2005 School Census, 18.1% of the students, that is 9,844,755 students in all levels of basic education, did not reply when asked about their ethnicity. Furthermore, ethnicity numbers in youngster and adult education do not include the 996,000 students enrolled extramurally. Therefore, in order to analyse data appropriately, the total number of enrolments for that level of study will be 4,619,409, instead of 5,615,409, and the number of enrolments in basic education drops from 56,471,622 to 55,475,622. With that in mind, of the 45,630,867 students that did reply to the ethnicity question, 46% consider themselves mulattos, 41% white, 10% black, 2% Asian and the remaining 1% indigenous, as demonstrated in Table 4.8. It is important to note that there are no fixed criteria to establish a person's race and answering that question was strictly limited to each student's or parent's interpretation, without help from teachers or staff.

Table 4.8: Number of enrolments in the education system by declared ethnicity, according to level of study - Brazil, 2005

	White	Black	Mulatto	Asian	Indigenous	TOTAL
Crèches	612,428	108,858	446,406	17,288	4,681	**1,414,343**
%	51.48%	9.15%	37.52%	1.45%	0.50%	
Pre-school	2,324,136	403,383	2,048,185	82,804	37,147	**5,790,670**
%	47.47%	8.24%	41.84%	1.69%	0.76%	
Primary	11,224,104	2,643,412	13,260,064	422,383	271,389	**33,534,561**
%	40.34%	9.50%	47.66%	1.52%	0.98%	
Secondary	3,132,641	753,923	3,163,348	118,660	47,376	**9,031,302**
%	43.41%	10.45%	43.84%	1.64%	0.66%	
Special	164,725	31,562	112,886	3,342	1,317	**378,074**
%	52.49%	10.06%	35.97%	1.06%	0.42%	
YAE*	1,149,961	532,489	1,931,985	53,726	35,211	**4,619,409**
%	31.05%	14.38%	52.17%	1.45%	0.95%	
Technical	300,923	42,841	138,023	7,220	2,040	**707,263**
%	61.28%	8.72%	28.11%	1.47%	0.42%	
TOTAL	**18,908,918**	**4,516,468**	**21,100,897**	**705,423**	**399,161**	**45,630,867**
%	41.44%	9.90%	46.24%	1.55%	0.87%	

*YAE: Youngster and adult education

Note: Excludes students in extramural YAE

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

This clearly shows that whites and non-whites have equal opportunities to study both in fundamental and secondary schooling, when compared to the percentage they represent in society. As seen back on Table 4.1, Brazilian society is practically divided between

white, who make up a little over 50% of the population, and mulattos, who account for 42%. These two ethnicities equally represent the academic population in primary and secondary education, with white comprising 33% of primary and almost 35% of secondary schooling, and mulattos representing 40% and 35% respectively. However, numbers shift significantly with an increase in the education level. Not only do whites have more opportunities than non-whites to study in tertiary institutions, but they also show more likelihood of concluding their studies, as demonstrated in Figure 4.13.

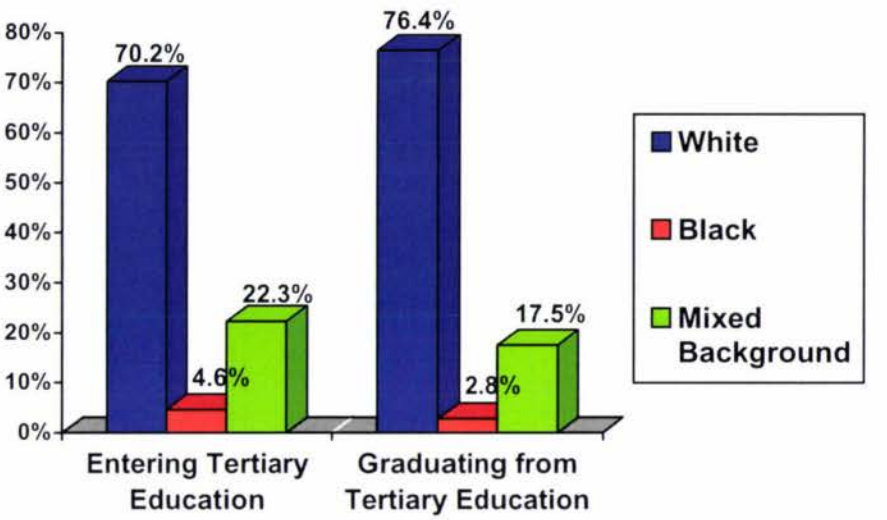

Figure 4.13: Percentage of students entering and concluding tertiary education, by ethnicity – Brazil, 2005

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

In an attempt to reduce racial inequalities, the Brazilian government has established racial quota both in the public contests and in public universities[7]. With these, the black population is guaranteed a specific number of seats and positions. This however, has caused somewhat of a negative reaction, because many of the citizens see it as reverse discrimination. Moreover, it is very difficult to determine the race of many individuals in the country because Brazilian society does not conform to conventional race-based social categories like most other nations.

[7] Brazilian legislation establishes that in order to work in governmental institutions, people must compete for a vacancy by testing their knowledge against other competitors in order to secure a position, such as occurs with the *vestibular* in public universities.

With access to school no longer being the issue in primary education, more focus is being given on improving the infrastructure of buildings. School facilities have improved considerably over the past years, but there is still an awful lot that needs to be done in order to guarantee proper infrastructures for students. It is absurd to think that there are still schools in Brazil that do not have running water, electricity or plumbing in this day and age – no matter how small the percentage might be. When analysing Figure 4.14, it is surprising to note that many schools still lack basic infrastructure at all levels of education in Brazil.

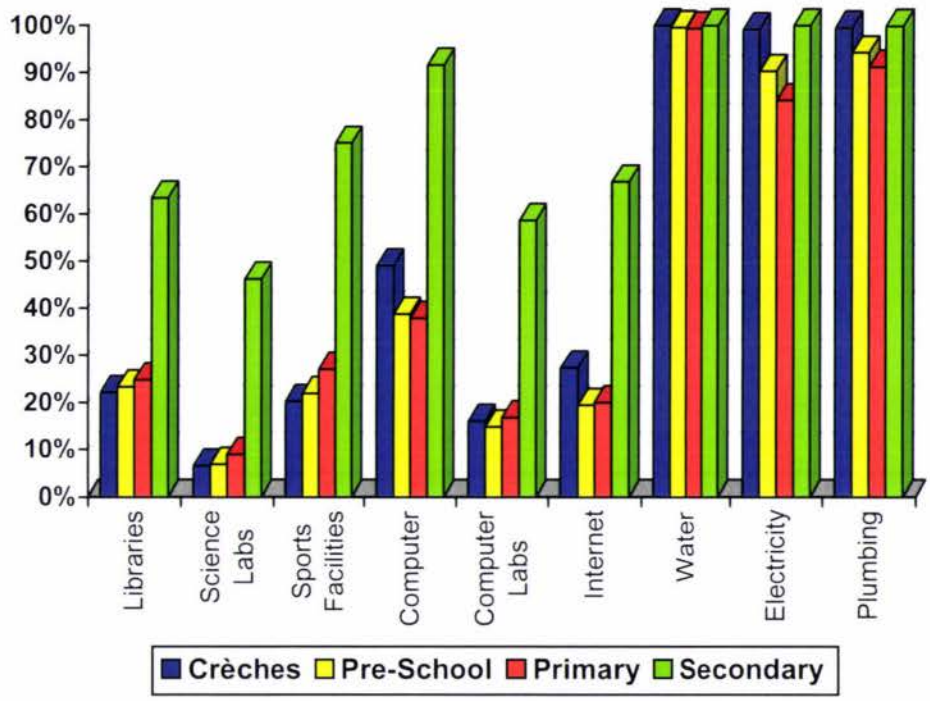

Figure 4.14: Percentage of school infrastructure coverage by academic level – Brazil, 2005

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

In primary education, 1,017 rural schools do not have running water, which accounts for 13% of these institutions. In urban regions this number is considerably smaller – but still present nonetheless – in 20 schools, which accounts for less than 1% of the total establishments in these areas. In relation to secondary education, this number is practically nil, with all the schools in urban regions having running water and only two of the rural schools that do not. Nonetheless, primary urban and rural schools still show a big gap between them. In relation to electricity, although less than 1% of the urban

schools have no energy, more than 28% of the rural ones suffer from the lack of it. This accounts for 25,737 rural primary schools that do not have electricity. These numbers come from the 2005 School Census carried out by INEP, as can be seen in the Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Number of Brazilian schools with water, electricity and plumbing, according to academic level and demographic region – Brazil, 2005

	TOTAL			Schools with water		Schools with electricity		Schools with plumbing	
	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Crèches	**32,296**	27,572	4,724	27,570	4,718	27,568	4,434	27,546	4,542
Pre-school	**105,616**	59,600	46,016	59,582	45,548	59,562	35,837	59,485	40,063
Primary	**162,727**	72,314	90,413	72,294	89,396	72,220	64,676	72,137	76,364
Secondary	**23,561**	22,184	1,377	22,184	1,375	22,183	1,368	22,157	1,357

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

In relation to the other infrastructures that might be present in schools, such as science laboratories, sports facilities and libraries, numbers also diverge immensely among urban and rural settings. While almost 50% of the primary schools in urban regions have libraries, only 6% of rural ones have these facilities. This means that primary children in 84,874 rural schools do not have access to the wide array of books held in these premises. In secondary education, although both regions fare a bit better, only 65% of urban and 44% of rural schools have libraries available for their students. The number of schools with science laboratories in primary education is insignificant (less than 9%). Of the 23,561 secondary education establishments, 10,890 of them have this type of infrastructure, which represents 46.22%. Of this total, it is astonishing to see that only 244 of the 1,377 – i.e., 17% – of rural schools have science labs. Sports facilities are also a distant reality for most of the rural schools in Brazil. While almost 54% of primary and 77% of secondary schools in urban regions have sports facilities in their grounds, in rural regions it is 5% and 47% of the schools respectively, as observed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Number of Brazilian schools with libraries, science laboratories and sports facilities, according to academic level and demographic region – Brazil, 2005

	TOTAL			Schools with libraries		Schools with science labs		Schools with sports facilities	
	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Crèches	**32,296**	27,572	4,724	6,870	253	2,072	15	6,331	196
Pre-school	**105,616**	59,600	46,016	21,715	2,927	6,847	302	20,503	2,672
Primary	**162,727**	72,314	90,413	34,834	5,539	13,910	599	38,869	5,074
Secondary	**23,561**	22,184	1,377	14,328	603	10,646	244	17,020	652

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

With such great discrepancies in basic school infrastructures, it is likely that in technologies the gap will be even wider. And this assumption is correct, as found when the numbers of schools with computers, computer labs and internet are analysed. It should be noted that when referring to schools with computers, it does not necessarily mean that they are accessible to the students. Many of them are used for administrative functions inside the school and are not for personal or academic use. Therefore, students' access to computers is measured by the number of schools with computer laboratories.

As can be seen in Table 4.11, although almost 38% of the schools at primary level have computers in their grounds, only 17% of them have computer laboratories for the students. Moreover, the gap between urban and rural schools is once again obvious as almost 44% of the primary schools in urban regions have internet access but only 1% of the rural primary schools have it. Furthermore, while the vast majority of secondary schools in urban areas have computers, that is, 93%, only a little over 64% of the rural ones have them.

Table 4.11: Number of Brazilian schools with computers, computer laboratories and internet access, according to academic level and demographic region – Brazil, 2005

	TOTAL			Schools with computers		Schools with computer labs		Schools with internet access	
	TOTAL	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Crèches	**32.296**	27.572	4.724	15.546	296	5.117	55	8.757	74
Pre-school	**105.616**	59.6	46.016	37.316	3.582	14.972	688	20.052	476
Primary	**162.727**	72.314	90.413	54.879	6.688	26.105	1.233	31.521	1.002
Secondary	**23.561**	22.184	1.377	20.692	888	13.477	320	15.391	358

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

All these numbers help explain the extreme regional and demographic differences present in the country, and serve to demonstrate how difficult it is to try to homogenise education policies in order to cover all the units of education in the country. Aligned with the qualifications of the teachers, academic material and teaching methods, these resources have enormous influence on the academic development of students and are crucial to ensure a high quality education.

4.4) Quality Education

Education has been considered a condition for social development, which makes it even more significant for developing countries. Debates have been changing from addressing the importance of education to focusing on the quality of the education being provided. Access to basic education is no longer a major issue in most of the countries in Latin America, as they are becoming increasingly more committed to the Millennium Development Goals (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2004). Many are now focusing on the quality of education as their main concern, and as previously mentioned, this is the case in Brazil.

Indeed, awareness of the quality of education is growing considerably in the country, not only among education experts, but also among the general population. The Centre

for Strategic Matters (NAE) from the Presidency of the Republic has carried out research with the population with the objective of detecting what is the main concern in regards to society and its development. The improvement of the quality of basic education in schools was said to be the most important among the general population. The concern is grounded in the fact that education is one of the primary rights of the citizens guaranteed by the Constitution and an obligation of the federal government. Furthermore, its importance for the population is clear as it is common to think that with more education comes better jobs and better salaries, which gives individuals a better social condition.

With that in mind, it is crucial to find a proper and fair definition of what is implied by 'quality'. There should be a standard way of measuring quality that involves the same parameters in all countries. Quality is often measured by student achievement. Nevertheless, it should be taken into consideration that students' performances in school can be influenced by many exterior factors, such as parental commitment to the school, background, socio-economic context and the community in which the student is involved.

An education that is high on quality is one of the biggest challenges faced by education providers all over the world. Quality is commonly measured by the final product and that, in the education scenario, is symbolised by the student. This means that the focus on quality of education relates to how and what students learn. The most common way of measuring quality in education, according to the United Nations' regulation, is by taking into account the proportion of students that start grade 1 and go on to complete a full course of study, i.e., up to grade 5.

As previously seen, a lot has been done to guarantee access to schools for all Brazilian children. In the 1980s, the proportion of students between 7-14 years of age in school was 80.9%, way below the 2000 mark of 96.4%, which places Brazil with many developed countries. In some states, such as São Paulo (in the Southeast) and the Federal District (in the Centre-West), this number reaches the mark of 98%. Nevertheless, due to regional disparities in the country, regions like the North and Northeast are below the national average, showing figures of 93.4% and 95.2%, respectively (INEP, 2002a). Among the age group of 15 to 17, the numbers are still low,

83%, but represent a significant improvement from the 49.7% noted in 1980 (INEP, 2002a)[8]. It is important to remember, however, that quality education is more than just access to schools.

A World Bank analysis has showed that Brazil still spends significantly more money as a result of high repetition rates. This costs the government 35% more per student in grades 1 to 4, 22% more per student in grades 5 to 8 and 23% in grades 9 to 11. If dropout rates are factored in, these numbers are even higher, with costs increasing 45%, 70% and 106% respectively (World Bank, 2003). Of all the Latin American countries, Brazil holds the record for spending the largest sum of money on repetition: a staggering 8 billion dollars a year (United Nations, 2005a). Indeed, problems with poor quality in education have cost the government a large sum of money, despite investment in education being substantial in Brazil. The country spends 5.2% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education, placing it alongside many developed countries and surpassing investments made by the United States and the United Kingdom (Guia do Estudante, 2005). Nevertheless, the Brazilian reality has proven that more money invested in education does not necessarily result in better outcomes.

Despite reducing the age-gender delay and repetition rates, the country is still far behind in providing quality education to its students. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 15-year-old Brazilian students have performed poorly in reading, science and mathematics, placing the country at the bottom of the list of participating members, as seen in Chapter 1. Furthermore, although 97.2% of the students are enrolled in school, less than 10% achieve adequate performance in Portuguese language and mathematics evaluations (NAE, 2004).

Quality issues relate to structural problems in the system. The difficulty lies in the fact that the decentralisation of the Brazilian education system makes it hard to determine how equal education is being provided. To combat this, a mass mobilisation is necessary. In Brazil, this means combining efforts from the executive, legislative and judiciary sectors in the federal, state and municipal levels, from the private sector, non-

[8] It should be observed that in this age group, although they are enrolled in class, there are many students who are not studying in the proper grade levels for their age, mainly as a consequence of repetition.

governmental organisations and society in general. It is important to note that equitability does not depend solely on the even distribution of funds. Geographic location of schools and socio-economic conditions of parents are some of the factors that greatly influence the service being provided. As previously mentioned, rural schools, for example, usually have less prepared teachers and ill-equipped classrooms. Likewise, families where parents have fewer years of study tend to give less importance to the presence of their children in school.

Assessment is a primary step in the educational cycle but it should not be seen as the essential way of measuring quality. Instead it should be taken as a means to help increase the quality of how students learn and how teachers teach. This is because assessment in itself does not guarantee better quality, but provides the route and basis for methods and strategies that could ultimately lead to an increase in the quality of education. It is crucial, because through assessment it is possible to gather significant data about students and teachers. This information can then be used to help increase the quality of education, and for this reason it is extremely important that all the data gathered also be of a high standard.

One of the key issues of assessment is that it often focuses on general student performance. This means that it does not address how much an individual student effectively learned. Instead, it measures the collective achievements in a specific grade. Furthermore, assessment does not focus on the teachers' efficiency. It is not unusual to see teachers preparing their students for assessment tests by practising and coaching them to pass instead of effectively aiding them in understanding what is really being asked of them during the exam (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2004).

It is important to use assessment and performance achievements as an aid to improve and succeed rather than as a tool to point out the failures of the student. Nevertheless, learning should not be focused on what will be addressed in assessment tests. Some key changes have to be taken in consideration in order to help improve the quality of education. The government should consider changing the focus of the assessment process and not give so much emphasis to overall rankings. Instead, more focus should be given to individual results from the students in order to pass those that do not show any problems and assist those that really require help.

Having mentioned that, a basic problem with the quality of education in Brazil is students' readiness to move higher up the educational ladder. This 'social promotion' allows a student to move to the next grade without actually being capable of doing so on his or her own (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2004). This means that even though the students have not learned all that is required to move forward, they are sometimes pushed forward by the system in order to make room for other children coming along. As a result, many students are being passed – as opposed to successfully completing the grade – and may end the entire cycle of study of approximately eight years without good knowledge of reading and writing – becoming functional literates, at most. Many of the teachers interviewed for this report have admitted to having already passed at least one unprepared student at some point. The main reason given for this was that these students were passed out of pity, because teachers did not want them to fail the entire school year just because of one single subject (theirs, in this case).

Because they fail to become proficient readers, these students require even more attention and work from educators. This obviously has great influence on and significance for the quality of education and helps explain why the age-grade distortion resulting from the high repetition rates persists in the system. The government has created specific programmes designed to exclusively address this issue, such as acceleration programmes and summer school programmes, which aim to help children left behind in the system catch up with their proper age group. Furthermore, an old technique of *dependência*[9], that is, a conditional pass, has given many students the opportunity to progress on the academic ladder without being held back an entire year. The problem is that all these measures are remedial, and do not fix the obstacles from the beginning.

Another major issue regarding the Brazilian education system is the already mentioned access to tertiary education through the *vestibular* contest, which favours students from private institutions rather than students from public schools who indeed need the opportunity to study in public tertiary institutions. The National Institute for Education Research (INEP) has come up with an estimate that in 2002, of approximately 5 million

[9] *Dependência* means that a student who usually fails 1 or 2 subjects will still pass the year, under the condition that he or she does extra work related to that failed subject after school throughout the following year.

candidates for the universities, only 1.2 million students were able to qualify in the *vestibular* and start a graduate degree (Ruiz, 2004, p. 81).

Yet, it is not necessary to look that high up the academic ladder to measure the impact of poor quality of education in Brazil, as it is also present at the early stages of education. The National Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) has pointed out that in basic education, evasion indices are close to 14%. Furthermore, 22% of the children enrolled in 4^{th} grade are currently in very critical stages of learning, meaning that after years of school they are still unable to read and write properly, or do math calculation accurately (Oliveira, 2005, pp. 72-78). These students are the ones that have the biggest likelihood of dropping out of school before completing at least 8^{th} grade.

There are many components that relate to the matter of quality education, which when addressed, can help improve the quality of what is being taught inside Brazilian classrooms. First and foremost, both teachers and students should be granted appropriate physical environments for teaching and learning, in schools that are well equipped, safe and well maintained. Teachers should be capable, motivated and well trained in order to deal with all aspects of teaching, not only in relation to the subjects they teach but also to the environment they are in. In this sense, teaching methodologies should be designed to encourage independent thinking by students and entice them in the act of learning. This is supported by a well-designed curriculum that is appropriate to the environment of the school, taking into account, for example, that students in rural areas may have different interests from those in urban schools.

Teachers need sufficient time to instruct, which includes not only the time spent inside the classrooms but also time needed to prepare the classes and materials for the students. Strong and effective school leadership and supervision is also necessary to guarantee an efficient working environment. Furthermore, learning should be supported by appropriate academic materials, which are up-to-date, reliable and effective. Likewise, evaluation and examinations need to be fair and valid so that students do not feel that they are being cheated in the learning process. Only when these factors are taken into account will there be conditions to ensure an educational environment that is fair, equal and high on quality, which will effectively help the personal development of the students and consequently of the country.

4.5) Illiteracy in Brazil

Illiteracy is a problem not only for the individuals, who are deprived of many social opportunities, but also for the governments, as it makes it considerably harder to implement measures and useful changes in society. In 1980, the illiteracy rate in Brazil was 25.4% for people 15 years and older. By the year 2000, this number was reduced to 13.6%. This shows great progress in comparison with the past, but taking the country's dimensions into consideration, it still means there are 16 million Brazilians who do not know how to read and write. Furthermore, dropout rates are still so high that for every 100 students enrolled in school, it is estimated that fewer than 60 of them will conclude 8th grade (INEP, 2002a).

Moreover, in 2005, 30% of the students enrolled in primary education were studying in grades lower than their age group and a shocking 46.3% of students enrolled in secondary education do not study accordingly either. There are many causes that serve to explain why these numbers are so high. Low quality, poor teacher training, few hours inside the classroom and ill-equipped schools are just some of the reasons that help justify why the system lacks quality (INEP, 2002a).

Table 4.12 shows an increase of almost 1.2 percentage points among the population with 11 years or more of study between 2004 and 2005, and linked to Table 4.13, shows how the illiteracy numbers in the population have been decreasing throughout the years.

Table 4.12: Level of instruction of population 10 years and older by gender – Brazil, 2004 and 2005

	2004			2005		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	**TOTAL**	Men	Women
No instruction or less than 1 year	**11.3%**	11.4%	11.2%	**10.8%**	10.8%	10.8%
1 to 3 years	**14.5%**	15.4%	13.6%	**14.1%**	15.1%	13.2%
4 to 7 years	**31.5%**	32.1%	30.8%	**31.2%**	31.9%	30.5%
8 to 10 years	**16.5%**	16.6%	16.4%	**16.4%**	16.5%	16.3%
11 years or more	**26.0%**	24.1%	27.7%	**27.2%**	25.5%	28.9%

Note: % difference includes people with non-determined or non-declared years of study
Source: IBGE, PNAD 2004-2005

Table 4.13: Illiteracy rates by age groups – Brazil, 1996/1998/2001

Age Group	Year		
	1996	1998	2001
10 to 14	8.3%	6.9%	4.2%
15 to 19	6.0%	4.8%	3.2%
20 to 29	7.6%	6.9%	6.0%
30 to 44	11.1%	10.8%	9.5%
45 to 59	21.9%	20.1%	17.6%
60 and above	37.4%	35.9%	34.0%

Source: IBGE, PNADs from 1995, 1998 and 2001.

It should be noted that the older population had less access to schools and consequently fewer opportunities to study, so it is obvious that illiteracy rates at this level are far higher than for the younger population. It can also be assumed that with the implementation of literacy programmes such as youngster and adult education, this number will consistently drop, as the younger level, with more instruction, will gradually replace the older population.

Notwithstanding, disparities and social inequities throughout all the different geographic units should also be factored in. From the country's five different regions, 26 states, a Federal District and 5,561 municipalities, the Northeast shows the worst indices, where 53.4% of the poorest children under 17 years of age are concentrated, while 21.8% are in the Southeast, 9.7% in the South region, 6.2% in the Central-West and 6.0% in the North region (IBGE, 2001). The regions less economically developed and with lower economic diversity, such as the Northeast, present the worst educational indices in the country, as revealed in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 – Illiteracy rates on population 15 years-old or above by geographic unit – Brazil – 1996/2001

Geographic Unit	Year		
	1996	**1998**	**2001**
North	12.4%	12.6%	11.2%
Northeast	28.7%	27.5%	24.3%
Southeast	8.7%	8.1%	7.5%
South	8.9%	8.1%	7.1%
Central-West	11.6%	11.1%	10.2%
Brazil	**14.7%**	**13.8%**	**12.4%**

Source: IBGE, PNADs from 1996, 1998 and 2001.

It can be observed that the Northeast of Brazil has the biggest illiteracy rate among the population 15 years or older in the country, with almost 8 million illiterates, which alone corresponds to more than 40% of the country's academic population. It is therefore of primary importance that political policies around education take into consideration regional differences. Furthermore, when comparing family incomes, these disparities become even more obvious. On Table 4.15, it can be seen that in families where the income is lower than the minimum wage, illiteracy rates in Brazil can reach a high of almost 29% (37% in the Northeast), while more developed regions with higher income families register illiteracy rates that range around 1.4% (0.4% in the South).

Table 4.15 – Illiteracy rates on population 15 years-old or above by family income according to region – Brazil –2001

Geographic Unit	Family Income in Current Minimum Wage*					
	TOTAL	**Up to 1**	**More than 1, up to 3**	**More than 3, up to 5**	**More than 5, up to 10**	**More than 10**
North	**11.2**	22.6	15.5	9.9	5.0	2.0
Northeast	**24.3**	36.8	29.3	17.2	8.4	1.8
Southeast	**7.5**	20.0	13.5	7.5	4.0	1.5
South	**7.1**	19.5	12.4	5.9	3.6	0.8
Central-West	**10.2**	23.3	15.3	8.9	5.0	1.4
Brazil	**12.4**	**28.8**	**19.7**	**9.7**	**4.7**	**1.4**

*Minimum wage in 2001 = R$180.00

Source: IBGE, PNAD 2001.

By these numbers it can be seen that in regions like the Northeast, illiteracy rates in the poorest families are approximately 20 times higher than those in richer families, which can be explained by the poor quality of schools (especially those in poorer regions), child labour (where many children are forced to withdraw from school in order to help with the family income), lack of study from the parents and poor teacher training, among others. It is crucial for political and educational policies to be combined in order to offer better chances for children to stay in school, instead of withdrawing for the many reasons related to low income or the bad quality of educational institutions.

It is therefore crucial to work with students so that they pass all academic levels in order to ensure that illiteracy numbers – and this includes numbers of functional literates as well – decrease further. The 2005 School Census shows that 78.63% of the students passed the primary level, while in the secondary stage, 73% successfully finished the academic year. Repetition rates are 13% in primary education, a figure significantly lower than the 21.7% registered in 2002. Furthermore, in 1996, 14.3% of the students in primary education had dropped out of school, while in 2000 this number was reduced to 12% and 8.3% in 2004 (INEP, 2001b; INEP, 2005).

What seems to be a small reduction in the overall numbers is in fact a significant change in the education scenario in the country. It shows an improvement in policies and incentives to help children continue in school and learn. Figure 4.15 shows the indices of school performance in Brazil during the time of the School Census in 2005. It can be seen that in primary education, a bigger proportion of students are failing as opposed to leaving school. However, in secondary education more children drop out of school than repeat the year, showing problems in retaining children in the higher levels of education.

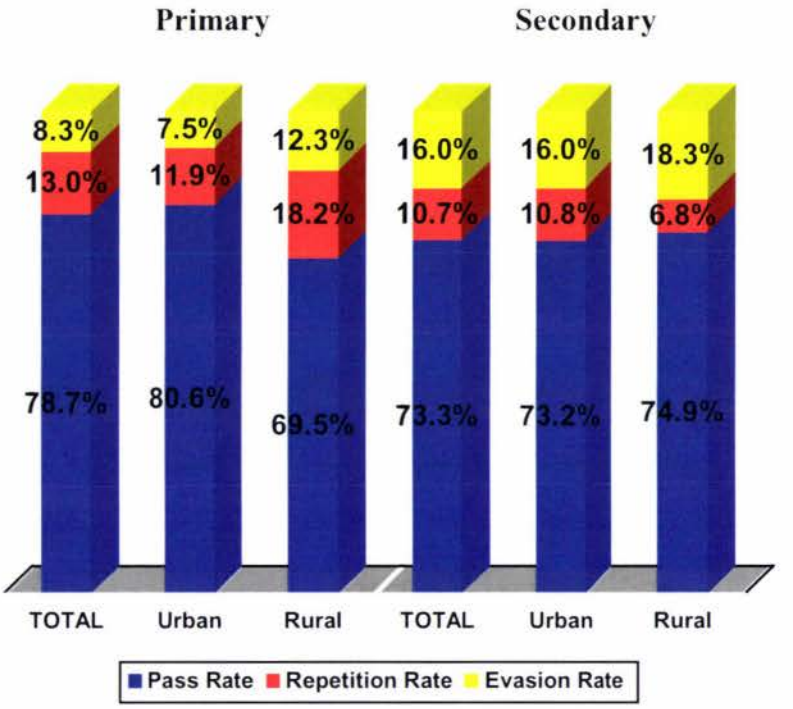

Figure 4.15: Pass, repetition and evasion rates in primary and secondary education – Brazil, 2004

Source: MEC/INEP, 2005

Notwithstanding, progress was also made in the secondary education in Brazil. From 1996 to 2004, pass rates went from 71.6% to 73.3% and evasion rates lowered from 18.9% to 16%. Nevertheless, repetition rates which were of 9.5% in 1996 jumped to 10.7%. This is a clear reflection of the impact of poor quality present in schools. While the system is able to retain more children in class, it still is responsible for producing functional literates that are not capable of continuing their studies and progressing further in their academic life. This is where acceleration programmes come in handy, as

they focus on the students that have been held back and are currently enrolled in lower grades than expected, helping diminish the repetition numbers.

An important issue with the quality of education in Brazil is the aforementioned decentralised system, which requires a lot more structure, organisation and uniformity. The federal government has little influence over the public schools throughout the country because most are the responsibility of the states and municipalities. This way, for national change to take place in the education system, the government needs to mobilise all 26 state governments, the Federal District and the 5561 municipal ones (World Bank, 2003). On this matter, Tarso Genro (2004) also points out the importance of a wide interaction between all three levels of government – federal, state and municipal – in order to guarantee that education be handed out evenly and steadily.

4.6) Teacher Issues

One of the key factors that affect the quality of the education in schools relates to teaching and teacher skills. It is therefore important to draw a profile of these professionals who are responsible for educating almost 60 million Brazilians currently enrolled from crèches to universities (INEP, 2005). It is undeniable that teachers play a crucial part in helping eradicate illiteracy, and for this reason, focus on their qualification is more than necessary. Brazil has more than 2.5 million teachers working in all levels of basic education and the issue of their qualification has been exhaustively discussed over the years in the country (INEP, 2005). However, it remains one of the biggest concerns in relation to the lack of quality in the education system. Along with the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) introduced in 1996, another law, from December of the same year, states that in the course of five years lay teachers should gain the necessary qualifications to carry out their jobs[10]. This measure reduced considerably the number of lay teachers in the country, from 15.3% in 1996 to 5.7% in 2001 (INEP, 2002a, p. 52).

[10] It is understood by lay teachers those who teach pre-primary education and first levels of primary (1st to 4th grades) without having finished secondary studies and those that teach primary (5th to 8th grades) and secondary school without a tertiary degree.

The problem is that lack of specialised teachers is one of the major concerns in the Brazilian education system. INEP numbers show that in 2002 there was a gap of 250,000 teachers, where subjects such as physics, mathematics, biology and chemistry had a shortage of approximately 55,000 specialised teachers each (World Bank, 2004, p. 145; Ruiz, 2004). Most recently, other areas such as geography, Spanish and English also struggle. The biggest explanation for this has always been low wages for these professionals with an increase in demand for more years of study to obtain a qualified diploma, but they are also faced with lack of incentives and low motivation, which directly affect their personal and professional well-being and their desire to carry on with their career. Table 4.16 shows the average income of different professions in Brazil. It is clear to see the discrepancies among the salaries of teachers in different levels of education, especially when comparing pre-primary teachers to tertiary ones, with the latter earning approximately six times more than the former.

Table 4.16: Average monthly income of different professions – Brazil and regions, 2001

Type of Profession	Average income per geographic region					
	Brazil	**North**	**Northeast**	**Southeast**	**South**	**Centre-West**
Pre-primary teacher	**422.78**	388.89	232.79	522.44	435.87	749.61
Primary teacher (1st to 4th grade)	**461.67**	443.17	293.18	599.19	552.72	567.38
Primary teacher (5th to 8th grade)	**599.85**	600.99	372.81	792.82	633.92	593.52
Secondary teacher	**866.23**	826.28	628.08	979.16	804.32	872.20
Public servant	**911.82**	661.40	679.31	1,072.50	926.14	1,103.37
Economist	**2,254.66**	1,700.77	2,009.08	2,227.19	1,641.35	3,592.64
Tertiary teacher	**2,565.47**	1,800.30	2,252.08	3,086.95	2,122.77	2,190.10
Doctor	**2,973.06**	4,429.82	2,576.78	2,801.77	3,260.41	4,110.87
Judge	**8,320.70**	5,905.38	8,038.88	9,018.42	9,750.00	7,331.08

Note: Values in Reais (R$) from September 2001

Source: PNAD, 2001

To make matters worse, the majority of the schools that suffer from the shortage of qualified teachers are in rural areas, and when qualified teachers are allocated to these regions, they were often trained in urban scenarios. Table 4.17 shows the number of

teachers working in Brazilian schools in the different levels of education and according to the levels of administration. The dilemma arises because it is fundamental for schools to fit the students' needs and rural schools cannot be effective if all they teach is related to the urban environment. If they do not respect the surroundings, children will not be motivated to show up and schools will be faced with empty classrooms.

Table 4.17: Number of teachers working in Brazilian Schools, by level of administration – 2001

	Crèches	Pre-School	Primary	Secondary	Special	YAE*	Technical
Federal	134	156	2,330	6,482	239	122	7,340
State	1,441	12,021	576,601	374,941	12,125	131,619	12,746
Municipal	49,056	197,045	807,456	11,054	10,704	99,504	1,836
Private	35,701	100,122	248,175	115,946	27,941	16,738	37,765
Brazil	**86,332**	**309,344**	**1,634,562**	**508,423**	**51,009**	**247,983**	**59,687**

Note: The same teacher may teach different levels and work in more than one school

* YAE: Youngster and adult education

Source: MEC/INEP

It is therefore crucial that teachers be aware that a major concern with rural schools is the lack of commitment that families have about keeping children in them. Because of the low quality of life and extreme poverty, kids that are enrolled in school often have to drop out during harvest season in order to work in the fields and help bring food to the table. Moreover, many of the families have to migrate in the middle of the year to other cities in search of work. By the second semester the classes that were full in the beginning of the year start to get empty. This is a common example of how work affects children's performance in school. In urban areas poor children hit the streets to beg for money or sell goods at traffic lights. Some even go to school during one period and work in the other, but this has severe consequences on the students' performance in class.

Figure 4.16 shows how many years of study teachers have gone through and what level of education they are teaching. It is clear by the figure that the majority of the teachers working at secondary level are complying with the LDB and have actually concluded their tertiary degrees. Nevertheless, the number of teachers who have not acquired a

tertiary diploma is still very high, where almost half of these professionals who work at the primary level still have not concluded their tertiary studies.

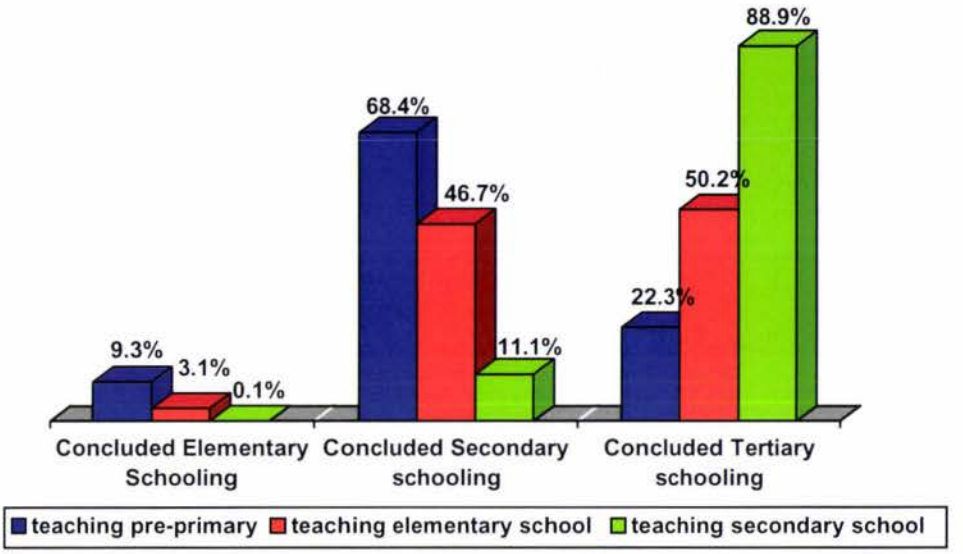

Figure 4.16: Percentage distribution of teachers by level of study and level taught – Brazil, 2001

Source: MEC/INEP, 2001

It is estimated that 25,144 teachers actively working in the lower levels of education still have completed only as far as primary education and 904,538 of them have concluded secondary studies at most (INEP, 2005). In 2001, 50.2% of the primary school teachers had a tertiary diploma, while 46.7% had only concluded secondary education. The remaining 3.1% had gone only as far as completing primary schooling. It is hard to imagine quality teaching in an environment where teachers themselves are not experts. Notwithstanding, the numbers of teachers with some sort of tertiary diploma are increasing significantly as these professionals adapt to the requirements of the LDB. These numbers are said to be an estimate because the number of teachers working in Brazilian schools is not accurately established, as many of them can work in different schools, and most importantly, teach at different levels of education. For this reason, schools count their teachers as they are currently enlisted, meaning that some numbers can be repeated once all the data is tallied up.

Research from the National Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) shows that teachers with higher training (especially those with Masters and Doctoral degrees) have

a more positive impact on students' achievement, as demonstrated on Table 4.18 (INEP, 2004, p. 39).

Table 4.18: Average students' score according to teachers' training – SAEB, 2001

	Portuguese			Mathematics		
	4th grade	8th grade	Secondary (Final year)	4th grade	8th grade	Secondary (Final year)
No post grad	158.42	233.80	266.08	181.43	252.27	260.72
Masters Degree	180.05	262.74	299.59	187.75	261.81	282.08
Doctoral Degree	178.94	281.43	308.19	176.75	-	355.25

Source: MEC/INEP

Nevertheless, a careful observation should be made about the assumption that more teacher training necessarily results in higher performance of students, for that is not always the case. Being a good and experienced teacher is not enough to guarantee good and adequate teaching. Other issues, such as infrastructure, curriculum and pedagogical material also play a primary role in the search for quality education. These are just some of the factors that influence the professional performance of teachers and consequently, the academic performance of the students. Furthermore, there is the likelihood that more experienced teachers work in better schools for students at a higher socio-economic level, which already tend to show better results in these assessments than less privileged children. This means that the students who are economically at an advantage are also those who benefit from more qualified professors. This is a major problem that needs to be addressed if the government plans to successfully achieve a balanced educational system.

Teachers in Brazilian schools are faced with many difficulties that go beyond the physical confines of the classrooms. Low salaries, career devaluation, poor social image, low self-esteem, lack of motivation and political policies that do not work in favour of the teaching profession are just some of the many challenges faced by these professionals. The impact these factors have on teachers is highly associated with their performance in class and consequently with the performance of their pupils.

Problems arise early on in their professional path, as many of them already receive poor training and later few have the opportunity to recycle their skills as their career progresses. Furthermore, low salaries and lack of incentives and career plans also compromise teachers' commitment to the profession. Although many want to dedicate themselves to teaching, they are faced with having to undergo extensive working hours in order to increase their salaries, or face crowded classrooms. In addition, schools frequently offer poor working conditions and ill-equipped environments which make it hard to teach. Many of these problems are determinant when time comes to recruit new professionals.

This brings into focus another factor that Perrenoud (2005) draws attention to: teacher burnout. Fatigue and stress are common among these professionals, especially for those who must carry out more than one work shift, or those who deal with more difficult students or poor working environments. This is why Lorraine Savoie-Zajc (2005) says that when the teachers stop seeing the importance of their job, or when they distance themselves from the students by fear of retaliation from their superiors, the school becomes a burden. As a result, after years of devotion to the profession, the passion is gone. Likewise, school can also be painful for students when teaching is focused on the programme rather than on them, when the teacher is only concerned about going through the subjects and not focusing on what the student is in fact learning, when the activities do not match what students need to learn or when they do not find any importance or significance in what is being taught.

Indeed, the extensive workload to which many of them – especially those teaching the last years of secondary education – are exposed is one of the major issues that affect many of the Brazilian teachers. Some of these teachers work more than 40 hours a week, mainly due to lack of staff or due to the need to increase productivity in school. Many are faced with having to work more than one shift (sometimes even going through three daily shifts) and often in more than one school in order to guarantee better salaries or to ensure that all classrooms have teachers. This has obvious impacts on teachers' performances because working hours do not involve only classroom teaching, but also planning of activities and classes, accessibility to meet with students and parents outside class times and availability to perform administrative activities related to the school.

Furthermore, classroom sizes influence not only student achievement but also teaching skills. Better-qualified teachers will be able to handle bigger classrooms. It should be noted that, although not determinant, smaller classes can be more effective, as teachers can give more attention to each individual student. As previously mentioned, Brazil is placed high above the median with classrooms that are filled with students and in many cases with teachers that are not prepared to deal with them.

To help teachers deal effectively with students in schools, the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) establishes that working hours for teachers should include not only time spent inside the classroom, but also study time, planning and evaluation time. Furthermore, the public system is obliged by law to ensure a safe and adequate working environment for these professionals. All of these are important rules that are vital for the appreciation of the teaching profession. The main issue is to get these rules from paper to practice as students can highly profit by teachers who are motivated and more involved in the learning process and that adopt different strategies for teaching that effectively enhance learning (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2004).

Many authors have also addressed the issue of the qualification and working conditions of teachers in the Brazilian education system. João Batista de Araújo e Oliveira (2005) states that an important factor that contributes to the inefficiency of the education system is teacher salaries. This is because it is hard to recruit new teachers or to stimulate existing ones towards the academic life when wages are low and working environments are far from satisfactory. In this sense, the Fund for Development and Maintenance of Primary Education and Teaching Valorisation (FUNDEF) established that 60% of the total educational funds be spent on teacher salaries, which initially benefit less qualified teachers, because salaries vary according to the level they teach. Secondary teachers, for example, often earn 60% more than those from crèches and pre-schools (INEP, 2002a). Table 4.19 gives an idea of how uneven income distribution is in Brazilian schools.

Table 4.19: Teachers' monthly income – Brazil, 2001 (in Reais)

Level Taught	Teachers' years of study		
	Less than 11 years	From 11 to 14 years	More than 15 years
Primary	339	476	770
Primary (1st to 4th grades)	219	416	713
Primary (5th to 8th grades)	190	487	946
Secondary	445	634	968

Source: IBGE/PNAD 2001, Oliveira, 2005

With the new legislation that stipulates that teachers should have a graduate diploma in order to teach – a practice that was not mandatory in the past – many of these professionals are forced to go through four more years of study in order to get their diploma and earn proportionately less than their previous salaries, taking into consideration the extra years of instruction they had to go through. The main concern lies in the fact that the law does not stipulate levels of qualification of the institutions where teachers are acquiring their diplomas, meaning that these professionals can get their degrees from universities that do not necessarily have good reputations or high standards. Furthermore, it should be noted that many local governments already spend more than 60% of these funds on teacher wages and that increasing the salaries does not necessarily mean increasing students' achievements.

In fact, teachers' wages are one of the major causes for the lack of interest in this profession, and teacher training and qualification are linked to salaries. Moreover, private schools pay more for their academic staff than municipal governments do and frequently have better working conditions for these teachers so many professionals opt to work in private institutions, leaving the public system with a gap for qualified teachers.

Besides all these challenges, teachers also have to face the social depreciation of their careers. Factors such as low wages, ill-equipped working environments and poor training serve to push down the social value of the profession. Often, even the students realise this situation and they too may lose respect for the teacher, which only makes matters worse in class. This makes it hard to create adequate and stimulating working

environments that will benefit their students and themselves. Hence it is crucial for teachers and principals to understand the different policy implementation measures that can be carried out in each institution in order to take advantage of the best resources available and help improve the quality of education. Teaching skills are highly influential on students' achievement and for this reason teachers must have knowledge not only of the content of what is being taught, but also have a wide perception of the environment they are in, so to provide their students with the best opportunities and lessons that fit their daily lives (United Nations, 2005a).

Facing such poor prospects in their careers, as the situation is currently presented in the country, it is important to take measures that will enhance the teachers' part in the education of students and help improve the quality of education in Brazil. The teaching profession in Brazil lacks stimulus and the number of enrolments for the career has been decreasing consistently over the years. In some regions of the country, schools suffer a shortage in teaching personnel and students suffer by not receiving proper instruction. As a result, many schools are faced with having to approve these students even though they were forced to skip some subjects, due to lack of qualified teachers (Gatti, 2000, p. 61). This obviously has strong and devastating consequences for the social future of these children and the country.

4.7) Educational initiatives in Brazil

Education is needed to help reduce poverty, hunger and inequities. Hungry children have more difficulty in learning because their concentration is lower and consequently many turn to labour in order to help their families put food on the table (FAO, 2002). For this reason it is crucial for the government to help motivate children to go to school, and encourage families to send them to class instead of wandering on the streets. In Brazil, meal, health and money transfer programmes have proven to be effective in keeping children in school.

Nevertheless, as being is school is no guarantee of learning, it is also fundamental for the country to adopt measures that will help evaluate what happens inside the classrooms. Many studies have been made in order to measure how Brazilian students are doing in different academic areas, and the results are far from satisfying. Currently, Brazil has developed mechanisms to measure the quality of education in the basic years of schooling and in secondary education. The National Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) is currently the most reliable tool to measure education in the basic level, while the National Upper-Secondary Education Exam (ENEM) is administered in the final year of the secondary school, to measure the quality at that academic level.

With proper tools to assess the quality of what is being taught inside Brazilian classrooms, it is now easier to determine what areas need more attention. With that in mind, the government has created many programmes that aim to improve access and quality in schools and help entice students to learn and teachers to educate.

4.7.1 SAEB

The National Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) was first established in 1990 and evaluates the quality, equity and efficiency of teaching and learning based on multiple-choice tests on primary and secondary education. It is aimed to assess the education system as a whole, and for this reason it is not given to every individual student, but rather to a representative sample of the school population. The tests are elaborated by a collection of experts from the different areas and SAEB uses statistical techniques to diagnose the education level of the different grades. In order to fully understand the school performance, SAEB measures not only the competencies and abilities acquired by the students but also carries out socio-economic surveys of teachers, principals, classes and schools. The test is carried out every two years to children in 4th and 8th grades of primary education and in the 3rd (and final) year of secondary education.

Since 2005, SAEB has been extended and now involves two distinctive evaluations: the National Basic Schooling Evaluation (ANEB), which is still being referred to as SAEB, due to its importance and positive results, and the National Academic Achievement

Evaluation (ANRESC), also referred to as *Prova Brasil*. In 2003, there were about 300,000 students, 17,000 teachers[11], 6,300 schools and 6,000 principals being evaluated in state, municipal and private administration levels in all 27 Federative units of the country. The evaluation is carried out by the National Institute for Education Research (INEP), and uses five different instruments to measure the academic quality: tests in Portuguese language and mathematics and four distinctive questionnaires – one for the student, one for the teacher, one for the principal and one for the person responsible for collecting the data inside the schools (Soares, 2005, p. 95). These contextual questionnaires comprise information on socio-economic status, parents' participation in children's academic life, teaching practices and managerial skills.

The *Prova Brasil* was created to provide specific information related to individual municipalities and schools, in order to help local governments take more informed decisions in relation to the education being provided in schools. It was carried out last year in 5,398 municipalities in all regions of the country and evaluated 3,306,378 students, from 122,463 classes in 40,920 public schools in urban regions (INEP, 2006).

SAEB is known to be the first Brazilian initiative of national scope, which studies in depth the education reality in the country's schools. Not only does it collect data related to the quality of education, it also tries to establish internal and external factors that influence the learning process. Furthermore, the data collected help trace a path towards effective education by pinpointing deficient and unequal areas that need more attention throughout the years. The 2003 evaluation has demonstrated, for example, that for the first time since the evaluation was established, the country has shown an improvement in relation to the previous years. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the country is finally performing well.

For the Portuguese language and mathematics measurements, eight levels were established, each corresponding to a different proficiency level. These eight levels comprise four distinct stages of construction of competence and development abilities distributed according to Table 4.20 (Araújo & Luzio, 2003).

[11] Once again, it should be noted that numbers related to teachers might be higher than the reality because they might teach both Portuguese and mathematics and are forced to answer a different questionnaire for each subject covered by SAEB.

Table 4.20: SAEB measurements

Stage	SAEB Proficiency Level	Characteristics
Very Critical	1 and 2	Students are unable to read properly and have not developed reading skills comparable to the 4th and 8th grades.
Critical	3 and 4	Students are not good readers yet and do not fit in the proper grade skills.
Intermediate	5 and 6	Students have some abilities but insufficient to match the 3rd – and final – year of secondary education, i.e., 11th grade.
Adequate	7 and 8	Students are competent readers who match the skills measured for the last year of secondary school.

Source: Araújo & Luzio, 2003

With that pattern, it is possible to trace the level of learning in Brazilian schools, such as shown in Table 4.21, which relates to Portuguese language students in Brazil during 2003 and how they score compared to the different stages measured by SAEB. While in 2001, 59% of the students in 4th grade were in the very critical and critical stages of Portuguese achievements, in 2003 this number dropped to 55%. However, during the same period, there was a slight increase of 8th grade students in the very critical and critical stages of Portuguese. Overall, 2003 numbers show that secondary students performed better in Portuguese than in 2001.

Table 4.21: Percentage of students in SAEB stages of competency construction – Portuguese language – Brazil, 2001 and 2003 (percentage)

	Primary Education (4th grade)		Primary Education (8th grade)		Secondary Education (final year)	
Stage	2001	2003	2001	2003	2001	2003
Very critical	22.2	18.7	4.9	4.8	4.9	3.9
Critical	36.8	36.7	20.1	22.0	37.2	34.7
Intermediate	36.2	39.7	64.8	63.8	52.5	55.2
Adequate	4.9	4.8	10.3	9.3	5.3	6.2

Source: MEC/INEP, SAEB results 2001 and 2003

More than half of the students who are about to complete secondary education and should therefore present fluent reading and writing skills are still showing an intermediate level of reading, comparable with those of an 8th grade student. This means that almost 94% of the students who have been through all 11 years of study, not taking into consideration repetition rates, have only acquired skills at an 8th grade level, at most. To make matters worse, it can be seen that approximately 40% of students in the *very critical* and *critical* levels of Portuguese assessment are not even able to read according to the 4th grade level.

When comparing progress in mathematics skills, the results are even more disappointing. Table 4.22 shows mathematics scores for students in Brazil during 2003 and how they scored compared with the different stages measured by SAEB. There haven't been many improvements between 2001 and 2003 among 4th grade students and a small increase of 8th grade students in the intermediate and adequate levels, while there were more secondary students in the very critical stage. Still, more than 67% of the secondary students taking the mathematics evaluation are on a critical or very critical level, while only a little over 24% are intermediate. As with Portuguese, a little over 6% of the students in secondary are learning according to their age and grade (once again, disregarding repetition rates).

Table 4.22: Percentage of students in SAEB stages of competency construction – Mathematics – Brazil, 2001 and 2003 (percentage)

	Primary Education (4th grade)		Primary Education (8th grade)		Secondary Education (final year)	
Stage	**2001**	**2003**	**2001**	**2003**	**2001**	**2003**
Very critical	12.5	11.5	6.7	7.3	4.8	6.5
Critical	39.8	40.1	51.7	49.8	62.6	62.3
Intermediate	40.9	41.9	38.8	39.7	26.6	24.3
Adequate	6.8	6.4	2.8	3.3	6.0	6.9

Source: MEC/INEP, SAEB results 2001 and 2003

Nevertheless, despite presenting slight improvements from 2001 to 2003 in most of the levels, the SAEB tables show that education in Brazil is not sufficient to guarantee that students learn properly, as most find themselves below the adequate level of learning.

These results show that not only is Brazil performing poorly in international evaluation programmes, but Brazilian students are also failing national assessments.

4.7.2 ENEM

The National Upper-Secondary Education Exam (ENEM) evaluates the following: fluency in Portuguese language and domain in specific areas of math, arts and science; use of concepts for the comprehension of natural phenomena, historical-geographical processes, technological production and artistic manifestations; the use of information in order to make proper decision-making and solve problems; construction of consistent argumentation and ability to elaborate intervention proposals in daily life which take into account diversity and respect for human values. Differently from other exams, ENEM does not divide questions by subjects, evaluating the whole instead. It is important to notice that this exam is not mandatory for students but the number of participants has been increasing consistently over the years, as demonstrated in Table 4.23. This is mainly due to the increase of awareness of the importance of the evaluation of quality towards better learning and because more and more tertiary institutions are now starting to use the ENEM results as a means of entrance to university (Castro & Tiezzi, 2005).

Table 4.23: Number of Participants on the National Upper-Secondary Education Exam – ENEM – Brazil, 1998-2002

Years	Number of Tertiary Institutions that use ENEM*	Number of Municipalities that perform ENEM	Number of Enrolments
1998	1	184	115,575
1999	93	162	315,960
2000	199	187	352,487
2001	296	277	1,200,883
2002	338	600	1,327,577

*Tertiary Institutions that use ENEM results as selection criteria for its courses (instead of the *vestibular*).

Source: MEC/INEP; Castro & Tiezzi, 2005

Classification on the exam goes from 0 to 100 percent on a scale where 0-40 is considered insufficient to regular progress; 40-70, regular to good; and 70-100, from good to excellent. In the 2002 examination, 74% of the students were on the 0-40 level, 23.5% in the 40-70 range and only 2.5% fared between 70-100. While these are shocking numbers that once more bring to light the lack of quality of the education system, they are but mere reflections of years of failed initiatives and poor training in the early years of schooling (Castro & Tiezzi, 2005, pp. 141-150). Furthermore, a major factor that contributes to the low performance in the examination is that a little over 73% of the participants in the 2002 evaluation came from public institutions. Table 4.24 shows the performance in ENEM according to the family income of the students and clearly demonstrates the gap between poorer families (scoring a bleak 26%) and those with higher income (scoring twice the amount, with 52%).

Table 4.24: ENEM scores, by family income – 2002

Family income	Objective Part	Writing Exam
Up to 1 minimum wage	26.01%	47.69%
1 to 2 minimum wages	28.28%	50.54%
2 to 5 minimum wages	32.44%	54.10%
5 to 10 minimum wages	38.15%	57.57%
10 to 30 minimum wages	47.01%	62.31%
30 to 50 minimum wages	51.80%	64.54%
More than 50 minimum wages	52.67%	64.34%

Source: MEC/INEP; Castro & Tiezzi, 2005

Better results in the 2002 ENEM writing evaluation have to do with the fact that the question asked for the essay was related to daily factors (participants were asked to discourse on the importance of elections in the country) and did not require the participants to elaborate on more scientific or specific areas. Be that as it may, scores were still deficient and lower than what is expected of a student concluding basic education.

In conclusion, ENEM evaluates the performance of students leaving secondary education based on the different subjects they have been exposed to during their entire academic career. It is more centred on continuous learning and has successfully become

a benchmark in school examination, such as the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) in the United States. ENEM is an individual test while SAEB analyses the group as a whole, but both are key weapons in the assessment of quality in education.

4.7.3 FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Funding has always played an important role on the search for universal education, and has always been a major source of criticism in the system. One of the main reasons why disparities in the country are so huge is the unequal distribution of funds and the embezzlement of money, which are present in all levels of government. To help combat the problems created by a decentralised education system, the Brazilian government implemented the Fund for Development and Maintenance of Primary Education and Teaching Valorisation (FUNDEF), which was a useful tool, as it gave incentives, i.e., funds, for municipal governments to commit themselves to providing quality primary schooling. Furthermore, FUNDEF also increased teacher wages, helped with municipal teaching careers, increased the number of teaching vacancies and allowed the development of teachers who did not possess a higher diploma, as required by the new LDB.

Now that the focus of the education problem in Brazil has shifted from quantity to quality, the government has found it necessary to replace FUNDEF with the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Schooling and Appreciation of Education Professionals (FUNDEB), which contrary to the FUNDEF, also intends to finance youngster and adult education. Francisco das Chagas Fernandes (2004) outlines the basic objectives of FUNDEB, which are to:

- evenly distribute funds in education to states and its municipalities;
- reduce inequities, assuring minimum investment that guarantees quality in education;
- make basic education universal; and
- give proper value to the teaching career and guarantee suitable conditions in relation to the salaries of these professionals.

Furthermore, FUNDEB is different from FUNDEF in the sense that it:

- broadens the coverage of education to include not only primary education, but also early childhood and secondary education, extending assistance to all levels of basic education;
- redistributes funds allocated to primary education, adopting a criterion that involves the number of students enrolled in each state and municipality, and an assurance of minimum investment per student/year, established yearly by the Federal Union, that ensures effective conditions of reaching adequate quality in education; and
- assures the mechanisms of financial equalisation which already exists in FUNDEF, but more intensively, resulting from the transfer of resources in relation to the number of students in all levels of basic education, not only primary.

In fact, the government has definitely improved the amount of funding destined for education. Numbers from the World Bank indicate that the country increased its public spending by approximately 30% since 1995, increasing the proportion of GDP from 4.2% in 1990 to 5.5% in 2000. Furthermore, municipalities have practically doubled the amount of money they spend in education during the same period (World Bank, 2004, p. 110).

Many other funding programmes have been implemented in Brazil. Through its National Education Development Fund (FNDE), the Ministry of Education created in 1995 the programme called *Dinheiro Direto na Escola*, i.e., Money Directly to Schools (DDE), where money is transferred from the federal government directly to the schools' bank accounts, without intermediates. This has been a crucial step to help reduce deviation of money and corruption, a serious problem in Brazil. The amount each school receives is proportional to the number of enrolments it has. Another programme, the *Fundescola*, filters federal money to help fund education in the poorest states and municipalities in order to assist them in improving the quality of education in these regions. The programme, which aims to raise schooling quality throughout the country and improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, works with local governments in an attempt to reduce inequities in their primary schools by taking into consideration

the limitations and available budget of each area. This way, *Fundescola* puts the responsibility for change on each of the schools instead of leaving it all to the government.

4.7.4 BOLSA ESCOLA

The *Bolsa Escola* programme gives a regular stipend per student in school and has had positive results in trying to take children off the streets. It was created in 1995 at a local level and in 2001 it became a federal initiative funded by the government. The *Bolsa Escola* programme offers poor families an amount of money in exchange for their children attending school. Families receive 15 Reais per month per child in school, under the condition that children attend 90% of the classes throughout the year. The families granted the stipend are those that have a monthly income per capita of less than half of a minimum wage, and they can each get assistance for up to three children. The amount might not seem very significant to the family income, but for families in conditions of extreme poverty it is a substantial help and has proven to be enough of an incentive to help the families send students to school.

This system has been responsible for ensuring that classrooms and stomachs remain full all year. The benefits are clear in regards to reducing child labour, hunger, illiteracy and exclusion. It breaks the existing cycle of children not attending school in order to work so they can have food. The money is transferred to the mothers, who get an exclusive bankcard to withdraw the monthly stipends from a popular government bank. This way the parents stop forcing their children to beg for money on the streets or to work for it and can send them to school instead. Due to its positive results, similar programmes are now being implemented in other countries in Latin America and some in Africa. In 2004, the Brazilian government combined the *Bolsa Escola* programme with other minimum income programmes transforming the *Bolsa Escola* into *Bolsa Família*, in order to cover other areas where assistance was needed, such as health. Table 4.25 shows the coverage of the programme in 2003 in the different levels of education, both in urban and rural areas.

Table 4.25: Number of students participating in the *Bolsa Escola* programme according to the level of education – Brazil, 2003

	Receive support	Enrolled and waiting	Do not participate
Pre-school	340,223	462,834	5,602,562
Primary	7,592,509	3,034,205	20,710,617
Secondary	301,422	152,993	8,051,030
Recovery Programmes for primary education	33,533	10,307	1,028,503
Adult Literacy	4,015	1,770	780,606
TOTAL	**8,273,468**	**3,662,109**	**43,489,444**

Source: IBGE, PNAD 2003

The National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) has shown that the *Bolsa Escola* programme is very effective in keeping children in school on the pre-school level and with children aged 14 to 17. The programme has considerably improved school attendance, as dropout rates among beneficiaries are 0.4% and non-beneficiaries 5.6% (UN Millennium Project, 2005). However, Schwartzman points out that in the other years of basic education, i.e., 7 to 13 years old, the programme is not very effective, as attendance at school at this level is already practically universal (Schwartzman, 2005d).

The major problem with the *Bolsa Escola* programme is the limitation of its coverage. While its regulation stipulates that only children aged 6 to 15 can profit from it, this means that most of the children who need it more do not have this assistance. Between these ages, the government already guarantees primary education but pre-school and secondary in particular are the levels that really need incentives to keep children in school. Another concern is that the programme was created under the principle that children do not gain knowledge because they do not attend school. It does not address the problem of lack of quality that affects students who are actually in school but still fail to learn.

Another major flaw, as demonstrated in Figure 4.17, is that although most of the families given the *Bolsa Escola* stipend do indeed come from lower income deciles, there is still a percentage – 18% to be more exact – of families from the 5th quintile or higher that should not be receiving the benefit at all, but do. This is a serious issue as

money that should be destined to families in need is being used towards those that do not require it. This shows the need for better policies to guarantee that the proper families receive the benefit and that money is not wasted on those that can afford it.

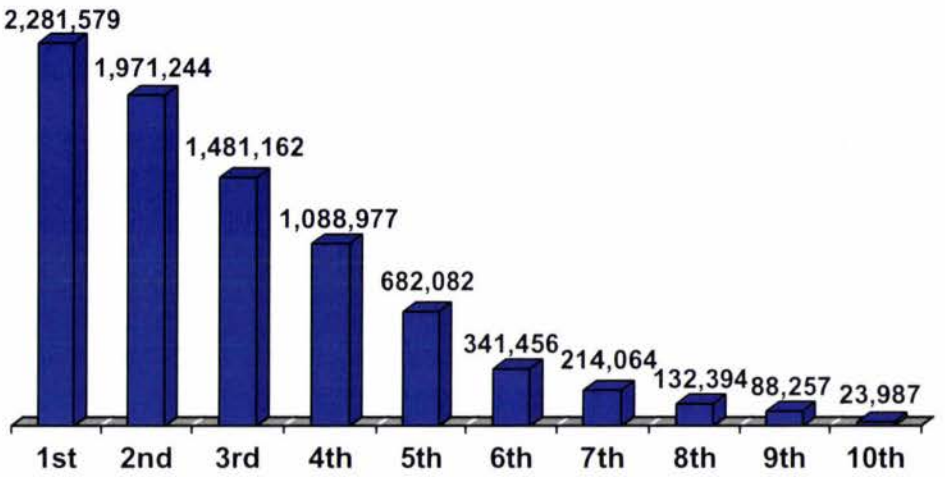

Figure 4.17: 5 to 17 year-olds participating in the *Bolsa Escola* programme, according to levels of family income – Brazil, 2003

Source: IBGE/PNAD, 2003; Schwartzman, 2005d

Authors such as Antonio Ibañez Ruiz (2004) point out the importance of making sure that factors such as expansion, quality and inclusion do not fail, as these are the three primary pillars of a well-developed education system. Other pressing factors are crucial to guarantee opportunities of qualified teaching in Brazil. This includes funding for education professionals to continue with training and development of their skills (such as the *Proformação – Programa de Formação de Professores em Exercício* – programme), the *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD), or National Textbook Programme, which is responsible for the distribution of Portuguese and Mathematics text books free of charge for students of secondary education; and programmes to give more emphasis on education towards specific subjects, such as Science and Biology, due to the low progress present in this area.

One important measure that can help improve the quality of education is the active participation of the parents in the student's life. Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings have been proven effective in the United States and were implemented in

Brazil in the 70s, with great results (Cody & Siqueira, 1997). This is because the active participation of the community in the school life is fundamental, as parents, teachers, staff and members of the community have a very positive effect on the attempt to solve problems in the education scenario.

It is worth mentioning that many of the poverty reduction programmes for children happen inside the schools, such as meal and health programmes, and this serves to stress the importance of keeping children in them. Meal programmes are a helpful tool because not only does it help keep children in school, but it also helps combat poverty and hunger, given that children from poor families are less likely to drop out of school if they have this incentive. Health programmes also improve children's performance in school as they help combat diseases that may affect children's attendance and benefits such as iron supplementation, for example, increases children's attention span, raising their concentration and their cognitive abilities.

4.8) Summary

Despite the literacy rates in Brazil reaching 97%, with a considerable improvement among the population of 7 to 14 years of age, the numbers decrease as the levels of education grow higher, mainly due to the poor quality of education, which is not sufficient to ensure that all students learn according to their grades and age groups. Furthermore, teachers often lack training, not only academic, but to deal with children from different backgrounds and socio-economic status. Frequently they do not even receive enough incentives to continue learning or to be well motivated to teach. The National Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) results show that despite efforts from many in the Brazilian education system, children are not learning well enough.

As a matter of fact, far from encouraging, the results of these tests – especially the SAEB – are disconcerting. Many children are failing the early academic levels and the low marks in these tests seem to be constant. This is likely the result of poor teaching in the first years of student life. If children do not learn how to read and write properly in the initial levels, subsequently all the teaching becomes remedial. To make matters worse, there are no effective programmes to deal with these situations and students may

be forced to repeat the entire school year because they failed one specific subject. Furthermore, many children have not had access to early childhood programmes and pre-school, leaving them at a disadvantage to start studying.

Key national reforms in the Brazilian education system involved the approval of law 9.394, the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), in 1996, which helped improve and outline the roles and responsibilities of the federal, state and municipal governments. It also helped increase the qualification of teachers, as they are now faced with having to pursue a tertiary diploma to teach, which was not mandatory in the past. This means that to comply with the LDB, by 2007, 768,000 primary and secondary teachers will have to obtain a graduate diploma (Figueiredo & Cowen, 2005).

The Fund for Development and Maintenance of Primary Education and Teaching Valorisation (FUNDEF), established in 1998, was also a valuable initiative to help reduce inequities, as it was responsible for improving the allocation of funds for basic education based on the number of enrolments per state and municipality. The creation of FUNDEF in the 1990s was crucial to guarantee that enrolments reach 97% of 7 to 14 year-olds. FUNDEF has recently been replaced by the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Schooling and Appreciation of Education Professionals (FUNDEB), which also includes assistance to young children and education of youngsters and adults.

Whether a cause or a consequence of inequality, Brazil's decentralised education system imposes more of a problem than a solution to the social discrepancies present in the country, as it lacks proper distinctions of what are the responsibilities and functions of the state and of the municipalities. Because of this division in the system, poor municipalities can only offer to their students and teachers poor infrastructures, few materials and lack of incentives. Furthermore, the federal government has difficulties instituting changes in the system because it has little control over the jurisdiction of the states and municipalities. The latter, on the other hand, lack funds to help improve the quality of schools, teaching and teacher wages, precisely where they are most needed. This shows how educational and socio-economic factors are closely linked and helps justify how better funding for social causes can help improve the quality of education. Programmes such as the FUNDEF and *Fundescola* have been key weapons to fight the

poor distribution of funds, as they have provided poor municipalities with imperative educational funds. Implementing programmes that can filter resources to the schools that need them the most has proven to be a useful and necessary tool for the development of the country.

Nevertheless, while effective policies have been responsible for increasing the number of schools in the country in the past, many of them still face infrastructure problems that highly impact teachers' abilities to teach and students' willingness to learn. Many of the schools do not have libraries, sports facilities, computer and science laboratories or internet available to staff and students and surprisingly, some do not even have water, electricity or plumbing. There are other issues that influence students' attendance at school. These factors range from natural disasters (such as the constant droughts responsible for much of the poverty in the Northeast region of Brazil), to violence in schools and around them, and to lack of transportation.

Moreover, it was seen that one of the major reason for school dropouts is that children go to the streets to ask for money or get low paid jobs to help with the family income, instead of staying in class. For this reason it is crucial that Brazil also commits itself to combat the other problems covered by the Millennium Development Goals. Good progress has been made towards extinguishing extreme poverty in the country, with Brazil having completed 78% of the required progress, reducing extreme poverty from 23.4% to 14.2% (United Nations, 2005a, p. 256). This obviously has positive impacts in the education scenario.

There are many other important factors that affect the quality of education. School infrastructure, equipment and material, number of classes and student/classroom ratio, education programmes, funding and teaching issues, among others, all influence the quality of education. Regardless of these factors, education should be accessible and responsive to students. For this reason, it is crucial for educators and all those involved in the education process to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils and their environment and how they can improve the quality of what is being taught to them. This is where assessment and evaluation come in.

Evaluation plays a fundamental part in quality issues. Through careful evaluation it is possible to pinpoint crucial aspects of the education system that lack attention and need change. For this reason, the government's effort to establish the SAEB has been praised by many because of its importance in the evaluation of both students' performance and schools' achievements. The School Census is also a valuable instrument to measure the quality and equity of the Brazilian education system. Data from both the Census and SAEB have become important tools to help justify the need for an education reform and to assist in improving education in schools.

In light of the importance of teacher qualification for the development of the education system, the approval of the LDB was essential, for it means that, as previously mentioned, by 2007 all active teachers must have completed their tertiary study and new teachers can only be hired upon the presentation of this diploma. This measure has obligated active teachers to conclude 15 years of study, instead of having only the 11 years or less of study which were previously acquired in specific teacher's schools. With the dissolution of specific teacher colleges, this means that they should acquire a tertiary degree in any subject. Prior to that law, a tertiary diploma was only required for teaching at universities and at technical courses. Nevertheless, the many laws, resolutions and decrees related to this subject have not been enough to guarantee that these professionals – in particular the ones who deal with basic education – receive proper training and instruction.

It is crucial and urgent that the government addresses straightforward the many problems teachers face in Brazil. Policies that set quality standards in classrooms need to be well established. Furthermore, teachers need incentive, which can be given by proper working environments, better wages and career plans. It is also paramount that teachers have the opportunity to recycle their skills, and for that the promotion of continuous learning programmes is necessary.

Brazil has shown positive and stimulating improvements in the education area. Among the accomplishments, there has been a considerable increase in the number of schools and enrolments. Between the years of 1996 and 2001, the country enrolled an additional 2 million children in the primary grades, boosting the net enrolment of 7 to 14 year old children by approximately 97% (Castro & Tiezzi, 2005). This is not the only school

level that has shown increases. Enrolments in crèches (0 to 3 years old) grew more than 200% during the same period, in pre-school (children from 4 to 6 years) from 4.2 million to 4.9 million and in secondary schools, that is, grades 9 to 11, from 5.7 million to 8.7 million students, more than a 50% increase (World Bank, 2004).

Furthermore, although still lacking excellence, the current repetition rates that now range about 13%, used to be over 30% in 1995 (INEP, 2002a). Nevertheless, despite the slow progress, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve universal primary education. If these numbers continue to be as high as they are, in the future Brazil will face lack of qualified personnel to fulfil specific jobs, which will ultimately result in an increase in unemployment rates and a slowdown of the country's development. It is therefore crucial that all levels of administration work together to ensure a uniform and just education system.

In order for reforms to take place and programmes to be implemented in Brazil, it is necessary to control the resources available and ensure that funding be used for the appropriate places. Because corruption levels are extremely high in Brazil, minimising the paths is crucial. Programmes such as the Money Directly to Schools (DDE) and FUNDEF, which was used as the main outlet to provide money for schools in the primary education level, are a useful tool to help reduce embezzlement. They collected government taxes and redistributed them to schools with a specific amount of enrolled students. Nevertheless, although the Brazilian Ministry of Education realises the importance of focusing on the quality of education, very few of its actions effectively point to such accomplishments. It is relevant to enquire where additional funds will come from with FUNDEF becoming FUNDEB and funding for basic education having to be divided with secondary education as well.

There is no magical solution to resolve the problem of the poor quality of education in Brazil. However, there are many different measures that can be taken in order to help reduce inequalities and inefficiency of education in the country. These suggestions mean working not only with teachers and students but also with the families and the community, seeing that education happens not only inside the classroom but also around it. This means that it would be interesting to bridge the gap between the children's families and the school in order to increase participation in the students' academic life.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Education is fundamental for the development of any society and is a key factor in the development of a nation. It influences, and is influenced by many different factors, such as economic growth, and is crucial for the understanding of the diversity in the region and this is a key factor in relation to development. It is sad to think that there are about 15 million Brazilians who should – but cannot – read the words 'Order and Progress' written on the nation's flag. An effective and consistent education system can help combat inequalities present in the country. Nevertheless, in Brazil, the scenario is different, as education is one of the biggest factors responsible for these inequities, given that the system itself is uneven. Although unacceptable, it is quite an understandable scenario as Brazil has one of the biggest income disparities in the world, with rich who are significantly wealthy and poor who are extremely deprived.

As pointed out by many international forums and declarations, education is primary to ensure the development of individuals and consequently of countries. In this sense, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established by the United Nations have become a benchmark in countries' commitment to increase the standard of living of every individual, by combating poverty and improving education, health and other factors that affect developing nations throughout the world. The eight MDGs are important because they help track past progress and map future concerns and actions to be taken. Central to this study is Goal 2 of the MDGs, which aims to provide universal primary education to boys and girls alike. Having mentioned that, it was seen that gender disparities in enrolments in Brazil are practically non-existent, with a small majority of students enrolled in primary and secondary schooling being female. Moreover, while the country has been responsible for increasing access to education, other indicators should be observed, such as measuring illiteracy rates in the older population and ensuring that schools are able to retain children for the necessary time for them to become literate.

Indeed, concern over the education system in Brazil has grown considerably over the past decades. However, there has been a significant shift from what was once thought to be the main issue related to the poor quality of education in Brazil. In the past, it was believed that the poor quality was due to lack of schools, insufficient or unprepared classrooms and lack of funding to provide a good academic environment for the students. It has been shown however, that the main issues currently revolve around the fact that children do go to school, but do not learn properly.

Although Brazil is seen as a good example of education reform, the starting point was so low that the country is still behind in education outcomes (World Bank, 2004, p. 38). Since 1996 Brazil has consistently enrolled more students in the primary grades and has practically ensured universal primary access to all. Indeed, the Brazilian education system has gone through a revolution in the last years. From the 88% enrolments of 7 to 14 year olds in school, to the current 98%, the country has shown great improvement and has proven that, given the correct policies, positive outcomes can arise. Nevertheless, education is not guaranteed only by placing children in school, and as seen in this report, the problem is not ensuring seats in classrooms, but caring for the excellence of the education system, which is currently very unequal and of variable quality in different regions of the country.

In fact, measuring literacy rates by the number of students enrolled in classrooms can be quite deceiving. It is not enough to ensure that children go to school on the correct age-grade referential because if the school does not provide quality education, then the country will continue to produce functional literates that may even complete the required eight years of study, but will not learn anything past the initial grades.

A major concern with school reforms and with attempts to improve schooling in Brazil has to do with the way the system is divided. State and municipal governments are responsible for the public primary schooling. This means that when the government plans reforms or changes in the system, it needs to mobilise all the 27 states and 5,561 municipalities in order to make the change nationwide. This demands a lot of effort and organisation, and often leaves matters unresolved. For this reason, changes cannot be imposed from above, as local governments are the ones who should act on them.

Nevertheless, nationwide changes cannot depend on local initiatives in order to take form, as the federal government should mould them to better fit the country's need.

It should be noted, nonetheless, that in terms of social conditions, having children in schools, despite the often poor quality of education, is a good way to get them off the streets, even though it is no excuse for poor quality. This reduces the numbers involved in child labour and tends to keep violence indices down. Furthermore, although a small number of students are actually becoming proficient readers, this number would be even lower with fewer children in school, which would be far worse for the development of the country.

Insufficient amount of time spent on teaching, classroom activities which are more focused on teachers than on students, teachers who do not use classroom materials and teaching aids, no interactive learning, lack of participation from the community and parents, poor guidelines for teachers and lack of material and textbooks are just some of the issues concerning the quality of education in Brazil (World Bank, 1995).

Another factor that influences schools' quality and students' performance is class size. Classrooms in Brazil tend to be over-full in all levels of education, mainly due to the government's attempt to cut down costs, especially teacher wages, by having more students in the same classroom. High dropout and repetition rates result from these crowded environments, as they make it harder for teachers to give special attention to their pupils and for students to learn. This number is even higher in public schools, where this factor is associated with poor learning environments, making it once more clear how unbalanced the system is among richer and poorer settings.

Work is also a determining factor for high dropout rates in Brazil. Many students are forced to leave school and discontinue their studies because they are required by their families to help with the household income. What salvages these students in most cases, and keeps enrolment numbers up, are night schools. This way, students who work full day shifts can still attend secondary school at night. This is normally a student's last attempt to continue studying before eventually dropping out. It is important to note however, that although work plays a significant part in school dropout, it should not take all the blame. The main issue is schools' incapacity to provide proper education

that is enticing and high in quality in order to stimulate children to be there. Low performance results in repetition, which ultimately leads to school evasion.

The low quality of the education system in Brazil originates in the early years of schooling. Not all students go through crèches or pre-school, and once in the literacy phase, poor instruction and monitoring account for slow learning. These children therefore carry these poor reading skills all through their academic life, despite the fact that Brazilian law establishes that all municipal governments should provide free pre-school for all children.

It is vital to assist children in the early years of schooling in order to help diminish dropout rates and repetition. These are very costly for the country and Brazil would certainly benefit from providing more funds to these lower levels in contrast to reparation and acceleration programmes. The 8 billion dollars Brazil spends with repetition costs could be better spent in other programmes that would help increase the quality and social conditions of the country. Notwithstanding, funding is not the only problem faced by schools and education institutions. The social environment where the children come from has a large impact on children's development. Malnourished kids cannot focus properly on learning and those that live in bad environments frequently lack attention in class. Children placed in communities that present a better socio-economic situation have more chances to learn, as wealth brings opportunities of learning outside the school scenario.

In this sense, it is worth noting that every school professional is important for the development of the students because learning does not occur solely inside the classroom. For this reason it is important for teachers, principals and staff to have good working conditions and proper training in order to better interact with the pupils. In addition, school personnel should go through constant training and recycling of the knowledge they possess. This means that teachers and pupils should be assessed in order to find what are their needs and limitations because it is crucial that schools and institutions adjust themselves to the particular circumstances and surroundings of their students, in order to use diversity to add value, instead of being a means of exclusion.

The decision-making process should occur inside the schools or in direct connection to them. Decisions carried out by governments that do not involve these institutions and their professionals may be imprecise or vague, and valuable opportunities for improvement can be lost. Principals and teachers that directly interact with the students, their families and the community have better understanding of what their needs are. For this reason it is essential that both principals and teachers have authority and autonomy to make decisions and take action, with proper resources and support.

Indeed, education policies outside the classrooms are very significant for the student's development. Increasing the amount of time children spend in school can be very beneficial. This does not necessarily translate into more time being spent inside the classroom, but also doing after school activities that will help their development by increasing the use of extra curricula material to help stimulate students' curiosity and willingness to learn. Furthermore, the use of computers can help provide the most updated information through the internet and emails can be less time consuming in communication between teachers and parents.

It is of the utmost importance that the government sets measures that will value the teaching profession and provide these specialists with adequate salaries and incentives to motivate existing teachers and attract future ones. If anything, in Brazil a different scenario is seen, as the teaching profession has been increasingly portrayed as less attractive to the upcoming generations, being considered a low paid and unimportant job.

A major concern about teacher quality in Brazil relates to one of the matters covered by the new LDB. Working hours are often not enough to guarantee good and decent salaries for these professionals. For this reason many teachers are faced with the obligation of working double and sometimes triple shifts. As a result, fewer hours are dedicated to the preparation of classes and activities, and little time is left for these professionals' personal improvement. This drastically affects teachers' performance and consequently interferes with students' learning, creating a vicious cycle where inadequate teachers educate inadequate students, who further on might end up becoming inadequate teachers themselves (Gatti, 2000, p. 47).

Enhancing the value of the teaching career is critical to elevate teachers' willingness and commitment to the profession, and thereby improve the quality of the system. Studies have proven that there is a close relationship between self-esteem and self-fulfilment with motivation and good performance (Gatti, 2000, p. 94). Good salaries and career plans are crucial to help increase teachers' self-esteem and the value of the teaching career. However, many are the challenges faced by teachers in the Brazilian education system. As seen in this study, these difficulties relate both to the physical environment as well as their personal beliefs and motivation. It has become extremely necessary to put into action measures and laws that reinforce the part of the teacher in the children's development. Resources need to be reallocated and better planned in order to reach those in need in the many diverse regions of the country.

Teachers should go through a process of continuous learning and must interact with the students, parents and community in order to fully understand the environment they are in. They need efficient and updated material, proper working environments and safe conditions to work. Furthermore, it is crucial that they feel appreciated and receive suitable salaries in order to continue working. However, in order for effective policies to work, all parties involved in the learning process should be able to work together, and this involves strong leadership, which usually comes from the principal but also reaches all levels of academic life, both inside and outside the school scenario. In this sense, the leaders are crucial to help enlighten the academic and local staff about the importance of education policies and integration methods not only among students and staff, but also within the families and broader society.

Most importantly, there should be an awareness of the cultural and regional differences in the country. Only then can teaching be focused on the appropriate target group in order to be more effective. Personalised teaching, i.e., teaching that respects each student's needs, offers an array of learning options and techniques, which can be very beneficial for the pupils. Moreover, having coherence between what is expected of the students and what is being taught in class is vital to help capture the attention of the pupils and helps them better understand the importance of the subjects being studied.

The government needs to create measures that will help and ensure that states and municipalities deliver an education that is effective and high on quality. For this it is

necessary to standardise the means of evaluation and make sure that assessment programmes are being carried out properly in each municipality. This is of key importance, because proper and effective evaluation methods can make it easier to understand the education situation in each institution and pinpoint areas that require more attention. Additionally, municipalities can help each other in this process by working together, sharing ideas and comparing outcomes.

Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the National Basic Education Evaluation System (SAEB) show that Brazil is not capable of ensuring the quality of education other countries present. Brazil's students are scoring below the standards imposed by the country's SAEB in Portuguese and mathematics, and according to the PISA, Brazil scored last place (38) among all the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2000; World Bank, 2004, p. 128). SAEB's results are crucial to help formulate educational policies in the federal, state and municipal levels of government, that will help increase the development of the learning and teaching processes.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that not all the regions score poorly and that there are successful cases and programmes throughout the country. These programmes have brought significant results and an increase of efficiency and positive outcomes in the education system. The LDB was also responsible for delineating the roles and duties of the federal, state and municipal governments, which are all responsible for the provision of education in the country. The law has brought to light many of the issues that had not been addressed by the Constitution of 1988.

The Education for All programme from 1993 to 2003, the creation of FUNDEF, followed by the implementation of FUNDEB, the *Fundescola* Programme, the *Proformação – Programa de Formação de Professores em Exercício*, a programme to improve the qualification of active teachers, the *Aprendizado Acelerado*, or Accelerated Learning Programme and the *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD), or National Textbook Programme, are just some of the successful examples of measures being taken to combat poor quality in the education scenario in the country.

In addition, in order to guarantee attendance in these new schools, there has been an increase of school transportation programmes as well as programmes to guarantee that students remain inside the classroom, such as the stipend programme *Bolsa Escola*. This programme (now *Bolsa Famíia*) could be extended to other levels of schooling, especially secondary education, where dropout rates are high and the enrolment gap between rich and poor is even more significant. But most importantly, without an even distribution of funds throughout the different regions in the country, these successful initiatives will not be enough to reach a significant number of children. Unless the government addresses this issue now, the question remains as to how effective these national initiatives really are if they do not reach all the children in the country.

With that in mind, it is crucial that the Brazilian government allocates more resources to compensatory programmes that target disadvantaged students in particular. This 'positive discrimination' is a primary step to ensure that children from poor communities get more equitable chances to improve their studies (World Bank, 2004). Many schools that already have scarce resources often use them wrongfully or ineffectively and therefore it would be useful to create strategies to help secure the proper allocation of resources among these institutions. Without this measure, achieving the Goals established by the UN would be extremely difficult. Furthermore, it would be more viable to focus on expanding the secondary education or focus on the present gap between rural and urban areas and among ethnic groups and concentrate on providing accessible education that has high standards of quality and can guarantee that all children get an equitable chance of climbing the academic ladder.

These are just some of the minimal requirements in order to have a universal public school that is free, democratic and of a consistent high quality throughout the country. Furthermore, the federal government can assist municipal governments not only by providing training that will guarantee better qualification of staff, consequently improving the managerial skills and administrative focus of personnel but also by standardising wages of the aptly qualified teachers throughout the country. Properly trained staff are more likely to use resources appropriately and focus attention on the areas most in need. The promotion of school improvement measures is also fundamental for a quality education. It is important to note that teaching does not occur solely inside the classroom, but involves the entire school environment. By providing municipalities

with material and guidelines for school improvement programmes, the government helps reinforce the quality of students' academic life.

Attention should also be given to higher levels of education, as children are greatly affected by inequities in the system. In Brazil, only one in every nine students is accepted in public universities, mainly due to the harsh test system used in the country (World Bank, 2004, p. 151). Again, the less privileged children from less prepared schools suffer the impact of inequity, as children from higher income backgrounds have more chances of being admitted. The poorer students are forced to attend private paid institutions, which in Brazil are often of a lower quality than public ones. One possible solution for the many youngsters who do not get a place in the universities is to offer a secondary education that is integrated with professional teaching. This way, students who fail to pass the *vestibular* can have better and more equitable conditions for facing working life.

In conclusion, it is clear that the problems related to the Brazilian education system are those concerning poor quality, which incapacitates students from learning properly and incites them to drop out before finishing the basic education cycle. Due to the country's noticeable income discrepancy, the poorer population is the one that suffers the most from unprepared professionals and ill-equipped schools, when they are the ones that in fact require even more assistance.

In relation to the question as to whether Brazil can achieve Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals, it has been proven that it is very likely that it will do so by the set date of 2015, at least in relation to indicator 6, regarding the net enrolment ratio in primary education. However, this is conditional on the emphasis on indicator 7, which measures the survival rate, that is, the number of students that start grade 1 and go on to grade 5, and indicator 8 (related to the literacy rate of 15 to 24 year-olds), because as aforementioned, indicator 06 is well on its way to completion. In response to the question of whether it can still ensure quality education for its students, if no major changes occur in the system, it is not probable it will do so. This certainly does not mean that there is no solution for the problem of poor quality in the Brazilian system. However, a lot of effort and resources should be expended to ensure that both equity *and* quality become a feature of the Brazilian education system.

The Brazilian government should focus on each individual indicator of goal 02 of the MDGs if it wants to successfully meet the goal. If children have difficulties in learning, then they are not likely to continue studying. For this reason it should be highlighted that achieving universal primary education does not necessarily mean successfully achieving the ultimate goal of extinguishing illiteracy in the country. After all, guaranteeing universal access to education without ensuring quality in what is being taught is like winning the battle, but ultimately losing the war.

Indeed, there is a direct relation between accomplishing the Millennium Development Goals and the education policies adopted by the government. What's more, it is this researcher's belief that there is a direct relation between the government's attempt to fulfil Goal 02 of the MDGs and the poor quality of education in Brazil. This does not mean, however, that the aim to complete Goal 02 is the cause of low quality. That, as previously discussed, is a result of a series of factors that together, account for unprepared and poorly motivated teachers in ill-equipped schools. The problem lies in past policies which aimed to assure access to education without a concern for what was being taught inside classrooms.

Considering that for a long time the issue of access was the sole concern of the government, it is clear that repercussions now arise in relation to the quality. Part of it has to do with the fact that literacy numbers are measured by the number of children inside classrooms. This measure can be very deceptive when relating to the real number of students who do not know how to read and write appropriately. Moreover, it is impossible to determine what the real reasons were that made the Brazilian government focus on access without worrying about quality, but the consequence of these measures are now being felt by the millions of Brazilians who go through school and are still unable to read and write properly. Quality of education requires a series of factors that combined, demand high resources and extensive planning. However, this should not be seen as expenditure or a burden to economic and social policies. It is – above all – an investment, which will bring profits to the entire country in the future.

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APPENDIX 1

United Nations Millennium Declaration

United Nations A/RES/55/2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 September 2000

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 60 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.2)*]

55/2. United Nations Millennium Declaration

The General Assembly

Adopts the following Declaration:

United Nations Millennium Declaration

I. Values and principles

1. We, heads of State and Government, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, at the dawn of a new millennium, to reaffirm our faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

2. We recognize that, in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs.

3. We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have proved timeless and universal. Indeed, their relevance and capacity to inspire have increased, as nations and peoples have become increasingly interconnected and interdependent.

4. We are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. We rededicate ourselves to support all efforts to uphold the sovereign equality of all States, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence, resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, the right to self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion and international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

5. We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge. Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable. These efforts must include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation.

6. We consider certain fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. These include:

- **Freedom.** Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.

- **Equality.** No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.

- **Solidarity.** Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.

- **Tolerance.** Human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.

- **Respect for nature.** Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.

- **Shared responsibility.** Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the United Nations must play the central role.

7. In order to translate these shared values into actions, we have identified key objectives to which we assign special significance.

II. Peace, security and disarmament

8. We will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States, which has claimed more than 5 million lives in the

past decade. We will also seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction.

9. We resolve therefore:

- To strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs and, in particular, to ensure compliance by Member States with the decisions of the International Court of Justice, in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, in cases to which they are parties.
- To make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction. In this context, we take note of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations[1] and request the General Assembly to consider its recommendations expeditiously.
- To strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.
- To ensure the implementation, by States Parties, of treaties in areas such as arms control and disarmament and of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and call upon all States to consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.[2]
- To take concerted action against international terrorism, and to accede as soon as possible to all the relevant international conventions.
- To redouble our efforts to implement our commitment to counter the world drug problem.
- To intensify our efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions, including trafficking as well as smuggling in human beings and money laundering.
- To minimize the adverse effects of United Nations economic sanctions on innocent populations, to subject such sanctions regimes to regular reviews and to eliminate the adverse effects of sanctions on third parties.
- To strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.
- To take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, especially by making arms transfers more transparent and supporting regional disarmament measures, taking account of all the recommendations of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- To call on all States to consider acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and

[1] A/55/305-S/2000/809; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-fifth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 2000*, document S/2000/809.

[2] A/CONF.183/9.

on Their Destruction,[3] as well as the amended mines protocol to the Convention on conventional weapons.[4]

10. We urge Member States to observe the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, now and in the future, and to support the International Olympic Committee in its efforts to promote peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic Ideal.

III. Development and poverty eradication

11. We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.

12. We resolve therefore to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.

13. Success in meeting these objectives depends, *inter alia*, on good governance within each country. It also depends on good governance at the international level and on transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems. We are committed to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system.

14. We are concerned about the obstacles developing countries face in mobilizing the resources needed to finance their sustained development. We will therefore make every effort to ensure the success of the High-level International and Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development, to be held in 2001.

15. We also undertake to address the special needs of the least developed countries. In this context, we welcome the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in May 2001 and will endeavour to ensure its success. We call on the industrialized countries:

- To adopt, preferably by the time of that Conference, a policy of duty- and quota-free access for essentially all exports from the least developed countries;
- To implement the enhanced programme of debt relief for the heavily indebted poor countries without further delay and to agree to cancel all official bilateral debts of those countries in return for their making demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction; and
- To grant more generous development assistance, especially to countries that are genuinely making an effort to apply their resources to poverty reduction.

16. We are also determined to deal comprehensively and effectively with the debt problems of low- and middle-income developing countries, through various national and international measures designed to make their debt sustainable in the long term.

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[3] See CD/1478.

[4] Amended protocol on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of mines, booby-traps and other devices (CCW/CONF.I/16 (Part I), annex B).

17. We also resolve to address the special needs of small island developing States, by implementing the Barbados Programme of Action[5] and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly rapidly and in full. We urge the international community to ensure that, in the development of a vulnerability index, the special needs of small island developing States are taken into account.

18. We recognize the special needs and problems of the landlocked developing countries, and urge both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their special development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems.

19. We resolve further:

- To halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.
- To ensure that, by the same date, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education.
- By the same date, to have reduced maternal mortality by three quarters, and under-five child mortality by two thirds, of their current rates.
- To have, by then, halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict humanity.
- To provide special assistance to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
- By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, as proposed in the "Cities Without Slums" initiative.

20. We also resolve:

- To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.
- To develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.
- To encourage the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available and affordable by all who need them in developing countries.
- To develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication.

[5] Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II).

- To ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, in conformity with recommendations contained in the ECOSOC 2000 Ministerial Declaration,[6] are available to all.

IV. Protecting our common environment

21. We must spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs.

22. We reaffirm our support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21,[7] agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

23. We resolve therefore to adopt in all our environmental actions a new ethic of conservation and stewardship and, as first steps, we resolve:

- To make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases.

- To intensify our collective efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

- To press for the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity[8] and the Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.[9]

- To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies.

- To intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters.

- To ensure free access to information on the human genome sequence.

V. Human rights, democracy and good governance

24. We will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

25. We resolve therefore:

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[6] E/2000/L.9.

[7] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[8] See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

[9] A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

- To respect fully and uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[10]
- To strive for the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all.
- To strengthen the capacity of all our countries to implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights, including minority rights.
- To combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.[11]
- To take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies.
- To work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens in all our countries.
- To ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information.

VI. Protecting the vulnerable

26. We will spare no effort to ensure that children and all civilian populations that suffer disproportionately the consequences of natural disasters, genocide, armed conflicts and other humanitarian emergencies are given every assistance and protection so that they can resume normal life as soon as possible.

We resolve therefore:

- To expand and strengthen the protection of civilians in complex emergencies, in conformity with international humanitarian law.
- To strengthen international cooperation, including burden sharing in, and the coordination of humanitarian assistance to, countries hosting refugees and to help all refugees and displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes, in safety and dignity and to be smoothly reintegrated into their societies.
- To encourage the ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child[12] and its optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.[13]

VII. Meeting the special needs of Africa

27. We will support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy.

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[10] Resolution 217 A (III).

[11] Resolution 34/180, annex.

[12] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[13] Resolution 54/263, annexes I and II.

28. We resolve therefore:

- To give full support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa.
- To encourage and sustain regional and subregional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peacekeeping operations on the continent.
- To take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced Official Development Assistance and increased flows of Foreign Direct Investment, as well as transfers of technology.
- To help Africa build up its capacity to tackle the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases.

VIII. Strengthening the United Nations

29. We will spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing all of these priorities: the fight for development for all the peoples of the world, the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice; the fight against violence, terror and crime; and the fight against the degradation and destruction of our common home.

30. We resolve therefore:

- To reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, and to enable it to play that role effectively.
- To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.
- To strengthen further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter.
- To strengthen the International Court of Justice, in order to ensure justice and the rule of law in international affairs.
- To encourage regular consultations and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations in pursuit of their functions.
- To ensure that the Organization is provided on a timely and predictable basis with the resources it needs to carry out its mandates.
- To urge the Secretariat to make the best use of those resources, in accordance with clear rules and procedures agreed by the General Assembly, in the interests of all Member States, by adopting the best management practices and technologies available and by concentrating on those tasks that reflect the agreed priorities of Member States.
- To promote adherence to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.[14]

[14] Resolution 49/59, annex.

- To ensure greater policy coherence and better cooperation between the United Nations, its agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, as well as other multilateral bodies, with a view to achieving a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development.

- To strengthen further cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments through their world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union in various fields, including peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights and democracy and gender issues.

- To give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general to contribute to the realization of the Organization's goals and programmes.

31. We request the General Assembly to review on a regular basis the progress made in implementing the provisions of this Declaration, and ask the Secretary-General to issue periodic reports for consideration by the General Assembly and as a basis for further action.

32. We solemnly reaffirm, on this historic occasion, that the United Nations is the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realize our universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development. We therefore pledge our unstinting support for these common objectives and our determination to achieve them.

8th plenary meeting
8 September 2000

APPENDIX 2

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

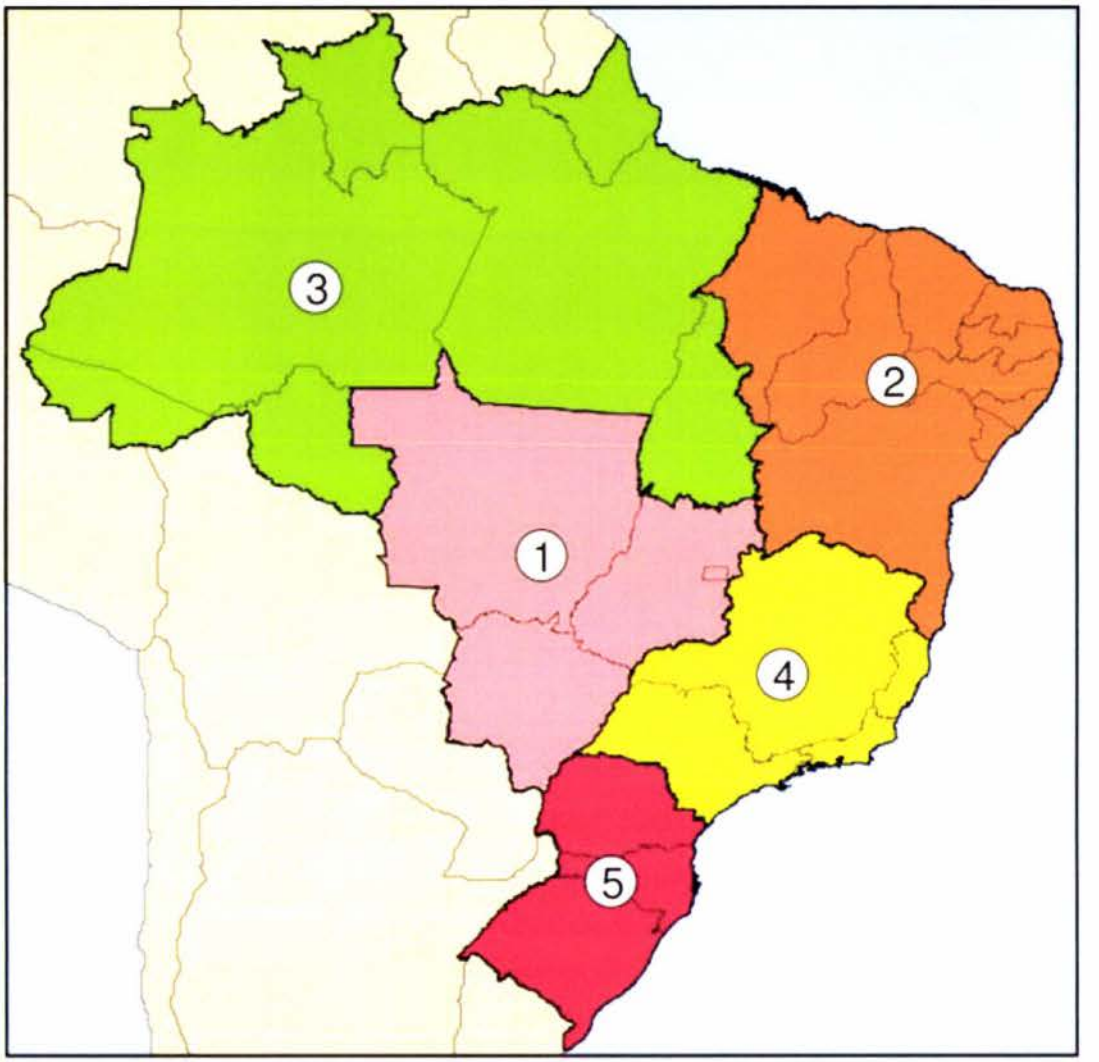
(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Overview: ***South America / Brazil***

Brazil: ***Administrative regions***



1- Centre-West
2- Northeast
3- North
4- Southeast
5- South

Brazil: ***Administrative divisions (states)***

Brazil: ***State capitals***

Brazil: *Demography*