



**BRAZILIAN COURT OF AUDIT**  
External Control Secretariat  
Government Programs Control and Evaluation Secretariat

Executive Summaries

# **TCU Evaluation of the Child Labor Eradication Program**

Rapporteur  
Minister Adylson Motta

Brasília  
2003

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# Contents

<b>Foreword to the English edition .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Eradication of Child Labor Program – PETI .....</b>	<b>8</b>
What was evaluated by the TCU? .....	8
Why was it evaluated? .....	9
How was the work developed? .....	9
Program history .....	9
<b>What the TCU found .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Regarding identification of the foci of child labor and inclusion of families in the Program .....	11
With respect to timeliness in the transfer of resources for payment of the Child Citizen Scholarship .....	11
Qualitative aspects of the Extended School Day .....	12
Instruments for monitoring and social control of the Program .....	13
<b>What can be done to improve the performance of the PETI .....</b>	<b>14</b>



## FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

This series of publications contains the main results of social programs audits carried out by the Brazilian Court of Audit-TCU for the purpose of evaluating the performance of the Federal Government in areas that are strategic for Brazilian society. The activities were developed within the scope of the Brazil/UK Technical Cooperation Agreement, in force since 1998.

The aim of this document is to disseminate information about TCU's actions by reporting the development of the audited programs and their main characteristics to the Supreme Audit Institutions and to other pertinent international organizations.

This issue presents information on the TCU audit aimed at evaluating the Eradication of Child Labor Program - PETI, under the responsibility of the State Social Assistance Agency - SEAS, of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance - MPAS.

**Valmir Campelo**  
Minister-President

## Eradication of Child Labor Program – PETI

The Brazilian Court of Audit carried out an audit to evaluate the extent to which the Eradication of Child Labor Program - PETI has contributed to removing children and adolescents - 7 to 14 years of age - from precocious labor activity, particularly in its worse forms. To attain its goals, the Program grants Child Citizen Scholarships and provides extended school hours for children and adolescents.

The Eradication of Child Labor Program – PETI is aimed at eradicating child labor involving children and adolescents from 7 to 14 years of age, who work under dangerous, unhealthy, distressful, or degrading conditions, in urban and rural areas. Its main reference is the family nucleus, with the support of the school and the community. The target public is constituted, primarily, of families in a situation of extreme poverty and social exclusion, whose *per capita* income is of up to half a minimum wage and whose children are in the age bracket referred to above and work in the aforementioned activities.

According to the principle of decentralized management, responsibility for the execution of the Program is shared by the three levels of Government. The State Social Assistance Agency – SEAS, linked to the Ministry of Welfare and Social Assistance – MPAS, is responsible for coordinating the Program, establishing the norms and guidelines and providing technical assistance to the states in the implementation of the actions.

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### What was evaluated by the TCU?

Considering that eradication of child labor is included in the agenda of commitments made by the Federal Government within the scope of the Program *Avança Brasil* (Onward Brazil) and that the issue is also covered in the constitution, the audit proposed to identify the relevant aspects of the PETI that might affect its performance. The focus of the program is on the registration of the families, the timeliness of the transfer of resources for payment of the Child Citizen Scholarships, the qualitative aspects of the Extended School Day and the tools of social control of the program.



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## Why was it evaluated?

Considering that the foci of child labor, in general, occur among the poorest population, the PETI proved to be a program of strong social impact. Thus, a connection is observed between the PETI and issues regarding reduction of poverty and regional inequalities, since the focus of the Program is the family that is most vulnerable due to social exclusion and which, in order to meet its basic needs and complement its income, depends on the work of its children. In turn, removing children and adolescents from precocious labor encourages their return to and permanence in the classrooms, reducing student drop-out rates.

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## How was the work developed?

The case studies were carried out in the states of Bahia, Maranhão, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Pernambuco, and Sergipe. These states were selected due to the number of children assisted and time of inclusion in the Program. The municipalities visited were defined by the use of random number tables. During the visits, interviews were conducted with approximately 100 people, including monitors and beneficiary families.

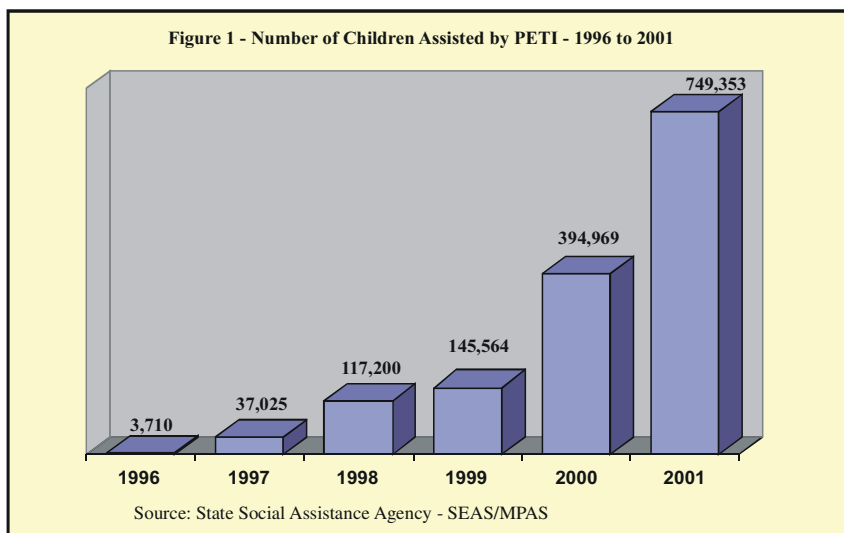
A postal survey was also carried out, by means of questionnaires mailed to all the 967 municipalities covered by the Program in the year 2000, as well as to state managers and forums of eradication of child labor.

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## Program history

In Brazil, the PETI was launched in 1996 as part of the social assistance policy of the Federal Government. It began as a pilot experience implemented in the coal production areas of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, assisting children who worked in the coal kilns and in the harvest of maté tea levas, covering 14 municipalities. In 1997, it was implemented in the sugar cane plantations of Pernambuco and the sisal region of Bahia, and assistance in the States of Amazonas and Goiás was also initiated. In 1998 it was extended to the citrus region of Sergipe, to mining areas in Rondônia and sugar cane areas on the coast of Rio de Janeiro. From 1999 onwards, the Program's coverage was extended to various activities in

the other States of Brazil. It also expanded to new municipalities in the States already covered. Figure 1 presents the historical evolution of the PETI in relation to the number of children assisted.



## What the TCU found

### Regarding identification of the foci of child labor and inclusion of families in the Program

The study demonstrated that there are no precise data on the total number of children involved in labor activities. Another problem diagnosed was the non-existence of uniform criteria among the municipalities for inclusion of children in the Program, making it difficult to identify and select the target public. Furthermore, some municipalities understand that the Program is directed to poor families and do not condition eligibility for the program to the fact that the children must actually be working.

The lack of equity due to absence of specific actions to support the execution of the Program in the poorest municipalities was also detected.

### With respect to timeliness in the transfer of resources for payment of the Child Citizen Scholarship

The resources for payment of the Child Citizen Scholarship are made available upon transfer from the National Social Assistance Fund - FNAS to the Social Assistance Funds of the states, municipalities or the Federal District, provided certain qualification criteria are met. The main criterion is compliance with the welfare obligations vis-à-vis the Union, which is proved by presenting the Negative Debt Certificate (CND) issued by the National Institute of Social Security – INSS.

It was found that, in August 2001, 53% of the municipalities were unable to receive resources due to lack of the certificate referred to. The delay or temporary suspension in the transfer of the resources was leading the families to remove their children from school and place them back at work. In order to solve the problem, the SEAS/MPAS published Administrative Rule 458/2001, which provides for transfer of the Child Citizen Scholarship resources directly to the families, through official banks or post offices, a practice already adopted in other government programs, such as the *Bolsa Escola* (Study Grant Program).

In relation to regular education, once the Scholarship is granted, parents are required to keep their children in school. This has contributed

to the decrease of the student drop-out rates. The postal survey demonstrated that 92% of the municipalities consider that the PETI has had a satisfactory impact on reducing student drop-out.

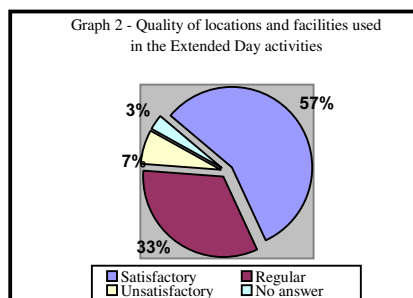
### Qualitative aspects of the Extended School Day

The main purpose of the Extended School Day is to increase the time children and adolescents spend in school, promoting a second shift focusing on culture, play, art, and sports activities, complementing regular education. The activities can be carried out in the municipal school units or other appropriate locations. The execution of this action is the responsibility of the Municipal Government, and the SEAS/MPAS is responsible for transferring the resources allocated for its maintenance.

Regarding the qualification of the monitors, it was found that the number of training hours varied considerably among the municipalities. In view of the pedagogical proposal that guides the Extended School Day and the social role of the monitor, a strong capacity building program is needed for this agent. As to the number of children per monitor, a huge disparity of this ratio was observed among the municipalities.

Nevertheless, the monitors interviewed stressed that the activities are contributing effectively to extending and strengthening the universe of knowledge and skills of the children, causing a significant improvement in their school performance, social life and self-esteem, in addition to having more appropriate nutrition. Furthermore, school reinforcement activities are also carried out, corresponding, on average, to two hours of the Extended School Day when the children carry out tasks related to regular education.

In the cases where the Extended School Day takes place in rented or assigned units instead of in the schools, the locations are not always appropriate for children. The main problem diagnosed was lack of space for the children and of conditions for the practice of sports or leisure



activities. Another frequent deficiency, which is more severe in the rural areas, is related to the infrastructure of some locations.

*In loco* examinations revealed that the attendance of the children in the Extended School Day is considered high. Attendance control is carried out by the monitors and forwarded to the municipal assistance agencies, in order to guarantee that the children are attending both the Extended School Day and regular school. According to the postal survey, 95% of the municipalities evaluated the control of attendance as satisfactory. In all the municipalities visited it was found that, when attendance is interrupted, an inquiry is conducted to find out what is motivating the absence of the child.

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### Instruments for monitoring and social control of the Program

The Commissions of Eradication of Child Labor constitute the main means of social control of the Program. According to the postal survey, in 94% of the municipalities, a Commission has been created and is functioning. However, during the *in loco* examinations it was diagnosed that about 95% of the parents and 75% of the monitors are unaware of the existence of this body.

In this framework, the Manager highlighted that the SEAS will request that the States broadly disseminate the action of the Commissions stressing their role, their competencies, their members, and their operation. Another step will be the inclusion of specific material regarding the Commissions in the PETI campaign for 2002. There is also a plan to include a methodological proposal in the National Qualification Plan, aimed at the PETI technical and managerial teams, focusing on promotion of these Commissions.

Regarding monitoring and verification of the results of the PETI, the SEAS has been holding regional and national meetings, with the participation of managers, coordinators and partners, to allow exchange of experiences of good practices and to evaluate the impact of the Program in the states. In addition, studies are being carried out jointly with the University of São Paulo – USP and the Getúlio Vargas Foundation – FGV, for the purpose of developing performance indicators for the Program.

## What can be done to improve the performance of the PETI

In order to contribute to the improvement of the operational performance of the PETI, the TCU recommended to the State Social Assistance Agency - SEAS, among other measures, that it should:

- implement action in order to ensure national uniformity of the criteria for inclusion of the families;
- establish and institute the ideal ratio of pupils per monitor for the Extended School Day, as well as standardize the number of hours of training for monitors of the PETI at national level;
- seek to strengthen the awareness raising campaigns designed for employers and people who exploit child labor, not only with regard to the legislation in force and its penalties, but also with respect to the image of the company and the physical integrity of the children;
- speed up the implementation of transfer of resources directly to the beneficiaries, by means of magnetic cards, as in a number of successful experiences of government programs in other areas, such as the *Bolsa Escola* (Study Grant) and the *Bolsa Renda* (Income Scholarship), as provided for in Administrative Rule 458, of October 4, 2001;
- include in the Operational Manual of the PETI minimum quality parameters for places and facilities to be used for the Extended School Day, always taking into account the administrative infrastructure conditions and local peculiarities of each municipality, in order to ensure that each center has toilets, area for kitchen and preparation of meals, and appropriate water and lighting fixtures, facilities and furniture;
- prioritize poor municipalities (lower Human Development Index – HDI) that do not have conditions to maintain an acceptable level of quality in the execution of the Program, allocating to them more resources and operational support.

The Brazilian Court of Audit will monitor the implementation of the recommendations in order to ensure that the problems raised by the audit will be addressed effectively.