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

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Marcela Figueiredo Nobre Formiga

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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)

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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