



EXPERIENCES IN SOCIAL INNOVATION

2006-2007 Cycle

FINALIST

Alfabetização Solidária (Learning Literacy through Solidarity) Brazil

AlfaSol is a non-profit, civil society, public service organization. Its objectives are to reduce illiteracy rates among citizens 15 years of age and older and to increase alternatives available for continued, public education to youth and adults. Its efficient and innovative model networks with "allies" from different sectors and provides a large scale, top quality service.

After eleven years of continuous activity, AlfaSol has obtained significant results: by the end of 2006, 5.3 million youth and adults had learned literacy and 244,000 teachers had been trained throughout 2,099 Brazilian municipalities. Today the organization counts on a network of 182 companies and government institutions and 108 higher educational establishments. Due to its success in Brazil, AlfaSol has provided technical assistance to other countries such as Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Sao Tomé, Príncipe, East Timor and Guatemala. Respect for each culture and the ability to attend peoples of different backgrounds is a fundamental concept of the model that allows for its replication in different parts of the world.

According to its mission, AlfaSol has developed programs and projects that complement the literacy process and take into account the particular needs of the community it is working with. Within a framework of cooperation with government, non-government, private, academic and international players, these programs and/or projects seek to intermingle with other initiatives that are in direct relation with the labor market, reading habits and public social inclusion programs.

The following are some of the important programs it develops:

Youth and Adult Literacy Program: This program seeks to reduce high illiteracy rates still existent in Brazil -and throughout the world – through several projects:

- a) *Proyecto Nacional* (**National Project**): local, trained teachers teach literacy to youth and adults;
- b) *Proyecto Grandes Centros Urbanos (PGCU)* (**Great Urban Centers Project**): This is an educational inclusion project that identifies and

- attends the illiterate population of 15 years and older living in great urban centers that are not covered by public policies;
- c) *Proyecto Ver (I Can See Project)*: The purpose of this project is to distribute eye glasses -free of charge- among AlfaSol students with impaired vision;
 - d) *Proyecto Alfabetización en las Empresas (Literacy at Work Project)*: Created to reduce illiteracy rates among young and adult workers and to encourage their re-insertion to the educational system;
 - e) *Proyecto de Complementación Nutricional (Complementary Nutrition Project)*: This project is in charge of providing additional meals for students for the duration of the literacy program to assure their nutritional needs are met. This activity has contributed to increase students' uninterrupted permanence in literacy programs.

Programa Fortaleciendo la Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (EJA) (Making Education Strong for Youth and Adults Program):

The program works to assure continuity in, and access to, different public education opportunities for youth and adults. Its main activities are: impart courses, train teachers of the municipal educational network and provide support to the municipalities that take part in the program.

Programa de Atención a la Diversidad (Attention to Diversity Program):

A didactic project created to attend the basic learning needs of specific social groups.

Programa de Incentivo a la Lectura (Reading Incentive Program):

This program strives to make reading more accessible for students, teachers and community in general by providing access to different publications, book collections, itinerant libraries and reading rooms.

Centro de Referencia en Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (CEREJA)/Portal Cereja (Youth and Adult Education Reference Center -CEREJA):

The center's main objectives are to rescue, systematize, preserve the value of and disseminate all information and experiences related to the education of youth and adults. The center encourages a culture of reflection and the sharing of knowledge through the CEREJA web page, narration contests, celebration of Literacy Week, and the publishing of a scientific magazine on learning literacy (*Revista de Alfabetización Solidaria*).

Programa de Educación Digital (Digital Education Program):

This program seeks to use the Internet for continuous teacher training and take advantage of all digital tools available to aid in the education process.

Programa de Cooperación Internacional (International Cooperation Program):

Using the AlfaSol model -as a multi-cultural one- this program supports worldwide efforts to reduce illiteracy rates.

The positive results achieved by AlfaSol are recognized by Brazilian public institutions such as the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia y Estadística* (Brazilian Geographic and Statistics Institute) or the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Investigações Educacionais Aísio Teixeira* (The Aísio Teixeira National Institute for Studies and Research on Education). These institutions consider that AlfaSol has made an important contribution to reduce Brazilian illiteracy rates (by 32.2% in the last decade) and to substantially increase, between 1999 and 2005, academic alternatives in municipalities for youth and adults. As to international recognition, AlfaSol was the first civil society organization to have a formal relationship with UNESCO. In 2003, AlfaSol was recognized by the United Nations as one of the 10 most successful literacy programs worldwide.

For further information, please contact:

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