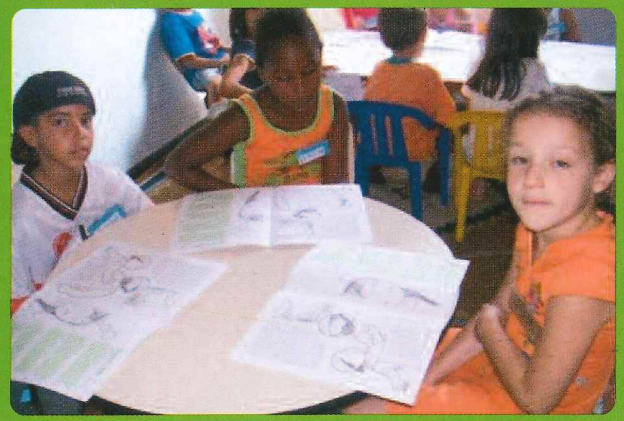
How do the Projects work?

Participatory planning is an essential part of the process of community building where the church and community identify their problems and become partners in building a healthier society. Each local church meets with children and their families to identify priorities for an educational program. Together they develop activities in the area of Christian education, academic support, sports and recreation, culture and artistic expression, health, citizenship, or computer education. To be part of the Shade and Fresh Water network, the program must offer regular recreation, academic support and Christian education activities.

Local projects are integrated into a regional and national network that allows them to share their needs and successes. Project educators meet with educators from other projects to share experiences and gain program resources.

Today, Methodist volunteers are reaching thousands of children that otherwise would be left on their own. Shade and Fresh Water is the Brazilian Methodist Church's response to sharing God's love to children in need.



How can you help the Brazilian church respond to the needs of children?

Pray that our workers discover ways to touch young lives and shape them in God's path. It is a great challenge for our local churches to develop creative programs.

Come as a volunteer! Come and share your love and talents with us. God touches people despite language barriers.

Contribute to the Advance Special – Ministry with Children # 11580A. The Brazilian church does not have the financial resources to meet this great challenge. Your donation can help us reach children with Christ's love.

Igreja Metodista

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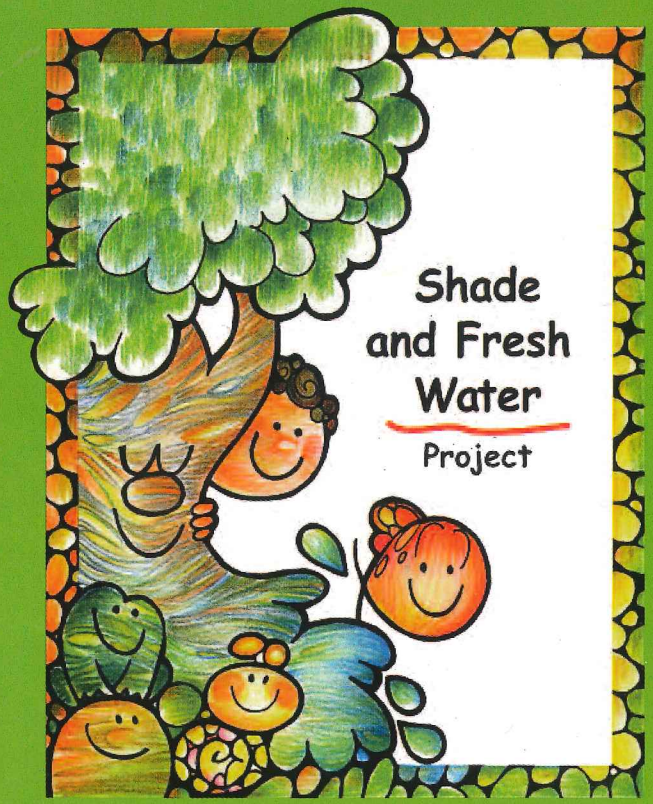
Shade and Fresh Water Project



Methodist Missionary Commitment to Children and Teenagers in Brazil

Children at risk

The Brazilian family is in crisis. Millions of parents leave home early in the morning in the struggle to find ways to support their families. They work long hours trying to earn money for food and shelter for their family, but have little time for their children. Left alone while their parents are working, children make their own food, go to school on their own, care for their younger brothers and sisters, and take responsibility for the home. Sometimes seven-year old children have full household responsibilities... cleaning, laundry and health needs. Without adult supervision children often to go to the streets to play, to get food, and many times, to meet people who introduce them to a life of drugs, crime and prostitution.

The Brazilian Methodist Church responds to Children's needs

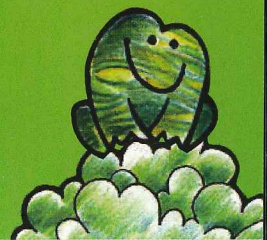
"The Methodist Church affirms its Christian responsibility for the holistic well-being of all people as an inherent part of its fidelity to the Word of God as expressed in the New and Old Testament scriptures."
Social Creed of the Brazilian Methodist Church

For nearly a century, the Brazilian Methodist Church has maintained projects that respond to the needs of children and teenagers. Starting in the 1940's and peaking during the military dictatorship (1964-82), tens of millions of rural people migrated to the cities in search of a better life. This "rural exodus" undermined Brazil's social fabric and family structure and had profound negative impact on children's lives. Slums ringing all major cities and were built without adequate sanitation, health treatment facilities or schools. With a burgeoning social crisis and the return to democracy in the 1980's and 1990's, the Methodist church began many new projects responding to the social problems caused by the rapid process of urbanization.

Churches, social organizations and political leaders created a broad movement seeking legal protection for children. Today, Brazil has an advanced legal code protecting the rights of children and teenagers. The well being of children and youth, however, is not something that can be done by legal decree. A healthy society is built by the collective effort of families, voluntary organizations, businesses, churches, and the government.

What is the Project "Shade and Fresh Water"?

In the face of a mammoth social crisis the Brazilian Methodist Church made children its "number one priority" and created the Shade and Fresh Water Project as a national network to assist local Methodist churches to develop activities for children as an alternative to the streets. The goal is to provide supervised activities that help young people become healthy citizens and gain an exposure to Christian values. Every local church is challenged to organize an after school program for children and teenagers between 6 and 14 years of age that follow national guidelines promoting healthy physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social development.

Why the name "Shade and Fresh Water"?

This Methodist program seeks to provide true signs of God love for children and youth by responding to their needs and giving them a chance to know the Christian message. The church adopted a popular Brazilian expression that transmits a desire to find a place that provides protection from life's harsh realities. Shade is a place to rest our bodies from life's bitter heat and water quenches our thirst. It is a place of protection that allows people the opportunity to grow. This easily understood phrase has profound biblical allusions. Shade represents the protection and care the church offers to children. Fresh water carries the biblical image of God's cleansing, transformation and renewal.