



## **Our on-going commitment to investing in education benefits over 70 students in Brazil**

Investment in education is recognised as an important factor in the reduction of social problems. It increases the opportunities that citizens have to enter the labour market, broadens their perspectives and strengthens both personal and professional values.



Two of our shopping centres in Brazil have implemented a pioneering programme that offers free classes to the public and the possibility for students to complete their high school graduation.

The idea was developed by Shopping Metr pole which had identified the need to empower employees and service providers

who had the potential and willingness to learn, but were unable to complete their studies owing to financial limitations, a lack of family support or their working hours.

In 2006, Metr pole Educa was launched. Based on this model, Shopping Penha set up the 'Penha Educa' programme in December 2008. Access to the programme was extended to local residents after a survey conducted by the centre indicated that there was also an interest and demand for this type of scheme in the community. Since its implementation, Shopping Penha has invested more than R\$175,000 ( 75,360) in the programme.

This covers classroom infrastructure; furniture; audio-visual resources; the periodic purchase of educational materials such as books and school supplies; the contract with the department for industrial social services (SESI) for the payment of qualified teachers; an academic advisor and the organisation of graduation and publicity. The approximate annual investment is R\$56,000 ( 24,110).



Both Shopping Metr pole and Shopping Penha point to the testimonials of its students as evidence of the success of the project. Many of them have stated that they feel more prepared for the labour market, have greater self-esteem and are highly motivated to continue; with a good number of students staying on to complete the second level of studies. This year the Metr pole Educa

programme enrolled an initial class of 18 students and a second group of 15 students are preparing for graduation. Currently there are 38 students enrolled in the Penha Educa programme.

*"I am very satisfied with the course. I am a bus driver and work at dawn, so I couldn't enrol in classes, but now this opportunity has given me motivation and made it possible. As soon as I finish high school I intend to do a technical course, so the sacrifice is worth it."* - Mario Azevedo Euripedes, Penha Educa Student

*"I am a carer for two elderly people who I also live with. My dream was always to go to college and to do so I am devoting my time to the classes. I'm sure I can do it."* - Angela Maria dos Santos, Penha Educa Student

*"With this opportunity I have been able to overcome challenges and I have learned to speak and express myself better. The classes motivate me to continue learning so that I will have more opportunities"* - Maria de Lourdes de Souza, Penha Educa Student

*"This project has given me the basis to acquire new knowledge, culture and inclusion in society. Thank you for this great opportunity"* - Antonio de Oliveira Sales Nic cio, Metr pole Educa Student

In the future, we will investigate the possibility of making partnerships with companies to allow students who have completed their course greater potential access to the labour market.