

University of Life High School Program

Mission

1. To offer students an educational program with enough tangible benefits to compete with the immediate need to contribute income to their families.
2. To provide students with the necessary tools to gain acceptance to and succeed in higher educational programs or obtain gainful employment in Brazil's competitive job market.



High school students presenting on Brazilian culture

- Constant sickness that leaves them up to a year behind in IQ development
- Widespread domestic abuse, gang activity and sexual violence
- No parental encouragement to study, illiteracy at home and pessimism about education
- Pressure to contribute income to the family or care for younger siblings
- 16% of youth in Fortaleza's favelas have their first sexual experience by age 13 and 42% by age 15*
- 20% of all births in Brazil are to teenage mothers*
- In Fortaleza's favelas one third of all boys and half of all girls report having used drugs by age 18*
- 61% of 15 year olds in Brazil scored below a critical level of science literacy (www.worldfund.org)
- Realization of poverty; embarrassment, bitterness or anger with their situation

With such overwhelming challenges, it is easy to understand why attendance at school is not a priority for children in the favelas—only 9% of children in Brazil finish high school and 6% go to college. With the poor academic training and reduced classroom time, even those who do graduate from public high school only obtain the equivalent of a seventh grade education. The difficult college entrance exams are virtually impossible to pass without additional tutoring. With no perceivable advantage to completing school, kids have little incentive to attend. Additionally, isolation in the favelas makes it nearly impossible to seek out vocational training opportunities. Without higher education or access to vocational training, young people are unable to compete in the job market, unable to leave the favelas and unable to break the cycle of poverty.

Background

In Brazil, the over 100 million children living in a favela (Brazilian slum) have one opportunity for education—an under-resourced, under-staffed public school system that provides lessons for only 4 hours a day, if the teachers turn up to work or are not on strike. Adolescents living in favelas face additional obstacles to pursuing and obtaining education, including:

To learn more about program activities, please contact:

The Channel, Inc

501(c)(3)

PO Box 804

Newport News, VA

23607

Phone: (757) 244-6852

Email: cbc@thechannel.org

www.thechannel.org

The Channel is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1995. We are a Christian developmental organization with over 25 years of experience working with impoverished children and communities in Brazil.

Our vision is to train and equip the future leaders of Brazil by creating a pathway out of poverty for children through quality education and training. Our project in Fortaleza is CBC (Channel to Brazil for Christ) University of Life and is a non-sectarian institution open to children of any color, race or religion.

The Channel is funded by contributions from individuals and groups who passionately believe that by working together we can improve the lives of children living in poverty, one child at a time.



* Cardoso, Ana Rute and Verner, Dorte, "Youth Risk-Taking Behavior in Brazil: Drug Use and Teenage Pregnancy" (March 1, 2008). World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4548 Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1104081>

The University of Life

The University of Life steps into the gap left by the public school system by offering a minimum of four additional hours of classroom instruction each school day. What began as a supplement to elementary school has grown to include high school instruction as we see young people committing to year after year of education.

Building a strong, effective and appealing high school program is currently the most crucial element to both the success of the University of Life and the young people it serves, yet it is has the fewest resources. The limited budget of the current program allows for the employment of only one, part time high school teacher who offers some instruction in advanced math and assists with homework. We also offer scholarship to obtain private tutoring for college entrance exams. Even with this minimal budget, we have seen amazing results:

- In 2003, the first University of Life student graduated high school; 21 more students have followed.
- 8 University of Life students passed the difficult entrance exams and are currently enrolled in college. The other graduates have all either found work, are in technical training schools or are enrolled other higher education programs.
- Younger students are inspired to continue studies as they see the tangible results of the older students
- Education is more greatly valued in the community as residents see the success of our students
- Greater pride in the community as residents see their young people succeed

Future Goals

Even with our successes and supportive atmosphere, we see our older students dropping out at a much higher rate than the younger ones. With the increasing economic demand on families, the pressure to earn income may become too great to make college a feasible option. Additionally, we know that college is not the right path for every individual. Therefore, we need the resources to design an innovative, effective program that offers both advanced studies for college preparation and immediately utilizable vocational skills and entrepreneurship training. Understanding the immense, unique pressures on our high school students, we realize that we need to bring our high school program up to the level of, and in some respects, exceed the elementary program. To keep our students engaged, such a program must include:

- A second computer lab with extended hours, exclusively for the use of high school students
- A flexible schedule to accommodate working students, including web-based instruction, that can be accessed when necessary
- At least two more teachers with advanced training in high school subjects
- A more specialized classroom environment—currently all high school grade levels are in the same classroom
- At least one staff member with technical training and vocational skills
- An expanded library with an up-to-date reference section and a librarian able to provide homework and research support for students

How can I help?

These are a few concrete ways that the high school program would benefit from your assistance:

- Support a staff member. It requires \$850 – \$900/month to employ a teacher (\$10,200 – \$10,800/year).
- Donate funds to purchase a computer, printer and/or software. We need an additional 10 computers for our high school students.
- Travel to Brazil to conduct teacher, technical or vocational training
- Donate funds to purchase library books
- Support a student at the University of Life for \$30 per month (\$360 per year)
- Support a college student through the completion of their degree for \$300 per month for three years (\$3600 per year)