

University of Life

UNICYBER: The Internet Café

Mission

To offer computing resources and printing services to the community, employment opportunities for the students and a source of sustainable funding for the school.

Background



The University of Life is located in Aqua Fria, a favela (Brazilian slum) of Fortaleza, Brazil. Residents have little or no access to computing services and, consequently, limited computer skills—a necessity in the increasingly virtual economy. Additionally, without the ability to create an résumé, maintain an email address, or apply for jobs online, residents are unable to compete in the job market and remain trapped in their current economic state.

To respond to this need, Unicyber was opened in June 2007. Unicyber is an Internet café located at the University of Life and open to the public six days a week, from 9 am to 9 pm. There are currently 10 computer stations and snacks available for purchase. In addition to Internet access, Unicyber also offers an accredited IT training course, basic printing and photocopy services, CD and DVD burning and wedding invitation design, all of which would be otherwise cost-prohibitive or inaccessible to the community.

The café brings knowledge and opportunity for study and employment, both for community members and University of Life graduates. We offer employment in the café as a part of a scholarship package to those graduates pursuing a college education. Any profits generated by the café are reinvested into the project. In addition to the economic and educational benefits, the café fosters dignity and pride as people learn together and see small businesses investing in their community.

Future Goals

Unicyber has proven to be a successful model for generating income for the program and delivering opportunities to the community, but we know there is huge potential for further growth and development. Since Unicyber began, we have seen other Internet establishments opening in the community, so we need to offer more comprehensive services to more ably compete with other cafés. We need to address the following:

- Invest in improved signs, publicity and access to the café. The road in front of Unicyber has been torn up and during rainy months becomes flooded.
- Create a separate graphics and printing office and employ another student
- Explore maintenance investments to keep the café cool and comfortable

How can I help?

- Donate funds to purchase hardware and software for the graphics office
- Support a student to operate the graphics office for \$250 per month (\$3000 per year)
- Donate funds to create better signage for the café
- Travel to Brazil to offer a seminar on IT, graphic design or any other computer related activities

To learn more about program activities, please contact:

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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.

