

CBC University of Life

Fortaleza, Brazil

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A *pathway* out of *poverty* through
quality *education* and *training*

Results and Relationship

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Heroes or Losers—the Brazilian football team return from South Africa and a disappointed nation tries to carry on.

Dear Friend,

You could have heard a pin drop here in Brazil, the day that Holland knocked the national team out of the World Cup. It was clear that nobody had even considered the possibility of a loss and people just didn't know what to do at the end of the game. The silence was palpable and 'tristeza' (sadness) was everywhere.

Eventually people started to talk, "*will we still have the afternoon off next week?*" "*who shall we support now?*" Within hours the national team was home, the Manager was sacked and the analysis of what went wrong began in earnest.



However, the overwhelming conclusion was shame and failure. We took this photo of Dunga (The Manager), who took the place of Guy Falkes on a decoration at a party a few days later.

It was interesting that the expectations of the team were so high that the team could only have been heroes or losers. There were no pats on the back, shouts of 'good effort' or 'let's try again next time', even though the team did incredibly well.

Our understanding and faith teaches us that failure is an inevitable part of life and a time to learn, grow, get up, try again. It is the time when we need friends, encouragement and strength to keep going.

There are two polar opposites of life in Brazil, rich or poor, winner or loser. The expectation of Brazil that its team will win the world cup every 4 years is enormous, resulting in young players being torn down, criticised and sacked after a loss. Likewise, the gap between rich and poor is massive and the more you understand Brazil, the more you see that there are obvious forces at

work which are intent on maintaining this gulf of inequality.

Here in Fortaleza, a minimum wage is about £135, a pair of Levis is £76 and a month's rent in a very basic two bedroomed non-furnished flat is £320. The poor will never get ahead and those who make it in the small middle class, make huge sacrifices, paying maids to bring up their children, working long hours and enjoying little personal freedom.

It is gut wrenchingly sad to watch those, who despite great aptitude, hard work, good character, initiative and commitment, are stuck year after year working for a minimum wage.

As our young students prove themselves in the workplace, they are confronting the reality of these extreme opposites. They want more, and they deserve more than most private and public sector jobs are willing to pay them.

In response, we are thinking and praying about investing in starting our own businesses, so that we can continue to support the lives of these young people. We are not lacking in ideas, workforce, creativity or purpose and our goal is to allow our students to be everything they have studied and dreamed of becoming.

Please pray for us as we plan these next steps and also for the children, young people and staff - 'The University of Life team.' Thanks to your help, support and encouragement we can maintain our unity and determination, and grow stronger each day towards our goals.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Marc and Ruth Marques

The girl with a blue dress

We hope you enjoy this story and find someone to tell it to this month.



In a poor neighbourhood in a town far away, lived a beautiful girl. It turns out that this girl attended classes at the local school, which was in a pitiful state. Her clothes were so old that her teacher decided to give her a new dress. The teacher reasoned to herself: *"It is a pity that so charming a student comes to school messed up like that. Perhaps, with some sacrifice, I could buy her a blue dress."*

When the girl got her new dress, she was overjoyed. Her mother didn't think it right that, with a dress so beautiful, her daughter should continue to go to school dirty as ever, and began to bathe her every day before class. After a week, her father said, *"Woman, don't you think it a shame that our daughter is so pretty and neat, but living in a home like this? Why don't you straighten up the house, while I, in my spare time, put some paint on the walls, repair the fence and plant a garden?"*

And so the humble couple did just that. The house became prettier than all the others in the street, and the neighbours, inspired by the little girl's family, began to work on their own houses. Thus, the entire neighbourhood improved considerably.

Soon afterwards a politician passed by and said, "It is unfortunate that people so industrious receive no support from the council." And from there he went to talk to the Mayor, who authorised him to organise a commission to study what improvements were needed to the neighbourhood. The road was re-surfaced, the drains were fixed and a new bus stop created so that people didn't have to walk so far.

The committee was so successful that from it emerged many others committees and today, throughout the country, they are helping poor neighbourhoods to grow and improve.



And to think it all started with a blue dress. The simple intention of helping one little girl was a catalyst to a far bigger transformation which impacted the lives of many other people.

All of us have someone who dreamt for us – the little girl had a teacher who cared for her immediate needs and a loving family who were inspired by her beauty. The teacher didn't have much in her hands and never had the intention of transforming so many neighbourhoods, but she did what she could – she gave a blue dress.

Working with the poor is hard work. It's slow, constantly challenging and there are so many needs. However, the greatest assets that we have are each other – as we care for the people around us, we enable them to reach out in their own way.

It is difficult to rebuild a neighbourhood, and to help a nation out of poverty, but each one of us can give a blue dress. Then, who knows what might happen?

Translation from portuguese, Author unknown

Answers to quiz in last newsletter

1st Grade - Brazilian Nursery Rhymes ANSWER c)

3rd Grade - Literature of Ceará ANSWER a)

4th Grade - Typical Food of Ceará. ANSWER b)

5th Grade - Tourist highlights of Fortaleza. ANSWER c)

6th Grade - Music of Ceará ANSWER a)



Please email us, we love to hear from you

Marc and Ruth Marques

This month...

Students will be returning from holidays to begin the second half of the academic year.

...the mission team will be travelling to help at a n orphanage on the outskirts of the city.

...we will be hosting three teams of volunteers

...Adaberto and Luzilene - two long time students of The University of Life will be getting married in the grounds of the project.

Please email us if you would like to send them a message or a gift.