

Happy Old Year
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Chit Chat in a favela



UNiViDA

Bringing life, hope and opportunity to children

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Brazil

- Educational Reality Check

Some statistics about education in Brazil.

Annual spending per student

(source: OECD)

United Kingdom	Brazil
US \$8,306	US \$1,550

- Brazil ranks 53 out of 65 countries recently tested by the OECD on educational quality.
- Only one third of the population has secondary education.
- Students in state schools are at least three years behind those in private schools.
- The north-east has some of the most shocking educational standards. Only 4 out of 10 children finish primary school.
- In Brazil a child is passed to the next year group regardless of whether they have progressed.



Find out more about education in Brazil online from UNICEF or the IBGE.

Happy Old Year ?

- Why children in Brazil can't enjoy the new year just yet.

Hello, and a very Happy New Year to you. January should mark the beginning of a new academic year in Brazil but the state school system is so far behind, children may not change year group until March!

If education in Brazil's slums could be compared to a race, it would definitely be the hurdles!

Children in the slums wake up hungry, and tired from lack of proper rest. Very often they wake up alone because their parents have left early if they have a job or worse, never returned from the night before. Finding self-motivation, purpose and the physical strength to actually make it to school is in itself a significant achievement, but unfortunately this is just the beginning.

School attendance in Brazil is compulsory and enrollment rates are high because they are tied to family benefits. However, the school day is only 4 hours,



class sizes are large and teachers earn less than £275 per month. Attendance rates are not so high either for pupils or staff!

Teacher strikes are so common that students often go months at a time registering their attendance but being sent straight home again without any lessons.

We do much more than just help children with their homework, we are actually the ones who are teaching them.

This January, instead of the excitement of a new year in a new class, children will be returning to their old year group after the

holidays.

Eventually, over what is now a 12 instead of 10 month school year the curriculum is 'officially taught'

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but this does not by any means equate to learning. Children often talk about copying test answers off the board so that the teacher can pass them on to the next year group.

With state school learning levels being so low, the support UNiViDA provides in the form of an after-school programme, is absolutely essential. We do much more than just help children with their homework, we are actually the ones who are teaching them.

Reducing the hurdles

In contrast to the state school, we will spend the beginning of this year, evaluating our timetables, subjects and teaching methods.

One of our biggest challenges is to strike the right balance of activities, meeting so many needs in just 4 hours a day.



Our goal is to give every student at the University of Life a very happy, inspiring and successful new year of learning.

If you would like to pray for this situation, please pray that...

...children living in favelas will have strength and motivation to get up and go to school.

....parents will see the value of supporting and helping their children to study.

...the state school system will improve.

...as we plan the 2011 timetable, we will continue to be innovative, courageous and creative in meeting the very special needs of the children who receive our help everyday.

Thank you.

Supporting parents so they can support their children >>>

Chit chat in the favelas of Brazil

Last time you sat down with a colleague or friend, what did you talk about? By Ruth Marques.



I recently sat down with the young women in our weekly house church meeting. Every week we meet in a different house somewhere in the favelas close to The University of Life. The conversation went something like this...

Claudia: "When we first heard the shots I said to mum 'we best go inside' and then I saw this young chap running towards us. He was holding his leg and at first I thought he must have been holding a gun at his side but then I realized that he had been shot. I couldn't see much blood so he must have been shot from very close range."

Frankie: "Oh yes, because when it's close up, the skin burns and there is not so much blood. Could you pass the coffee please?"

Conversations like this are normal in our weekly women's meeting. The very next week there was a gun battle in the alley right outside the house when the meeting was taking place. 'See you next week', is a phrase that no one here takes for granted, everyone knows a victim of drug related violence in the slums.

The tireless intensity and uncertainty of life in the favelas never ceases to amaze us. As if a long day of work, motherhood and for many abuse from their partners wasn't enough, these women have to dodge bullets as well. Encouraging them so they can encourage their kids is essential.

Think of them next time you sit down for a coffee and a chat!

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Peace Project

In October and November of 2010, classroom work at The University of Life was based on the theme of peace. The poem below was studied by the children.



You can find photos of this project on our Facebook page, its called Univida.

Programme Your Life

Swap your rude words for kind words
Change violent gestures to smooth ones

Speak without aggression

Listen with attention

Look more to heaven and less to the earth

Make an idea into a reality

Don't keep your life to yourself

Find a reason to try everyday

Spread the good that is in you, into someone else

Love before you want to be loved

Abandoned at birth and destined for the rubbish but saved by a UoL student.



A former University of Life student who rescued a baby girl from certain death and is now her adoptive mother.

Lidia (name changed), is 8 years old. She is in year 2 at The University of Life and loves to study. She is intelligent confident and friendly but there is also a very thoughtful side to Lidia which you may think is a characteristic beyond her years.

As a newborn, Lidia was adopted by a caring couple that lived next door to her biological mother. They knew that the mother wanted to get rid of the child and quickly acted to save her life. Vanessa, Lidia's adopted mother, is a former student of The University of Life who had to leave the project at the age of 14 to look after her younger siblings.

Today Vanessa is married and looks after Lidia and her son. She was quick to register Lidia at The University of Life and says... "I want Lidia to have the opportunity to study and do better than I did at school."

At a recent presentation about families, Lidia surprised everyone by asking her teacher if she could share something with her fellow students. In front of 175 children, mostly older than herself, Lidia told her story. She explained that she had heard some people speaking badly about their parents and that this had upset her very much.

Lidia told the children that she was very nearly thrown in the rubbish when she was born and that family is something we should never take for granted. Everyone listened with great humility to her words and we was profoundly moved. Just like her adoptive mother, Lidia is already showing her capacity to make a difference in the world.

We are yet to know what Lidia's future holds, but we know that with life, hope and opportunity UNiVIDA is transforming children to transform their communities, one Vanessa and one Lidia at a time.



Dreambuilders - Thank you!

Your monthly support can do more than you might ever imagine!



Abandoned Children

There are literally millions of children abandoned on the streets of Brazil. On the streets, these children suffer immense trauma. They become sick, they are bullied, abused, raped and beaten. Their life expectancy plummets to only 18.

Rescuing and working to re-habilitate these children can take years.

UNiVIDA offers support and partnership to projects working with street children. We prepare older students in our community mission team to do outreach work with street children, be-friending them, taking them food and clothes and encouraging them to find shelter.

However, UNiVIDA is dedicated to pre-venting children from ending up on the streets and suffering such trauma. We want to make sure that children at risk and their families, recieve help before their lives are destroyed on the streets.



How you can help this year ? *Fighting poverty / behind the scenes >>>*

Vehicle Fundraising

Reliable vehicles are essential in Brazil for meeting the daily needs of the projects. VW Kombi vans which run on natural gas, alcohol and petrol are the most fuel efficient way to purchase supplies and transport students.



Our goal is to buy one new van in 2011 but we need your help to do it. The fundraising goal is £18,000.

The Gymnasium / Community Outreach Centre

Open space in the favela is rare and our gymnasium is an essential community facility. It is used for sports, music, dance and large community events. However, the building is still without toilets and bathrooms.



Our fundraising goal is £20,000.

Become a Dreambuilder



£20 a month is enough to transform the life of a child living in favelas by giving them the opportunity to study at The University of Life.

If you have not already signed up, please consider making this commitment in 2011. We need 100 new Dreambuilders. You can download a Giving form on our website.

UK Visit

Marc and Ruth Marques will be visiting the UK in May and June of 2011. If you would like them to speak at your workplace, church or organisation, please contact the office on 01777 7160 614.

Your help is needed in arranging accommodation and opportunities for them to promote the needs of children in Brazil.



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Title & Full Name _____

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I would like to give £ _____ please make cheque payable to UNiViDA

I would like to set up a monthly standing order for £ _____

Please contact me about...

- Church Partnerships Including UNiViDA in my will
 School Partnerships Holding a fundraising event

THANK YOU: We would like to keep you informed about how your donation is **making a difference**. However, If you would prefer not to hear from us please tick this box.

Gift Aid Declaration

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Date: ____/____/____ (tick box)

I want **UNiViDA** to treat all donations that I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations.

You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year. (currently 25p for each £1 you give).

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