

# A better education for children in Brazil's City of God



Marc Boettcher/ActionAid

## Introduction

**Education is one of the best weapons against poverty, providing a window of hope for millions of young people.** Securing a quality education is crucial to reducing poverty, increasing opportunities, preventing the spread of disease and enabling people to play a full part in their communities and nations.

In Brazil, receiving a quality education is a real challenge. Over a million children aged between 12 and 17 are still unable to read and write, and only 11% of children are able to complete primary school. Currently 33 million Brazilian children receive less than four years of schooling. Violence in classrooms, poor teaching standards and poverty all contribute to the high drop out rates throughout the country. This issue must be addressed in order to provide the younger people in Brazil with the future they deserve.

## Brazil's vulnerable children

Situated on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, the City of God is one of the most notorious slum areas in the world. The City of God is home to over 60,000 people, 80% of whom live in houses smaller than a double garage. The city is dominated by gangs, gun crime and the drugs trade, and 20% of children living in the City of God will not survive their teens.

While many children have access to school, classes are often interrupted by police raids or gun crime. Children often do not feel safe at school and so drop out of classes. Children are extremely vulnerable as the school day is only four hours long, giving them significant free time to wander the streets alone. These children desperately need a chance to receive a better education, which will increase their confidence and provide them with opportunities for a brighter future.

real lives:

## Danielle's story

**Danielle is 15 years old and lives in the City of God. She spends much of her time on the streets and has missed several years of school, making it difficult for her to catch up.**

"I have always lived in Cidade de Deus (City of God). It's a dangerous area and even the people who live here get scared. Sometimes we are on our way home from school and the policemen start to shoot their guns without looking around first. The children here spend a lot of time on the streets.

I love to play football, but the school field is full of holes and the goalposts are broken. I can't play there because we must be careful not to get hurt."



Jenny Matthews/ActionAid

# how you can help

By supporting this project you can help children like Danielle access the education they need to secure a brighter future.

## The project – back to school

This project will work in partnership with a local cultural centre to provide hundreds of children in the City of God with an alternative to a life of drugs and violence. The project will set up after-school clubs which will encourage the children to start learning again, gain vital skills that will help them gain employment and use sports and games to build confidence and diffuse tension between gangs.

The project will provide the children with catch-up classes to help them integrate back into school and IT classes to ensure that they can learn varied skills. Football pitches will be set up and children will be encouraged to form football teams and attend capoeira (a form of dance) classes. A community radio station will be established, which will give the children and young people a voice for their ideas and aspirations.

## What your support means to children like Danielle

**£11** could provide a child like Danielle with catch up classes for a year

**£80** could provide ten children with karate classes for a year

**£133** could enable 20 students to set up a community radio station

**£250** could provide one child with IT classes for a year

**£1,086** could set up football leagues and teams for 600 children in the City of God



## Braziltoday

- ◆ 55 million people in Brazil live below the poverty line.
- ◆ The richest 10% of the population earn nearly 50% of Brazil's total income.
- ◆ 32 million people in Brazil go hungry every day.

## The biggerpicture

- ◆ 100 million children across the developing world do not have access to primary school.
- ◆ Education is a basic right – recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- ◆ ActionAid is part of the Global Campaign for Education, which calls on people around the world to demand free, quality basic education for all.



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