

THE CHANNEL (**Channel to Brazil for Christ**)
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Quality education and training for children living in poverty in the slums of Brazil.

www.THECHANNEL.org

April 2019

 @channeltobrazil

Questions?

Email us cbc@thechannel.org

**ONLINE
GIVING**
now available



Spring
is here

Fundraising Banquet, April 5th, 6.30pm
Bethel Church Hospitality Center, Hampton VA

It's Time To Give

This April we will hold our Spring Fundraising Banquet in Virginia. This event is so important to us because it allows us to share the fruit of our labor throughout the year. Whether you are able to attend in person or make a gift from wherever you are, we are encouraged by your partnership and support.

This year our goal is to raise \$10,000 towards the daily running costs of the project. You can give knowing that your donation will go directly to helping the 250 kids escape the chaos of the slums described in this newsletter. We really need your help and count on you to keep this ministry going and growing. Thank you and may God bless you as you give.

You can give online using either Paypal or our online giving page www.thechannel.org/donate

Alternatively you can write a check, payable to Channel to Brazil for Christ, and mail it to...

PO Box 804 Newport News, VA 23607

Can You Imagine?

By A Recent Visitor to CBC

Fortaleza has the 7th highest murder rate in the world, and the 2nd highest within Brazil. Sapiranga, the district where CBC is based, is one of the more dangerous neighbourhoods, and has the highest rate of increase in adolescent murders in Fortaleza. These figures don't reflect the surge in gang violence against the state since the start of 2019.

In 2013, the fact that 8 adolescents (aged 10-19) were killed each week in Fortaleza, prompted UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) to investigate, and publish a report called Lives Interrupted, focusing on the murder of 424 adolescents in that year.

The report investigated the backgrounds of the victims, and relayed 4 particular stories – a youth killed by the police, a breast-feeding mother killed by her boyfriend, a 12 year-old lynched because he witnessed a fight between gangs, and a boy killed through mistaken identity.

Although I thought I knew much of what life was like in the favelas, through 13 years of close contact with CBC and several trips to Brazil, I was shocked and heartbroken by what I read.

Basically, all of the factors that we know so well through the children at the project existed in the lives of the murdered adolescents and their families – poverty, gangs, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, race, police violence, school dropout and low schooling rates of parents and victims.

After school, there are few vocational or educational opportunities and work is infrequent and poorly-paid. The analysis showed starkly that some neighborhoods are at huge risk of adolescent murders (44% taking place in 17 of Fortaleza's 119 districts), and some youths are more likely to be killed (young, poor, black or brown males in those communities).

More than that, the impact on the families and community became clearer to me; 4.1% of the deaths involved public agents (mostly police).

44% of the murders took place within 500 metres (or even at) the victim's home – can you imagine what its like living where your son was killed? Many of the cases were not investigated by the police at all, with families' addresses not being recorded. This means that there is no justice for the families, and the killers have impunity – with a conviction rate of only 2.8%.

The report had many recommendations for actions at City and State government-level, although it is difficult to see the resources being provided, agencies working effectively, and people willing to allow the level of government support required. So far, so depressing.

What cheers me, and gives me hope, is the way in which CBC meets the local-level recommendations of the report.

Social projects bring people together, avoiding the social exclusion which results in gang membership; they teach children to resolve conflict without resorting to violence. Providing education and school support (along with artistic, sporting, cultural and recreational activities) keeps children engaged with, and succeeding in school, and out of gangs and prostitution. Our focus on gaining employable skills for older children helps them enter the employment market.

The Christian values and leadership skills we develop allow the children to challenge the corruption in the country, and to become so much more than society expects them to be.

So, I am encouraged that, with God's guidance, CBC is making a difference in the lives and futures of the children in Sapiranga, and offering a local solution to the dark and depressing situations our children live in.

**Your support is helping us save lives
and comfort families.**

Please make a special gift this month.

Thank you