

EDUCATION FUND: helping to educate Rio's most at risk youth



Children enjoy a computer class at the CEACA-Vila

This year during the Latin America Workshop in Brazil, ICEF's Marketing and Communications Manager, Korinne Algje visited the first ICEF Education Fund project in Rio de Janeiro. Below she shares her experience.

A year ago we launched the ICEF Education Fund to support education-focussed youth projects around the world. The first project we selected was CEACA-Digital which forms part of the CEACA-Vila. The CEACA-Vila is located in the Morro dos Macacos favela (slum) in Rio de Janeiro. Once overrun with drug dealers and violence, the favela now has a permanent police presence, making the community safer for its residents.



The Morro dos Macacos favela in Rio de Janeiro

Working with Brazilian charity CDI, a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to empower communities through technology and education, ICEF donated US\$7000. This money funded student scholarships, contributed to teachers' salaries and helped to purchase equipment for the CEACA-Digital centre.

After keeping in contact throughout the year and learning more about each other's organisations, ICEF was invited to visit the project. On the first day of the 2012 Latin America Workshop, together with CDI's

Rafael Botelho and Alexander Carlos, I went to the CEACA-Vila. As we navigated Rio's morning traffic, Rafael and Alexander told me about the favela, CDI's involvement with CEACA-Digital and the CEACA-Vila's role in the wider community. I learnt that Alexander was born and raised in the favela and had lived through many terrifying situations, many of which I could not even imagine. Alexander also spoke of his first-hand experience of the programmes offered at the Vila, having studied there himself.



Students during a class at CEACA-Digital

On arrival I was made to feel very welcome and given a thorough tour of the CEACA-Digital centre and training facilities. I was amazed by how organised and professionally managed the centre was, especially given the limited economic resources available. At CEACA-Digital I met with students, many of whom had little formal education but were obviously motivated to study and become qualified. The teachers at the centre were amazing people. Having grown up in the favela, they could relate so very closely to their students and were clearly important positive role models.

After sitting in on lessons and meeting all the various people that make CEACA-Digital the amazing place it is, we walked a few blocks down the street to the Vila's other building, the school and cultural centre. By working with children as young as a year old – many of who do not have food or running water at home - CEACA is ensuring that the favela's youngest residents are being nourished, cared for, and educated as early as possible. It is organisations such as these that will ensure that the favela has a brighter future.

The commitment to community betterment and well-being in Morro do Macacos was humbling and I was honoured to have been able to see and experience the changes that the ICEF Education Fund is helping to bring into effect. If you are interested in supporting this project or any of our other Education Fund initiatives, please visit www.icef.com/fund



ICEF's Korinne Algie with some of the youngest students at the CEACA-Vila