

RIO NEWS

The official newsletter of Projects Abroad – Brazil

ProjectsAbroad

Special Edition - July/2011 – Issue nº 9

1 year later...

Recomeçar

AMAS – Home 4 Boys

* June's Festival

* Cultural Agenda

* Physiotherapy in Niterói

Editorial

Hello!

After five months without any news from this corner of the world, I am pleased to announce that Rio News is back again with an Especial Edition for you!!

Yes, over the past few months there were some amazing things happening in Projects Abroad Brazil. Then we decided to compile some of the best stories for this volume. This is our tribute to these successful initiatives:

The first one was the launch of a very special book written by an ex-volunteer, Armando Ballotta, and eleven boys from AMAS for Boys, an orphanage.

The second one was the celebration of the first year of activities in Recomeçar – the communitarian English course in Ititioca. Recomeçar means restart and this is what they are trying to do there: restart their lives and dreams. People from this poor community in Niterói give us an example of generosity and organization that touch and teach our lives.

Moreover, in this special edition, you can find more about our Physiotherapy project, read the testimony of the first volunteer, Emily Horn, and check what was going on in our social events last month and much more....

I hope you enjoy reading!

Best,

Luzia da Silva 😊



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News & Updates

Cultural Agenda

02/07 – Visit to Salgueiro Samba School

09/07 – Visit to Corcovado and Christ

16/07 – Visit to Sugar Loaf

22/ 07 – Creche Jurujuba Julina's Party

30/07 – Visit to Copacabana Fort

Welcome to Brazil!!

For the forthcoming weeks Projects Abroad in Brazil are expecting to welcome the following volunteers: Melania Kok (Netherlands), Victoria Mahon (UK), Keith Bolles (US), Priya Minhas and Kirenpreet Sandhu (UK).

Donations

- Materials to make a colorful mural on the outside wall of Recomeçar Day Care.
- 6 ceiling fans and 2 wall fans to freshen up things at Casa do Oleiro Community Center.
- Chocolate and candy for the kids of Projeto Orla at Easter.
- Toys and school supplies to be distributed to the kids of Jurujuba Day Care at June's Festival.

Project's Insights:

Physiotherapy Project at Pestalozzi

Volunteers who apply for the Physiotherapy project in Brazil usually work in an Educational Institution called Pestalozzi. It is located in Pendotiba (about 40 minutes from Niterói downtown).

This organization has three branches: the Physiotherapy Faculty, the Rehabilitation Center who offers social and medical assistance for the community (it is like a small clinic), and a school for special children.

As most of our volunteers are not qualified physiotherapists but want to learn about this career, they only follow and shadow the doctors in their daily activities in the Rehabilitation Center. So I recommend this project for people that are really interested in this field of studies because volunteers do not have permission to touch the patients.

Our volunteers are also invited to have a global vision of the institution, working and doing other activities during their stay here.



Emily Horn and the students of the special school

They have the opportunity to visit different areas like respiratory physiotherapy, orthopaedics, neurofunctional and occupational therapy and also help in the garden, and do crafts in the mother's house. This is an initiative to help the patients' mothers who live far from Pestalozzi.

The organization expects the volunteers speak at least a basic level of our official language, Portuguese, in order to communicate with the local staff and patients.

Now a brief testimony from our first Physiotherapy volunteer: Emily Horn

"I was unsure of what to expect going into my Physiotherapy placement, and so I went into it with an open-mind and with the understanding that Physiotherapy in Brazil may be different to that in the UK. I am currently taking a gap year and will be starting to study Physiotherapy at university next year in the UK, so my experience in Brazil was very important in helping me to confirm that Physiotherapy was the right decision with regards to my future career path.

Before starting my placement I was most nervous about the language barrier and the obstacles that may arise because of it. I had learnt a little Portuguese before travelling to Brazil in preparation which, along with the language course I took during my time in Brazil, helped me to communicate with both members of staff and patients.

I witnessed a wide variety of areas of Physiotherapy during my time at Pestalozzi, which was great as it gave me an in depth insight into the career. It also helped me to consider the many possibilities for specialising in specific areas for the future. I particularly enjoyed the days I spent in the 'Early Stimulation Centre' working with



children from 0-7 years old. Each child that I met during this time had a unique and lasting effect on me. It was really special knowing that the methods used by the Physiotherapists would help the children improve their posture and overall physical strength for now and for the future, leading to a better quality of life for the child.

Much like the rest of the Brazilian culture, I was welcomed into Pestalozzi with great warmth and was taken back by how hospitable everybody was. I would often walk out at the end of the day with a huge smile on my face, looking forward to what was in store for me the next day. "



Cultural Corner

Festa Junina – June’s Festival in Brazil

June’s festival, also known as Festas Juninas, is a tradition in Brazil. It is usually held in the month of June, but also happens during July, and sometimes until August.

This is not only because the Brazilian people love parties, but because it is part of our culture as a catholic country which celebrate its Saints: Antony, John and Peter. These popular festivals were introduced during the colony period in Brazil by the Portuguese people and until today we celebrate it.

So on 12th June it is Saint Antony’s day; on 24th June is Saint John’s day, and 29th June is Saint Peter’s day. These days are not considered national holiday in our official calendar.

It means that we do not have a day off because of the saint’s days. So you cannot miss your project!

In the past the festival was typical in the Northeast states of Brazil, but now all the 27 states in Brazil celebrate June’s festival, but the biggest is held on Pernambuco in a city called Caruaru. People start to celebrate on the weekends from Friday night to Sunday night. The celebration is to thank the saint’s for the rain, the good harvest and to celebrate rural life style.



June’s Festival is also known by its typical dance – quadrilha, like square dancing; the typical clothes and by the delicious typical food. We usually call the local parties ‘Arraial’ plus the name of the area; like Arraial of Icaraí, or Fonseca, for example. There are many vendors selling drinks and foods, etc in tents made of raw material like in the farms. People usually wear costumes, men usually dress up as farm boys with hats and women wear pigtails, freckles, painted gap teeth and red-checked dresses.

The couples dance quadrilha, forró simulating a wedding and people tell old stories and jokes while eating the good food around bonfires and have lots of fun.

Rio News Especial: 1 year later....

The future is in our hands

By Deborah Santos

Armando Ballotta arrived in Niterói on 28th May, 2010. His mission was to spend three months volunteering at AMAS Home for Boys. His job seemed simple at first. He should go to the house every morning and spend

and the idea of writing a book together. Armando loves writing, having had a poetry book published in Italy and all. The boys were not so sure about it, but they went along and soon they loved



Armando and the boys from AMAS

some time with the boys. He should take part in their activities, their talks, share their meals, their stories... He should basically share their life experiences.

This simple routine was the basis of the relationship between Armando, Anderson (coordinator) and the teenagers at AMAS. This Italian-Brazilian friendship brought many good things to the boys: pizza, great football matches, nice pictures, good laughs, more pizza,

writing as well.

It was just an idea, but Armando talked to Anderson and they laid out a plan. Before having a book, they needed to have writers so they organized a discussion group. At the end of every conversation, the boys had to write in their diaries. There were many conversations about important topics. Armando and Anderson listened as the boys defined what love, anger, family,

“We must plant the right seeds, so that the tree of the future gives always good fruits.”

J. M. - 16

friends, violence and the future meant for them. It was a time for sharing the boys' views on the world and passing on to them the perspective of people who are a bit older and understand how life can be challenging.

After the discussions came the writing. Writing may seem simple to some people, but it actually means so much more. When a teenager writes, he has to think about things that usually pass by in a flash. He has to sit down and face things that he might have been ignoring for years. He has to remember things he thought he had forgotten and things he wished he had forgotten. Writing is an exercise of becoming yourself and explaining yourself to others. To the boys of AMAS, writing was a victory and the prize.

These short texts written by the boys were beautiful and honest. In fact, they were so beautiful that we thought the boys should get them published. We wanted to make a real book, with a cover, summary, and the names of all of them as authors. It took some months before the manuscript was ready. After selecting the best ones, editing them for misspelling, cleaning up the confusing bits, and finding the right online publisher, we finally had the books all

printed and sitting in our office. It was all ready for the book launch, except one major detail: Armando had to go back to Italy and it wouldn't be fair to launch it without him. He promised to come back, so we waited for him. He finally came back in June and we had the launch on the 28th. AMAS organized a little party to celebrate. Armando and the boys all dressed up and sat on the long table to sign their book. Cleonice, the Director of AMAS, cried as she remembered how some of those same boys had arrived to the house as younger, shyer, angrier kids, and were now teens, writing books and thinking about the future.

It was a great evening that we spent together. If you ever come to Niterói you'll understand how much fun one can have just by being with them. Everything was a reason to laugh: competing to have the nicest signature, to sign more books, to pose for more pictures... They were already talking about more books to be written and more subjects to be discussed! It really was a great evening that we spent together.



Armando, J.M and Cleonice

Congratulations,



By Luzia da Silva

The time goes fast...It was just a blink and when we realized Projeto Recomeçar, our communitarian English course in Ititioca, completed its first year!!!

I remember like it was today when Deborah and I had the first briefing with Marília and Flávio (the Directors of Recomeçar) and four more members of the association to discuss about the possibilities to start an English course for teenagers and adults.

I also remember how excited and enthusiastic they were about the partnership with Projects Abroad to welcome foreign young people to work as volunteers within the community. By our side, we were also excited and fascinated with their social awareness and organization.

Projeto Recomeçar was established by an initiative of a group of friends who would like to improve the living conditions, especially for the children and teenagers in the neighborhood of Ititioca. The project was developed not only for the community

but with the local community as well. Everybody was involved in contributing ideas and materials, sharing their own knowledge with others, raising funding etc. One of the members of the community had lent a house for them to stay in so it was possible to start the adult and youth's literacy class and other activities like crafts for ladies, capoeira and football for the kids and teenagers. By doing so Projeto Recomeçar is gradually transforming the reality in Ititioca and bringing citizenship awareness in that community.

Then in July of 2010, Veronique Teles, a French English teacher who speaks Portuguese fluently had the privilege to be the first Projects Abroad volunteer in Recomeçar. She was fascinated with the people, with their life stories and how welcome and happy they are. Until today Veronique is kindly remember for her brilliant English lessons and for the lovely person she is.

Recomeçar is growing and as the English lessons and the cultural interchange are having a positive impact in the community, Flávio and Marília made an agreement with

the director of a local public school (Vila Costa Monteiro School) and the English Course in Recomeçar are now held in the rooms of the school and not in that old house. Moreover the old house became a communitarian day care center also known as Creche Recomeçar.

For all these wonderful experiences we take this special edition to celebrate the first year of Recomeçar and to wish all the best to the community.

Our most warm and sincere thanks to Flávio, Márlia, Lorena and Bruno (the Volunteer's Assistants) and to the volunteers - Veronique Teles, Gordon Hannah, Grant Brown, Paula Andrewitch, Mads Larsen, Caroline Bossaert, Timothy van Niekerk, Indianna Somerville, Austin Eighan, Jaih HunterHill and Thomas Simpson - for your dedication and hard work in Recomeçar.



Creche Recomeçar



Marília (Director) ad Austin Eighan (Volunteer)



Recomeçar Students

and, of course, they really loved it when I tried to say it. They were generally really nice about it though and would shout out the correct pronunciation, which I would then have to repeat (sometimes numerous times) before I could go on!

The adult class afterwards was great also. Their English is already pretty good, they can get their point across but their grammar and sentence structure needs a bit of work; they are really enthusiastic, even looking at verbs and such like! We were looking at describing how much you like or dislike activities, like cooking, and also how "to cook" can change for present, past etc. One of the ladies in the group started speaking to the others after I wrote, "I really like cooking" on the board. I listened carefully and picked up the odd word here and there so I wrote another sentence on to the board, "I love to eat but I really hate cooking", at this the others burst into laughter and I got a round of applause as I had managed to work out what she had said in Portuguese! This was another highlight of the evening for me.

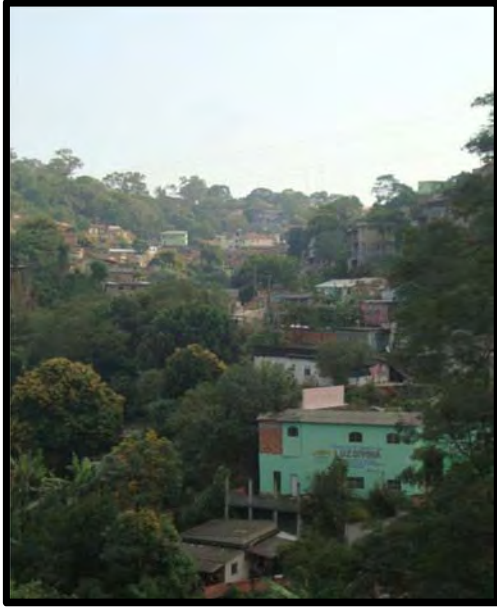
At the end of the lesson, on the board they wrote, "We will miss you! Thank you ... Please come back one day :)".

Unfortunately, I got the news that it was the last time I would see the adults as they are away on vacation for two weeks now. They took my email address as they want to keep in contact and want to continue improving their written English. They asked me if I would return to Brazil, I told them I couldn't promise anything, but I might, maybe for the World Cup in 2014. They told me many volunteers promise to come back but never do. After speaking

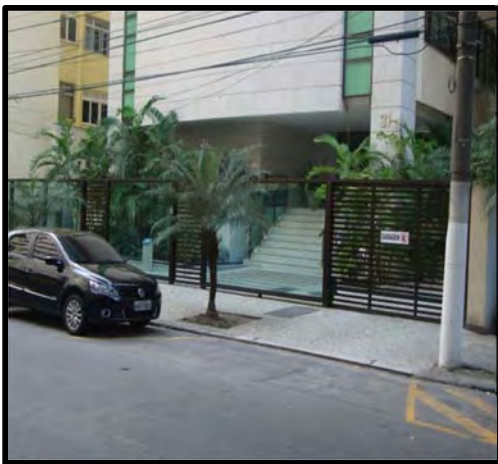
about the World Cup, they asked where I would stay, to which I replied, a hotel probably. Next, one of the ladies shook her head and told me I would stay with her. I thanked her and told her I would pay her for this, she shook her head again and told me no. When I asked why, she told me we are friends now and she couldn't charge a friend. This truly shows how welcoming and friendly the Brazilian people are. I have known her for less than two weeks and have only taught her on a few occasions but she would be willing to let me into her home in the future if I was to come back to Brazil - amazing!

I went back to Ititioca during the day today as I wanted to see it in daylight, as I'd only ever travelled through at night. Some of the sights, sounds and smells were amazing. At night I loved watching favela life pass me by, daytime didn't let me down either; water trucks trundled by, delivering water to peoples homes whilst spilling out over the sides; kids were out playing with their homemade kites and balls and again seemed very happy; the bars at the street sides were of course filled with some of the local older men, but despite a couple of gringos walking through their neighbourhood they didn't seem to mind. It was also interesting looking down some of the little alleyways, over the top of walls or through holes within them! This is the Brazil that your normal tourist doesn't see or doesn't experience and I love it!





Coming back to Icarai, an affluent neighbourhood in Niteroi is very different to Ititoca. People all seem very busy as they quickly move past the many shops, boutiques, bakers and cafes which you find here. There isn't the same atmosphere. It could quite easily be anywhere in the world. Everything is very generic, again the sense of community and belonging wasn't there. When you are in Ititoca you somehow 'feel' you are there, you want to take part in what is happening,



you want to try and help people, to try and make a difference ... In Icarai you lose this feeling. Icarai also has something which I find quite ironic. The rich live behind bars here - literally. You would normally associate living behind bars with criminals, those who are in jail for some kind of wrong doing. However, here in Brazil, it is the rich who find themselves behind bars on a daily basis. I have seen this in Icarai and some other areas of town ... but not in Ititoca. Albeit some walls had glass shards on top of them to stop people climbing over them, but people seem to care more about each other there. I get that feeling that if something were to happen, or if an outsider came in the favela people would take notice and look after each other. The richer people perhaps don't have this and feel the need to hide behind screens, bars and gates which I find quite sad. The rich have lost their compassion for other people, or maybe it's just a lack of understanding?



Socials

In the last two months our volunteers had the opportunity to have lots of fun visiting one of the biggest samba schools in Rio called Salgueiro. But the leisure time went far beyond it!!! The Social Manager also planned a guided tourist visit to the main sights in Rio de Janeiro... Sugar Loaf, Corcovado (Christ Redeemer) and.... Copacabana Fort.



Memories ...



Delights of Brazilian Cuisine....

The months of June, July and August are very special for Brazilian people. It is Festas Juninas (June's Party)!!!! This is the time we celebrate the Catholic Saints days like Saint Anthony, John and Peter with parties with lots of traditional foods, drinks and a special dance called quadrilha.

So this month we are going to teach you how to prepare a very typical Festa Junina's food called **Canjica**. Mmmm, It is just delicious!!

Ingredients

- 1 package white hominy
- 1 litre of milk
- 1/2 cup of grated coconut
- 1/2 cup of roasted peanuts (unsalted)
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 pinch of salt
- 5 pieces of Indian clove
- 1 or 2 cinnamon sticks



How to Prepare:

Wash and drain hominy. Then place grains in a plastic bowl and soak overnight. Pour soaked grains with the remaining water in a pressure cooker. Cook for about 20 minutes after the regulator starts to blow steam or until tender. If you don't have a pressure cooker, cook the grains in a regular pot for about 60 minutes.

In a large saucepan bring the milk to boil. Drain the hot grains in a colander and add immediately to boiling milk. Combine the spices: grated coconut, roasted peanuts, sugar, the pinch of salt, the Indian clove and the cinnamon stick.

Hint: For a perfect *canjica*, always combine hot hominy with hot milk (both should be boiling when put together). Serve hot in a cereal bowl. Makes 6 servings.



We hope you enjoy it!!

Social Media

Hey! Come to join our community on Facebook to learn, explore and share your doubts and experiences with us!!!



Facebook: This is the Brazilian official group. Here you can meet other volunteers and start making your connections before your arrival. It is also useful to know about your roommate ...

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=115851455127021>

Mytripblog: Use the blogosphere to share your feelings and experience before, during and after your trip to Brazil.

www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/264/brazil

Newsletter: Sign up or download the past issues to be updated about what is going on here.

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