Project Title: One Goal: Promoting Peace through Soccer in Rio de Janeiro’s Morro dos Macacos Neighborhood

Site: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
Institution: University of Chicago

Team Members: Diego Pizano, USA, University of Chicago (lead)  
Vinicius Campos, Brazil, Fluminense Federal University

Project Summary:
Our project seeks to teach peacemaking skills to children in one of the most impoverished favelas in Rio de Janeiro. It aims to accomplish this by renovating a community-run futsal court and hosting a two-week soccer camp in partnership with a local nonprofit called Coletivo Macacos Vive. Additionally, we seek to provide these children with sports equipment and an educational curriculum for them to continue participating in sports for years to come.

The favela of Morro dos Macacos is home to tens of thousands of children and high levels of violence, drugs, and gangs. Children and adolescents in this community have few options for healthy extracurricular activities and are often pressured to sell drugs or join gangs. Coletivo Macacos Vive was formed to address this issue and provide children with educational programming and a safe place to play, learn, and grow. Although Macacos Vive owns a small field for children to play sports, they do not have enough money to renovate their existing futsal court, so children in the community often play soccer in unsafe, non-central locations surrounding the field. By renovating Morro dos Macacos’ futsal field, we will enable children in the area to find a safe space to focus their energy and learn skills that they can apply for the rest of their lives. Because soccer is Brazil’s favorite pastime, we also believe that it represents a culturally relevant and accessible way for children outside of school to learn and grow. Ultimately, by providing children a safe place to play and a structure to learn about peace-making, we hope to not only offer children the opportunity to find peace at home but also to promote peace-making skills across the Morro dos Macacos neighborhood.

Background:
Rio de Janeiro’s favelas have limited educational and work opportunities which particularly affects the community’s youth. Only around half of children continue their schooling past the age of 14, and favelas have an unemployment rate of around 20%, leaving children with little to do. Schools do not provide a solution for children, since only one in four schools promote sports due to limited play areas in favelas. This makes the presence of a futsal field all the more important for children as an outlet to avoid gang activities. According to a study conducted by the United Nations coordinator on Education, Science, and Culture in Brazil, sports are an effective tool in keeping youth from falling into a cycle of crime, violence, and drug use. Sports have been found to promote mutual respect and tolerance and teach important interpersonal skills to youth – so much so that in areas where there are sports programs for children and adolescents, there is an annual drop of 30% in crime compared to the year prior. We seek to bring similar levels of improvement in the Morro dos Macacos neighborhood.

Implementation and Timeline:
We have contacted an engineer who estimated that it would cost $8,000 to improve the field. We have also partnered with a local nonprofit that owns and operates that field, Coletivo Macacos Vive, that will help us lead our soccer camps and identify children who will benefit from them in the summer.

In Phase 1 – during the months of March, April, and May – we will set the groundwork for renovations of our futsal field and prepare ourselves to lead the soccer camp by coordinating with leaders at Coletivo Macacos Vive regarding the purchase of equipment and materials needed to repair the field. During this phase, our partners at Macacos Vive will organize community volunteers who are willing to physically help revitalize the pitch before our arrival. Vinicius will personally visit the site to help facilitate this process. We will also be working directly with the founder of Coletivo Macacos Vive and his lead event organizer to develop an experiential soccer curriculum that will engage Morro dos Macacos’ youth and teach them peace-building skills based on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) Line Up Live Up Trainer Manual. The training manual – available in both English and Portuguese – prepares coaches to prevent crime and drug use by promoting soccer and strengthening life skills for at-risk youth. We will train ourselves in how to be effective leaders based on the UN guidelines in this book before the start of
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the soccer camp and arrive with our finalized programming schedule. In Phase 2 – starting after Diego’s arrival in Morros dos Macacos in mid-June – we will both personally help with the renovation efforts alongside community members for three weeks while overseeing the budget, since we anticipate this being more than enough time to make all the major repairs the field requires. In Phase 3 – after we finish renovating the field in mid-July – we will transition to leading the soccer camp for an additional two weeks with the support of Coletivo Macacos Vive. The tentative timeline for our training can be found below.

Curriculum Timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Day</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Training 1 + Introductions &amp; Welcome</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Training 6 + Activity: Football Equality Pt. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Training 2 + Activity: Square Ball</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Training 7 + Activity: Free Zone!</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Training 3 + Activity: Score – Or Not?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Training 8 + Activity: Six Ball Game</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Training 4 + Activity: Group Dynamics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Training 9 + Medals Ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Training 5 + Activity: Football Equality</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Visit Maracana to watch Fluminense FC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Sustainability and Anticipated Results:*

Coletivo Macacos Vive will continue to use the sports resources that we provide them to support children in the Morros dos Macacos community to build social skills and advance their physical education long after we are gone. Aside from serving as a sports complex, the futsal field is also used for many cultural community events, so community members have a vested interest in preserving it and ensuring that it is fully functional for everyone to use. By providing community members with a new cultural event center and futsal field, and by training at-risk youth in peace-making skills, we will increase peace in the Morro dos Macacos neighborhood and strengthen the unity among neighbors. Coletivo Macacos Vive has agreed to maintain the field’s condition so that it does not fall back into the same poor condition it is currently in, so we believe our investment will be help promote peace for years to come.

One Goal Team:

Diego Pizano has been working with children since he started a tutoring nonprofit called Bridge Tutoring in 2016. Bridge Tutoring grew to become the biggest student-run tutoring nonprofit in the city of Chicago, and Diego Pizano served as its founder and Executive Director until 2021. That same year, Diego visited Rio for the first time and discovered a country that was both very passionate about soccer and very unequal in its access to it. While in Rio, he studied Portuguese and joined a footvolley team where he met Vinicius Campos. Their shared passion for soccer and community service has kept the two in contact since then. Thereafter, Diego developed a passion for both the Portuguese language and Brazil and is a two-time recipient of the US Department of State’s Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) in 2020 and 2021. Diego is fluent in Portuguese and is currently the president and founder of the Business Organization for Latino Development (BOLD) at the University of Chicago. He hopes to go back to Rio to support the children he once played soccer with.

Vinicius Campos is a Rio de Janeiro native who has a passion for public service. He has spent the last ten months in the first company focused on sustainability headquartered at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and he is currently interning at a company investing in the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) space. Vinicius is also an avid sports fan with a strong preference for soccer and footvolley on the beach. His knowledge of Rio, Portuguese language skills, and cultural understanding of Brazilian people will be immense assets in ensuring the project is successful.