

**AFP - RIO 2014: FOOTBALL
AS SEEN BY YOUNG FANS
IN THE CIDADE DE DEUS
FAVELA**

PRESS KIT



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A UNIQUE PROJECT: TEACHING UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN PHOTOGRAPHY

With AFP's backing in Rio, Christophe Simon, AFP's head of photography in Brazil, taught basic photography techniques to a group of 18 adolescents from the "Cidade de Deus" (City of God) favela (the term for Brazil's slums) in Rio de Janeiro, with amazing results. Together, they photographed their daily life and their passion for football, at a time when all eyes are on Brazil, set to host the Football World Cup in 2014.

It was while covering efforts to "pacify" the favelas that Christophe Simon realised that these underprivileged youngsters were fascinated by photography and his profession.

"I was constantly surrounded by crowds of kids who seemed really interested in my work, following me everywhere, asking me countless questions."

Christophe Simon



AFP / Marcio Ferreira dos Santos / Danielo / Silvana de Araruio Barcelo

[Making-of video](#)



HOW THE ADVENTURE STARTED

Seeking to share his professional knowledge and show how much Brazilians love football, Christophe Simon worked with Tony Barros, a local photographer who runs the “Lente Dos Sonhos” photography school in Rio. They found 18 kids ranging in age from 10 to 15 years old who wanted to participate in this project.

Each weekend, for more than five months, they met with these budding photographers in the City of God slum, training them in picture-taking techniques.

Although freshly “pacified”, the City of God nevertheless remains a complex place where anything is possible. Such as coming face to face with drug dealers surprised to find children equipped with cameras. A tricky situation that was quickly defused thanks to the diplomacy of Tony Barros.

In groups of three to 10, the youngsters focused on one goal: photographing their universe, with football as the main theme.

“The sessions usually lasted three or four hours, sometimes a full day. Organisation was not easy.”

Christophe Simon

The project rapidly became popular and the young people turned out to be particularly driven, some even showing promising talent.

[Making-of photo](#)



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA

AMAZING RESULTS



AFP / Joyce

The end results are striking. The quality of their work is indisputable.

“We gave these kids the opportunity to show us where they live and how their passion for football began. The result could not be more authentic.”

Christophe Simon



AFP / Silvana de Araruio Barcelo

The children caught on quickly to the basic rules (no posing, no flash, etc.). They saw their neighbourhood through new eyes, discovering things that they had not noticed previously.

The teachers selected 70 photos to be sold on ImageForum, AFP's photo database. Any income from sales of these images will be donated to Casa Geração, an ONG specialising in fashion, whose mission is to help children from the favelas find careers.

AFP is to continue the project by running a photo workshop for children from the favelas up to the 2016 Olympic Games. It will be financed mainly from sales of the photos and organised in partnership with Casa Geração.

[The end results](#)



EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE

Budding photographers with a promising eye

If someone had given Pele a camera when he was a child, what kinds of photos would he have taken of his spirited football games on the dirt roads of 1940s Brazil?

This was the opportunity given to 18 boys and girls in the favela who participated in this adventure. These kids were thus able to convey their vision of the Brazilian art of football. This experience allowed them to blossom, learn new things about their community, hone a professional project, and fuel their love of the game.

For Silvana de Araujo, a 13-year old who is a big sports fan, these workshops allowed her to discover a new calling:

“Before this project, I wanted to be a journalist. Now I would like to be a photographer shooting news stories or fashion events.”



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA

During the sessions, she learned several important techniques, such as framing a shot or how to blend in with the backdrop so that the subjects are not conscious of being photographed.

Like Silvana, Victoria de Jesus, 13, took Christophe Simon's advice to heart. She would like to become a doctor and thus focused on the human dimension of this project which allowed her to meet new people. Her twin brother, Victor, remains fascinated by the final photos and will never forget the day when the participants and their families got together to see all the images on a giant open-air screen.



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA

From a large family, Marcelo Ferreira Dos Santos, 14, dreams of becoming a professional football player for the Flamengo club. He joined our adventure thanks to his coach, and he was able to put his knowledge of the sport to good use to shoot very specific points in a game:

“I learned to pay attention to the lighting, to wait to take the picture: the moment when the ball is in the air and two players go to head it at the same time.”



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA

Christophe Simon: a one-of-a-kind teacher



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA

Idriss Déby's overthrow of Hissène Habré in Chad (1990). He was one of the first photographers to enter Kuwait City when it was liberated by US troops in the first Gulf War (1991).

Christophe Simon, 52 years old, has worked for AFP for 30 years, covering numerous conflicts and historic events in the Arab world, Africa, the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

He began working at AFP in 1984 in Nice, then was appointed to the Strasbourg desk in 1989. From that base, he covered the Romanian revolution, the funeral of Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran in 1989, and

In Abidjan in 1994, he was named head of photography for western and central Africa, before moving on in 1999, after a brief stint in Montpellier, to the Madrid desk as the head of photography for Spain and Portugal, where he brought together a solid network of photographers.

In June 2005, Christophe Simon returned to AFP's headquarters in Paris, as the head of reporting for the chief photo editor. In 2007, he was put in charge of photography for Italy, where he notably covered the terrible Aquila earthquake.

In 2011, he became the head photographer for Brazil. In anticipation of the 2014 World Cup, the Brazilian police and military made spectacular "pacification" efforts to take back control of the favelas from the drug lords. Working in the wake of these forces of order, Christophe Simon was surprised by the attitude of the children that crowded around him: they were fascinated by his cameras and lenses! Thus took root the idea of organising a project to have these youngsters show their passion for football through photography.

Christophe Simon's [blog](#): football fuelling passion



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA

RIO DE JANEIRO – In Brazil's favelas, children play football all the time, everywhere. With worn-out balls. On dusty vacant lots. Against the walls of houses. With the 2014 World Cup looming, I was looking for a way to illustrate the roots of Brazil's obsession with football. To do so, what better way than asking a handful of children from the favelas to show me their passion, from their own perspective?

Since arriving Rio in 2011, I have covered numerous "pacification" efforts in the favelas, carried out by security forces aiming to clean up the city's image before the World Cup and then the Olympics two years later. Laden with my cameras, I would go through the favela to follow the progress of the army and the police via sordid little streets. I was constantly surrounded by crowds of kids who seemed really interested in my work, following me everywhere, asking me countless questions. In 2011, I turned 50, an age where you start wanting to pass on your knowledge and experience to younger people. That is how I came up with the idea for this project.

AFP contacted camera manufacturer Nikon France, which agreed to help out by contributing 10 waterproof Coolpix cameras. In Cidade de Deus, the "City of God", one of the most famous favelas of Rio, I befriended a man named Tony, who runs a photography school. I met him through Nadine Gonzalez, a French friend who works on training underprivileged kids to work in the fashion industry. Tony immediately became my main ally and my "open sesame": he's the one who recruited the children who wanted to participate. He's the one who came along with us for three months, escorting us throughout the favela. He opened doors for us and defused some tricky situations.

Almost every weekend, from February to May 2013, Tony and I took groups of three to 10 children through the streets of the slum. Each kid had a camera and was instructed to take pictures on the theme of football. The sessions usually lasted three or four hours, sometimes a full day. Organisation was not easy. We had to go and fetch the children at their homes, stay with them until the end of the session, get to the same places at the same time, take pictures without any members of our group appearing in the frame, etc.

I taught them the basics and imposed several rules, such as no posing (tough to do in a country where people love to pose) or using flash. The experience was exciting and the results surprising. I was amazed that these kids were capable of producing such good pictures. If I had decided to tackle this subject myself, I would have followed my usual way of working, my own personal view. We gave these kids the opportunity to show us where they live and how their passion for football began. The result could not be more authentic.

And at the same time, whereas at the start I thought it would be these kids who would show me things, I was often surprised to see that I was the one opening the eyes of my

“students”. The favelas have their own unwritten rules. For example, everyone knows that in Cidade de Deus, you’re not supposed to pay too much attention to what your neighbours are doing. I didn’t know these rules. I came in with a fresh perspective. And I helped the kids discover things that were right there in front of them all this time that they had never seen.

The “City of God” might well have been officially “pacified”, but that does not mean that it has become a peaceful place. Several times, we suddenly came face to face with drug dealers, who were obviously not pleased to see all these cameras. But thanks to Tony’s great diplomacy, the tense moments never got out of hand.

There was a high turnover among participants. After a certain amount of time, our project began to be well-known in the favela and candidates came flocking to us. But there were also some regulars. Among the latter, Kuhan was a real stand-out in my mind. A 10-year old boy whose parents are crack addicts. An incredibly lively and talented kid. Out of the 50-odd photos I selected at the end of the project, his are clearly the best shots.

Tony Barros: an ally in the heart of the favelas

Photographer Tony Barros, age 47, grew up in the City of God slum which he knows like the back of his hand. He discovered this neighbourhood four years after it was built when he was a child. After living in Copacabana, he returned at age 16. He came back to a favela in the hands of drug lords who were fighting over territory.



AFP / Yasuyoshi CHIBA

To avoid a life of drug dealing, as a young adolescent Tony Barros took classes in numerous subjects (painting, automobile mechanics, nursing) and decided to work in a centre for young people, run by a seminary student near the Rio cathedral. Here he began taking snapshots of underprivileged kids from his neighbourhood.

That is how his passion for photography and the desire to make it his profession were born. People started hiring Tony Barros to photograph marriages, birthdays, or dances in the favela whereas until 2004, no outside person could enter the slum with a camera without authorisation from the drug dealers.

In 2001, he made his start as a photojournalist thanks to the “Viva Favela” project created by local correspondents. With Gisele Guimaraes he founded the photography school “Lente dos Sonhos” (Lens of Dreams) which teaches young girls from the community how to make it in the world of fashion and become models. In 2002, the photos of his first fashion show were published in the local newspaper, *Extra*, and in European magazines.

In 2011, thanks to an introduction by Nadine Gonzalez, he worked with Christophe Simon on this project to teach favela kids photography. He now wants to continue the adventure by making the photo workshop permanent and help these underprivileged young people get professional experience.

OUR PARTNERS

Lente Dos Sonhos Photography School

Tony Barros, the school's director and a photographer in the Cidade de Deus favela, worked with Christophe Simon throughout the project and assisted Simon in recruiting the young participants. As he knows the favela perfectly, he helped its inhabitants better understand the project.

Casa Geração



Casa Geração is a school located in the Vigial favela in Rio de Janeiro. Founded by Nadine Gonzalez, a former journalist in the fashion world in Paris, the school trains favela children in the various fashion industry professions. Nadine Gonzalez helped out our project from the very beginning, notably by introducing Tony Barros to Christophe Simon.

Nikon



Nikon supported this project by providing 10 water-proof and shock-proof cameras to the favela children.









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TORCIDA JOVEN































