

D-Lab Brazil | 2006
Opportunities for direct community involvement in Rocinha



Massachusetts Institute of Technology International Development Initiative

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For the last two years, D-Lab Brazil has been working with the Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquisas sobre a Infância (CIESPI) in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Through this partnership grew a relationship with the Ação Social Padre Anchieta (ASPA) of Rocinha. There are unique opportunities to contribute to the community of Rocinha and D-Lab's continued work in Rio de Janeiro with ASPA.

Local community partner

The Ação Social Padre Anchieta (ASPA) in Rocinha coordinates 6 crèche (day care) programs for 120 children as well as diverse cultural and educational after-school programs that reach up to 400 additional youth in the neighborhood. In their words, they support *atividades educacionais e de promoção social para promover a consciência e o exercício da cidadania na perspectiva de melhorar a qualidade de vida da comunidade através da educação*¹. ASPA has been in the neighborhood for decades, and is staffed by and gets volunteers from the population of Rocinha (see contact information in Appendix A).

Matching Space to Existing and Future Goals

All of ASPA's activities take place in a lively building in the center of Rocinha on the Travessa da Luz. From years of experience as ASPA's program coordinator, Firmino believes the ASPA space can be better arranged for current programs and to allow additional services for the long-term benefit of the community.

The overall objective of this proposal is to create a link to ASPA which will enhance and expand the current services provided by ASPA by

- Renovating the existing kitchen
- Improving the existing recreational space
- Including a community center and library to the existing building
- Supporting educational and cultural initiatives in Rocinha.

Each one of these options is further described in the sections below (see also Appendix B). The projects can be undertaken individually or as a series of smaller projects.

The project costs presented have been estimated by Firmino in consultation with local architects and the team from MIT and the Universidade de São Paulo that visited in January. The MIT-USP team, including a civil engineer and two architect-civil engineers, reviewed the proposed layout (Appendix C and D) and gave feedback. Estimated costs include materials (approximately 70% of cost), labor, engineering approvals, and equipment. Leveraging the resources and advantages in procurements of private partners can bring financial support, materials, and/or engineering expertise can make these plans a reality for ASPA and the Rocinha community.

¹ Activities which are educational in nature and support the promotion of the conscience and exercise of citizenship, with the perspective of improving the quality of life in the community through education.

Renovation of Kitchen

Estimated cost: R\$15,000

ASPA's day-care programs provide meals to ensure that the children in their programs get nutritional meals at least two times a day. The kitchen is barely adequate for their needs and lacks appropriate storage space.

Renovation of the kitchen would make the space match ASPA's current and future programs, such as activities to provide longer-term nutritional education. The improvements to the kitchen (about 19m²) include:

- Increasing kitchen capacity so ASPA can start seminars for teaching parents how prepare affordable, nutritional menus at home.
- Arranging facilities to make preparation of crèche meals more efficient
- Adding capacity for food storage to allow bulk purchasing at lower per-weight costs
- Improving food storage and appliances to increase food safety.



The current kitchen set-up at ASPA. Food storage space is limited (small room at right of picture, provides less than 10m² of storage space).

Improved Recreational Space

Estimated cost: R\$30,000

The ASPA roofdeck is a safe, open space for children to participate in physical activities. The roofdeck has a concrete surface and is about 100m² in total area. Unfortunately it is not protected from the elements. Furthermore, the proposed location of the new library is located directly below this roofdeck. Therefore improvements must be made in order to ensure a suitable environment for the books. Firmino's plan is to improve the roofdeck's usefulness by adding an overhanging roof. The overhang would

- Protect children from the strong sun
- Channel rain away from the roofdeck and into appropriate drainage systems
- Prevent heat from being absorbed by concrete and transferred into the building
- Improve air conditions in the lower-level classrooms

These improvements are obviously important to ASPA, and also provide a great opportunity to consider the use of sustainable building technologies.



The roofdeck of ASPA.

Community center and children's library

Estimated total cost: R\$100,000- R\$200,000

Further renovations would make the ASPA building a complete community center with greater capacity for the crèche and youth activities. Rearranging the space (Appendix D) will also make it possible for ASPA to deliver better tutoring programs and expose local youth to new perspectives through extra-curricular activities. Complete renovations would include a full library, a playroom, small-group tutoring space, and rooms and equipment suitable for classes in music, language, and dance.

Complete renovations would also put all of the children's groups on one floor and move all offices and library together in the lower floor. The current arrangement has offices

and classrooms scattered throughout the building, reducing the effectiveness of both administrators and care-givers.

Having such a space would bolster the community's existing respect for the school and increase their interaction with it. Although ASPA focuses its limited resources on the students in the crèche and youth activities, they want the center to be open to all.

Educationally-focused and volunteer-based opportunities

Appropriate spaces allow community programs to prosper, but their success is ultimately related to the inter-personal relationships and education that are made possible by bringing people together. Support of educational programs could help Rocinha youth at ASPA to realize their full potential. There are many ways to contribute, for example through educational materials, tutoring or technical training.

Educational Materials

A new library in the ASPA center would benefit many children in Rocinha, and in the future could expand to include programs in adult literacy and job counseling. ASPA has very few books to fill the library now. Age-appropriate books in a variety of subjects: fiction, non-fiction, educational, cultural, etc., would enrich the reading opportunities and experience of children in Rocinha. New books could add to the collection as well in areas where more copies or specific "classic" books are needed.

Tutoring

ASPA has plans to offer tutoring services to children who are in school in Rocinha. One challenge in starting such a program is getting commitment from volunteers who have the skills in the areas that children need tutoring in. Locals who are interested in this kind of opportunity would be able to provide a great service to the community. Additionally, they would provide a new perspective and inspiration for students who would benefit from a role model or mentor.

Summary

Working in collaboration with ASPA is a chance for local corporations to contribute to the local community and in particular to create opportunities for neighborhood youth in Rocinha. It is also a good model for how D-Lab teams can interact with locally invested corporations that are interested in developing connections and opportunities within the cities around them.

Appendix A. Contact Information

It is best to contact ASPA first through CIESPI (Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquisas sobre a Infância), an organization at the PUC-RJ (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro) which has long-term relationships with ASPA:

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The program director of ASPA can also be reached directly:

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Appendix B. Table of opportunities and estimated costs

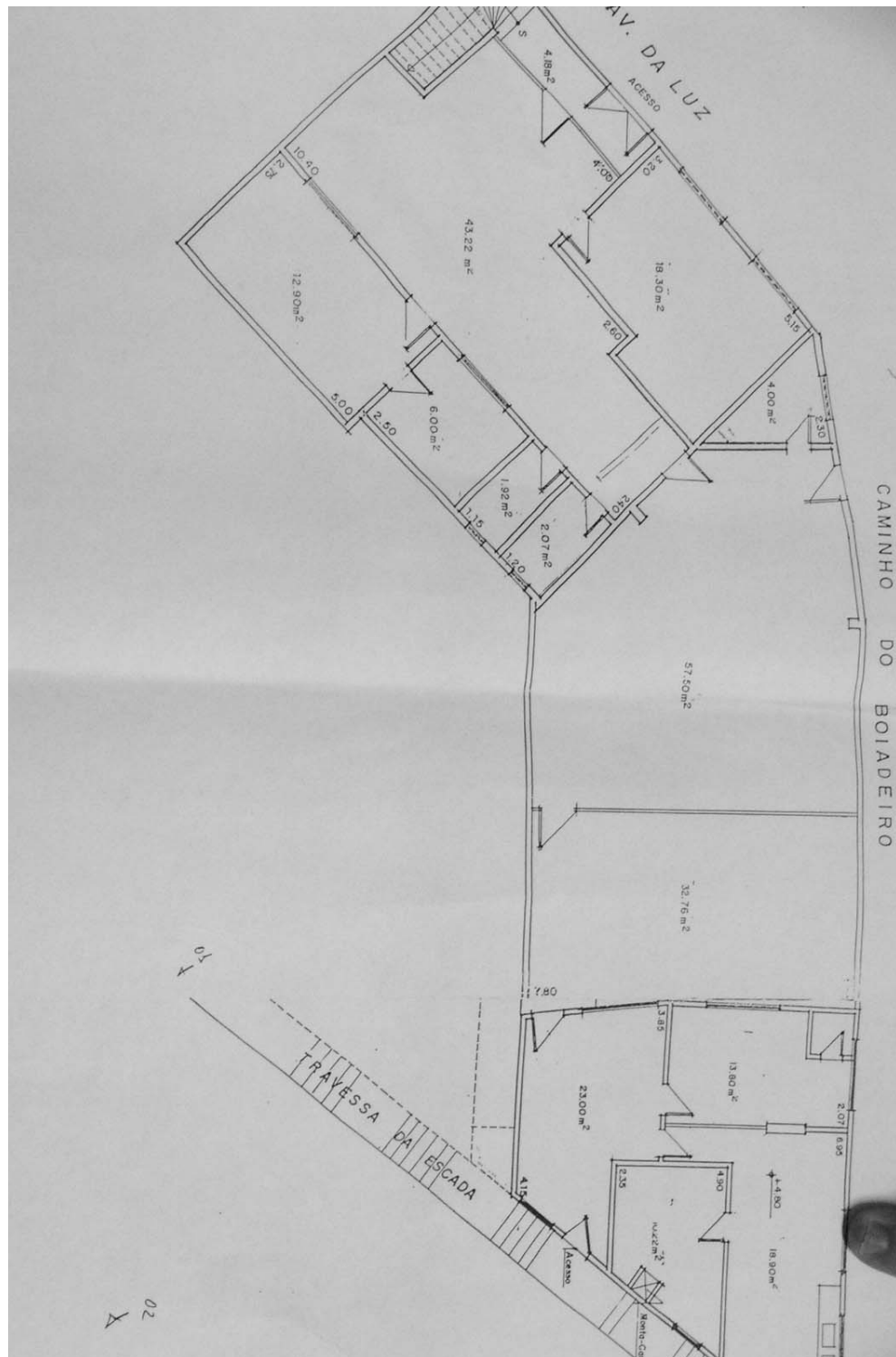
Physical space improvements

Kitchen	Improves flow and storage during busy meals; allows ASPA to teach nutritious meal preparation to parents.	R\$15,000
Recreation area	Covering recreation area will protect children from sun and rain; it will also improve ambient conditions in the classrooms below the recreation area	R\$30,000
Complete	Adds library, spaces for specific classes, and clusters administrative and student spaces for better use	R\$100,000-200,000
Total		R\$145,000-R\$245,000

Educational opportunities

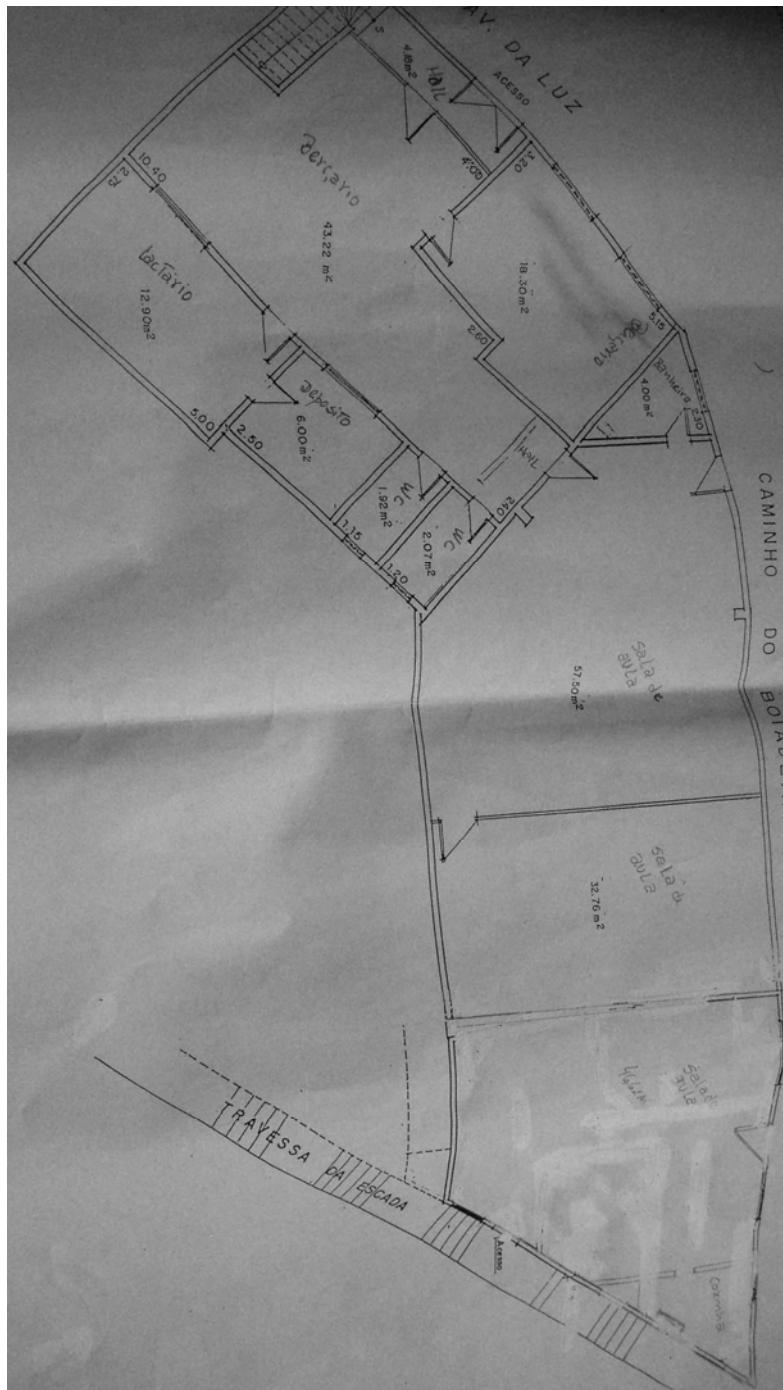
Book drive	Fills the new library with new and gently-used books collected by MOEC and families	Less than R\$1,000
Tutoring	Contributes to academic or extra-curricular tutoring activities; brings outside perspective and role models	More of a time commitment

Appendix C. Existing floorplan

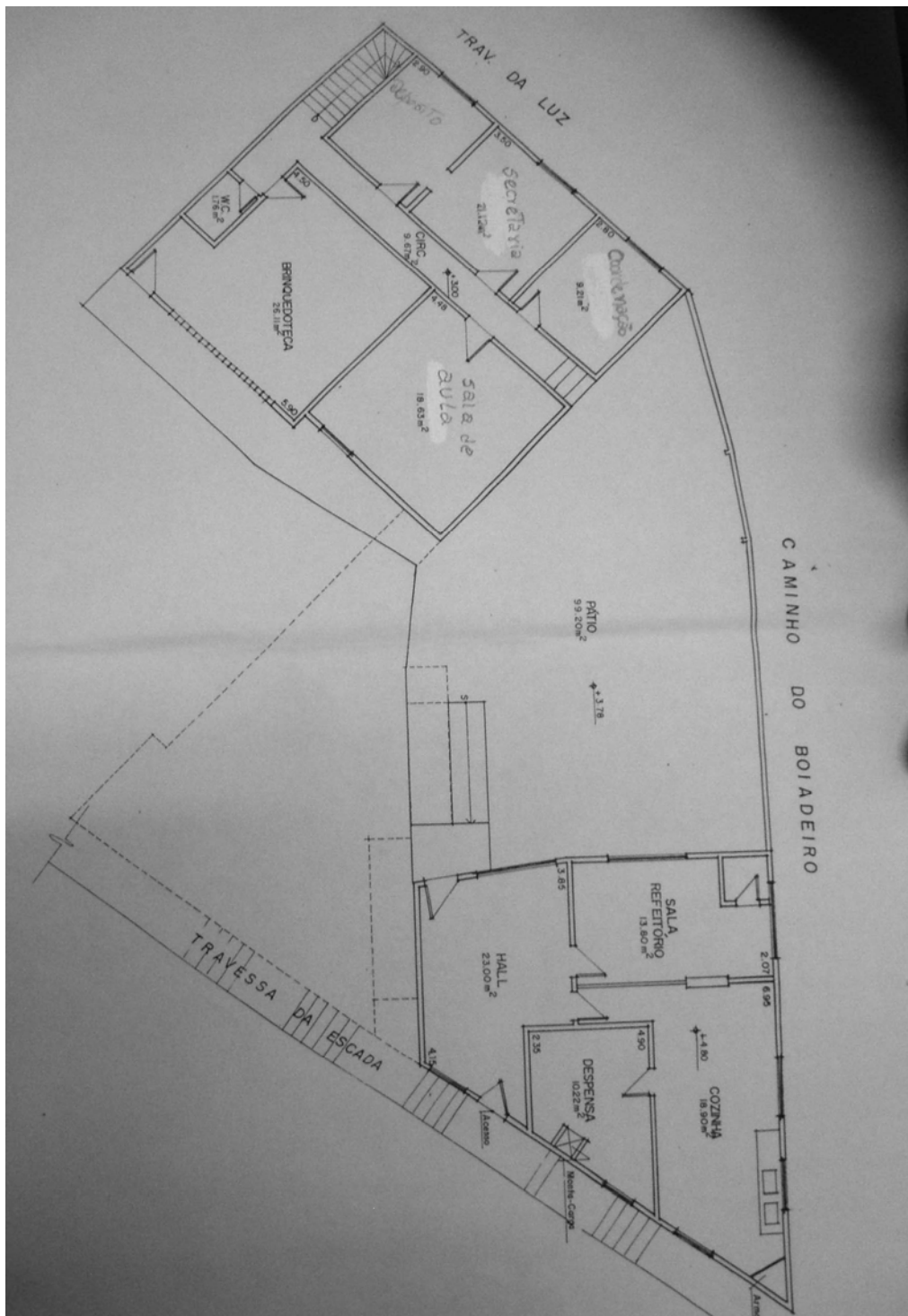


Existing floorplan at what would be the classroom level.

Appendix D. Proposed Blueprints



Proposed classroom level blueprint of ASPA, Rocinha.



Proposed recreation and office level of ASPA, Rocinha.