RIO DE JANEIRO & FAVELA LECTURE SERIES

Presented by Theresa Williamson, Ph.D.
(Founder and Executive Director of Catalytic Communities)
Stand-alone lecture or full-day campus visits available
Selected dates available from September through November 2014

Lecture titles include:
- Classic All-Encompassing Lecture: Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro: The Dynamics of Urban Change
- Community Organizing: Community Responses to Eviction, Gentrification and Police Violence in Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro
- Sustainable Development: Favelas at the Vanguard: Rethinking Our Assumptions in Sustainable Development (with film)
- Housing: Favela Gentrification, Property Titles, Eviction and the Struggle for Affordable Housing in Rio de Janeiro
- Social Entrepreneurship and Organizational Management: Catalytic Communities, a New Organizational Model from Rio de Janeiro: Experimentation, Responsiveness, Flexibility and Reflection as Organizational Precepts
- Communications and Journalism: RioOnWatch: How Taking Hyper Local News Global Can Change the World
PUTTING FAVELAS IN CONTEXT

After decades of stagnation marked by poor governance and disinvestment, by 2010 Rio de Janeiro grew to be one of the fastest growing cities in the Americas. Pricier than New York and receiving more than double the international investment of Sao Paulo, the city was eager to take advantage of recent offshore oil discoveries and having been selected to host the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics to reconstitute itself “a global city.”

Yet despite initial optimistic press coverage and significant work on the part of the city administration to engender a positive international image, the tide turned in 2013 and, following mass protests, a city applauded just months prior was suddenly seen as having lost its opportunity - rather than empowering and integrating citizens, mega-event inspired policies were instead exacerbating the city’s already infamous inequality. Known as the “Marvelous City” for its geologic beauty, Rio is also known as the “Divided City” by locals as rich and poor live side by side yet face historic segregation and stark disparities in access to public services.

How is Rio’s “coming of age” unfolding? What is the role of the two mega-events in this process? What is happening in the city’s 600 plus favela communities? What exactly are favelas? And how is the city currently handling these communities and its deep historic divide? Could the sustainable development of Rio’s favelas offer a housing model for the world? How has community media and creative organizing influenced this scenario? And finally, how much could Rio transform the present state of affairs—increasingly seen as dark and chaotic—into a unique opportunity to grow and consolidate its economy without compromising its unique cultural heritage, and in a way that reduces inequality?

INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOUR

Dr. Theresa Williamson, Founder and Executive Director of Catalytic Communities, will be presenting a series of lectures across the United States, Canada and Europe on topics related to favelas, sustainable development, communication, and organizational development in Rio de Janeiro. Each talk will offer a contextual overview of the city, its recent history, and that of the favelas. It will then target itself towards one of these six topics.

Williamson is available for a two hour seminar or public lecture, or a full-day campus visit (allowing for an unlimited number of classroom visits, individual or group meetings, and/or additional talks). There is also an option of showing our award-winning film, Favelas as a Sustainable Model. All honoraria are paid to Catalytic Communities, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, to further efforts on behalf of Rio de Janeiro’s favelas.

Few are in Williamson’s position to offer a community perspective on the current transformations unfolding in Rio - a perspective rarely available at a distance. The presentation incorporates the very latest in breaking news and community responses. It is informed by the experience of favela residents and up-to-date research. Audience members are left with a full understanding of the context which is shaping Rio de Janeiro today and the organizations and institutions involved.

Since 2010 Williamson has spoken at the following colleges and universities: American, Berea, Brown, Carroll, Columbia, Georgetown, Georgia State, Goucher, MIT, NYU, Pratt, Roger Williams, Stanford, St. Joseph’s, Swarthmore, U. Colorado-Boulder, U. Delaware, U. Pennsylva-
nia, Vassar, Villanova, Wellesley, West Chester, and Yale.

THERESA WILLIAMSON, Ph.D.
Founder and Executive Director, Catalytic Communities

Winner of the 2012 NAHRO John D. Lange International Award for her contribution to the international housing debate, with three Opinion pieces published in The New York Times in 2012 and 2013, Theresa Williamson has become an outspoken and respected advocate and informant on behalf of Rio de Janeiro’s favelas in the face of current fast-paced transformations. She has been featured in O Globo, Marie Claire, and Tricycle, and quoted in The New York Times, Al Jazeera, Le Monde, NPR’s Worldview, Radio CBN (Brazil), SBS Dateline (Australia), BBC Radio (UK), CBC Radio (Canada), Next American City, The Independent (UK), El Mundo (Spain), Folha de São Paulo (Brazil), O Globo (Brazil), Places: The Design Observer, Architectural Record, Revista Pauí (Brazil), 45 Minutowita (Finland), The Washington Post, Cyberpresse (Canada), and a number of other outlets.

In May 2004 Tera received her Ph.D. from the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. Entitled Catalytic Communities: The Birth of a Dot Org, her dissertation won the 2005 Gill-Chin Lim Award for Best Dissertation on International Planning and was one of three finalists for the 2004 Barclay Gibbs Jones Award for the Best Dissertation in Planning. She has published articles from this dissertation and related research in DETAIL (Germany), Progressive Planning, The Journal of Urban Technology, and Cidadania.org. Theresa received her undergraduate degree in Biological Anthropology from Swarthmore College. Raised in the Washington, DC area, she is a dual Brazilian and British citizen and lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Listen to Theresa’s March 2014 interview on the WBGO Journal, and read her recent comments on favela gentrification in The Atlantic Cities and evictions in The Guardian.

Presentations will be along six themes:

- **Classic All-Encompassing Lecture: Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro: The Dynamics of Urban Change**
- **Community Organizing: Community Responses to Eviction, Gentrification and Police Violence in Pre-Olympic Rio de Janeiro**
- **Sustainable Development: Favelas at the Vanguard: Rethinking Our Assumptions in Sustainable Development (with film)**
- **Housing: Favela Gentrification, Property Titles, Eviction and the Struggle for Affordable Housing in Rio de Janeiro**
- **Social Entrepreneurship and Organizational Management: Catalytic Communities, a New Organizational Model from Rio de Janeiro: Experimentation, Responsiveness, Flexibility and Reflection as Organizational Precepts**
- **Communications and Journalism: RioOnWatch: How Taking Hyper Local News Global Can Change the World**

Please contact us for further details or modifications regarding a specific talk subject.
ABOUT CATALYTIC COMMUNITIES

Since 2000, Catalytic Communities (CatComm) has provided capacity-building and technology training, media exposure, meeting spaces, and global networks of support to over 1500 leaders from over 250 low-income communities across Rio de Janeiro. As a result, the tide is beginning to turn on the stigma these communities historically face. They are increasingly recognized as creative, self-built neighborhoods that comprise an important niche within the urban fabric, one worthy of recognition, respect and investment.

Winner of a 2006 Tech Award from the Tech Museum of Innovation in Silicon Valley, and recognized for its ‘actionable ideas’ by the UN, CatComm makes strategic use of media and networks to link grassroots community groups in Rio de Janeiro with networks of exchange and support. CatComm is the only organization in Rio working at the intersection of urban planning, community development, social media, and global networks, providing community organizing workshops, strategic communications and advocating on policies on behalf of Rio’s favelas. Our largest current project, RioOnWatch, targets journalists and opinion-formers focused on Brazil with favela perspectives to ensure they are included in the dialogue and direct the future of Rio. The project’s site, RioOnWatch.org is Rio’s only English-language community news site and has become a go-to source among journalists from around the world.

For further information or to book, please contact:

u-tour@catcomm.org
(301) 637-7360
catcomm.org

VISITING RIO DE JANEIRO?

Since 2004 Catalytic Communities has worked with visiting university departments, graduate researchers, journalists, conference goers, and volunteer groups to provide tailored educational visits, guided by local leaders, to favelas across Rio de Janeiro. If you are interested in a visit, please visit catcomm.org/ecv.