

FAVA FAVELA

A P H O T O P A C K



Introduction

FALALA FAVELA

PHOTOGRAPHS AND ACTIVITIES ON SHANTYTOWN LIFE IN BRAZIL

PUBLISHED BY:

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- Our title Fala Favela is the Brazilian for "Speak Favela". In Brazil, shantytowns are referred to as favelas. Favela is the Brazilian word for honeycomb. This term describes the very dense, closely packed housing characteristic of shantytowns.

Introduction

FALA FAVELA

Fala Favela introduces the life of the community of favela Vila Prudente in São Paulo, Brazil. It has been produced by a group of teachers from Ireland and Britain in partnership with the MDF (Movement for the Defence of Favela Dwellers) in Brazil. The group visited Brazil in 1988 and has continued to maintain an active interest and teaching programme since then.

The group decided to produce a photopack because it could more graphically and realistically portray the human aspects of life in one favela. The aim was to portray not only the hardships of life there but also the positive dimensions of community hope, struggle and laughter. The group also felt that a photopack would provide a useful way of introducing the issue of how favelas came to be and why they remain. Fala Favela allows for active use in learning situations and for considerable personal and group debate.

The photopack contents have been designed and agreed with the community in Vila Prudente.

Why chose Vila Prudente in Sao Paulo ?

The ready agreement of community leaders to our group's request, and their appreciation of the importance and potential of education for justice, was a major factor. Vila Prudente has its own uniqueness but, in many ways, is representative of favela life in Brazil. Vila Prudente has been in existence since the late 1940's and is, therefore, well established. The community has fought many long and hard battles for survival, for water, sanitation and electricity.

The pack is not about Brazil, or indeed, about favelas or cities in general – it is about one favela. But of course, it is about much more than that. It is about power and poverty and the shape of our world.

In our view, the issues raised by the pack include the meaning of keywords such as poverty, development, struggle, equality, and injustice. It also raises questions about wealth, perception/images, faith and solidarity. It also addresses the question of how we respond to poverty and injustice whenever we meet or experience it.

Fala Favela is an attempt to provide an introductory learning resource for use in Brazil and in Europe. We hope it will be of use to those organising community leadership and literacy courses in Brazil and in education for justice work in Europe.

It would be impossible for us to convey adequately our thanks to all those who made Fala Favela possible. We hope its production marks this in some way.

We sincerely dedicate Fala Favela to the community of Vila Prudente.

The MDF Story

The story of the organisation for the defence of the shanty town people of Sao Paulo (the MDF) goes back to the mid-1970's. Military rule was then at its height and the shanty towns (favelas) had grown dramatically between 1964 (year of the military coup) and 1977. In Santo Andre (a satellite town of Sao Paulo) they increased during that period of 13 years from two to sixty seven. It was in Santo Andre, in fact, that the MDF first began, under the inspiration of Rubous Chassereaux, a priest of that diocese who had undergone imprisonment and torture for his work among the poor.

Slowly, leadership among the people themselves began to emerge and by 1978 links were being forged between the favelas of Santo Andre and those of the city of Sao Paulo, which at that time, numbered more than one thousand. In due course, the MDF grew into a federation linking up several states north and south of the country.

Meanwhile, in the eastern region of the city of Sao Paulo, which is regarded as the poorest part of the metropolis, many young people were becoming involved in the struggle among the poor of the shantytowns. It was from among their numbers that the MDF (Belem) emerged, constituting itself as an

autonomous legally recognised resource centre (distinct from Santo Andre) in 1983, under the coordination of Anne Boran and Pat Clarke CSSP, with the specific objective of catering for the favelas of the diocese of Belem, which numbered 237. The resource centre itself was staffed initially by a core team of six permanent members in addition to the assistance of two lawyers and two architects. Since then, it has grown in experience and stature being recognised within and outside Sao Paulo as a major contribution in the context of popular movements to the cause of justice through the promotion of awareness, leadership, transformation and celebration among the oppressed.

Looking back, it is clear that the MDF would not have developed as it has without the sustained solidarity of friends and collaborators overseas, in particular the non governmental organisations of Europe and North America, without the pioneering pastoral vision and commitment of people here in Brazil such as Patrick Dundon CSSP, George Boran CSSP, Patrick Culley CSSP, Fr. Angelo Franco, Fr. Fernando Altmeier, Maria Perreira, Antonio Caetano, to name but a few of the legion of men and women, who in the memorable words of Caetano, have "gone without sleep so that others might have a place to sleep".

Using the Photographs in Sao Paulo?

THE NEXT SIX PAGES SUGGEST A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES FOR USING THE PHOTOGRAPHS CONTAINED IN THE PACK. THESE ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE CATEGORIES: PREPARATION AND AGENDA SETTING, EMPATHISING, AND EXPLORING THE ISSUES. PHOTOGRAPHS ARE A USEFUL AND FLEXIBLE RESOURCE WHICH ALLOW PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT COMPLEX ISSUES FROM THEIR OWN STARTING POINTS.

■ PREPARATION AND AGENDA SETTING

The following activities are useful for familiarising people with the whole set of photographs and for drawing out perceptions and attitudes. They will also help people to identify issues for further study or discussion.

■ Selection

Display the photographs around the room.

Activity

Ask the group to look carefully at the whole set of photographs. Each individual chooses a photograph which he/she finds particularly interesting. People then form groups of four and explain their choices in turn to the other members of the group. Each group then selects one photograph from the four photographs in the group. The choice made by each group and the key points from the discussion are shared with the whole group.

■ Observing

Display the photographs around the room.

Activity

Ask everyone to have a good look at the whole set of photographs. Someone then turns one photograph face down, while everyone else avoids looking. Which one has been removed?

■ QUESTIONING A PHOTOGRAPH

Each pair will need one photograph and a felt pen. You could use some of the photographs selected through the 'SELECTION' activity above. Mount the photograph in the middle of a large sheet of blank paper.

Activity

Divide the group into pairs. Ask each pair to note down as many questions as they can which are raised by the photograph. Some of the questions may be directly related to the photograph, others only indirectly. In a plenary, feedback the most important questions raised by the photographs. You could draw up a list of issues which come out of the discussion and which people are interested in following up.

■ Clusters

Display the photographs around the room, clustering them in threes or fours around a blank sheet of paper. Divide the group into pairs. Each pair will need a felt pen.

Activity

Ask people in pairs to look at each cluster of photographs and jot down in one or two words on the blank sheet any issues relating to city life in Brazil raised by the photographs. Each pair looks at all the issues written down and places a star by the four issues which they think are most important to discuss. From these you could draw up an agenda of issues.

■ BUILDING EMPATHY

The following activities are useful for helping people to empathise with what they see in the photographs. They will give insights into what it is like to live in a favela in Brazil.

■ ROLE PLAY

Role play is best undertaken when people have done some of the preparation activities. It allows people the opportunity to develop empathy with those in the photographs.

You will need one photograph for each group of four people. Select

photographs which will interest them and lend themselves to dramatisation.

Activity

Give a photograph to each group. Ask people to use their imagination to develop a scene about the life of the people in the photograph, which they will then act out. For each photograph they will need to decide:

- the names of everyone in the picture
- their relationship to each other
- whether any members of the household or community are not included in the photograph
- how each person in the picture feels
- what each person is doing
- what they are saying.

People decide which roles to take on. They can role play the scene in the photograph and/or extend it to include events that led up to this scene and events that followed it. Each group presents their scene. Allow comments and questions immediately afterwards. Ask people what they feel they have learned.

You may want to move on to do work around the profiles on pages 8-16. This could include further role play or some more detailed work on a few favela dwellers on the theme of 'A day in the life'.

■ Role Play Interviews

As an alternative to the role play people could choose a character from the

photograph. The others interview them asking about their life in the favela and they reply in role as the character they have chosen. It is important to discuss what has been learned.

■ Telling a story

From previous activities, identify a number of themes that people are interested in. Group people according to their interests. Small groups of four are best. Select a number of photographs for each group, appropriate to their theme.

Activity

Ask each group to use their set of photographs to tell a story. This will involve ordering them so that their story has a beginning, a middle and an end. It will also involve a lot of discussion about the interpretation of each photograph. There are a number of ways in which groups can present their story:

1. They could mount the photographs on a large sheet of poster paper, once they have discussed their story. They could attach speech and thought bubbles to the people in the photographs, then add a narrative in boxes below the photographs.
2. Alternatively they could read or role play their story.

It is important to ask people what they feel they have learned after each story has been presented.

■ Exploring the issues

The following activities are useful for exploring in more detail the issues raised by the photopack about the urban poor in Brazil. Once people have thought about what it is like to live in a favela, it is important to move on to consider some of the underlying issues: why there are favelas in Brazil, the favela in the context of the city, how favela dwellers are fighting for justice etc.

■ Ranking photographs

Each group will need to be able to see the same set of nine photographs, selected from the pack to show a range of scenes from the favela and the wider city. These could be displayed on a wall, identifying each with a letter A-I.

Activity

Ask each group to rank the set of photographs twice, using the letters to represent each photograph, to make a diamond pattern each time. The first time, arrange them in order of those which show the biggest problems facing the poor in the city. The second time, arrange them in order of those which show the biggest advantages of city life for the poor. Groups should note down the order of the photographs that make up their first pattern. Each group then shares their top and bottom choices each time, giving reasons for these.

■ Pressures from within and without

Each group will need a large sheet of sugar paper and felt pens. Display the photographs around the room.

Activity

Each group draws a large circle on their paper with a matchstick drawing of a person. This represents a person living in the favela. The idea is to think about the different pressures on this person, firstly, from within the favela and secondly, from outside. The group talks about these pressures and jots them down inside and outside the circle. They then share their ideas with the rest of the group.

■ Favela meeting

Groups of eight or ten people imagine they are favela dwellers. They get together from time to time to talk about what can be done to improve their situation. Give pairs in the group several different photographs each from the set. Ask them to use these to identify what they think are some of the needs of the favela community. Pairs discuss these in role. Everyone then comes together to pool their ideas.

The group take this further by prioritising the needs of the community and working out strategies for meeting these needs.

Profiling the People of Vila Prudente

In order to provide background information on the history of the favela and on life in Vila Prudente today, we include profiles of some of the people we met. These can be used to relate the photos to the lives and hopes of the community.

Each profile can be related to the most appropriate photograph. Areas for discussion and activities follow each profile.

Dona Carmelita was born in Ceara in the North of Brazil which is three days and three nights journey by bus from Sao Paulo. At nineteen, she married and she and her husband worked as farm labourers on a large sugar plantation. Their lives were extremely difficult. They often suffered food shortages because they were only given a small plot of land on which to grow their own food.

Dona Carmelita had fourteen children in all but only seven survived. When one of her sons Eduardo was 16 years old he left the farm for Sao Paulo. There he found work as a petrol pump attendant. After two years he had saved enough for his mother to come and visit him. Dona Carmelita stayed with her son in the favela of Vila Prudente in Sao Paulo for a couple of months. In Sao Paulo there was work available in some factories or cleaning the homes of wealthy families. Dona Carmelita

In these groups she helps people to look at the reasons for their poverty and at ways of doing something about it.

decided to bring all her family to Sao Paulo.

Her husband was reluctant to move at first but he finally agreed. They sold everything they had to pay the bus fare and left their home in Ceara. They moved into Antonio's two roomed house in Vila Prudente.

Dona Carmelita and her family stayed with Antonio for three years until they moved into the house where Dona Carmelita lives today. She worked as a cleaner in an office by night and minded favela children in a creche by day.

Eight years ago Dona Carmelita met Father John, an Irish priest who works in the favela. After meeting him she became involved with different groups in the community. In these groups she helps people to look at the reasons for their poverty and at ways of doing something about it. She sees this work as slowly bringing about change. Dona Carmelita is happy living in the favela but she is concerned about the rising cost of housing. Seven years ago, when she bought her house it cost 370 crusados. Today, it is worth 500,000 crusados. It is becoming more and more difficult for people moving into Sao Paulo to buy or rent a house.

The last Mayor of Sao Paulo however wanted to get rid of all the favelas. He wanted to move people who lived in them to the edge of the city where there are no facilities whatsoever or as the people call it, "to the end of the world". Favelas exist because of the unwillingness of the government to tackle the problem of housing. However, the recently elected mayor has brought new hope. She was elected in part by the vote of the favela dwellers and has been trying to change Sao Paulo's housing policy.

It takes great effort to bring about change in the favela but Dona Carmelita feels that when people come together many things are possible.

Discussion Questions

1. Movement from rural areas to cities is as a result of push and pull factors i.e. factors that force people off the land and factors that attract them to the city. What were the push and pull factors for Dona Carmelita and her family?
2. What policies could the government adopt that would address the problem of housing?
3. What difference did meeting Father John make to Dona Carmelita's life?
4. "When people come together many things are possible." What changes have been brought about in your community by people working together?

Activities

1. Imagine you are Dona Carmelita's son Eduardo. Write the letter to your mother describing Vila Prudente and inviting her to come to visit.
2. Arrange a meeting between people of the favela and the Mayor of Sao Paulo. In Sao Paulo the Mayor is responsible for the allocation of funds to and development of the different services provided by local government. The favela dwellers wish to highlight their problems. The Mayor and local government representatives must meet the needs of all dwellers in Sao Paulo. Act out the meeting.
3. You are the Mayor of Sao Paulo. Write your political manifesto outlining what you would do for Vila Prudente.
4. A mental map involves expressing how you see a place in the form of a drawing.
Draw a mental map of how you would like to see Vila Prudente in the future.

Fabio Barras – Church Worker

In 1976 Fabio and Maria Barras at the ages of 22 and 21, moved with their nine small children to Vila Prudente from Para in Northern Brazil. They had lived on their small farm for thirteen years. There they had grown soya beans, red beans, rice, corn and coffee – enough to keep the family fed and healthy. However, their luck changed. A big landowner moved in and took over their land. Fabio and Maria had legal title to the land but it made no difference. The police issued false documents and using these, they sold the farm to the landowner. A gang of armed men came and simply threw Fabio and his family off their land. The same happened to other small farmers in the area – there was nothing any of them could do.

Fabio and Maria took their family to Sao Paulo. Fabio thought he would get work in one of the big factories but the first problem was to find somewhere to live. They had never seen so many people before. In Vila Prudente, they found a tiny vacant space between two houses and there they built their house out of wooden packing cases.

They had no privacy, no running water and no electric light. There were open sewers – all the muck and dirt just flowed through the streets of the favela. The children were continuously ill. Maria hated the place but knew she had no choice – they needed somewhere to live.

Fabio knew he would have to get some kind of qualifications if he wanted to find work. He became an apprentice mechanical fitter. Soon after qualifying he got a job in a factory. He worked there for six years but the pay and working conditions were terrible. Fabio decided to try his hand at bricklaying. After finishing work in the factory on Friday he spent the

weekends bricklaying. He earned more money over the weekend than he got from a week's work in the factory. Fabio decided to become self employed.

In 1978 Fabio became involved with different groups organised by the Catholic Church in Vila Prudente. With one of these groups Fabio learned to read and write. Another of the groups he was involved in looked at the basic needs of the community and set about working with the people to achieve them. Fabio's group saw a sewage system as essential. The group set about convincing the people that this was a project that they could do together. People in each section of the favela laid the pipes for their area. Everyone helped. Fabio co-ordinated the work.

Fabio believes that nobody should suffer and that people must work together to change things.

After 13 years in Vila Prudente, Fabio earned enough money to move out of the favela and buy a little piece of land in Sousa, just outside the city, where he built his own house. Fabio still works hard to make ends meet. He is up at four every morning, seven days a week. He is still involved in Vila Prudente and is now coordinating the building of a creche. He is also involved in a group which is asking why so many people are suffering. They are looking not just at the problems but at the causes of the problems. Fabio believes that nobody should suffer and that people must work together to change things. If they don't, he feels the powerful who haven't got the interests of the poor at heart will always win.

Discussion Questions

1. What difficulties did Fabio and his family experience when they moved to Sao Paulo?
2. Why could Fabio make more money as a self-employed bricklayer than in the factory?
3. How has the Church helped the people of Vila Prudente?
4. What kind of problems do you think illiterate people in your society would experience in their daily lives and in looking for employment?

Activities

1. A timeline is created by marking a set of events on a line in chronological order.

Draw a timeline for Fabio plotting the main events in his life.

Timelines can be extended into the future. Projections can be made about what will probably happen and could possibly happen.

Extend the timeline for the next twenty years of Fabio's life.

2. Draw a poster to highlight the plight of people who are being forcibly moved off their land by powerful commercial companies.

3. Hold a radio interview with a panel of people from Vila Prudente. The panel wants to promote a positive image of the favela. The panel comprises:

a local councillor

a church worker

a visitor to the Community for the first time

a young person.

4. You are Fabio. Write an article for the local newspaper describing how developing the sewage system came about. Explain what happened from the first meeting when the decision was made to the day the final pipe was laid.

Helena - Community Worker

Helena began working with the community of Vila Prudente ten years ago when she was 18. At that time she worked as part of a church group based outside the favela. The group collected clothes from the wealthier areas in Sao Paulo and distributed them to the people of the favela. After doing this charity work for three years she began to question whether it was having any real effect on the quality of the favela dwellers' lives. She decided to find out if she could do more.

Helena met with people as they went about their daily work. She played with the children on the street. She became more aware of the appalling conditions people were living in. Helena also began to realise how poverty led to crime, especially amongst the children. As one woman put it, "If you have no money, no job and you are young you can be tempted to rob or to push drugs."

Helena and some friends held meetings with a group of favela dwellers to see what could be done. They decided that it was important to build up a strong community spirit by finding something which they could work on together. The group identified three basic needs which they had and about which they felt they could do something. These were: the problem of open sewers, the lack of electric lighting in homes and in the streets and the lack of easily available drinking water.

Helena discovered that another group organised by a Catholic priest in the favela was also hoping to do something about the sewage. Both groups decided to work together. The local politicians became annoyed. They did not want the people to solve their problems by themselves. Instead, they wanted to keep power in their own hands. Helena also ran into difficulty with her own church youth group. They

felt that she was becoming too political and that she was forgetting about her religion. As a result she was thrown out of the group. She and a number of friends went ahead on their own and helped the people to put in the sewage pipes.

After working together on projects like this Helena helped the people set up an Association of Favela Dwellers. This association gives people an opportunity to come together, discuss their problems and do something about them. The association has now become part of the national body called the M.D.F. (The Movement for the Defence of the Favela Dwellers). This has given them even greater strength.

After doing this charity work for three years she began to question whether it was having any real effect on the quality of the favela dwellers' lives.

The Association is currently tackling the issue of the rights of favela dwellers to own the land on which their houses are built. In the past there have been violent clashes between favela dwellers and the land owners with a number of people being killed.

Helena thinks that the cause of all the injustice is the distribution of land and the lack of government policy on housing. Most of the land is owned by a very small number of landowners. These landowners are determined to hold onto their power. The problems of violence, families splitting up, infant deaths and drug abuse are only symptoms of this injustice.

However, there are also happy times in the favela as one man described to Helena: "In February when we have our carnival we really enjoy ourselves. We sing and dance. During carnival week we forget our problems".

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think collecting clothes from the wealthy and distributing them as charity to the poor helps anyone? If so, who is helped and in what ways? What other ways of helping people can you think of?
2. Helena realised how poverty led to crime among children. How do you think problems of young people in Vila Prudente compare with problems of young people in your society? What are the causes of these problems?
3. What do you think was the most important thing that Helena and her friends did for the people of Vila Prudente?
4. How would being an outsider have helped or hindered Helena?

Activities

1. Hold the meeting that took place between Helena, her friends and the church youth group that resulted in Helena being expelled from the group.
2. Working initially in small groups and then in a large group, using a large poster, make a list of human needs in order of priority. On the other side of the poster, make a list of those who have a responsibility to make sure each of these needs is met.
3. Divide into two groups; one group supports the landlords; the other, the favela dwellers. Debate the case.

Nelson

Nelson is nine years old. He lives with his parents, three brothers and three sisters in a two roomed house in Vila Prudente. As the family gets older, the house seems to get smaller and smaller, Nelson is the third oldest in his family and the first to go to school.

Every morning, Nelson is awakened at 7 a.m. by his mother. Nelson helps prepare the breakfast and the whole family sits together to eat. Nelson's father arrives in from work in time for breakfast. He works as a night watchman in one of the factories. Usually they drink coffee with milk and some bread. Sometimes, they have margarine. After breakfast, Nelson's mother leaves by bus for a wealthier part of the city. She collects two bags of laundry which she will bring home to wash and iron before returning them the following day.

There is a lot of work to be done in the house while she is away. Nelson's sister Maria washes the dishes while his brother Antonio dries. Nelson then sweeps the floor. Meanwhile, his sisters have started making the beds and tidying the house.

Water has to be collected from the tap on the street. Nelson enjoys this job most of all because he meets his friends who have come to fill their containers too. Sometimes, he forgets about the time until he hears his eldest sister, Marcia calling him from the top of the street. She takes care of the two younger children and tries to keep them quiet so that their father can get some sleep.

Once the water has been collected, it is time for Nelson to do his homework. It takes about an hour to do the Mathematics, Portuguese and English that the teachers have given him to do. The smell of the rice and beans that Marcia is cooking for lunch

make him feel hungry. As soon as his mother arrives they eat. Just before noon, Nelson sets off for school. There he meets his younger brother and sister who have recently started school. They go early in the mornings and finish at noon.

Nelson used to walk two miles to school but now there is a school in the favela. Nelson prefers his new school because it is nearer and because he learns more about life in the favela.

At school Nelson learns History, Geography, Artistic Education and Physical Education as well as Portuguese, English and Mathematics. His favourite subject is P.E. but he wishes they had a football pitch where he could play soccer. Instead, the children play volleyball in the laneway beside the school.

As the family gets older, the house seems to get smaller and smaller, Nelson is the third oldest in his family and the first to go to school.

There are twenty-six pupils in Nelson's class and seven teachers – one for each subject. Some teachers have no books but the English teacher has one for each child.

School finishes at four o'clock. When he gets home from school there is work to be done before Nelson can play with his friends. More water is needed so he goes to the tap with his container. Sometimes, he goes to the shop to buy bread or ice. Meanwhile at home, a lot of work has been done by his brothers and sisters. The evening meal is cooking and the laundry is drying in the sun. After supper, the family sit down and watch television while his father relaxes before he sets off for work. Nelson talks about what has been happening at school

School is exciting especially at festivity time. During Art classes special decorations are made. Everywhere looks bright and cheerful. The biggest celebration is the Carnival held before Lent. The top performers of the Samba schools who have been rehearsing for months parade in the streets in their dazzling costumes to the thunder of drums. People in the favela rehearse for hours each day and save for months to pay for their costumes. At Easter, there is another festa. The people in the favela act out the Way of the Cross on Good Friday. Last year, Nelson's father played the part of Simon. The June festa celebrates the feast of St. Peter. One of the teachers brings in a record player and they all sing and dance to samba music. They eat popcorn and drink juice. The Christmas festa takes place during the summer holiday when school is closed from mid-December to mid January.

Discussion Questions

1. Why, do you think, was Nelson the first in his family to go to school?
2. How does the type of work Nelson's parents do affect the family?
3. What forms of entertainment are mentioned in the story? What other forms of entertainment might be available in Vila Prudente?
4. How do celebrations mentioned compare with those celebrated in your community?

Activities

1. This story describes a typical day in Nelson's life. Write a similar description for a typical day in your life. In groups, share your descriptions. How are they different from/similar to Nelson's day?
2. Using the set of twenty-eight photographs, in groups of five look at five or six photographs.

Use these to identify what is happening in the locality that affects the school. Represent this in diagram form as follows:

Draw a circle with arrows pointing inwards. These arrows represent forces in the locality that affect the school.

Draw a circle with arrows pointing outwards. These arrows represent what the school could affect in the locality.

Feedback both diagrams to the whole group.

3. Draw similar diagrams to those in Q2. for your school or club.
4. Nelson prefers the new school in the favela.

In groups, explore the role of school from different viewpoints through role playing the following characters:

Nelson, Nelson's father, the English teacher, a teacher from the school outside the favela, a pupil in that school, a representative of the Ministry of Education.

Facts about Favelas

The favela of Vila Prudente has grown out of the overall problem of urban poverty in Sao Paulo. In this section we set Vila Prudente in the wider urban context. We look at the causes of this poverty and different responses to it.

Facts and Figures

(These will be necessary for the activity described on page 18)

1. Of Sao Paulo's population of 16 million, three million live in Corticos (single dwellings illegally let out to many occupants) half a million on the street and one million in favelas. Similar figures are to found elsewhere in Brazil.
2. According to a survey of the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo in 1970, only 30% of households had drains and only 53% had piped water. The UN now estimates that at least 3 million people in this area obtain their water from wells sunk into a watertable heavily polluted with sewage. The infant mortality rate has almost doubled in the last 15 years. Nearly a half of all children living in city slums are undernourished with the incidence of poverty related diseases being extremely high.
3. As illegal squatters, favela dwellers continually face eviction and harassment. Life is worst for those on the streets, while for those in the corticos it can be horrific with extreme overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, physical danger and high rents.
4. Migration from the countryside continues to feed the increasing numbers

of the urban poor. Over 6 million people have migrated to the cities in the last decade. In Brazil today, 19% of the population owns over 50% of the land and a further 30.4 million hectares is in foreign hands.

5. People have been pushed off the land as a result of poverty, poor social services, limited choices, mechanisation and an increase in farm size. The city offers the hope of a job, better living standards, services and education. Thus, the push factors of the countryside and the pull factors of the cities conspire to produce widespread urban poverty.
6. The overall process is graphically described by a recent woman migrant from the North east:

"You work your whole life on the land, then the latifundiata (big landowners) doesn't want you there anymore. He only wants cattle and sugarcane. From there you are pushed to the roadside. Then the government officials come and push you out; you go to the city and construct your little shack. The city grows, and municipal officials come and want to evict you. In this world, there is no room for us."

Those in the local community organisations, the base Christian communities and the opposition political parties recognise that urban and rural issues are inter-related. As one inhabitant of Vila Prudente put it

"The misery there is the misery here. We can only survive by helping one another."

Using 'Some Facts and Figures'

The information on the previous page has provided some background information on the situation in Vila Prudente in the wider context of Sao Paulo. This information can be explored by using the group activity "Jigsawing".

Jigsawing is a method used to disseminate information through group activity. The passage should be reproduced and divided up according to paragraphs 1 to 6. (See previous page)

The following instructions are for a group of 18 people

1. Divide the group into 4 groups of 4 people.
2. Give the remaining 2 people, called researchers paragraph 1 to discuss.
3. Give the 4 groups of 4 the subsequent paragraphs to study and discuss: group 1, para 2; Group 2, para 3, Group 3 para 4; Group 4 para 5.
4. Letter each person in the 4 groups A-D.
5. Re-arrange the groups according to letters i.e. all A's join together. They exchange information.
6. Send the researchers to two groups each. They pass on their additional information.

List of Photographs and Questions

The photographs in this pack are designed as a stimulus for talking about life in Vila Prudente. The issues of concern to the people of the favela can also be related to experiences in other communities.

We have titled the photographs and given some information with each one. The titles are for ease of reference. It is recommended however, that neither the titles nor the information be given during the activities in using the photographs as they may prejudice the issues. The background information will be necessary to explore the issues that accompany each of the questions in this section.

List of photos plus key themes

1. Vila Prudente against the skyline of Sao Paulo. One of the world's largest cities. The home of 16 million people and the industrial/commercial heartland of Brazil.

2. Vila Prudente in context.

In the foreground the favela is bounded by the motorway entry road, the main street, the railway line. Vila Prudente is the home of 8,000 people. The city of Sao Paulo stretches into the background.

3. Favela in Rio de Janeiro.

In Rio, many favelas are built on stilts up the hillsides on a thin covering of soil over solid bedrock and are thus

prone to mud slides. In January 1988, torrential rain swept through Rio and its favelas and 290 people died, 734 were injured and 13,943 were left homeless.

4. A more recent favela on the outskirts of Sao Paulo. Houses are much more ramshackle, made from cardboard, wood corrugated tin, etc. The sewage passes directly underneath the wooden "bridges".
5. Shared water, Vila Prudente. The common water taps have made a big difference. Not only do they provide clean water, they are also a focal point for the community.
6. The houses of Vila Prudente have many roles – here a display of plants and flowers – many with extensive medicinal purposes. Homeopathic medicine is very highly developed and used throughout Brazil.
7. A main street in Vila Prudente.
8. The bars – meeting to play various games, to drink and to chat – an important aspect of, in this case, mens' lives.
9. A typical Vila Prudente house. Note the electricity meters – the result of a long struggle for services and a sign of some permanency.
10. A typical image of Sao Paulo – a modern, well serviced and "commutable" city

11. Old people play a crucial role – as child minders, historians, advisors, etc.
12.and her family.
13. Homework – a universal task.
14. Education – for a better future?
15. Building the community creche – here a group of young church activists build communities both materially and spiritually.
16. Parties are universal. Celebration is very important.
17. The first stage of squatting – these people have organised an “invasao” – an invasion of open land on the city outskirts. Whole communities invade overnight, set up these tents, struggle to hold on to the land. In this case they lost and were moved on.
18. A group discussion in Vila Prudente.
19. A single woman of 17 years struggles to rear her family. Single parent families are common.
20. Inside a home. For many, televisions are crucial. One survey showed that over 60% of households have television sets.
21. Electricity, water, sanitation – all signs of progress achieved.
22. Shops provide not only the basic necessities of life but also a chance to meet and talk.
23. Nelson at school.
24. The contrast between two worlds....

The following questions are offered as suggestions of areas which you might explore in relation to each photograph.

1. How does this image of Sao Paulo compare with other capital cities in the world? How does it compare with your capital city?
2. Are the benefits of Brazil's wealth enjoyed by all? What does the contrast in development tell us?
3. Why are the houses built on the hillside? What dangers are there for the people who live in them?
4. What are these favela homes made of? What facilities are available? What difficulties do you imagine the people experience? How would their health be affected? What is most striking about the picture?
5. What effect would the introduction of a central tap have on an area in Vila Prudente?
6. Suggest a reason why this woman has so many plants growing on the wall of her house apart from being decorative? Items are being continually re-used in the favela. What evidence is there in the photograph to suggest this?
7. How does this main street differ from a main street in your area?
8. Why are bars important in the life of the community? How does this bar compare with a bar in your area? (see also photograph 22)
9. What difference do you think the introduction of electricity has made to the people of the favela? Fire is a major threat to life in the favela. Why do you think this is so?
10. Who benefits most from this type of road network? What does it tell you about development priorities in Brazil? What are the development priorities in your area?

11. What role does this woman have in her community? How are old people treated? How are old people treated in your community? What services are available when they can no longer earn a living?
12. How is a family home in the favela similar to or different from your home? What difficulties do you think children encounter growing up in a house like that in the photograph?
13. Who do you think is deciding what these children should learn in school? Who decides what you learn in school? How appropriate is your education to your needs?
14. How well resourced is the school in the photograph? Whose responsibility is it to resource schools? Who is responsible for resourcing schools in your area?
15. Why is a creche facility a priority? How does work such as this build up a community? Are creches considered a priority in your area? What activities are church workers in your area involved in?
16. Why are parties important in Vila Prudente?
17. Why are people forced to become squatters? What advantages are there in a whole community deciding to move into an area of vacant land? What problems do squatters face? In your country what rights do squatters have?
18. What are the benefits of group decision making? Could development in your community be decided this way?
19. What particular difficulties do single parent families encounter? What type of community support is there in the favela for single parent families? How does this compare with the support system in your area? What is the attitude in your society to single parent families?
20. What role does television play in the life of the favela? How does television influence people's expectations?
21. What would it mean for a community to be without electricity, water and sanitation? Who provides these facilities in you area?
22. Compare the role of women in this photograph with the role of men in photograph no. 8?
23. What do you consider are the aspirations of young people in Vila Prudente? What aspirations do young people in your society have?
24. In your opinion why do such contrasts of wealth and poverty exist in a society such as Brazil ? Are there similar examples of extreme contrast to be found in your society ?

Debating the Future

Conflicts of interest and differences of opinion arise as to the shape of the future of Vila Prudente and who should control that future.

In this section we examine the various interest groups within Vila Prudente and the issues outside of Vila Prudente that affect its future. The views on the page opposite illustrate some of the choices and difficulties facing Vila Prudente.

Activities

1. Identify the different people whose views are expressed here (e.g. young person, etc.). Can you think of other sectors whose views are not represented?
2. Which statements do you agree with? Which ones do you disagree with?
3. In groups of 4 or 5 group rank the statements from 1 to 12, number 1 being the statement you agree with most and 12 the statement you agree with least. Feed these back to the whole group giving reasons for your choices.
4. Write a speech or report outlining your views on the future of the Vila Prudente. (They may have changed as a result of your discussions). This could also be done from a variety of perspectives e.g.: as a favelado as a community leader as the Mayor of Sao Paulo.
5. Look at the people you identified in Q.1. Using a similar list take an issue that is prominent in your area (e.g. Travellers, Squatters, Homelessness). Prepare 'talking heads' expressing the different view points about what should be done.

Favelados* need support from other grassroots organisations – we need to unite together.

As a young person the most important thing for me is to study, be trained, and to get myself a job.

There are houses on the outskirts of Sao Paulo – why don't Favelados move there?

Favelas are an eyesore and give visitors the wrong impression of Sao Paulo. They should be pulled down.

Favelas must be cleared to make room for housing.

Favelados are well off compared with the homeless and those living in corticos.

The more Favelados link with other grassroots movements, the more difficult it is to satisfy our own needs.

The needs of everyone are important. Everyone should have a fair share. Things can be different.

The city needs water, sanitation, transport, and cleaning services first before housing can be tackled.

Investment in industry must be the main priorities if Brazil is to develop.

Small farmers own only 3% of the land in Brazil. If people were allowed to hold on to the plots of land they would not end up in the favelas.

Farmers must move into the 20th century – that means big farms, cash crops and mechanisation.

Note: *Favelados are the people who live in favelas.

Timeline and Facts Box

So far we have concentrated on life in the community of Vila Prudente. However, life in favelas such as Vila Prudente are very much part of the wider context of Brazilian life today and Brazil of the past. In this section we look at the social, economic and political developments in Brazil in an historical context.

We include a simple introductory timeline of Brazil with a basic facts box which summarise developments in Brazil.

Using the Facts Box

1. Identify the most surprising facts from the facts box and the page opposite.
2. Does any of the information in the facts box help to explain issues that arose in the section on Profiles (e.g. life expectancy/infant mortality/ economy/ debt/religion)?
3. Draw up a similar facts box for your country. Compare and contrast it with that for Brazil.

Using the Timeline (page 26)

1. Make a list of key words about Vila Prudente.
2. Read the boxes contained in the timeline and make a list of key words about Brazil. Compare this list with the list of key words about Vila Prudente.

BASIC FACTS BOX

Name:

Federative Republic of Brazil.

Area:

8,511,965 sq. kms.

Capital:

Brasilia

Population:

14.4 million (1988)

Language:

Portuguese is the official language of all except indigenous people who speak principally Tupi, Ge, Gorib, Arawak and Nambicuara.

Religion:

Predominantly Christian (90% Roman Catholic).

Government:

Civilian government; Fernando Collor elected President November 1989. Replaced Jose Sarney who was President from April, 1985 when he replaced the military government.

Economy:

GNP per capita = US2,160 (1988)

Foreign Debt:

\$115 billion, 1990.

Main Exports:

Food and beverages, minerals, vegetable products, machinery.

Main Imports:

Minerals, machinery, chemical products, vegetable products.

Life Expectancy at Birth:

65

Infant Mortality:

63 per 1,000 live births 1988

Literacy Rate:

78.5% (1985)

SOME KEY ISSUES

Indigenous People

When the Portuguese Pedro Alvares Cabral arrived in Vera Cruz in 1500 it was estimated that there were some 5 million Indians living in the area making up modern-day Brazil. Today (1990) only 5% of these have survived (250,000). Up to 1,500 Yanomami Indians in Brazil died between 1988-1990 because other people moved in on their land bringing with them disease and destruction. At this rate the Yanomami will be totally wiped out in 10 years time.

Land

Ownership of land or lack of ownership is one of the biggest issues in modern Brazil. In 1988, 2% of owners with holdings averaging more than 1,000 hectares owned 58% of agricultural land while 83% of farms with less than 100 ha. barely reached 2% of the total area. Over half of the 240 million ha. which make up Brazilian large farms are abandoned and non-productive, this in a country which has three times as much farm land as China. Over one and a half thousand peasant small holders have been killed in defence of their land since 1980.

Wealth and Poverty

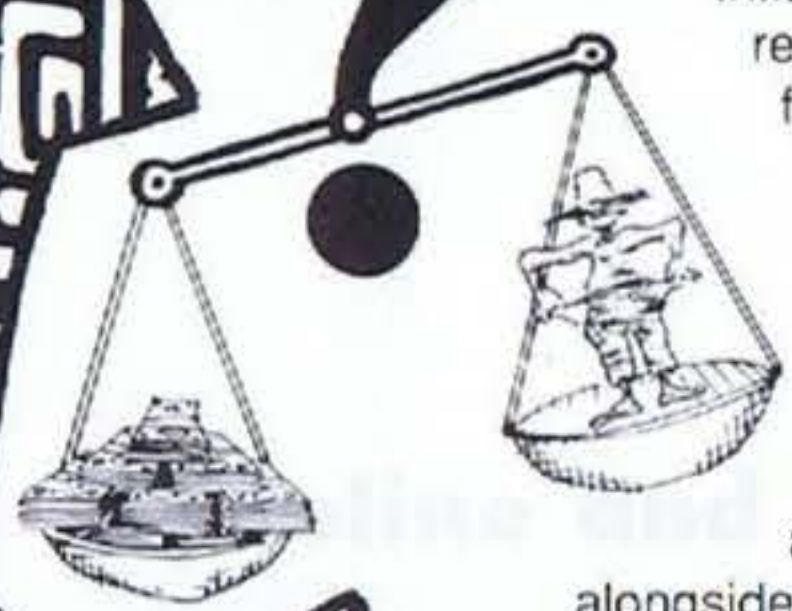
Brazil is a rich country which has enough resources to create a good standard of

living for all its people. It has the eighth largest economy in the world, yet 50% of its people survive in absolute poverty. Since 1980 the average inflation per year was 260%. In the year to April 1990 inflation was 7,000%, an average of 6% a day. In Brazil the gap between rich and poor is widening considerably.

TIME LINE

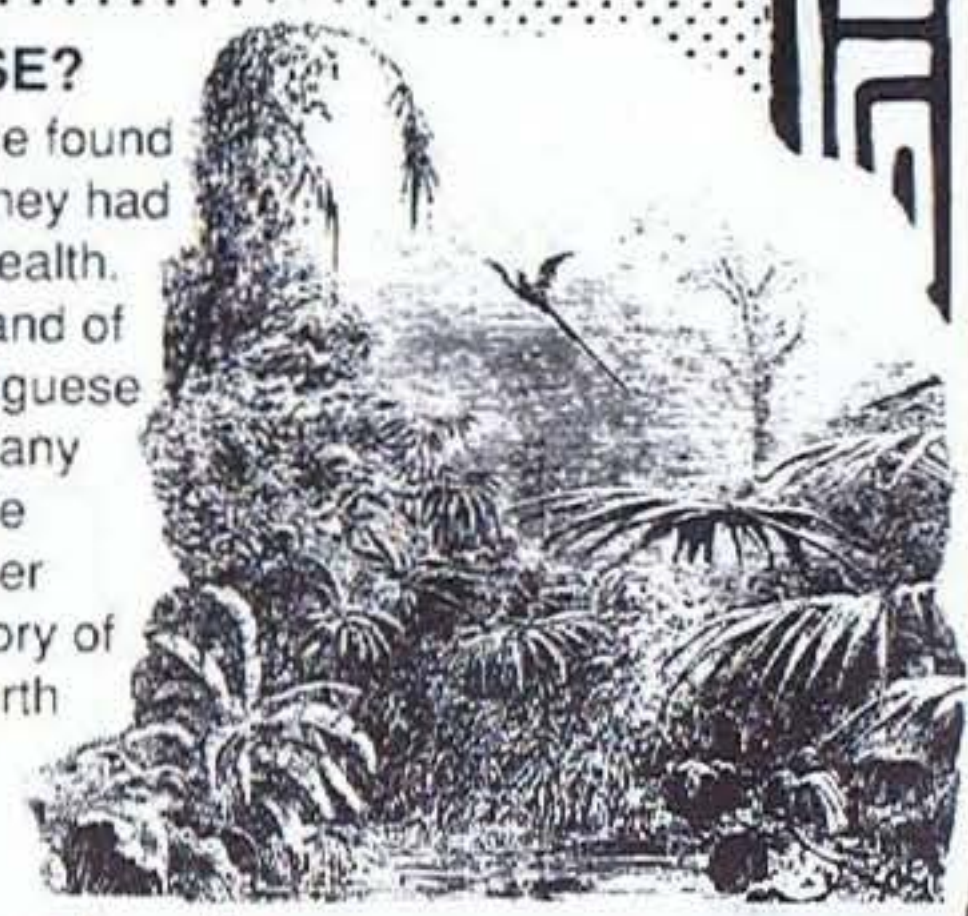
6 BRAZIL IN THE 1990's

Today Brazil is in the midst of a major economic and political crisis. Inflation and debt have reached all time highs thus forcing the government to introduce severe cutbacks. These continue to hurt the poor. Popular movements of the rural and urban poor continue to challenge the authoritarian government alongside the opposition parties and the trade unions. Whatever happens in Brazil in the 1990's will have major repercussions in Latin America and worldwide.



1 A NEW PARADISE?

When the Portuguese found Brazil in 1500 they thought they had found a paradise of untold wealth. They called it El Dorado or land of gold. But of course the Portuguese had not discovered Brazil; many Indians had lived there for the previous 3000 years. The later history of Brazil was the history of white expansion from the North East southwards and inland and of the genocide of the Indians who numbered 5 million in 1500 but are now reduced to roughly 250,000 in number.



2 SUGAR, MINES, RUBBER, COFFEE AND ORE

The history of Brazil can be summarised as the history of using and misusing resources. From the early colonisation of the North-East and the introduction of sugar cane (and slaves) settlement moved southwards into the mining region of Minas Gerais (iron ore, gold, diamonds, etc). From there it moved inland and now into the immense area (and wealth) of Amazon Basin. These developments have created fabulous wealth for some and immense poverty for others.



MANAUS

RECIFE

SALVADOR

5 "BRAZIL HAS DONE WELL BUT BRAZILIANS HAVE NOT"

The immense wealth of Brazil is obvious - so too is its immense poverty. They exist uncomfortably side by side. The famous Brazilian economic miracle did nothing to redistribute wealth amongst all. The gap between rich and poor continued (and continues) to widen. Rural poverty increased, pushed people off the land and into the overcrowded cities. Services in these cities are very poor and jobs hard to come by.



Since 1980 the poor have become better organised and are now struggling for their rights.

BRAZIL

RIO DE JANEIRO

SAO PAULO

3 BRAZILIAN MULTI-CULTURALISM

By the time of independence from Portugal in 1822, Brazil had the makings of a multicultural society. In later years, immigrants from Africa, Asia and North America were added to the Indian, slave and European peoples already there. Italians and Portuguese came to work on the coffee plantations in Sao Paulo state. Japanese, German and Polish peoples also settled. The last census recording the colour of Brazilian people was taken in 1950 and showed that whites make up 62% of the population, blacks 11% and browns 27%. While inter-marriage and racial tolerance are high, racism remains, especially towards black people.



4 MILITARY RULE 1964 - 1985

This period of Brazilian history witnessed considerable economic growth. Development at the time became known as the "Brazilian Miracle". But this took place alongside strict military rule, with assassinations, "disappearances", torture and the widespread abuse of political rights. Opposition to military rule was led by the poor and the workers as well as by the Catholic Church. Despite the return to civilian government and democracy since 1985, the military remain strong and continue to influence Brazilian society.



Bringing it Home

This pack about the community of favela Vila Prudente raises very fundamental justice and human rights issues. The teachers who compiled these materials found that their discussions about what they had experienced in Brazil naturally led to discussions about their own areas. One of the most valuable aspects of the study visit was that it helped the group to look again at their own lives and communities. This page offers a number of suggestions as to how people using this pack might apply the same process.

Asking Questions

- Why do you think people are living in favelas?
- Are there any similar situations in your community or country?
- What questions are you left with having used this pack – about the favela community? about urban life in Brazil? about urban life in your country? Brainstorm as a group.

In Your Area

1. Look at the photographs again. Jot down the key words that you would associate with the favela and the key words that you would associate with your area. Discuss your two wordsheets.
2. Make a list of key people/organisations /movements in the favela and in your area.
3. Using the profiles on pages 8 to 16 as a model, draw up profiles of people in your own place.
4. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of life in the favela and life in your area. How are the favela people trying to achieve their demands? How are people in your area working together for improvements? How could they work together if this is not happening at the moment?
5. Compile a collection of photographs that would portray life in your community and the key issues of concern in the area. (If photographs are not available, local newspapers may be a useful resource.). Display the photographs indicating the key themes raised in each photograph.
6. Using this collection carry out some of the activities outlined under the section on USING THE PHOTOGRAPHS (see pages 4 to 7).

Further reading on Brazil

Participants in the Brazil 1988 Study Visit

- Maria Brito
- Susan Connolly
- Pamela Corrin
- Sa James Crowe
- Anne Curran
- Stephen McCurdy
- Norah Moore-Hennan
- Suzanne Nix
- Eamon Power
- Colm Regan
- Agnes Kelly and
- Diane Swift

View's Book: Introducing Development Issues
1991 Development Centre

Brazil Profile
1991

State of Hope: Shanties on the Edge of Hell
1979

Living Poor: Penguin, 1979

Spenser: Cities of Life in the Urban Third World
1971

Huller, Jane E. & Narwary, David
1971

Brazil: A Multi-faceted Progress
1991

Shantytowns: A study of the experiences of children living in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro
1971

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Development Education Centre, Birmingham

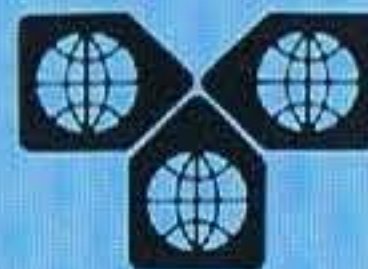
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH
**MOVIMENTO DE DEFESA DO FAVELADO,
SAO PAULO, BRAZIL.**