

# 4 CORNERS

## CREATIVE HANDS

Lynne McLeavy and her colleague, Bete, have recently begun a ministry to the women and children who live off what they can find on Brazil's rubbish dumps.



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These people live in constant fear for their lives. Everyone knows that criminals hide out at the dump when they want to get away from the police. Last month, two door-to-door salesmen had their vehicles and goods stolen. The very strong sun and heavy rainfall do not stop the people working in the dump. Their skin gets scorched and wrinkled as they go searching through the rubbish. Rotting rubbish is chosen because of its value. Shoes, bottles, paper, cardboard, metal and clothing, all can be sold. People earn around £2.50 a ▶



► day. Everything they own in their houses has been found in the dump. £2.50 will buy 1kg of rice and 1kg of beans. To survive, they have to eat the food that they find in the dump, such as out-of-date meat and chicken the supermarkets throw away.

The people also have to put up with the stigma of being from the dump. When they are in town they sometimes hear people talking about them. One man was heard to say, "If it was up to me, I would go to the dump and kill everyone in it."

### Scabies

Many people are sick because of the poisonous smoke coming from the dump, but no one knows who sets it on fire. Once the rubbish is lit it takes a few days of rain to go out. Rose is three-years-old but says she is five. She has a baby brother and her mother is pregnant with her third child – all different fathers – but none of them are around any more. What I first noticed about Rose was her feet: covered in infected scabies. They looked really sore. Rose was walking towards me and kept stopping to cry; she was talking at the same time. She would start walking again, then stop to cry. I thought it was because of the ants. There are a lot of red ants and they really do hurt when they bite. I went to her, picked her up and realized it was not ants that were bothering her but the open sores on her feet. I wanted to wash her feet but the only water that was available was very dirty. The people who live off the tip are so used to living with scabies

that they do not even notice when their children are suffering.

Please pray about the scabies situation at the Flowers Estate. The new born babies have also caught scabies. Things are very serious. The scabies is coming from the dogs which have a type of scabies that can be passed on to the children. I took photos and then went to see the Secretary of Health for Benevides. She called in a vet who went with me to see the situation. He agreed that the illness is coming from the dogs; he was appalled at the state the children were in. There is the prospect of treatment for them in January.

### Creative Hands Project

Bete and I visited all the people living around the dump and invited them to a meeting. We were looked at with a lot of suspicion, but 20 ladies and all their children came to the meeting. They talked to us about the situation they are living in, and what they felt could be done about it. They wanted to learn different crafts and sewing, so that they could sell what they make.

Bete knows how to sew beads onto flip flops, so we started with a course to teach the ladies how to make them.



At the same time we opened a Good News Bible Club for the children. The ladies have a lot of motivation and learned very quickly. It was this group of ladies who chose the name for their group, 'Creative Hands.' I really like the name; it is very positive.

They are very interested in hearing the Gospel and have started doing a Bible study course. We asked the ladies for prayer requests and most of them wrote the same things. They listed each member of their family and asked for prayer that they would find employment. Another common request was for their husbands and boyfriends who are alcoholics. Lene told us that when she has any money, she must hide it so that her husband doesn't spend it on drink. She gave him 10p to buy bread for the children and he spent it on alcohol.

Please pray for our work among these very needy people. ■

**Lynne McLeavy**



*For more information about supporting the work of the Creative Hands Project, please contact the Swindon office.*

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HANDS**