

Brazil 4 - Plex Homes-for-the-Helpless Project Update August 6, 2010 – Terri Polet

When our church partner Calvary Chapel in Rio de Janeiro, revealed that there were irregularities regarding the land purchased in Xerem, Brazil in 2009 which launched this project, we all agreed not to proceed with this project in this area of Brazil. A decision was made early in 2010 to find a project with a similar mandate of housing for women and children in Brazil and redirect the funds there. Habitat for Humanity, Brazil had a project called Fiera Nova – Rebuilding Women’s Lives in the city of Feira Nova located 77 km from Recife that matched our mandate. Letters went out to all donors to the project asking for their permission to redirect their funds and all responded favorably to the request.

To date \$51,786 US dollars, which was the amount remaining in the Brazil 4 - Plex project account has now been successfully transferred to Habitat for Humanity-Brazil (HHB) in support of the Feira Nova Project. \$26,000 dollars still remain tied up in the land that was purchased in 2009 to begin the 4-Plex project. However, I am pleased to report, from my recent mission to Brazil to deal with this matter and investigate the Habitat for Humanity project in Feira Nova, that there is now a Brazilian lawyer seeking justice on the land issue. In due time the lawyer will receive the research from land registries and will provide some options to the Calvary Chapel leaders, who will decide with us as to the best option to pursue.



Observing and taking part in the Habitat Project in Brazil did confirm that God has still used the 4-plex project opportunity for his purposes. Our efforts have been multiplied and will give homes to 100 women and their children who work in the flour factories. In my opinion this project is a success story. We were able to visit one flour factory out of eight still operating in the area. It is a complex project for HHB because they normally like to have home owners help to build their homes. However, in this case few women can help since they have very long hours in the factory peeling manioc for flour. Once the women have homes they still have no other alternative income in this area as manioc flour is still an important staple. It will take a generation to complete the change as these deplorable factories shut down because new work opportunities must be created. Habitat only provides homes, but this project is unique as HHB adjusts their model to partner with the Women Center of Glória

do Goitá City, and local council to integrate the actions on the Rebuilding Women’s Lives Project. This group will select the women for ownership of the Habitat houses being built and be involved in the longer term sustainable development as these groups find solutions that will help to break the cycle of poverty. I hope you will agree with me that your support redirected into this project is a success.

“Known as “houses of flour” the boxes where women work are inhuman and based on patriarchal culture of exploitation, encouraged by the long standing social constructs. The treatment of women is discriminatory and oppressive, containing unequal relations of gender occurring during teenage years. The early work has been increasingly common in this region, bringing major impacts on education and integration of women into the workplace. A significant number of scrapers are 13 to 30 years old as no other job alternatives is available to survive. Over 60% of women are heads of families. Over 60% of the women interviewed are single or divorced assuming alone the maintenance of their homes, education, and caring for children. The income obtained from these women in the “houses of flour” is a misery, 85% of them receive less than \$ 94 per month. Each 100 kg of peeled cassava they earn \$ 0,94 or \$ 9,40 per 1.000kg. To obtain that they work 15hours a day 4am until 10pm without any security and in miserable conditions.” (Habitat for Humanity –Brazil Feira Nova project report)

