



# Brazil Report

It's strange how you can arrive in a new place and know so strongly that your time there will change and re-direct your life in unimagined ways. That's how I felt as the plane from London flew low over Sao Paulo preparing to land.

I hunched low in my seat and peered out the plane's window onto the foreign landscape below. To one side I saw derelict, precariously placed houses clustered tightly together over the land – the Favelas of Brazil. On the other side, the sun shone brightly off the hard steel exteriors of an army of sky scrapers that marched off into the distance. Never before had I seen such a noticeable contrast between the rich and the poor, the line that is drawn up between the classes shown so clearly by the landscape.

I lived and worked at Aramitan for nearly a month in December 2005, with a wonderful group of people. The work we did on the house and the land varied each day depending on the weather and the materials we had available. Whether we were plastering and concreting, or gardening and building, we learnt new things everyday. We worked during the week, and in the weekends when we had free time, we visited colourful markets, struggling Favelas, old cathedrals and manicured parks.

The Brazilian people whom we met while in Sao Paulo were all so kind hearted and generous. They welcomed us into their homes and incorporated us into their gatherings and functions. The lively music, the expressive dancing, the creative food and the varied people made each adventure unique. It was so special to be immersed in the rich, vibrant culture that is so strong in Brazil.

When the day came for me to return to London the thought of leaving Sao Paulo was a sad one. But I boarded the plane and soon found myself back in England where the snow fell from a wistful grey sky. But the eye-opening experiences I have had in Brazil will stay with me always.

Coral Fraser (N.Z) 02/2006