

PROFILE: BRAZIL



Vast in size and economic potential, Brazil is also home to more people suffering extreme poverty than anywhere else in Latin America.

Brazil is mineral-rich and self-sufficient in oil. But rapid development has seen winners and losers. Indigenous Amazonian peoples have lost land and livelihoods; one-fifth of Brazil's rainforest has gone – much to illegal logging. Meanwhile, Brazil's arable land lies in the hands of a few.

Since 2003, social welfare initiatives have improved millions of lives. However, a huge wealth gap still exists and corruption has been a problem in recent years.

Poverty is most pervasive in rural areas, while violent crime has risen in towns and cities. Millions of children live on the streets – despite passing one of the most advanced Child Acts in the world.

Brazil has become a model for HIV care. Around 600,000 people live with the virus, but benefit from free treatment. (Brazil's government bypassed major drugs firms to produce cheaper, generic medicines.)

Brazil's rapidly growing evangelical church is often referred to as 'the church of the poor'. However, the many denominations often struggle to unite on common issues.

TEARFUND'S WORK IN BRAZIL

Tearfund has been supporting projects in Brazil for more than 30 years and we currently work with eight partners in the country. Between 1990 and 1997 we backed a number of children at risk projects, but our main current focus is north-east Brazil, where severe drought intensifies hardships and encourages migration.

Here is just a brief sample of Tearfund-supported work in the region:

ACEV (Ação Evangélica), a Brazilian evangelical church denomination, has installed around 100 wells during the last 14 years, providing tens of thousands of rural people with a reliable water supply and improved sanitation. Local community members receive training in basic health, well maintenance and community mobilisation.

ACEV also raises awareness of community rights to government water deliveries. Without this intervention, uneducated villagers are vulnerable to deception by corrupt local government officials who demand payment for what should be a free service.

Seeking to transform the circumstances of 'excluded' people, Diaconia supports vulnerable children and trains church volunteers to care for people living with HIV.

A Diaconia food security programme, meanwhile, helps drought-affected communities become self-sufficient in food and water. Small farmers are taught to diversify crops, build affordable irrigation systems and sanitation facilities, sell excess produce in local markets and get involved in local politics.

- **Pray for people living in poverty in Brazil.**
- **Please pray for our Brazilian partners as they seek to help others.**
- **And pray for Brazil: for justice, peace, good health and hope for everyone.**