



Issue Cards: Brazil

CAUSES:

Jessica: "People in my favela use drink...to forget about how hard their lives are, but it doesn't help..."

- Unemployment
- Tough living conditions in the favelas
- Lack of education
- Children of alcoholics are more likely to grow up to become alcoholics themselves

PERSONAL EFFECTS:

Jessica: "The worst thing was when Mum and Dad used to drink...I had to look after my brother and sister. It was a very difficult time for me."

- Neglected children
- Family breakdown
- Domestic violence
- Increases likelihood of poverty



SOCIAL EFFECTS:

- Conflict and anti-social behaviour in the community
- Illness
- Unemployment – drinking makes it harder for people to get jobs, and lift themselves out of poverty

THINK ABOUT...

Imagine if you were...

- **A parent** who couldn't find work or earn enough to look after your family. You have to send your children out to work illegally to help pay the bills. Where you live is dangerous - any day something terrible could happen to you or your children. It's easy to see how you might turn to drink to forget.
- **A child** who has to look after themselves and their siblings because their parent/s are too drunk to look after them. You do not get enough to eat and are scared when your parents get angry and/or pass out because they are drunk.



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CAUSES:

Children and young people join gangs in the favelas for many reasons:

- Lack of opportunity
- Poverty
- The need for protection from violence and other gangs
- Looking for status
- Peer pressure
- Revenge
- A family member is already part of a gang

PERSONAL EFFECTS:

If you're a gang member:

- You are more exposed to violence and likely to be arrested/jailed, hurt or killed in gang conflict
- You are likely to have more access to money

If you're not a gang member:

- Your neighbourhood will be a dangerous place to live in, and if you go out, you have to stay alert at all times, avoiding people trying to offer you drugs and to join their gang.
- Jessica says: 'Mum worries even if I go out to buy bread, as children like me get hurt all the time. People...take drugs to help them forget about their lives, but it doesn't help.'

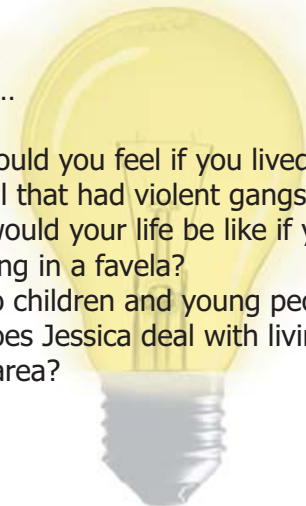


SOCIAL EFFECTS:

- Gang violence – many children and young people are hurt or even killed in gang conflict
- Increase in gun crime
- Increase in drug and alcohol abuse
- Police 'have no control over the gangs'
- Gangs can make an area a very dangerous place to live in, as Jessica says: 'Sometimes the drug dealers let off fireworks to warn everyone there is going to be war with the police. This is frightening because people get hurt or even killed. My friend Sabrina's dad was a drug dealer and he was killed outside our house.'

THINK ABOUT...

- How would you feel if you lived in a favela in Brazil that had violent gangs?
- What would your life be like if you were part of a gang in a favela?
- Why do children and young people join gangs?
- How does Jessica deal with living with gangs in her area?





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PROBLEMS:

Jessica: I'm a favelada – someone who lives in a favela. There are favelas all over Brazil and it's where people live who can't afford anywhere else.

- Unemployment rates in favelas are a third higher than the rest of Brazil.
- Badly paid jobs – even if favelados are lucky enough to have a job, they usually don't pay enough for families to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Lack of education – children miss out on going to school because they are needed to work to help the family.



FAMILY POVERTY IN BRAZILIAN FAVELAS

THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY:

- Poverty in the favelas increases the rich/poor divide in Brazil, creating unequal share of wealth.
- Poor housing.
- Lack of plumbing, toilets, covered drains and sewage pipes.
- Poor access to health care.
- Malnutrition – not getting enough to eat.
- Children have to work and miss out on education.
- Increase in criminal activities – drug dealing, stealing and even murder.
- Increase in gangs and gang conflict.

SOLUTIONS:

- People run small businesses from their homes to earn some extra money for the family e.g. hairdressing, beauty salons, dressmaking.
- To earn more money, sometimes people in the favelas feel they have no choice but to get involved in illegal activities e.g. drug dealing.
- Education – if children had a chance to go to school, they could get better paid jobs and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.
- Projects like Passage House are helping families earn extra money as Jessica explains: 'Mum works as a manicurist, but Passage House is also teaching her how to sew, so she can make clothes and bags. This will give her a chance to earn a bit more money.'

THINK ABOUT...

What would you do if you were a parent?... You only have a small amount of money to pay for essential things for your family. What would you have to give up? You'd have to make choices between:

- Putting food on the table
- Paying for the water and electricity
- Paying for your children's travel to get to school
- Bottle of alcohol
- Top up for your mobile phone

How would you feel if you were in Jessica's position? Not knowing if you were going to get enough food that day, or whether your mum could buy the things you need?



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WHY IS PASSAGE HOUSE NEEDED?

- The favela Jessica lives in, in Recife, is very violent. In just 6 months in 2007, 2,019 people were killed in and around Recife.
- Lots of children and young people live on the streets and are vulnerable to violence and abuse
- Families living in poverty need financial and emotional support.
- Many young people are vulnerable to gangs and are addicted to drugs, glue or alcohol.

WHAT JESSICA SAYS ABOUT PASSAGE HOUSE:

"The project helped Mum to stop drinking, which was one of the happiest times of my life, because now she spends more time with us. Mum works as a manicurist, but Passage House is also teaching her how to sew, so she can make clothes and bags. This will give her a chance to earn a bit more money.

The project is very important for me and my friends, because it gives us the chance to play games, eat good food and be together in a safe place, away from the violence in our area. We go there everyday! I especially like dancing to frevo music and acting at the project."



WORK OF PASSAGE HOUSE:

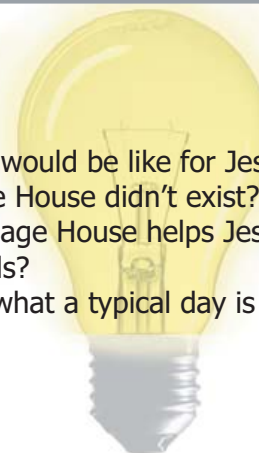
Set up in 1990, Passage House is funded by money raised through Sport Relief and provides a safe place for 4,000 young girls and their families who live in the favelas and streets of Recife.

Passage House provides:

- A safe place to play
- Education on good health and well being
- Help and support with homework
- Good food and showers
- Counselling for girls who may have been hurt or affected by violence. The project also counsels girls who are addicted to drugs or alcohol.
- Sports and cultural activities, so young people can build their self-esteem.
- Help enrol children into school
- Training for parents in different skills so they can earn extra money.

THINK ABOUT...

- What life would be like for Jessica and her friends if Passage House didn't exist?
- How Passage House helps Jessica, her family and her friends?
- Imagine what a typical day is like at Passage House





Issue Cards: Brazil

EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

- Education is free – as well as uniforms, books, pens and school meals.
- Children are expected to attend school between the ages of 7 and 14.
- It is estimated that over five million children between those ages are not in school.
- Children who live in poor areas, like favelas, end up working to help the family, which means they miss out on school.
- Some schools have two or three shifts, so all children can attend at some point during the day, even if they have to work.



EDUCATION

WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

- Every child has the right to go to school.
- School is essential to help children and young people develop their minds and get better jobs and to end poverty around the world.

Jessica: "School's very important. You need to learn how to read and write or people take advantage of you. There are lots of older people who can't read and write and life is difficult for them. Just getting on the bus can be hard if you can't read where the bus is going. If you don't go to school you can end up picking up garbage, but even to do that you need to be able to count money!"

WHAT STOPS CHILDREN GOING TO SCHOOL IN BRAZIL?

- High unemployment, poor housing and low family incomes mean that many children either don't go to school, or if they do, don't manage to finish their education.
- Some parents may not see the point of sending their children to school, as they have very low expectations for their children. This is particularly true if they can't read or write themselves.
- Even if children can go to school, the quality of education might not be very good. In some poor areas in Brazil, teachers tend to be less qualified and schools are not as well funded.



THINK ABOUT...

- Comparing Jessica with another child who doesn't have education in Brazil – what would both their futures be like?
- What do you think Jessica's future would be like if she didn't go to school?
- Imagine what your life would be like without education?