

An Interview with Leonie on her recent trip to England

April 2009

Jayne Tell us what is different about life in Honduras

Leonie The people in the valley live in mud shacks with no running water and no electricity. The floor is mud so the women cannot put the babies on the floor so they carry them everywhere. They bathe, wash clothes and drink from the river. This means that they are all clean but they all suffer from parasitic infections from the water as it is not purified.



I do have water but it comes from a well which is muddy and obviously cold. Washing in muddy water, including your hair, is not very nice to say the least. We have to buy our drinking water which comes in gallon barrels and, as it's far too heavy for me to carry, I have to find a strong boy or man to do this. We have electricity in the house but the government can turn the national grid off. The worst time I can remember is the electricity being off for five days. This means no refrigerator, washing machine or shower.

Life in Honduras is really busy for me. I get up at 0530 hours to get Joshua his breakfast and then take him to school, which is about 40 minutes away in the town. The roads are virtually non-existent so it's like being on a switch back ride.

Jayne You always seem to have a house full of people. Who are they?

Leonie Well there's me and Joshua, Miranda (who heads up the transition unit for teenagers) and she has two foster children Santos (17 years) and Dino (21 years) Santos' sister. Dino is in Kansas at the moment at Bible school but she will be back in May and will work with the H4H ministry with the children. There are two transition units to help aid teenagers leaving the orphanage to gain skills for life and living. In this way the teenagers do not end up on the streets, with all that entails.

Jayne Do you have any help?

Leonie Yes there's Digna who is my housekeeper. She has ten children of her own and she walks to my house every morning (40 minutes each way). Her last baby was born prematurely at six months and she carried him skin to skin to the very poor hospital an hour away in the town. This meant travelling on a chicken bus (a metal bus for animals and people). Women in the valley have no access to maternity care and many cannot afford the bus fares to the hospital in the town.



Digna also cooks the weekly meal for between 80-100 children at the local school. Each nutritionally balanced meal costs 50 pence and this is often the only nourishing meal they get all week. The remainder of the week the children will often eat garden weeds and tortillas as their staple diet.

Jayne That is so sad.

Leonie It is and I am often moved to tears. I know all these children and their parents by name and I get so frustrated that I can't do more. During the week Issis (19) and her baby, Daniel (1), who live in the valley in a Pulperia (a little metal shack which is also the newsagents as shown), come to my house to learn skills for living. She also helps with some cleaning and cooking. I also have people who stay for respite care and families who come to adopt Honduran children. The house is always full.



Jayne What is your biggest concern?

Leonie Being a single women alone in the house with many vulnerable women and children. We have no guard and there have also been kidnappings at Joshua's school.

Jayne That's a really important prayer point for all of us.

Details of all projects can be found on the March 2009 newsletter which can be downloaded from the Newsletter archive.