

THE  
SEWING  
PROJECT





# SEWING HOPE

Delya lives on the edge of Paraguay's capital city Asuncion on a sandy plot. There is no running water but a deep well. Cooking is done on a charcoal brazier. There isn't enough money for a fridge. There are 8 people, including children, in the extended family.

Delya's husband left her when her children were small but she managed to provide for them by taking in washing and collecting plastic bottles and bottle caps for recycling.

Poverty can rob people of hope. Many women in Paraguay have never had the support to complete primary or secondary education. The sewing project is simple and small yet for the women who participate, opportunities are created. It enables new skills to be developed such as using a sewing machine and making clothes.

Like all beginners, frustration with slow progress, the need to concentrate, getting seams straight, hems even, and unpicking what's gone wrong are experienced. In the midst of this a community grows.

Having the sewing workshop in the shanty town has opened up new possibilities for the women. Delya told me, "This sewing workshop is my real work; it's a joy". Starting with nothing, in three months Delya has learnt to cut out from patterns, hem, do straight and zigzag stitches. She's made tops, trousers, cushions and place mats. You can sense a hunger for new learning. The next steps are to fit zips, tailor clothes using a tape measure and tackle crochet, all the while polishing the basic skills. The women are keen to come to the sewing workshop because, besides the advances

in learning, it gives them a sense of belonging which raises self-esteem and creates a sense of empowerment. I thank God for His investment in this project. I'm excited to see where it's leading.

Many people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Paraguay have few opportunities to buy new clothes or learn new skills as productive as this. The women are learning professional skills for self-sufficiency through making clothes and soft furnishings to sell. With the money they make from sales, most want to buy their own machines. This is the first step.

**Caroline Gilmour-White,**  
**Project Co-ordinator in Paraguay.**





# MENDING THE SEAMS

What a delight to see first hand a project which serves local people in their community. A sewing project has evolved in three centres. Women and young girls are taught how to use an electric sewing machine and given the opportunity to make simple garments. The expressions of sheer wonderment and joy on the faces of the women as they achieved their goals are precious memories. Children were so keen to make every day items such as a scarf or to sew a pillow case.

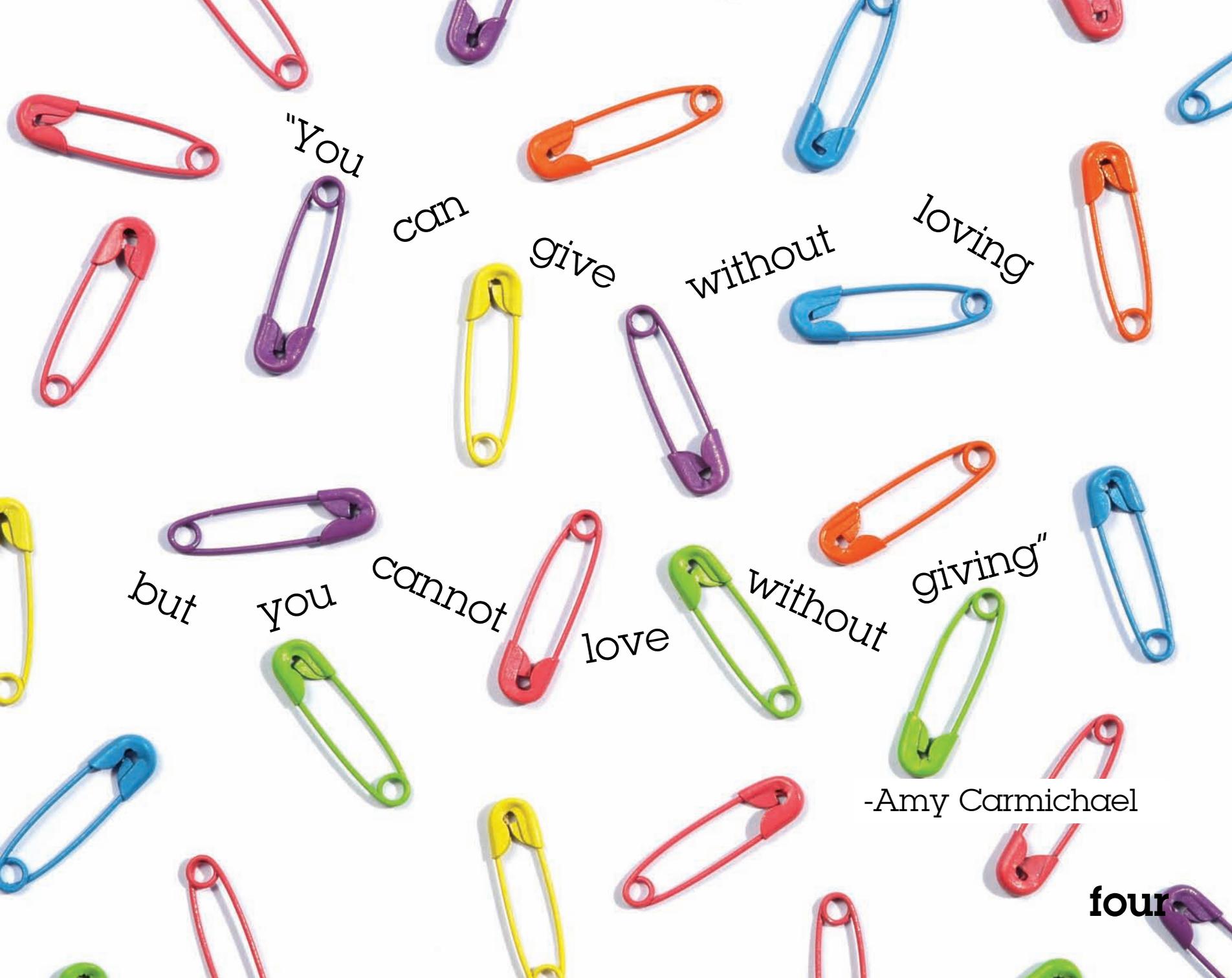
The sewing projects help women and young girls make simple garments for their own use and for sale. The women involved are very poor, with limited employment opportunities and they live in marginalised communities. Life for many of them is a daily challenge.

Words can not express how amazing an experience this was as we had the opportunity to interact with so many people. In all this we saw a great need

for physical assistance and spiritual nourishment. Be assured this project will make such a difference in the lives of extremely impoverished people as they are valued, supported and loved through this practical initiative.

**M. Lindsay  
(Down & Dromore)**

**three**



"You  
can  
give  
without  
loving

but  
you  
cannot  
love  
without  
giving"

-Amy Carmichael

four



# THE SEWING PROJECT

The sewing project doesn't take place in isolation. Local Anglican churches in Paraguay are committed to enabling children and young people to grow on a personal, social and spiritual level. The sewing project establishes a natural focal point which creates a safe and supportive environment for women, children and young people to gain valuable life skills.

People living below the poverty line cannot afford the luxury of toys, therefore providing access to toys as part of the sewing projects wider commitment to basic community development creates the potential

for learning through play, giving a golden opportunity for mothers and toddlers to learn together. This project will also enable some of the teenage girls to develop basic skills as they supervise the children and develop confidence. Resources are needed for this play initiative and also to provide the mothers and children with a snack.

This important relational work is a practical example of sharing God's love in Paraguay by providing physical and spiritual nourishment and in so doing giving mothers, children and young people the building blocks to move forward.

## **How Your Money Helps:**

- Kids Resources.
- Toys, crayons, pencils, pencil sharpeners, paper and cardboard for crafts.
- Coloured pencils, felt-tips, scissors, glue, workbooks, tumblers and towels.
- Bibles and general Christian resources.
- Snacks for children's clubs for 50 children.
- Sewing machines.
- Over locking machines.
- Cloth, elastic, zips, scissors.



Others  
pray  
for  
them

Some  
wish  
blessings

And  
they  
become  
one

Some  
send  
blessings



# PARAGUAY FACT FILE

## **Terrain**

Paraguay is divided naturally by the river Paraguay. To the west of the river is the flat deposit of the Gran Chaco, a vast plain which extends from Paraguay into Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil. This whole region is characterized by grasslands, swamps, and sparse bush coverage. The eastern area consists mainly of plains with rainforest-like vegetation and is drained by the tributaries of the Paraguay and Paraná rivers.

## **Climate**

Paraguay has a subtropical climate. In Asunción average temperatures range between 17°C in July and 27°C in January. In the Gran Chaco

temperatures exceed 45°C on hot days. Generally the main rainy season lasts from December to March.

## **History**

Early inhabitants of present day Paraguay came from three different ethnic groups: the Guaraní, Guaycurú, and Payaguá. The Portuguese explorer Alejo García discovered Paraguay from a European context in 1525. Paraguay declared its independence from Spain in 1811.

## **Economy**

Paraguay has a predominantly agricultural economy, with a struggling commercial sector.

There is a large subsistence sector, including sizable urban unemployment and underemployment. The economy is dependent on exports of soybeans, cotton, grains, cattle, timber, sugar, electricity generation, and to a decreasing degree on re-exporting to Brazil and Argentina products made elsewhere. It is, therefore, vulnerable to the vagaries of weather and to the fortunes of the Argentine and Brazilian economies.

**Population: 6.2 million**

**Capital: Asunción**

**Area: 406,752 sq km (157,048 sq miles)**

**Major languages: Spanish & Guaraní**



**How** wonderful  
it is that  
**NOBODY**  
need wait  
a **SINGLE**  
**MOMENT**  
before starting  
to **IMPROVE** the  
world -Anne Frank



# REFLECT

Within the Christian community are we guilty at times of thinking rather one dimensionally, focussing exclusively on attempting great things for God? Do we wrestle with the expression of mission which commands us to love our neighbours, to live authentically, or simply to obey God no matter how mundane the task seems.

From a cultural context we are at times deeply influenced by the notion that 'big is always best'.

We dream of doing something great. But, what if mission was less exciting? What if mission were much more invisible and at times looked just like people getting on with their ordinary lives? Isn't it stimulating to ponder the thought that all of us can participate in mission here at home and overseas.

Mission was never meant to be glamorous. Serving the poor isn't a new trend, it's simply theology worked out in practice.

Mission ought to be what we do in the ebb and flow of everyday life. As we live within our communities may we consciously seek to be the salt and light Jesus spoke of. There will be moments of joy and enthusiasm, but for the most part it will consist of just getting on with life in the daily routines that make up our lives.

Thank you for taking part in this Sewing Project. May it be a blessing to you as you bless others.

## PRAYER

Dear God

Help us to stop, just long enough to be reminded that you are committed to every woman, girl and child who will come into contact with this sewing project.

We pray for the women who will participate in the project, may they be enriched as they grow in confidence. May they know your love through their various tasks. May they know the encouragement of being valued and we pray that this project will be a place of joy.

We pray for the children who will share a bite to eat and play with toys; we rejoice that moments like this are significant. Encourage, equip and give wisdom to local church volunteers as they oversee this project.

We rejoice in the fact that we can play a role in resourcing people thousands of miles away through this initiative. God of transformation we commit all the people who become part of the sewing project to your safe keeping.

Amen



### Contact and Support Details

If you would like further information on how you can pray or financially support The Sewing Project then please contact us.



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