



Justice, peace and hope in Latin America with UK support

Thank you once again for all your support in 2022. Thanks to the financial contributions of individuals and churches, Paz y Esperanza UK was able to send the offices in Latin America £12,600 at the end of the year. In this newsletter we will be sharing a few examples of the amazing work of the teams in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia in 2022 and some of their plans for 2023.

* - please note that names of children throughout have been changed for security

Bolivia

The team in Bolivia prioritise three areas of work. These are preventing sexual violence against women and children, preventing domestic and gender-based violence and giving psychological and legal support to victims. One of the team's ongoing projects is *Action Against Violence*, a restorative justice programme which works with aggressors to rehabilitate them and also promotes the reduction of violence in vulnerable communities. Last year PyE were also involved in ongoing work responding to the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. They worked with 15 churches and helped at least 1,500 people with education, access to vaccinations and practical help.

Mariela*, a pregnant woman, was a victim of domestic violence and was helped by the team. She said: "*I receive therapeutic care and take part in face-to-face workshops on violence prevention and empowerment. They are giving me legal help with the criminal process.*"

As the high levels of violence continue, the money raised by PyE UK will help fund the work to try and prevent violence and help victims with legal, psychological, social and spiritual help. The team has 25 active legal cases which they support with the help of lawyers.



Colombia

In Colombia, millions of people have been displaced due to the internal armed conflict. They face terrible poverty, as well as challenges with their mental health due to trauma and bereavement. PyE are continuing their work in Nueva Jerusalen, an informal settlement near Medellin where 27,000 people live. The people there live in cramped conditions, do not have access to healthcare, water or the internet. The team continue to work with people there in practical ways and also by offering emotional and spiritual support. For example, they run art workshops helping people, especially older people and teenagers, come to terms with their past experiences

During the Covid-19 pandemic, PyE implemented a project providing a phone line for people to call if they were struggling. One of the people who benefitted said: "*It helped me to live with my fears and give me a space to talk.*". The team will continue to work with vulnerable people, including victims of violence, children and migrants, in various communities in Colombia in 2023.



Ecuador

In 2022, PyE Ecuador continued its work to help people have lives free from violence. This was achieved in many ways, including educational workshops and fairs and creating resources such as videos to raise awareness.

Sofia* was one of the people helped by the team. She is a young mother from Guayaquil who was suffering from domestic violence. The team were able to help her leave and set up a safe home. They helped her financially and gave her emotional and practical support. Jose Vences, director of PyE Ecuador, said: "*Seeing Sofia and her children in a secure home inspires us to keep helping as many victims as possible so that they can start again away from violence.*" In another case, Pablo* was the victim of sexual abuse at school. His family didn't know how to handle the situation. They turned to PyE who supported them and helped them deal with the authorities

There are approximately 500,000 Venezuelan migrants living in Ecuador. In 2023, the team plan to spend their portion of the money sent from PyE UK on supporting as many migrants as possible. The money will pay for psychologists and practical help as they find their feet.



Peru

The main focus of PyE in Peru is helping people with the process of achieving justice after the period of armed conflict which the country lived through between 1980 and 2000. PyE is part of a national Christian human rights movement involved in a number of cases involving hundreds of victims. In 2022, there were positive steps forward in many cases and in 2023, the team will use the money from PyE UK to continue long judicial processes and pay for lawyers. This help is key to achieving reconciliation and to ensure that these types of situations are not repeated in the future.

One of the ongoing cases is one which took place in Callqui in Ayacucho region. This involved the killing of six indigenous people by an army patrol at a church in 1984. The court case began in March 2022 and is likely to last three years because there are 150 witnesses. The legal team supported by PyE has asked for the compensation amount for the families of the six victims to be increased. It has also asked that a monument be erected with a plaque outlining the details of the murders and stating that the victims were innocent people and not terrorists, as stated by the military



Please pray for all the teams, including Brazil, Chile and El Salvador, as they continue their work this year facing many challenges. These include political unrest, particularly in Peru and Brazil following changes in leadership and violent protests. We will share more specific prayer requests in our February prayer update.

Do join us with a regular or one-off donation at <https://www.justgiving.com/pazyesperanza>

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