



*Paz y  
Esperanza*



## **Standing alongside the vulnerable in Ecuador**

This month we would like to update you on some of the projects that Paz y Esperanza Ecuador are involved in. Director Jose Vences shared with us some of the exciting developments in the past year as well as some impactful testimonies.

PyE works in Ecuador's second city, Guayaquil, in a poor area where 20,000 vulnerable people live. Here the team are involved in a project called *Agua Para Todos (Water For All)* to try and prevent illnesses associated with drinking dirty water. In the area, only 50% of homes have running water. The rest rely on lorries that bring water tanks to a central area and this is then collected in buckets and water carriers. PyE has joined forces with a network of 40 female leaders to educate them about water borne diseases and how to prevent them. The women will spread the message and try to improve community health. One of the key messages is to boil water. Often people do not boil their water properly because they cannot afford the gas. The team have also distributed water purifiers in the community to use at home.

One of the vulnerable groups of people who live in Guayaquil are migrants, particularly Venezuelans who have fled a terrible economic situation in their country. Last year the team distributed 900 hygiene kits, food, seed funding for families with no income to start a small business, children's clothes and equipment and study materials.

Violence against women is a major problem in Ecuador. The team recently carried out a survey with the objective of drawing attention to the high levels of violence and identifying the failings in the justice system. They surveyed 406 women living in communities in northwest Guayaquil and the results were very worrying. The report was given to various bodies and authorities and the team is hopeful it will bring about change in society. The following image from the report summarises the findings.



## WOMEN, VIOLENCE & THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

### A Summary of our results

2 out of every 3 women have lived with violence (physical, economic, sexual and/or psychological)

33% of women who lived with violence, never made a formal complaint because they had no confidence in the justice system

77% of the women who made a formal complaint were never contacted again by the authorities

Only 11% of the formal complaints resulted with a verdict in favour of the victim

The team continue to help people live lives free from violence in many other ways, including running educational workshops and fairs to encourage healthy relationships and running a telephone line called *I Am Listening Ecuador* to help people with emotional and spiritual needs. One of the workshops is for men and focuses on masculinity and violence. Luis is one of the people who has attended, and he said: *"I realised that if I kept living this way, I would lose my family. I am learning how to manage my emotions and communicate with respect so I can be a better husband and father, a healthy and trustworthy man."*

One of the women involved in a workshop said: *"I learnt how to love myself and appreciate my worth. The topic that surprised me was sexual violence as I didn't understand that it is a crime that can be reported."* One of the other key aspects of PyE's work is providing psychological support to women who have been victims of violence as well as advice on how to access the justice system. PyE gave this support to 36 people in 2022. The team also continue to help the vulnerable living in poverty and unable to access help or justice. This includes helping children and young people who are living in homes where there is domestic violence.

**Please pray for the staff and volunteers as they continue this year with all their projects.**

**Please also pray for the people they are helping. We will share more specific prayer requests for Ecuador in our June prayer update.**

Our three trustees were very happy to be at St. Margaret's Warnham, one of our supporter churches, on 14<sup>th</sup> May to talk about PyE. Graham shared a message from Exodus 3 v7-8 which highlights how God sees our suffering and wants to rescue us. He also talked about some of the projects that PyE are working on across Latin America.



Hannah and Sophie, daughters of our trustee Suzanne, baked some delicious PyE logo dove shaped biscuits and cupcakes and held a bake sale after the service to raise money for the charity. They managed to raise an amazing £182, from the sale and donations from family and friends who couldn't be at the sale. Our friends at St. Margaret's also gave £255 in a retiring collection.

Thank you so much to everyone for your generosity and supporting PyE financially and in prayer.

Thank you for your support. Please join us with a regular or one-off donation at: <https://www.justgiving.com/pazyesperanza>

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