



Creating a path to justice in Bolivia

This month we would like to focus on the work being carried out by PyE Bolivia. We spoke to **Fernando Teran**, the president, and **Rabinder Chandra**, the executive director and lawyer, who updated us on their projects.

The team, which is based in Santa Cruz and has 30 volunteers including lawyers and psychologists, 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. Fernando said: *"Nobody wants to create a path to justice so this is what PyE does."*

Free legal advice

This year the team of ten volunteer lawyers have been working with the Guarani indigenous community. About 20,000 Guarani live two hours away from Santa Cruz. In indigenous communities, male chauvinism is rife and there are high levels of violence of men against women and children. Violence perpetrated by women is also not unheard of and is often psychological violence rather than physical violence.

PyE has 25 active legal cases and offers legal protection to vulnerable people for free. Between 2020 and September 2023, PyE gave legal help on 790 occasions. The legal process in Bolivia is arduous and can be long, lasting up to ten months. Some of the work carried out with victims of violence is to help them stand alone and provide for their families without having to rely on income from their spouse. PyE has helped many women start up small businesses so they can generate their own money to pay for food and other basics.

Restorative justice

One of the team's ongoing projects is *Action Against Violence*, a restorative justice programme which works with aggressors to rehabilitate them and promotes the reduction of violence in vulnerable communities.

Rabinder said: *"This is a big and innovative project to try and help people who have been violent in collaboration with a psychologist. The aggressors are also victims of the system and nobody thinks about helping them."* PyE offers therapy and social and spiritual help to the perpetrators who have often had very difficult backgrounds.

Working with churches

Part of PyE's work is running workshops with their 15 partner churches of different denominations to try and prevent violence. These are carried out from a Biblical perspective. In many churches women will not speak out as they have been told they must submit to their husbands and there is a big stigma attached to denouncing violence. Some of the church leaders do not understand that there are laws to protect people that must be followed.

Fernando gave an example of a case in Santa Cruz involving a youth leader who took advantage of some girls. He said: *"The church pastor said initially that PyE did not love sinners and he believed it was enough to ask for God's forgiveness. There was a lack of understanding about the justice system. It can be quite complicated explaining the legal system to people and telling them that we must follow the law."*



Please pray

Fernando and Rabinder asked for prayer for guidance and strength for the team as they carry out this important but very challenging work. They said that there is a lot of suspicion from evangelical congregations which PyE has to overcome as they build relationships with churches.

"We don't want to be cowards as these people need justice. They are stigmatised and rejected in society."

Thank you so much for your prayer and financial support. Please consider making a regular or one-off donation at

<https://www.justgiving.com/pazesperanza>



Swim - Ride - Run

Last month we announced that Graham Gordon was participating in a Triathlon on 25th September to raise money for PyE UK. We are pleased to announce that he successfully completed the course and in the process has nearly reached his target of £2,000. There is still time to top it up! Thank you to all who have, or will, contribute.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/graham-gordon-50birthday>