



Partnering with vulnerable people in Latin America in 2023/24

Thank you once again for your support in 2023. Thanks to the donations of individuals and churches, Paz y Esperanza UK was able to send the offices in Latin America £14,500 at the end of the year. In this newsletter we will be highlighting some of the amazing work being carried out by the PyE teams in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. We will also be finding out about their plans for the rest of 2024

Bolivia

The team in Bolivia has 30 volunteers, including lawyers and psychologists. They give legal, psychological and spiritual help to women and children who are victims of sexual, gender-based or domestic violence. They also help indigenous people, including the Guarani community in Santa Cruz, and the elderly. Last year they gave legal support to 600 people and therapy to 114 families. They offered workshops called *'Words of Peace'* to promote healthy relationships in community settings and reached between 100 and 150 people per month. They sent psychologists into Palmasola, Bolivia's largest prison, to help women and run workshops. 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.

In 2024 the team will continue these important projects and try to improve institutional relationships to create better links with the justice system. The legal process in Bolivia is complex and can be very long.



Colombia

In Colombia, 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 work with people there in practical ways and offer emotional and practical support. One of the projects helps women come to terms with past traumas, including being displaced by the long-standing internal armed conflict, by expressing themselves through art. The art has been displayed in a local museum as part of an exhibition reflecting on issues of displacement.

Maria took part in the *Mujeres de la Memoria* (Memory Women) group and she said: *"What impacted me the most were the talks because you helped us go back to our childhoods, to relive our tragedies and cry together. You helped us extract some of the feelings we had kept hidden for years."*

Other projects include helping young people in Medellin and Turbo in Antioquia department, by organising groups where they do all sorts of activities and learn skills and tools to help them navigate adolescence and mental health issues. They also work with churches in areas which have been significantly affected by the armed conflict and where many migrants live. They provide Bible teaching and practical and legal support.

The team will continue all their projects into 2024, helping victims of violence, children and migrants with the many physical and mental health challenges, traumas and bereavements they face.



'Memory Women'

Peru

The main focus of PyE in Peru is helping people to achieve 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. For years, PyE has been working on three emblematic cases, namely Putis, Huanta (including Callqui) and Ccarpaccasa/Sillaccasa/Sankaypata. In 2023, there was progress in all the cases, including achieving compensation for families of the victims who were murdered and prison sentences for some of the perpetrators.

The massacre in Putis took place in 1984 and involved the death of 123 people, including 48 children, who were murdered by armed military officials. The trial began in December 2020 and continues after 104 sessions in court. Nobody has been brought to justice in connection with this crime but the PyE team will keep fighting on behalf of the victims.

This year the money raised by PyE UK will be used to continue these long judicial processes, support the families involved 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.



Ecuador

In 2023, PyE Ecuador continued its work in Guayaquil to help people have lives free from violence. They ran educational workshops and fairs, as well as created resources to raise awareness. Last year they offered five sessions of psychological support each to people who were victims of violence and abuse, and supported 20 people as they navigated the legal process. They also ran a workshop on positive masculinity involving 125 students. As we shared in our January and February newsletters, the security situation in Ecuador has deteriorated significantly in recent months and years, so the need is great.

Maricela took part in a women's workshop and now promotes women's rights in her community. She said: *"About six years ago, I was suffering from physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence from my partner and I thought this was normal as I had seen it in my family growing up. In 2017, PyE carried out a workshop on healthy families free from violence and I felt like a blindfold had been taken away from my eyes. I had very low self-esteem and I allowed the abuse. The workshops have helped me grow and my husband has learnt to take care of his family."*

In 2024, the money sent by PyE UK will be used to support some of the 500,000 Venezuelan migrants who live in Ecuador. Most of the money will be spent on paying psychologists who will offer mental health support



Please pray for all the teams, including Brazil, Chile and El Salvador, as they continue their work this year under challenging circumstances.
We will share prayer requests from the teams in our April prayer update.
Do please join us with a regular or one-off donation at
<https://www.justgiving.com/pazyesperanza>

Trustees
We are planning to expand the number of Trustees that look after PyE UK, and if anyone would like a chat about what it might involve, contact us with a phone number and we will be in touch. uk-enquiry@pazyesperanza.org