

## IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN 2022–2023

### Chairman's report

It's 30 years exactly now since our founders Joan and Terry Thraves first visited Colombia – and that beautiful nation is still struggling to shake off its violent past. Peace deals may have ended the civil war, but armed groups, paramilitaries and criminal gangs are still very active. Insecurity and gang violence are part of daily life for so many.

The cost-of-living crisis has plunged many Colombians into poverty: the poverty rate rose to 38 per cent in 2022. In a country famous for its rich natural resources, children are still dying of malnutrition. Colombia remains a very unequal society.

There were high hopes riding on Colombia's first left-wing president, Gustavo Petro, who was elected on the promise of reform last June. These hopes have yet to be realised.

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As we seem to say every year, In Ministry to Children in Colombia, IMiC, have had a difficult year, with rising prices and an unpredictable income due to exchange rates. Yet, despite these pressures, they have supported xxxx children and xxx adults in total – a remarkable achievement for such a small team.

They continue to support four main project areas:

- Los Alpes in Ciudad Bolívar, an informal settlement in Bogotá;
- Fusa;
- La Guajira; and
- Tasajera.

In each setting, they work closely with local churches, whose commitment to making a difference in their local area makes them invaluable partners.

As in the previous year, IMiC supports families in four main ways:

- Essentials – such as food and access to education
- Workshops to strengthen families' resilience – from parenting support to drug awareness
- Livelihoods support and training, including savings groups
- Spiritual input – which IMiC considers the most valuable gift they can give

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One area which remains a particular priority for IMiC is **La Guajira**, which is in the far north-west of Colombia and home to the Indigenous Wayuu people. The region has suffered drought for years – the result of both climate change and injustice. Then, last October Hurricane Julia brought flash floods, perversely, which cut off for days vulnerable areas including the communities we support.

Countrywide, 308 children died of hunger in Colombia last year – 85 of them in La Guajira, according to the national ombudsman. This was almost a third more than in 2021.

Our work in La Guajira has focused mostly on providing food to people in seven *rancherías* or settlements – but the focus is also moving towards helping people start to develop their own livelihoods. These are early days but there have been some small projects to encourage the planting of drought-resistant crops such as corn, beans and mango.

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Meanwhile, the *comedor* or community hub in **Los Alpes**, which moved to new improved premises in September, continues to grow in numbers. And the input of the local church means people have grown spiritually too. It remains a very violent, deprived area. Not long ago, a mother deposited her newborn child in a bin near to the IMC hub, because she was too poor to care for it. Thankfully, the child was rescued but the mother was nearly lynched. Yet, the IMiC team and their church partners believe in the power of God's Word and the power of community to transform society.

In Tasajera, an area to the west of La Guajira, local people have had their livelihoods stripped from them as landowners and businesses have exploited coastal marshlands, destroying fisheries. As they did last year, IMiC has provided families with food and given children clothes and shoes for school. IMiC would like to develop its work here, when funds allow.

In all projects now, there's a strong emphasis on breaking a mindset of dependency. Indeed, families in Fusa and Los Alpes are now expected to attend workshops that will give them life skills if they want to receive foodstuffs, for example. IMiC Director Nancy makes no apology for attaching strings in this way: people cannot rely on handouts, she says.

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As trustees, our focus this year has been on supporting Nancy and IMiC, maintaining communications and relationship with our wonderful supporters, and fundraising. As you'll hear later in this meeting, we've had a busy fundraising year as trustees – and we're grateful as ever for the faithful giving and prayers of our supporters.

We continue to be inspired by the commitment and dogged determination of our Colombian colleagues, especially Director Nancy Centeno, who's now based in Barranquilla. She is ably supported by: Yan Carlos Rodriguez, IMiC Deputy Director; Maicol, the IMiC social worker; Jennyfer, the IMiC administrator; and Sofia, who continues to support Fusa families. Partnerships with local churches in Colombia are something we have longed to see for years – and now they are absolutely key to how IMiC works in each project.

We continue to be amazed at the faithful generosity of our supporters, even throughout the cost-of-living crisis. As ever, we're grateful to: Michael and John Arnold of Life Church Petersfield for their administrative support; to team who stuff envelopes and post out our newsletter, Sue, Liz and Joan; to our very wonderful newsletter editor Martin Plowman; and to our patron Joan for her cheery wisdom and constant encouragement.

We're still coming to terms with the loss our dear patron, Joan's husband, Terry Thraves, in November. But we trust that Terry would be happy to know his legacy lives on, in the way that IMiC is touching so many young lives in Colombia and showing them that they are precious and valuable in God's sight.

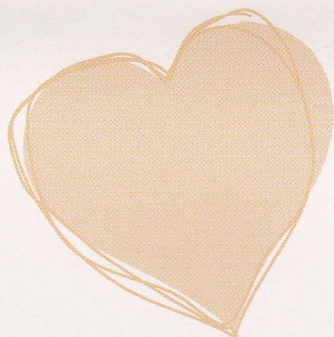
Seren Boyd, Chair of IMC trustees

May 2023

IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN  
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2022

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Income                | £81,594 |
| Expenditure           | £80,138 |
| Comprising:-          |         |
| Transfers to Colombia | £76,000 |
| Publicity Expenses    | £ 428   |
| Financial Management  | £ 3,710 |

| <b>Active Accounts</b> | <b>Debit</b> | <b>Credit</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 3524 Personnel         | £4,952.00    | £5,048.00     |
| 3525Child Sponsorship  | £7,516.00    | £7,446.00     |
| 3527General Fund       | £68,265.01   | £67,180.17    |
| 3530CIF                | £1,920.00    | £1,920.00     |



**links**  
INTERNATIONAL

To whom it may concern

This is to ascertain that all In Ministry to Children monies (Charity No. 1064690) are monitored and audited by ourselves, Links International Trust. Therefore, the accounts for In Ministry to Children are encompassed in our audit report which we submit to the Charity Commission each year.

Mandy Dukes

Accounts Manager