

IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN 2023–2024

Chairman's report

IMC and its dedicated team in Colombia continue to shine a bright light in a beautiful country which still faces many problems. Despite being a very small team with very limited resources, Director Nancy Centeno and the team continue to punch way above their weight.

In the past year, IMiC (which is the name of the team in Colombia) supported xx children in xxx families in different, very different, parts of the country. They met children's practical needs as well as giving them spiritual and emotional support, showing them love and reminding them that their lives matter. What they achieve, year on year, is nothing short of miraculous.

[slide 1: cable car]

The background to this work is challenging. While poverty is declining in some urban areas, it is increasing in rural areas and among indigenous communities such as the Wayuu people we support in the far north.

Today, 6.9 million people in Colombia live in extreme poverty – surviving on about £1.30 a day or less. In other words, almost 7 million people in Colombia struggle every day to secure food and shelter, and face impossible decisions like choosing between feeding their child and sending them to school. That's true for Los Alpes, which you see in the picture here: it's the slum area we support in Bogota.

In 2023, 269 children died of malnutrition in Colombia: two-thirds of these deaths were in indigenous rural areas.

Inflation remains high, and many communities live in the shadow of violence, family breakdown and criminality. Just last month, a three-year-old child was killed in Fusa, close to our community hub: his stepfather is the chief suspect.

[slide 2: boy in green/girl in orange]

IMiC continues to support four main project areas:

- Los Alpes ('The Alps'), a slum area on the outskirts of Bogotá;
- Fusa, an urban area about an hour's drive from Bogota
- La Guajira, a rural indigenous area in the far north, and
- Tasajera, a rural area, also in the north.

In each setting, IMiC continues to work closely with local churches. This means they have direct links right into the heart of communities and can easily identify who needs help the most. The churches provide families with spiritual support: IMiC provides the practical and psycho-social support.

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

- Providing essentials – such as food and access to education
- Running workshops and training to strengthen families' resilience – from positive parenting to family values
- Offering livelihoods support and training, including savings groups
- Giving spiritual support – through their collaboration with churches

[slide 3: mother and baby]

One area which remains a particular priority for IMiC is **La Guajira**, home to the reservation of the indigenous Wayuu people. Drought is persistent here, water is scarce and unemployment rates are high.

About one-third of the Wayúu population live in poverty and one-quarter live in extreme poverty. More than one in four Wayúu children under five suffer from malnutrition. An infant dies every week in La Guajira.

A major source of the Wayuu's problems is the fact that large mining companies have stolen tribal land and water – and their actions have gone unpunished. Anyone who speaks out about injustices – so called human rights defenders – tends to be threatened or killed.

This is why **about a third** of IMiC's spending now goes to La Guajira where we work with **xxx** families in seven *rancherías* or settlements, alongside the Upper Room Church.

[slide 4: inside of church]

We have continued to support these communities with food handouts – but also training. A major focus this year has been the construction of a new church building that will double as a community centre – a project which is nearing completion. This is due to the generosity of one particular IMC supporter to whom we are immensely grateful.

[slide 5: social worker Maicol with 5 small children]

Meanwhile, the *comedor* or community hub in **Los Alpes** continues to serve a very deprived area with high rates of criminality. As well as providing food **for xx children each week**, the IMiC team and the Oaks of Righteousness Church provide activities and training for families. For example, there's a regular 'music school' for children, and families attend workshops in subjects such as positive parenting.

[slide 6: many children, Colombian and British flags]

In **Fusa**, our programme now offers children refreshments, rather than full meals, but there's still a full programme of activities. There are regular workshops for families on subjects such as child protection, as well as health outreaches, such as dentistry and oral hygiene checks.

Strong links with local churches and occasional collaborations with other organisations mean that IMiC is extending the range of what it can offer families.

As always, the drive is towards helping families help themselves.

In the summer, the Fusa held a community fair to advertise the work of IMiC, sell products the families had made, promote their small businesses and raise funds that would help provide the families with 'thanksgiving' gifts.

This year, new savings clubs have been set up in Fusa and Los Alpes: members commit to saving regularly for a specific purpose and undergo weekly training in entrepreneurship. In Fusa, they've even started small business ventures such as selling sweets.

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. IMiC has again provided xx families here with food and given children xxxxx. IMiC would like to develop its work here, when funds allow.

As trustees, we've been busy supporting Nancy and IMiC, communicating with our wonderful supporters and fundraisers, and fundraising ourselves, as you'll hear later in this meeting. We're all volunteers so we're incredibly grateful as ever for the faithful giving and prayers of our supporters.

We must mention a few stalwarts: Michael and John Arnold of Life Church Petersfield for their administrative support; to the 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 grace and encouragement.

[slide 7: the IMiC team – Maicol, Jennyfer, YanCarlos]

And we continue to be inspired by of our Colombian colleagues, especially Director Nancy Centeno, who's based in Barranquilla these days (and whom we will hear from shortly!). On her core team are:

Yan Carlos Rodriguez, IMiC's Deputy Director

Maicol, a former IMC boy who is now the IMiC social worker
and Jennyfer, the IMiC administrator

[Maicol, Jennyfer and YanCarlos are shown here. They are all based in and around Bogota]

[slide 8: Sofia the 'cook']

And then there's faithful Sofia, who continues to serve families in Fusa, despite some significant health issues of her own.

These are all determined, selfless people devoted to serving the children of Colombia – and it's a privilege to support them. As ever, we remain committed to Colombia's most vulnerable children – the 'C' in IMC stands for children, after all – and we continue to ask God to guide us.

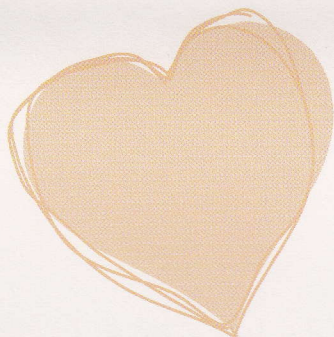
IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN
TREASURER'S REPORT 1.1.23-31.12.23.

Income

3524	Personnel	£4980
3525	Child Sponsorship	£6,716
3527	General Fund	£6,250
3530	CIF	£3,600
Total		£75,546

Expenditure

Transfers to Colombia		£69,250
Publicity, various items		£650
Financial management by Links		£6,678
		£76,578



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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