

IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN 2024–2025

Chairman's report

[slide 1]

The IMC team in Colombia (which we call IMiC) continue to be a beacon of hope in some of the country's poorest communities. And they have continued to shine, despite significant hurdles this year. The communities they serve remain immensely challenging, and the funding landscape in which they operate is increasingly volatile. They remain a tiny team, operating on a shoestring. And yet, despite all this, IMiC supported **1,299 children** and 456 adults living in very vulnerable situations in 2024.

The context

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According to a World Bank report at the end of 2024, Colombia remains a deeply unequal nation. It is still plagued by deep class divisions, and [quotes] 'deep inequalities in access to opportunities (...) and widely varying levels of poverty'. Poverty overall is declining, yet more than 16 million people still live below the bread line. In departments such as La Guajira, one of the places where IMiC works, two in three people are living in poverty – double the national average.

When President Gustavo Petro took office in 2022, he announced a 'total peace' strategy but Colombia is still waiting. Her poorest citizens – especially indigenous and Afro-descendant communities – suffer widespread abuses at the hands of armed groups and big business. They are often the target of criminal gangs too. Yet, they have limited access to justice. The husband of IMiC's accountant was killed this year, a victim of extortion – a rising trend as criminal gangs facing a decline in drug trafficking look for new ways to make money.

[slide 2]

After visiting Colombia last year, Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, said: 'Unless eradicating poverty becomes a priority for all Colombians, no matter their income bracket, the vicious cycle of poverty and conflict will continue, and the country will never know peace.'

Our priorities

In 2024, IMiC supported four main project areas. These are, in order of spending priorities:

- La Guajira, a rural indigenous area in the far north
- Los Alpes ('The Alps'), a slum area within Ciudad Bolívar on the outskirts of Bogotá. *(The next few slides will take you on a cable car trip up to the top of Los Alpes where we work and watch how the housing deteriorates...)*

[slides 4 to 8 in succession]

We also work in:

- Fusa, an urban area about an hour's drive from Bogotá, and
- Tasajera, a swampy area west of La Guajira

In each setting, IMiC continues to work closely with local churches which operate in the very heart of communities and enjoy strong relationships built on trust with local people. The churches provide families with spiritual input: IMiC provides practical and psycho-social support.

Broadly, IMiC summarises its key focuses as:

- Psychosocial support – mental and emotional health
- Healthy nutrition
- Educational support
- Clothing
- Savings clubs and microenterprises

- Spiritual support

IMiC's goal is to help families become what it calls 'sustainable families', resilient to the many challenges they face. It educates families about their rights, trains them in everything from child protection to conflict resolution, and helps them set up or develop microenterprises – from nail bars to artisanal products. As always, the drive is towards helping families help themselves.

Our projects

[slide 9]

La Guajira, home to the reservation of the indigenous Wayuu people, remains a priority for IMC. It is a very poor, arid and insecure area. Colombia is host to 2.8 million refugees from Venezuela and most of them have settled in La Guajira. A large displacement camp there – called La Pista (the runway) as it's an abandoned airfield – is home to 10,000 Venezuelan migrants, half of whom are children.

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Two thirds of the Wayúu population live in poverty and one-quarter live in extreme poverty – victims of manmade injustices such as mines stealing their water and environmental hazards such as drought. In 2024, 31 children under the age of five died from acute malnutrition in La Guajira. (*The toddler you see in the centre of this image was showing signs of malnutrition – a telltale reddish tint to the hair*)

This is why 35% (more than a third) of IMiC's spending in 2024 went to La Guajira where we work with families in several *rancherías* or settlements, alongside the Upper Room and Maranatha churches.

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Since the school you see here was built, we have continued to support these communities with food and training. A continuing focus this year has also been the completion of a new church building that will double as a

community centre – a project which has just been completed, Nancy reports.

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And we continue to offer livelihood support to the Wayuu providing materials for their beautiful handmade *mochilas* (or bags) and exploring new markets for them.

[slide 13]

Los Alpes is an informal settlement on the outskirts of the capital Bogotá which has high rates of criminality and deprivation. We have been running a community hub here for several years now and last year it accounted for a quarter of IMiC's spending.

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For the first part of the year, the IMiC team and the Oaks of Righteousness Church provided food for children, plus activities and training for families, including a savings group. They even helped set up a community soup kitchen.

More recently, and as an aside, that church decided to run its own social project so IMiC has joined forces with Don Antonio, a teacher with a passion for helping children in Los Alpes, especially through educational support. IMiC now supports Antonio's project by providing food, training workshops, clothing and books to start a children's library. There is a plan to start a sewing school to help families set up microenterprises.

[slide 15 and 16]

In **Fusa**, where IMiC spends 22% of its budget, it has been partnering with two churches – the Good News Church and the King of Israel Church. It has been running activities for children, workshops for parents (such as conflict resolution and managing emotions), and a savings group. IMiC's

faithful team member Sofia has been providing the children with a healthy snack such as a sandwich.

And finally, in **Tasajera**, IMiC has been supporting a community with high unemployment and deep poverty in all the same ways as its other projects – but to a lesser degree. IMiC's involvement there has been halted for the time being for lack of funds, although there's still a church at work there.

In the spring, IMiC held a fair at Granja Peniel to celebrate its 30th anniversary and raise awareness of its work. It also used the opportunity to thank supporters, reach out to potential new donors, sell some of Peniel's own produce (including blackberries) and promote local producers who also sold their wares.

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We continue to be in awe of our Colombian colleagues, Nancy's core team now consists of Yan Carlos Rodriguez, IMiC's Deputy Director, and Jennyfer Ambrosio, the IMiC administrator, who are both based in Bogota; and Sofia, who continues to serve families in Fusa. In recent months, our social worker, Maicol, has left the foundation to focus on his family's tailoring business – and will be sorely missed.

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IMiC's tireless Director Nancy Centeno will be joining us shortly.

As trustees, we've been busy supporting Nancy and the IMiC team, raising awareness of their work, communicating with our supporters, and fundraising ourselves. We're all volunteers so we're as grateful as ever for the generous giving, volunteering, fundraising and prayers of our amazing supporters.

We must again mention and thank a few stalwarts:

- Michael and John Arnold of Life Church Petersfield for their administrative support
- our very wonderful newsletter editor, Martin Plowman
- the team who stuff envelopes and post out our newsletter, Joan, Sue and Liz
- our patron, Joan, for her grace and encouragement; and
- and Lesina and Robin Ashfield who host our Summer Serenade

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As ever, none of this would be possible without our supporters – whom Jenny will talk about in more detail a bit later. And of course none of this would be possible without God. We continue to seek him, as we try to serve his purposes, build his kingdom and love well the children of Colombia. We continue to be amazed by his faithfulness and his goodness.

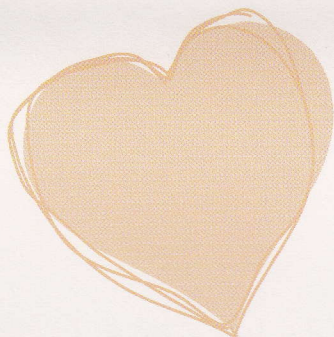
IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN
TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT 1.01.2024 - 31.12.2024

INCOME

3524	Personnel	£ 4,950
3525	Child Sponsorship	£ 6,115
3527	General Fund	£58,308
3530	CIF	£ 3,600
TOTAL		£72,973

EXPENDITURE

Transfers to Colombia		£66,330
Publicity		£ 441
Financial management by Links		£ 6,956
TOTAL		£73,727



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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