



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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# About La Vida

La Vida was co-founded in 2006 by Katy Vatis and Helen Ilsley following a business trip to Brazil in February that year, when they met Dr. Monica Nogueira, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon trying to raise funds to train her peers in the non-surgical 'Ponseti Technique' of treating children with clubfoot. La Vida raised the funds needed in the UK, and the project was a success; just in 2008, 556 doctors were trained who helped 5,000 children. Many more thousands have been successfully treated using this technique over the subsequent years.

La Vida has since supported highly effective grassroots projects in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Peru, some of which we support on a continuing basis and some which are now complete. The grants were for projects in areas such as youth development, supporting primary and secondary education initiatives and school expansions, as well as community health and environmental programmes.

Although La Vida is a relatively small charity, so far we have raised over £900,000 through sponsorship, our annual La Vida fundraising events, direct donations and partnerships with other foundations. The funding we have deployed we estimate will have directly impacted the lives of over 60,000 disadvantaged children and their families in Latin America.

## Our mission

La Vida raises funds to support community health, education and environment projects throughout Latin America. The charity is registered in the UK and has been established to help disadvantaged people residing permanently in Latin America, in particular, by preserving and protecting health, relieving sickness, relieving poverty, advancing education and raising environmental awareness.

# Why La Vida?

- We focus exclusively on projects supporting communities' health, environment and education – our targeted support has a positive impact in some of the world's poorest countries.
- We have a rigorous governance process – we go to great lengths to ensure funds are properly allocated and well-monitored and have a significant, long-term local impact.
- Everyone working for La Vida does so on a voluntary basis – we have an impressively low cost base with over 98% of funds raised going directly to our projects.
- We connect our projects so they can share best practice and learn from each other.

## Our Achievements



# Our trustees



**Katy  
Vatis**  
**Founder**

Katy has a degree in

Economics with Spanish. She most recently worked at Fullerton Fund Management as a Senior Analyst in the Emerging Markets team and has spent most of her career as a Fund Manager covering Latin American equity markets. Her work has involved a lot of travel to the region where she has experienced first hand the extreme levels of poverty and the need for improvements in health and education.



**Helen  
Ilsley**  
**Founder**

Helen spent 15 years as a

stockbroker in the Latin American investment community. Having left the City in 2012 and set up her own property asset business, Helen is now an executive coach, heading up Business Development for the Executive Coaching Consultancy, specialising in helping businesses retain and develop their talented women. Helen has a Business Economics degree and is an accredited member of the Association of Coaching.



**Rosie  
Bichard**

Rosie has a degree in French and Spanish from St John's

College, Cambridge and is a Chartered Financial Analyst. She has worked in finance since 1990, and was involved with Latin America for 12 years. She currently works as a Senior Analyst at Lofoten Asset Management. Rosie has travelled extensively in Latin America and speaks Spanish and Portuguese. She became a La Vida trustee in 2008 and is also a board member of Oxfam's Enterprise Development Programme.



**Ivonne  
Cantu**

Ivonne grew up in Mexico and has been living in

London since 1996. Currently she is head of Investor Relations at Benchmark plc, a global aquaculture business, and a Director of Creo Medical plc, a medical devices technology company. Prior to joining Benchmark, Ivonne was a corporate finance adviser for 20 years at Merrill Lynch and at Cenkos Securities. She has an MBA from the Wharton School of Business and a BSc Engineering. Since 2016 she has been advising small UK charities as a member of Pilotlight, a charity that connects professionals with charitable organisations.



**Ana  
Beatriz  
Alencar**

Ana Beatriz is Brazilian and has been

living in London since 1997. Ana Beatriz has a background in digital development and project management. She has a degree in Electrical Engineering from PUC-Rio, an MBA from Cass Business School and an MSc in Management of Innovation. She works at the Ministry of Justice Digital & Technology. She has previously volunteered for Cancer Research UK, Task Brazil, CAFOD and London 2012. She joined La Vida in 2013 as she strongly believes in fundraising for good projects in Latin America.



**Zary  
Feeney**

Zary joined La Vida in December 2012. She

began her career with Ernst & Young's Financial Advisory Team in Washington DC where she focused on Latin America. She moved to London to join Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein's M&A team. She has subsequently become involved in the non-profit sector and serves on the boards of foundations that are having a significant social impact in the areas of the arts, health, education and the environment in Latin America. She has a MBA from George Washington University. She is fluent in English and Spanish, with conversational Portuguese.



# Summary of 2021 projects

In 2021, despite the effects of the Covid pandemic we had decent fundraising year, receiving £57,757 through donations. We did not have a fundraising event due to the Covid restrictions.

This year we had significant donations from the Royal Bank of Canada and Generation Asset Management. We also had a number of large donations from private individuals and our usual supporters continued to 'sponsor a child's education'.

Due to Covid restrictions, we have not been able to visit the projects in person in 2021, but we have continued to keep in regular contact over video calls and we have provided additional help to certain projects throughout the Covid crisis by granting extra funds for food etc. where needed. Many of our projects have had to adapt their activities to the current situation and we are working with them to see how they can best be supported going forward.

## **Summary of the year**

During 2021, we granted £55,639 to causes throughout Latin America. We continued to support the following projects: Amantani, Peru; The Corcovado Foundation, Costa Rica; Helping Hands in La Paz, Bolivia; Poder Joven in Medellin, Colombia; Fundesoc in Santa Cruz, Bolivia; Maya Midwifery, Guatemala; and Villa Maria in Lima, Peru. More details can be found below.

We funded two new projects in 2021; new health project for pregnancy prevention in Brazil called Nosso Instituto and El Rio Foundation in Colombia, providing after school academic tutoring to kids who have fallen behind in the pandemic.

# Our projects

## Amantani



### Education

**Grant in 2021:** £3000

**Location:** Peru

**Partner since:** 2014

**Beneficiaries:** 100

This project was developed out of the need for transitional support for young school leavers in Ccorca and Huanquite due to the lack of access to higher education. Since 2016 La Vida has been supporting young people through Amantani from indigenous communities in the Andes to access education and employment opportunities. The Transitions Project provides access to ICT literacy, mentoring and psychological sessions and gives students access to a fully equipped youth club. In addition, parents take part in workshops to support their children's higher education goals. [www.amantani.org.uk](http://www.amantani.org.uk)

## Corcovado Foundation



### Environmental Education

**Grant in 2021:** £4400

**Location:** Costa Rica

**Partner since:** 2020

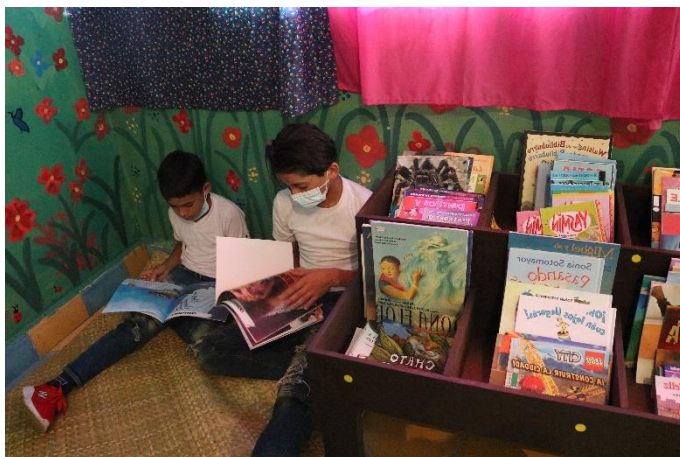
**Beneficiaries:** 30 families

The regenerative agriculture programme started out in 2020 as a way of addressing food scarcity experienced in the Drake Bay community during the Covid pandemic. The Corcovado Foundation, with the support of La Vida, established a programme to promote sustainable use of their natural land and resources which benefits over 120 persons/30 local families. These practices promote self-sufficiency and

food independence by allowing families to have the food needed for their subsistence; promotes the reduction of use of dangerous pollutants, and encourage practices that allow soil restoration, carbon capture and reduce the production of greenhouse gases. Regenerative farmers have transformed their land showing improvements in soil health and fertility, evidenced by healthier crops and improved yields. These results have changed livelihoods and attitudes, making life better for people, farms, and the environment in the Drake Bay area.



## Educate.



### Education – New Project

**Grant in 2021:** £3000

**Location:** Honduras

**Partner since:** 2021

**Beneficiaries:** 60 children, their families and community

We funded a new community library at a primary school in Las Delicias, Santa Barbara, Trinidad, Honduras. After consultation with the community, they renovated an existing room in the school, bespoke bookshelves and reed mats and cushions were made by local artisans, and we provided 300 books. <https://educate-ngo.com/>



Las Delicias, located in Santa Barbara, is a primary school on the outskirts of the village of Trinidad with 60 students and two teachers as well as a director and a volunteer Kindergarten teacher. The school, a public institution, is operated by municipal and regional authorities. Much of the population of Las Delicias lives along the nearby riverbanks and works in agriculture and construction, as well as in shoemaking, but is low income. Most women stay home to take care of the household. As many families in Las Delicias could not complete their schooling, the school has focused on ensuring that their students dedicate as much time as possible while in class to their educational development, with language arts being a main focus of their curriculum.

The school's curriculum, following the national guidelines, is designed to ensure that students can develop the competencies needed to participate fully in society and in the next level of education. As such, the curriculum also encompasses communications, math, natural sciences, social sciences, civics, art, and physical education. Las Delicias also is part of the USAID sponsored program, "From Readers to Leaders", which supports school staff with training, book purchasing, and in applying a new mode of direct teaching for Spanish language arts. One hour of class time is dedicated to library usage, with the objective of improving the student's ease of reading and enriches their vocabulary, stimulating their ability to be great thinkers.

## El Rio Foundation



### Education – New Project

**Grant in 2021:** £3650

**Location:** Colombia

**Partner since:** 2021

**Beneficiaries:** 69 children/teenagers and their families

We funded a new project in 2021 through the Rio Foundation academic tutoring programme. Their goal is to improve the education of 24+ school children in the remote town of Buritaca. However, the project exceeded expectations and on average 69 children participated in the tutoring sessions each week. Each child was given over 16 hours of academic tutoring

every week as many of these children had not been to school for over 21 months and have suffered great setbacks in their school education from Covid closures in March 2020. Many children were unable to follow virtual lessons due to poor internet connection and a very limited number devices.

The impact report carried out shows that the participants improved in all the skills they worked on during the six month period. This included reading, writing, listening, communication, maths, concentration, team-work, confidence and problem solving.

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## Fundesoc



### Environmental Education

**Grant in 2021:** £11,000

**Location:** Bolivia

**Partner since:** 2018

**Beneficiaries:** 736,000

This new project addressed the critical and repetitive forest fire situation in the fragile and unique Pantanal region of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where FUNDESOC had been working previously. The project aimed to contribute to environmental awareness and strengthen local capacity to prevent and mitigate forest fires that threaten both biodiversity and local livelihoods in this ecoregion through the dissemination of messages using local mass media (radio slots, videos), and by strengthening the capacity of the local community group of Volunteer Firefighters “Saviors Pantaneros”. La Vida funded basic equipment and inputs for training sessions in environmental and biodiversity protection, forest fire prevention and for forest firefighting for the volunteer firefighters and their new local training centre in Puerto Quijarro.

Twenty members of the local community-based group of Volunteer Firefighters “Saviors Pantaneros” received training, these young, local men and women voluntarily organized themselves to fight forest fires, including people of Chiquitano ethnic origin as well as migrants from other parts of the country who now live in the area. Indirectly this project has benefits 36,000 people in local communities where the volunteer firefighters have replicated training sessions, including those reached through the messages disseminated through local and regional media.

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# Helping Hands



## Education

**Grant in 2021:** £1607

**Location:** La Paz, Bolivia

**Partner since:** 2009

**Beneficiaries:** 4 students

**Beneficiaries since 2009:** 48 students

Helping Hands provides tailored financial support, mentoring and an enrichment programme to help disadvantaged young people in La Paz, Bolivia, complete their studies and take their first steps into the world of work. Originally focused on teenage boys leaving care, Helping Hands has expanded its activities, supporting more than 300 students since its foundation in 2004. In 2021 Helping Hands supported 117 students of which 73 were girls. Of the 117 students supported in 2021, 46 were in elementary and high school, 27 were in technical careers and 44 in university.

Like in many countries around the world, Covid-19 created enormous challenges for students and their families in Bolivia. With limited access to internet or to mobile devices, continuing education was challenging and compounded by financial difficulties and illness in many of the students' families. Helping Hands reached out with monthly food baskets for 22 students and their families and extra support for 3 families suffering unemployment. During the pandemic, Helping Hands, with the contribution of a local pharmaceutical company, was able to put together COVID kits for families affected by COVID 19. Through the use of online tools, the Helping Hands team was able to continue to monitor and support students and their families through this difficult period.

In 2021, La Vida funded support for four students, two of which are in university and two are in high school. Through La Vida support a young single mother was able to continue her university studies and is now in her last year and excelling.



# Maya Midwifery



## Health

**Grant in 2021:** £5000

**Location:** Guatemala

**Partner since:** 2020

**Beneficiaries:** 71 midwives

The Maya Midwives Project in Guatemala aims to improve reproductive, maternal and newborn health by preparing and sustaining indigenous midwives in the Mam speaking areas of

Guatemala.

Within Maya communities in Guatemala, midwives are highly respected health care providers and integral community members. This puts them in a unique position to influence and support health-related decisions and empower Maya women and their communities through midwifery care. The midwives speak the Mam language of their communities and understand local cultural practices, helping to ensure provision of culturally appropriate, quality services. In 2021, La Vida provided £5,000 (\$6,515) for the purchase of medical equipment and PPE items (including nasal aspirators, sling scales, head lamps, nursing shoes, blood pressure cuffs, oximeters, infrared thermometers, foetal stethoscopes, medical gloves, antibacterial soap, and waterproof gowns) for these midwives. The midwives are excited to continue to develop their skills, now that they have comprehensive birth kits.



# Nosso Instituto



## Health – New Project

**Grant in 2021:** £5000

**Location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**Partner since:** 2020

**Beneficiaries:** 11 health professionals

Nosso Instituto's main focus is the sexual and reproductive rights of the individual. They work in collaboration with schools, hospitals and health centres.

There are three main initiatives involved in Nosso Instituto's projects:

- 1- Education - lectures to educate about contraception, sexually transmitted infections, situations of violence, consent, responsible exercise of sexuality.
- 2- Health interventions - Consultations with health professionals where the contraceptive method is discussed and insertions of IUDs and implants are offered. There are Whats App support groups for follow ups and questions.
- 3- Training of health professionals - Training and certifying health professionals for the management and insertion of LARCs - IUD and Implanon NXT. These professionals work daily in the Public Health Service are able then able to perform the insertions with Nosso Instituto and via SUS (the Brazilian health service).

La Vida has sponsored during the month of March 2022 one training course for 11 health professionals focused on handling and insertion of Implanon NXT, 22 gynecological appointments for insertion of the subdermal implants. We have also sponsored cytology tests for the patients. The monitoring of activities to evaluate the method for 6 months will continue during the next financial year.

# Poder Joven



## Education

**Grant in 2021:** £10,000

**Location:** Medellin, Colombia

**Partner since:** 2010

**Beneficiaries:** 75 children and their families

We continue to support this pre and after hours school facility in a deprived area in the outskirts of Medellin which provides

children with food, educational, medical and psychological support on a daily basis. In 2021, we sent extra funds for emergency food parcels for the families struggling to put food on the table as they were not able to work during the pandemic.

Due to school closures in Colombia because of the pandemic, Poder Joven prioritised helping the kids with the worksheets they were set by the school with a particular focus on Spanish language. In addition, they continued to run workshops throughout the year on different topics including alcoholism, drug use, mental health issues and health problems. Their aim is to prevent problems by discussing these issue with the kids and their families.



## Villa Maria



## Education

**Grant in 2021:** £7300

**Location:** Lima, Peru

**Partner since:** 2007

**Beneficiaries:** 100 Primary school children and their families, school staff. 33 sponsorships in 2021.

2021 was another very hard year in Peru, particularly in impoverished communities such as Villa Maria del Triunfo where Villa Maria school is located. Education continued to be delivered remotely for a second year in a row, creating significant challenges - from constraints in the delivery of lessons due to the limited availability of computers, to the impact of limited social interaction on the children, to the additional pressure that home schooling places on families.

Against this backdrop, Villa Maria's commitment and ability to adapt was remarkable. In addition to moving teaching online, Villa Maria's teachers adjusted their programmes and teaching methods to make the best use of the technology available, while creating opportunities for social interaction in ways that enhanced learning and engagement both with the children and their families. Remote teaching had a significant impact on absenteeism and drop-out rates in Peru as in the rest of Latin America. As such, Villa Maria saw a reduction in the number of children enrolled, with a consequent reduction in income. To cope, teachers took a salary cut while in some cases working even longer hours.

Going into 2022, teaching will be delivered progressively through a hybrid model, hopefully returning to in-person teaching before the year. This will require work and further funding to refresh the school's installations, and the ongoing support of La Vida will play an important role in providing continuity of education for children in this disadvantaged community.

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# Financial statements and notes

## Financial review

**Policy on reserves:** For 2021, La Vida kept 6 months of our ongoing commitments to projects as reserves. We will continue to do this in 2022.

**For the period from January 2021 to December 2021**

## Section A: Receipts and Payments

<b>A1 Receipts</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Restricted Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Endowment Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Total Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Last year</b> (nearest £)
Donations	48,347	9,410		57,757	76,044
Fundraising events					14,827
Interest on Deposit					
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross Income AR)	48,347	9,410		57,757	90,871

<b>A2 Asset and investment sales</b>					
<b>Sub Total</b>					

<b>Total receipts</b>	48,347	9,410		57,757	90,871
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<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Cost of fundraising events					3,688
Internet costs					
Grants to Latam projects	45,079	10,560		55,639	67,139
FX and bank charges	96			96	116
<b>Sub Total</b>	45,175	10,560		55,735	70,943



<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases</b>					
<b>Sub Total</b>					

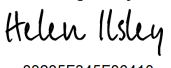
<b>Total payments</b>	45,175	10,560		55,735	70,943
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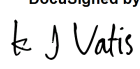
<b>Net of receipts/ (payments)</b>	3,172	-1150		2,022	19,928
<b>A5 Transfer between funds</b>					
<b>A6 Cash Funds last year end</b>	67,327	18,964		86,291	66,363
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	70,499	17,814		88,313	86,291

## Section B: Statement of Assets and Liabilities at the end of period

<b>B1 Cash donations</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Restricted Funds</b> ( nearest £)	<b>Endowment Funds</b> (nearest £)
CAF cash funds	70,499	17,814	
<b>Total Cash Funds</b>	70,499	17,814	

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all trustees:

DocuSigned by: 9/24/2022  
  
 83235F345F86410...  
 Helen Ilsley , date of approval

DocuSigned by: 9/24/2022  
  
 EC96AEA3EEAF452...  
 Katy Vatis, date of approval

# Independent examiner's report

**Report to the  
trustees/  
members of**

LA VIDA Vital Investment for Development Aid in Latin America

**On accounts for  
the year ended**

31 December 2021

**Charity no.**

1115796

**Set out on  
pages**

15 - 16

**Responsibilities  
and basis of  
report**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2021.**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.


**Independent  
examiner's  
statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

**Signed:**

**Date:**

16 Sep 2022

**Name:**

Tracey Falero

**Relevant  
professional  
qualification(s)  
or body (if any):**

Association of Chartered Accountants (ACA)

**Address:**

c/o LA VIDA

Gordon House, Gordon Ave, London SW14 8DZ. UK.

# Administrative details

**Charity name:** La Vida - Vital Investment for Development Aid in Latin America

**Charity Number:** 1115796

**Registered Address:** GORDON HOUSE  
GORDON AVENUE  
LONDON  
SW14 8DZ

**Trustees:** Ana Beatriz Alencar  
Rosie Bichard  
Ivonne Cantu  
Zarela Feeney  
Helen Ilsley  
Katy Vatis

**Independent Examiner:** Tracey Falero (ACA)



# Structure, Governance and Management

## Description of the charity's trusts

**Type of governing document:** Trust deed

**How the charity is constituted:** Trust

**Trustee selection methods:** Appointed by existing trustees

## Additional governance issues

La Vida - Trustee Selection Process Statement

- Interest in the Latin American region and improving the conditions of its people.
  - Skills and experience that add value to the board such as good relationships with potential sponsors and strong marketing skills for fundraising.
  - Good character
  - Nomination by one of the Trustees
  - Unanimous approval by current Trustees
- 

## Objectives and Activities

### Summary of the objects of the charity set out in this governing document

To further any charitable purpose for the benefit of disadvantaged people residing permanently in Latin America. In particular, by preserving and protecting health, relieving sickness, relieving poverty and advancing education.

## **Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects**

Provide funding for specific health, education and environment projects identified in any country in Latin America.

La Vida is 100% volunteer run. All of the Trustees and Executive Committee work on a voluntary basis and aim to keep expenses to a minimum so the money raised goes directly to the project beneficiaries.

Donations and fundraising have allowed us to improve and directly benefit the lives of over 60,000 children and their families across Latin America.

We continue to fund health, education and environment projects throughout the region. In 2021, we continued to support our existing ongoing projects in Costa Rica, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala and Peru. We funded new projects in Colombia and Honduras.

## **Additional details of objective and activities**

### **Policy on grant making:**

The Trustees of La Vida endeavour to directly grant funding to specific projects that relieve sickness and /or improve education in any Latin American country. Preference will be given to independent projects, but trustees could also look to partner with local organisations that will see through the success and completion of compelling projects in health, education and the environment in Latin America.

The project committee meets every 3-6 months to discuss and approve new project proposals. We assess our projects in depth and have a rigorous selection process. Each grant application has to complete our project proposal form and give proof of identity of their organisation and the people running it, plus 2 years of bank statements. Every project we support has a partnership agreement signed by La Vida and the organisation receiving the project funding which includes all of our reporting requirements. The agreement sets out the timeline of the project with final goals to be reached, all of our reporting requirements such as photos of the project, receipts for items purchased etc.

The executive committee, all of whom are volunteers, continues to help organise fundraising events, develop the website, publish newsletters and broaden the reach of the charity.