



LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!®

LIFE IN ITS FULLNESS
FOR CHILDREN IN COLOMBIA

Charity registered with the Charity Commission No. 1159113



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AGGREGATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

31st DECEMBER 2024

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

	Page
GENERAL INFORMATION	1
REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS	
Introduction	2
Partner Organisation	3
Objects	4
Mission and Vision	5
The Context of the Charity's Beneficiaries in Colombia	6
Principal Activities	14
Finance	26
Property	33
Human Resources	33
Public Benefit	34
Risk Management	35
Governance	52
Responsibilities of the Trustees	53
Independent Examination	54
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	55
AGGREGATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	57
AGGREGATED BALANCE SHEET	58
AGGREGATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS	60
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	61

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

GENERAL INFORMATION

COMPANY NUMBER:	07140869
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBERS:	1159113 1159113-1
DIRECTORS:	Miss P. Brown (Chairman) Fr S. Goodman Mrs G. Prosser
COMPANY SECRETARY:	Miss P. Allan
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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:	David Hoose FCA Forvis Mazars LLP 2, Chamberlain Square Birmingham B3 3AX

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

The Directors/Trustees present their Report for the year ended 31st December 2024.

Introduction

Let The Children Live! is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, incorporated on 20th January 2010 and registered as a Charity on 6th November 2014. The Company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the Charitable Company; and it is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the Company being wound up the Members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1. The Directors of the Company are also its Trustees for the purposes of charity law.

Let The Children Live! was set up by the Trustees of the Charitable Trust of the same name (Registered Charity No. 1159113-1, originally 1013634), which was founded by Father Peter Walters at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk, in 1992. The same people are the Trustees of both charities.

Fr Peter asked the Trustees of the Trust to set up the Company in order:

- to consolidate and extend the work he had begun through the Trust;
- to make the specifically Christian principles and nature of this work more explicit and secure; and
- to provide this work with an incorporated structure in which the liability of the Trustees would be limited.

Although Fr Peter is recognised as being the Founder of both charities, he is not a Trustee of either of them. He was employed by the Trust as its Executive Director until 31st December 2016; and the following day he became employed as the Executive Director of the Company.

When the Company was established, it was agreed that this new body should gradually take over the work of the Trust, and that once all of the assets and liabilities of the latter had been transferred to the former, the Trust would eventually be wound up in order to avoid the unnecessary expenditure of time and money involved in running two charities for the same purpose.

By the end of 2016 the Company was ready to take over the operational responsibilities of the Trust; and it duly did this on 1st January 2017. The Company then became the workhorse in the partnership between the two “related undertakings”.

The employees of the Trust agreed that their contracts of employment should be transferred to the Company as from 1st January 2017. The Trustees decided that the tangible assets of the Trust should be made over to the Company on that day; and

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

they arranged for the leases of the three properties rented by the Trust to be taken over by the Company on the same date. Consequently, thenceforward the Trust has no longer had any employees, tangible assets or leased premises of its own: but it has been able to benefit, free of charge, from those of the Company.

Although, as has been mentioned above, the Trustees had initially expected to be able to wind up the Trust within a quite limited timespan, they found that some regular donors had set up their Standing Orders without giving their contact details to the Trust, so it was not possible to contact them to ask them to transfer their Standing Orders from the Trust to the Company. Others simply ignored repeated requests to make this transfer.

The Trustees feared that the income from these donors would be lost if the Trust were to be wound up, so they allowed it to remain in existence year after year in a semi-dormant state, simply serving as the recipient of this income. However, on 14th December 2020 the Charity Commission told the Trustees that they “should review all available options by 31 May 2021 for effectively winding up the Trust by an appropriate time and transferring all assets/donations to the Charity, taking into account any appropriate professional advice.”

The Trustees therefore consulted their Solicitor, who said that in view of the net annual income of more than £10,000 in standing orders and Gift Aid that was likely to be lost if the Trust were to be wound up, he did not consider that this would be in its best interests. He therefore suggested that the Trustees should instead apply to the Charity Commission for the Trust to be “linked” to the Company. The Trustees accepted this advice, and made the necessary application.

On 26th July 2021 the Charity Commission agreed that the Trust (No. 1013634) should be linked to the Company (No. 1159113) for the purposes of Part 4 (registration) and Part 8 (accounting) of the Charities Act 2011. The Commission also decided that the number of the Trust should be changed to 1159113-1.

In order to avoid confusion, hereafter in this Report, the *Company* will be referred to as the “Reporting Charity”, and the *Trust* will be referred to as the “Linked Charity”. When the linked charities are referred to *jointly*, they will simply be called either “**Let The Children Live!**” or “the charity”.

Partner Organisation

The charity’s operational Partner Organisation in Colombia is **Fundación ¡Vivan Los Niños! (Funvini)** a Charitable Foundation that the Trustees asked Fr Peter to set up in 1994 to serve this purpose. It is, however, a separate organisation, subject to

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Colombian law, and with its own *Junta Directiva* (Board of Trustees) to manage its affairs.

In order to promote transparency and cooperation between **Funvini** and **Let The Children Live!**, an important part of Fr Peter's work is to act as the non-voting Permanent Representative of the British charity on the *Junta Directiva* of the Colombian one. He is therefore usually based in Medellín for more than half of the year. Further contact is provided by occasional visits made to **Funvini** by the Trustees of **Let The Children Live!**

For example, the Chairman of the Trustees made such visits in 2013, 2014 and 2017; She had planned to make her next visit in August 2020, but unfortunately this was not possible because of the Covid pandemic. The ongoing complications in intercontinental travel prevented her from going in 2021 or 2022; but she was at last able to go in August 2023. All being well, she will make another visit in 2026.

The accounts of **Funvini** for 2024 were subjected to a full Audit by an independent *Revisora Fiscal* in 2025, and were certified to be in order. **Funvini**'s Child Protection Officer confirmed that its Child Protection Policy had continued to work satisfactorily in 2024, and that no irregularities had come to her notice.

Objects

The Objects of the Linked Charity are: "to relieve children and young persons anywhere in the world but particularly in Colombia who are in conditions of sickness, need, hardship and distress by the provision of medical supplies, clothing, food, shelter and in such other charitable ways the Trustees may determine."

Similarly, the Objects of the Reporting Charity are:

(i) to relieve street-children and young persons anywhere in the world particularly (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing) in the Republic of Colombia who are in conditions of sickness, need, hardship and distress by the provision of medical supplies, clothing, food, shelter and in such other Charitable ways as the Trustees may determine;

(ii) to advance the education of the public by the following:

- the provision of education and training of such children and young persons, and to advance their formation within the doctrines and principles of the Christian faith;

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

- furthering research into the causes and nature of the conditions and behaviour of such children and young people, and into the means of their improvement; and the dissemination of the useful results of such research for the benefit of the public; and
- the provision of Development Education (education on social, health and economic issues), in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in relation to the conditions and behaviour of such children and young people, in particular but not exclusively through delivery of education in schools.

(iii) to preserve and protect the health of such children and young people by assisting in the prevention of substance abuse and delinquency; and in their protection from violence, cruelty, danger or exploitation and other violations of their human rights.

Mission and Vision

In accordance with these Objects and the Founder's intentions, the Trustees defined the charity's Mission as being "to promote the welfare and education of street-children and other young people who are in conditions of hardship, danger or distress, in the Republic of Colombia or elsewhere, so that they 'may have life and have it to the full', by means of obtaining and providing financial and technical support for the work of **Fundación ¡Vivan Los Niños! (Funvini)** and of other similar organisations."

In their Vision Statement, the Trustees proclaimed that the charity would aspire "to develop the expertise and capacity to obtain and provide the financial and technical resources required to enable **Fundación ¡Vivan Los Niños! (Funvini)** to become a leading developer in the Republic of Colombia of innovative, reproducible, small-scale, high-quality programmes, designed and conducted in accordance with Christian teaching and principles, and intended to assist, educate and protect street-children and other young people at high social risk, to prevent their falling into delinquency and substance-abuse, and to facilitate their reintegration into the family, school and society; and also to obtain and provide resources to help other organisations to develop programmes of a similar nature elsewhere."

As their very names proclaim, both **Let The Children Live!** and **Fundación ¡Vivan Los Niños!** are staunchly pro-life organisations, firmly committed to the protection of the lives and well-being of children from the moment of their conception until the time of their natural death. In traditional Christian moral teaching, certain acts - including abortion, euthanasia and suicide - have been, and continue to be, considered to be intrinsically wrong in all cases, and can never be morally justifiable under any

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

circumstances. This teaching received its clearest modern expression in St John Paul II's great Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (1993). No matter how superficially attractive, benign or advantageous they may appear, it can never really be in a person's true interest to commit, participate in, consent to, or be the subject of, acts that are intrinsically wrong.

These moral principles are the basis of the policies of both **Let The Children Live!** and **Funvini**. As the British charity's Solicitor has confirmed, these views are not extremist: they are perfectly moderate and legitimate expressions of deeply-held and rationally justifiable convictions that are not anti-anyone, or anything-phobic. Like those of their benefactors, they are just pro-Christian, pro-life and pro-children. Any attempt to impose any other interpretation on the contents of this Report would constitute a misunderstanding of the Trustees' intentions, and a wilful misrepresentation of their views.

The Context of the Charity's Beneficiaries in Colombia

In 2024 the work of **Let The Children Live!** was, as usual, focused on supporting that of **Fundación ¡Vivan Los Niños! (Funvini)** with children and young people at high social risk in the city of Medellín. In 2024, a total of 123 families (86 Colombian and 37 Venezuelan) received help of one kind or another from **Funvini**. These families were composed not only of 247 children but also of 155 adults on whose welfare that of the children depended. Of the children, 183 benefitted directly from the charity's programmes; and a further 64 - mostly younger brothers and sisters of the main group - also received indirect benefits of various kinds.

For both **Let The Children Live!** and **Funvini**, every year since 2007 has been impacted by the fluctuations in the value of Sterling against the Colombian Peso (C\$). At the beginning of July 2006, £1 was worth C\$5,030: and in 2024 the average exchange rate received by **Funvini** was £1= C\$5,177.74. This represented a fall of 2.5% in relation to the average rate in 2023, and was only 2.9% higher than the rate in July 2006.

The damage caused by the many years of a weak pound between 2006 and 2024 has been made much worse by the accumulative effect of 247.56% in annual inflation in Colombia in that period on the purchasing power of the charity's donations to **Funvini**. In 2006 the charity donated a total of £423,595 to **Funvini**. In order to have had the same purchasing power in Colombia in 2024 as that sum had in 2006, the charity would have needed to have donated more than £1,048,000 to **Funvini** last

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

year. That would have been £703,980 (204.6%) more than the total of £344,020 that was actually donated, and would obviously have required a correspondingly substantial increase in the British charity's income.

According to the most recent version of the *End of Childhood Index*, a statistical survey of 180 countries published by Save The Children in its *Global Children Report 2021*, Colombia ranked 132nd in terms of the best places in which to be a child. The United Kingdom was ranked 28th. And whereas in a Gallup pole in 2021 Colombia was rated the happiest country in the world, in the World Happiness Index for 2024 Colombia fell from 72nd to 78th out of 143 countries, just one place above Venezuela, and 58 places below the United Kingdom, which was ranked 20th.

A report issued in July 2025 by DANE (the National Administrative Statistical Department), stated that 31.8% of the Colombian population were living in monetary poverty in 2024; and 11.7% of the population were in a state of *extreme* poverty. with a *per capita* income of only C\$227,220 (about £42) each *month* - or about £1.40 each day. Figures supplied by DANE and UNICEF indicate that this means that about 7,200,000 children in Colombia are living in poverty, and that about 1,288,000 children are in a state of *extreme* poverty.

As for Medellín, in particular, the DANE report stated that 22.6% of the city's population were living in monetary poverty in 2024. That year, Medellín was the second most expensive city in Colombia to live in. In contrast, *Time Out* ranked Medellín third in its list of *The 53 Best Cities in the World in 2022*. Although the city had slipped to 20th place in the rankings for 2025, it was still the top one in South America.

Evidently, the surveys that produced these very upbeat assessments of life in Medellín only questioned those fortunate few of its inhabitants who had the money to be involved in the restaurant scene and the bar circuit as customers rather than as waiters, cooks, washers-up or cleaners. Nor did they mention the 28% of the city's inhabitants who told the survey *Medellín, Cómo Vamos* in both 2023 and 2024 that a member of their household had eaten fewer than three meals per day in the previous week because they did not have enough food. The surveys are also unlikely to have reflected the views of the children who fell victim to sexual exploitation as a consequence of the city's nightlife and the dating apps.

On 8th June 2024 *The Times* published a very positive article about Medellín by Stephanie Rafanelli, who reported that the city had attracted 1.2 million tourists in 2023, and that number was set to grow. About half of these tourists were foreigners. But her article did not mention that in Medellín's international airport at Rio Negro

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

the arrivals corridor and immigration hall was then (and is still) lined with large posters that warn all these foreign visitors that those caught engaging in the sexual exploitation of minors must expect drastic penalties. The fact that such posters are considered necessary is an indication of the scale of this problem.

In the period between January and November 2022, the authorities dealt with 14 cases of such exploitation per month: but it is clear that these cases represented only a small fraction of the total number of the children involved. The majority of them were girls; and although their ages ranged from 4 to 17, the average age was 13.

A report on Caracol Radio on 19th November 2024 stated that so far that year 226 people had been detained on charges relating to the sexual exploitation of minors. This was an increase of 11% on the total for the whole of 2023. The *Personería* of Medellín (the city Ombudsman's office) has reported that in 2023 they registered 1,259 incidents of this kind; and this was an increase of 59% on the total in 2022. These are by far the highest figures reported in any city in Colombia.

An article in *El Colombiano* on 15th February 2024 reported that the Mayor of Medellín had said that four gangs - three Colombian and one Venezuelan - controlled prostitution around Lleras Park, a major centre of the city's nightlife in *El Poblado*, the district where most tourists stay, eat and relax. At least one of these gangs is believed to be involved in sex tourism networks that aim to attract foreigners, including foreign paedophiles.

In an attempt to counter this menace, the authorities created the GESET (Group against Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons), to articulate the work of the Colombian police, the Attorney General's Office and international agencies such as the United States Embassy, the Homeland Security Investigations and Interpol. In December 2024 Interpol opened its own special operations centre in Medellín. This is the first such centre it has established in a non-capital city anywhere in the world. Among its functions will be to alert the authorities to the arrival in Medellín of any foreigners who have a history of sexual offences elsewhere.

The work of these agencies has already had some success. According to another report in *El Colombiano* on 9th January 2025, twelve foreigners were charged in 2024 with sexual offences against children in Medellín, whereas only ten had been arrested between 2019 and 2023. Two of those charged in 2024 had previously made multiple visits to Medellín: one had come 65 times; and the other had visited the city 45 times since 2022. This man was arrested in Miami airport when he was about to leave for yet another trip to Colombia.

In 2024, 26 (10.5%) of **Funvini's** children had to work. Of these, the majority (17) were girls; and 7 were aged under 15. Four worked with their parents: one girl helped

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

her mother to sell sweets in the street; another helped her father to maintain washing-machines; and two boys helped in sorting through rubbish for recycling. The other 22 worked on their own account, but without legal contracts. Some of these sold sweets, others cleaned car windscreens at the traffic lights; and others unloaded large lorries delivering food and other merchandise to the *Minorista* retail market. Two of the girls were involved in prostitution and internet pornography, and their cases were referred to the ICBF (the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare). However, all of these children were at high risk of getting caught up in drugs, crime or prostitution.

The previously-mentioned article in the *Times* of 8th June 2024 was particularly effusive about the “social transformation” that had taken place in the *Comuna 13*, a sector of Medellín that was formerly notorious for its violence. However, because of its strategic geographical location, this part of the city was - and still is - the corridor for taking drugs to the Gulf of Urabá on Colombia’s Caribbean coast, which is a major gateway on the smugglers’ route to the United States.

This *comuna* is home to some of **Funvini**’s families, and they have confirmed that it remains under the control of the gangs, who now benefit from the tourist bonanza by such means as extorting money from the guides, the souvenir shops and the taxi drivers waiting to take the tourists back to their hotels. Too much overt violence there would now be bad for business: but the veneer of social transformation that the tourists see is only skin deep.

For example, on 12th July 2025 the authorities announced the capture of alias *Valde*, the second-in-command of the *Las Independistas* gang. He has been accused of coordinating the extortion of protection money from business owners in the *Comuna 13*, and of the sale of drugs to foreign tourists who visited the area. His capture came four months after the authorities’ attempt to arrest the leader of this gang, alias *Sebas*, was foiled by the intervention of dozens of local civilians who enabled him to escape through the crowd.

Most of the other working-class districts of Medellín are rarely visited by tourists, and they have not fared as well as the *Comuna 13*. Violence is still very much part of the background of the lives of those of **Funvini**’s children who live there.

Because criminal organisations in Colombia are constantly evolving, the authorities periodically change the way in which they are classified. Those whose criminal activities have a transnational dimension are now known as *Grupos Delictivos Organizados* (GDOs - Organised Criminal Groups). There are estimated to be 10 of these GDOs in Medellín alone, and between them they control around 400 smaller local criminal *combos* in the city.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

For many years, the territorial disputes between the gangs made Medellín notorious for its violence. Indeed, in 1991 it was the city with the highest murder rate in the whole of the western hemisphere, with 395 victims per hundred thousand inhabitants. In subsequent years, however, there has been a slow and unsteady but very remarkable improvement, and in 2024, with a rate of 11.7 victims per hundred thousand inhabitants, the city reached the lowest level of violence in four decades. Even so, there is still considerable room for further improvement: the homicide rate in London, by contrast, was about 1.1 per hundred thousand inhabitants.

According to a report from *Análisis Urbano* (<https://analisisurbano.org/medellin-avanza-hacia-la-paz-urbana-en-2024-menor-tasa-de-homicidios-en-mas-de-cuatro-decadas/>) only 31.36% of the homicides committed in Medellín in 2024 were directly attributed by the authorities to the activities of the GDOs. However, at the time the report was written a further 32.58% of the homicides had not yet been categorised, and it was probable that some of these would eventually be attributed to the GDOs, too. In any event, it is clear that in 2024 the GDOs were still responsible for a very significant proportion of the violent deaths in the city - much more, for example, than domestic violence (2.10%), or gender-based violence (3.73%), or even theft (9.06%).

The decrease in the number of homicides is therefore considered to be the result not only of the interventions of the authorities but also - and to a very considerable degree - to the decision of the GDOs themselves to impose a series of *Pactos de Fusil* (Rifle Pacts) to reduce the level of violence in the city as they have diversified their sources of illegal financing, focusing on activities such as extortion, micro-trafficking and corruption, which do not necessarily require the use of lethal violence to be profitable. Indeed, this suppression of the bloody “turf wars” between gangs was advantageous to the GDOs both because it reduced the risk of provoking massive intervention by the authorities and because it helped to create more stable conditions in which their other criminal activities could flourish.

The fall in Medellín’s homicide rate therefore does not mean that the power of the GDOs and the *combos* has diminished. On the contrary, their control over nearly all of the poor *barrios* in the city has actually increased, enabling them to exercise a kind of *de facto* “co-government” in which it is they, rather than the authorities, that resolve disputes and enforce contracts. They prevent or punish “unauthorised” criminal activity in these areas, so that they can enjoy a local monopoly of

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

prostitution, betting, loan-sharking and selling drugs. And they also extort protection money - *la vacuna* - from businesses and householders.

Moreover, in the first part of the present year the decline in the number of murders in Medellín has suffered an alarming reversal. By 15th July 2025 a total of 186 murders had been committed in the city. This was 39 (27%) more than in the corresponding period in 2024. So far, the cause of this increase has not been determined by the authorities. However, on 22nd August 2025 the city's Security Secretariat reported that the number of robberies in the city so far this year had fallen by 34%. In Medellín, when the murder rate goes up, the number of robberies tends to fall - and *vice versa*.

The Trustees continue to be very concerned about the impact that the continuing crisis in Venezuela is having on Colombia. Three countries - Colombia, Brazil and Guyana - share land borders with Venezuela, but at 1,378 miles its longest border is that with Colombia; and it is Colombia that has received the greatest number of the more than 7,000,000 refugees and migrants who have come to Colombia from Venezuela in recent years.

According to Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Relations, in 2014, the last "normal" year before the crisis began, there were then 23,573 Venezuelan migrants in Colombia. However, ten years later, the government agency Migración Colombia, reported that at the end of February 2024 this number had gone up to 2,845,706 - an increase of 12,071.9%. Moreover, the presence of 486,072 (17.1%) of these Venezuelans was believed to be "irregular", either because they had failed to update the kind of temporary residence permit they held, or because they had exceeded the time they were officially meant to stay in the country.

A report by R4V, the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, in September 2024 indicated that there had been little change during that year because there were still 2,808,968 refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the country. And the *Migration Pulse* survey published on 10th October 2024 by DANE, the Colombian government's statistical department, revealed that 80% of the Venezuelans then in Colombia intended to remain there; and that only 3.6% intended to return to their own country.

In terms of religion, culture, history and language, Colombia has much in common with Venezuela, and many Colombians have blood ties with the neighbouring country. In most cases, it has not been too difficult for Venezuelans to adapt to the Colombian life-style, or for them to be assimilated into Colombian society. And in

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

spite of the vast influx of Venezuelans into Colombia, the great majority of Colombians have continued to display great solidarity and tolerance towards their Venezuelan guests, even though their presence has put greater pressure on employment, education, health and housing.

In an article in *El Colombiano* dated 21st June 2024, Elisa Carlaccini, an official of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was reported as stating that there were then 240,278 people “of Venezuelan origin” in Medellín, and that her agency calculated that they constituted “more than 10%” of the city’s total population. This was the greatest proportion in any Colombian city.

Unfortunately, there are clear signs that a small but increasing minority number of the Venezuelans in Medellín are becoming involved in crime. An article in *El Colombiano* reported on 20th February 2024 that 2,172 Venezuelans had been arrested for various crimes in the city, and that a further 426 had been prosecuted so far in 2024. Another article in that paper, dated 14th November 2024, stated that 31 Venezuelans had been murdered in Medellín so far that year. That was the highest number since the influx of Venezuelans began in 2015. It represented an increase of 14.8% in comparison with the total in the same period the previous year, and contrasted with the general fall in 2024 in the number of homicides among other population groups in the city.

It is not clear what proportion of these Venezuelan victims were totally innocent, and what proportion were killed because of their involvement in criminal activities. Because of the present government’s political sympathy for the Venezuelan regime, it likes the Venezuelans in Colombia to be called “migrants” rather than “refugees”; and it also prefers Venezuelan criminals to be referred to as “foreign citizens” without specifying their nationality.

The Itagüi Peace Table is made up of the leaders of some of the largest criminal gangs in the Aburrá Valley in which Medellín is situated, and who are currently inmates of the Itagüi Maximum Security Prison. They maintain that the increase in murders in the city is the result of the activity in the Aburrá Valley of foreign criminal organisations, such as the Venezuelan *Tren de Aragua*, that are trying to take over control of drugs, prostitution and extortion in some parts of the city.

However, according to the previously-mentioned report in *El Colombiano* of 20th February 2024, the authorities in Medellín denied that the *Tren de Aragua*, one of the most powerful criminal gangs in Venezuela, with a presence in Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Panama and the United States, had been trying to make inroads into the city’s very lucrative criminal underworld in the way that they had managed to do in other Colombian cities such as Bogotá, Cúcuta, Villa del Rosario and Ipiales.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

The authorities maintained that the *Envigado Office*, the transnational criminal cartel that was born in Medellín, has consolidated its hegemony over most of the city's GDOs and *combos* - including some that are composed exclusively of Venezuelans - to a much greater degree than any single criminal organisation has achieved elsewhere, and that this is preventing the incursion of the *Aragua Train* into their domain.

However, the article pointed out that the Venezuelan gang does not always enter new territory violently, but sometimes seeks to gain a toehold through negotiation with the dominant existing criminal organisation. It had therefore been rumoured that emissaries of the *Aragua Train* may have come to Medellín to talk to leaders of the *Office*; but so far no agreement appears to have been reached between the two parties.

It appears that some young Venezuelans and other foreign nationals who have settled in the central areas of Medellín, and have served their “apprenticeship” with the Colombian criminal gangs that were already operating there, are now trying to go into business on their own account. They are not party to the current *Pacto de Fusil* between Medellín's main criminal groups.

However, according to a report in *El Colombiano* on 13th July 2025, underworld sources have claimed that other factors may be behind this year's rise in homicides. They allege that some of the members of the Peace Table are becoming impatient with the lack of progress with their negotiations with the Colombian government in its Total Urban Peace initiative. Whatever the truth of this may be, it would appear that the veneer of comparative peace that has been hailed by many foreign commentators is now wearing dangerously thin.

All of these developments give cause for grave concern. Moreover, if the attitude of the Colombian public towards the Venezuelan refugees/migrants were to deteriorate seriously, there might be a risk that charities like **Funvini** could be targeted if they were perceived as being too sympathetic to the refugees.

The GDOs and the *combos* are a constant menace to the sort of children for which **Funvini** cares because they are always trying to recruit young people into their ranks. The gangs are attractive because they offer the youngsters easy money, social standing and a feeling of belonging. The very identity of those who enter the gangs at a young age is forged in them, and they do not know any other way of life. And, of course, those who try to desert can expect no mercy.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

The *sicario* (hitman) who shot Senator Miguel Uribe Turbay in Bogotá in June 2025 was aged only 14. He said that he committed the murder “for money, for my family”. If the crime had occurred in Medellín, the culprit could very well have been a child to whom **Funvini** would have offered a very different way of life.

However, it has to be admitted that in spite of its best efforts, **Funvini**’s interventions in this very difficult environment sometimes come too late, or prove to be insufficient. The Trustees received a sad reminder of this when they heard that a young man of 24 who had spent much of his childhood in **Funvini**’s care, but who had later taken to drugs as an adult, and had eventually ended up in the street, had committed a savage murder in a fit of rage in November 2024, and has now been sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Fortunately, this was a quite exceptional case; and since **Funvini**’s foundation in 1994 the generosity of its benefactors and the dedication of its staff have enabled many hundreds of youngsters from a similar backgrounds to avoid a similar fate.

Principal Activities

Whereas in 2023 **Funvini** had had a total of 26 employees, it began 2024 with only 18. A social worker had retired; the special needs teacher had gone to work in Australia; and for lack of funds the contracts of another social worker, three teachers, one cleaner and the messenger were not renewed.

Such a drastic cut in the number of staff inevitably resulted in a corresponding reduction in the number of children whom Funvini was able to help. The Trustees therefore greatly regret to have to report that the number of children who regularly took part in **Funvini**’s programmes in 2024 fell by 52% to 116. However, an additional 67 children participated on an occasional basis: and a further 64 children - most of whom were younger brothers or sisters of those who were involved in **Funvini**’s programmes - also received benefits of various kinds.

The substantial number of occasional beneficiaries was mostly due to the fact the Venezuelan refugee population in Medellín was - and still is - very unstable because families tend to move from *barrio* to *barrio*, from city to city - and, indeed, from country to country - as they attempt to find a better place in which to live, and a better way with which to try to scratch a living. A total of 123 families (86 Colombian and 37 Venezuelan) families received help from **Funvini**. Up to the beginning of August

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

2025, the total for the present year was 121 families (93 Colombian and 28 Venezuelan).

As in previous years, the children who were admitted to **Funvini**'s programmes in January 2024 were selected on the basis of a "traffic light" system based on their characteristics and their perceived degree of deprivation and vulnerability, according to various criteria. In the red category of greatest need or danger were 53.3% of the children; 39.3% of them were in the amber category; and only 7.3% were in the green category. Some children were re-categorised during the course of the year in response to changes in their situation, and the total population of the programmes gradually increased during the year.

However, it is important to understand that, in both years, *all* of the children were deprived and at high social risk. The "traffic light" system was only indicative of the *relative degree* of their deprivation and of the risk to which they were exposed. It has proved useful in prioritising the use of **Funvini**'s limited resources to benefit most the children whose need or danger is considered to be greatest.

Funvini arranged 26 *talleres* (workshops) for the children's parents, 20 in *Casa Walsingham* and 6 in *Casa Bannatyne*. and a total of 81 individuals took part in these. The *talleres* were designed to provide the parents with a forum in which common problems can be discussed, and at which classes could be given about such matters as parenting skills and budgeting. Those who were in particular difficulty were able to receive additional support in private from the charity's social-workers and psychologists; and those with legal problems can be referred to its lawyers.

In August 2025, the number of children regularly taking part in **Funvini**'s programmes was 128. Of this population, 88 were Colombian and 40 were Venezuelan. A further 43 children were attending occasionally; and 87 younger children were benefitting from food-parcels. In total, 258 children were therefore being helped. This number was 10 (4%) greater than the total in August 2024.

Funvini helped to matriculate, or re-matriculate, a total of 143 children in local schools in 2024. In order to keep their school places, pupils in Colombia have to be re-matriculated every year. With support from **Funvini**'s teachers 126 (88.1%) of these children completed the year successfully, and were promoted to the next grade. The previous year, 68.6% of the pupils had gained promotion, so this represented a considerable improvement. It reflected the increased emphasis that **Funvini** had given to educational support during the year.

In 2023, the average number of pupils in Medellín's primary schools was 40 per class; and in the city's secondary schools it was 35. The average class size in the

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

secondary schools attended by the choristers was 39.5. However, one of the choristers had 51 other children in his class! These average figures were 50% higher than in British state schools, where the figures were 26.6 and 22.3, respectively.

With such large numbers, the teachers in Colombian state schools are unable to provide their pupils with much individual support. Worse still, the present Mayor of Medellín is ceasing to fund special education posts in the city's schools. Instead, he has created a single Integral Attention Unit (UAI) to provide support for all 144 of the state schools in the city. The idea is that children with special needs should be referred to the UAI for diagnosis only, and then simply returned to their schools with guidelines to help the ordinary teachers there to deal with each case. According to a very critical report in *El Colombiano* on 18th July 2023, this has left 14,000 children who have special educational needs without the support that they need.

Because of this lack of proper provision for such children, **Funvini** continued to make its own small contribution in the *Sala VIP* at *Casa Walsingham*. Until October 2023 this had been run by a dedicated special needs teacher, who was also a psychologist. Unfortunately, she then resigned in order to emigrate to Australia, and shortage of funds prevented **Funvini** from replacing her. To help to compensate for this, Funvini entered into agreements with two specialist organisations to provide extra support for nearly all of the 18 children who attended the *Sala VIP*. Thanks to this, 15 (83.3%) of these children were able to complete the year successfully, and were promoted to the next grade. Without this help, however, it is unlikely that *any* of them would have done so.

In 2024, two girls and two boys who had belonged to **Funvini's** School Project celebrated their graduation from High School. The two girls were young mothers of the St María Goretti Group. It is hoped that a further 4 pupils will graduate from High School in 2025. This will bring the total of number of students who have graduated through the School Project since 2017 to 51, (31 girls and 20 boys). None of these young people would, in all probability, have managed to complete their secondary education without this help.

Small though the scale of the Project may be, the Trustees consider these results to be very encouraging. They therefore greatly regret the fact that the great shortage of special education teachers in Colombia has so far prevented **Funvini** from being able to recruit one to take charge both of this Project and of the *Sala Vip*.

Many of **Funvini's** beneficiaries reach the age of 18 before they have completed their secondary education, and would stand little chance of finding honest employment if they were forced to leave school and go out looking for work without any qualifications. In 2023 eight such young adults received support from **Funvini's**

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Extension group to enable them to continue with their vocational training (four) or their courses at university (four). Three of those at university were boys who had belonged to *Cor Videns*, and the other was a girl from the School Project who had chosen to read forensic science. They all came from families with very restricted means, and it is unlikely that any of them would be able to fulfil their potential without **Funvini**'s help.

All 247 youngsters who belonged to **Funvini**'s programmes in December 2024 were given presents of toys, clothing and sweets by the charity over the Christmas period. An additional 4 children who came along in the hope of presents were not sent away disappointed. In many cases, these were the only presents the children received, so it is easy to imagine how much excitement and pleasure they generated. Once again, all of the funds needed to fund the festivities and to buy the presents were raised in Scotland by Mr George McAleenan, in spite of his ill health. The Trustees are most grateful for this.

During 2024, more than 7,000 lunches were served at *Casa Walsingham*, and a further 8,034 lunches were served at *Casa Bannatyne*. The children who stayed there were also provided with breakfast and dinner. For many of these children, their lunch at *Casa Walsingham* - together with the healthy snack they are given either in the morning or the late afternoon - was and is their main source of nourishment. As a result of the alarming rise in food prices since the pandemic, the children have become even more reliant on the food provided by **Funvini**.

In the course of 2024, the charity assisted 80 boys and girls to receive various types of medical attention. These included general practitioner and paediatric appointments, nutritional evaluations, dental treatment and eye tests.

Additionally, **Funvini** paid insurance policies to provide a total of 164 children with accident and emergency health cover for all or part of the year in 2024. The policy covered 151 children at any one time, but the departure of some children - when they entered other institutions, moved to distant *barrios*, or left the city altogether - meant that their places could then be assigned to new arrivals.

Lack of funds prevented **Funvini** from providing the usual annual vaccinations against influenza for its children and staff in either 2023 or 2024. However, the Trustees are pleased to be able to report that in 2025 a total of 130 vaccinations have been administered. These vaccinations are particularly necessary in Medellín because the high level of pollution in the air in the city causes many respiratory problems amongst the children, and a bad bout of influenza could seriously aggravate these. The authorities sometimes have to declare amber or red alerts about the air quality in

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Medellín. On these occasion emergency measures have to be implemented to try to reduce the smog by which the inhabitants are threatened.

Unlike **Let The Children Live!**, **Funvini** is an explicitly Roman Catholic organisation. Although it certainly does not exclude non-Catholics, and it provides its services on the basis of need rather than creed, the great majority of its children - in common with the majority of the population of Medellín in general - are Catholics. **Funvini** considers that enabling them to participate in the sacramental life of the Church is an integral and very important part of the charity's work. It therefore provides Catechism classes for those who wish to be prepared for the Sacraments, and who for one reason or another are not able to attend catechism classes in their own parishes.

In 2024, 11 such children made their First Communion: four on Easter Sunday, and seven on Christmas Day. Both of these Masses were celebrated in the Chapel of *Casa Walsingham*. In 2025 the Rev'd Deacon Germán Montoya entered **Funvini**'s team as a full-time employee. This has enabled the spiritual life of *Casa Walsingham* to remain active whilst Fr Peter is away, and for the religious formation both of **Funvini**'s children and of its staff to be intensified.

The Trustees are pleased to report that, as a result of Deacon Germán's work, 12 children and 3 of their adult family members are currently being prepared for Holy Baptism and First Communion, and a further 6 children and 3 adults are being prepared for their First Communion. It is hoped that the Baptisms will take place in the local parish church on the Solemnity of Christ the King in November; and that half of the First Communions will be take place at Midnight Mass in the Chapel of *Casa Walsingham* on Christmas Eve, and the other half in the same place at the Christmas Day Mass.

In August 2023, the Forty Hours Devotion of continuous prayer before the Blessed Sacrament was held again in the Chapel at *Casa Walsingham* for the first time since the Covid pandemic. This is normally a high point in **Funvini**'s spiritual calendar; and although it was rather tiring, the event was as well-supported as ever both by the children and by the staff. The girls took it in turns to keep the adoration going throughout the first night, and the boys did the same on the second night. Unfortunately, Fr Peter's recent illness prevented this Devotion from being held again in August 2024, but it is due to take place at the end of August 2025.

Let The Children Live! receives the support of all sorts of people of good will. Most of them are Christians of one kind or another, but some are of different religious

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

persuasions. The Trustees are most grateful for the spiritual support of all the individuals and groups who prayed for the children in response to the charity's intercession list.

In accordance with its Catholic principles, **Funvini** fully shares the commitment of **Let The Children Live!** to safeguard the lives of children from the time of their conception onwards. When young girls belonging to any of its programmes become pregnant - or other pregnant teenagers turn to it for help - **Funvini** therefore does all it can to provide care for them and their babies both before and after the birth.

The charity ensures that these girls are given the necessary medical checks; it gives them basic training in child care; it helps with supplies of food, nappies and other essentials; and it gives them support if they have been abandoned by their families or subjected to domestic violence. **Funvini** also encourages the girls to continue with their education; and it gives them the chance to meet together regularly for recreation and mutual support.

In 2024 the beneficiaries of the St Maria Goretti group included 14 of these young mothers and their babies. All of these girls were aged under 17, and the youngest was 14, having become pregnant at the age of 13. Two babies were born in the course of the year. As of August 2025, the group was composed of 13 mothers and their babies. The youngest two mothers in the group were aged 14.

With **Funvini**'s help, all but one of these girls were enabled to continue with their secondary schooling, or to begin vocational training. Two of the girls belonged to **Funvini**'s School Project, and they both completed their *Bachillerato* (High School Diploma) in 2024. The other girls continued with their studies. The girl who was unable to go to school in 2024 was a Venezuelan who did not have the necessary a PPT (Temporary Residence Permit). With **Funvini**'s help, she has obtained this vital document and is now going to school.

A trainee social-worker who is doing her practical work with **Funvini** recently wrote a paper on adolescent pregnancy as part of her degree course. She reported that Medellín has achieved a significant reduction in the adolescent pregnancy rate thanks to various prevention and education strategies. According to recent data, the teenage pregnancy rate decreased to 9.75%, in 2024, a notable decrease from the 10.46% recorded in 2023. This decrease is attributed to the implementation of the *Medellín Te Quiere* Development Plan 2024-2027, which includes specific goals to reduce the proportion of teenage pregnancies from 11.3% to 8.5%.

Unfortunately, this programme has focused on sex education and the provision of contraception, and has not included any attempt to combat premature sexual activity

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

and promiscuity amongst teenagers by promoting such vital concepts as virginity, continence, chastity and fidelity which are so alien to the prevailing moral culture. It is therefore an important part of **Funvini**'s mission to do all in its power to help the children in its care to learn about these virtues and to put them into practice. The Trustees appreciate that this is no easy task.

Unfortunately, only a tiny minority of the children cared for by **Funvini** benefit from the advantages of a stable and non-conflictual marital home. The overwhelming majority of them were born outside wedlock and live with their mothers, often accompanied by the mother's current *novio* (boy-friend), and with little - if any - contact with, or support from, their biological fathers. In such families, skills in verbal communication and the articulation of emotions tend to be limited, and anger and stress tend to express themselves in violence. Instances of physical and sexual abuse by the "stepfathers" are rife. Criminal gangs sometimes serve as substitute families for youngsters who can no longer tolerate life at home.

A study of 177 of **Funvini**'s children conducted in 2022 showed that only *one* of these children - a chorister - was currently living with parents who had been married in Church. The parents of three other choristers had been married in Church, but were not currently living together. The parents of four of the Venezuelan children had had civil weddings. Only 38 of the children lived with both parents, whether married or not. A total of 96 children lived in households with adults who were in unmarried relationships; 73 of the children were being brought up by their mothers alone; and just two by the father alone. A "stepfather" figure was living with the mothers of 42 of the children; and a "stepmother" was living with the fathers of 6 children. A total of 30 children were living with grandparents or other members of their extended families.

Funvini seeks to prepare some of its youngsters to assume leadership roles in their local communities, to equip them to resist what St John Paul called the "culture of death", and what Pope Benedict XVI referred to as "the tyranny of relativism". However, one of the greatest challenges it faces is recruiting staff who are themselves living in accordance with Catholic moral teaching, and who are able to share their principles with cheerful conviction. A number of **Funvini**'s current employees are living in relationships outside wedlock, or have had children who have been born outside wedlock. This therefore greatly diminishes their ability to serve as good role-models for the charity's children.

Unfortunately, fewer than a quarter of **Funvini**'s employees are married; and those who are married are all male. This means that even when the children are taking part in the charity's activities, they very rarely come into contact with a married woman. This makes it more difficult for them to learn to consider marriage as normal, and as

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

a state to which they should aspire. It is hoped that the work of Deacon Germán will help to redress this deficiency to some extent. However, these are matters that have to be handled with great delicacy because nothing will be achieved if the children gain the impression that their parents or families are being criticised.

The number of Venezuelan children who were regular members of **Funvini's** programmes fell in 2024 to 61 (33.3% of the beneficiaries) from 89 (39.9%) the previous year. The main explanation for this was that the families of some of the Venezuelan children had to make frequent changes of their lodgings. Sometimes they were forced to move because they were unable to pay the rent; and sometimes they opted to move because they had managed to find cheaper accommodation in a more remote *barrio*.

Funvini's Venezuelan children ranged from 6 to 17 years of age, and school places were obtained for 47 (77%) of them. It was often difficult for them to obtain places in schools close to their new temporary abodes, so their education was interrupted. Of those who went to school, 42 (89.3%) succeeded in gaining promotion to the next grade. Another 25 Venezuelan children - who were mostly younger brothers and sisters of the other children - benefitted from **Funvini's** help in various ways, but were not formally admitted to its programmes.

By August of 2025, 47 Venezuelan children had been admitted to **Funvini's** programmes this year. They constitute 26.7% of this population. Two Venezuelan children are currently being helped on an occasional basis; and a further 22 younger brothers and sisters are also receiving indirect benefits.

Since 2009, *Casa Bannatyne* has served mainly as the base of **Funvini's** choir, *Cor Videns*. This was formed in 2004 in the hope that it would develop into a first-class children's choir which would give the city's invisible, forgotten children, whose cries so often go unheeded, a voice that would eventually be heard around the world. Although it was originally a mixed group, the choir is now only for boys because there are plenty of other choirs that are either mixed or only for girls.

The name *Cor Videns - the Seeing Heart Choir* - was inspired by a passage by Pope Benedict XVI in his Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (31,b) in which he said, "The Christian's programme—the programme of the Good Samaritan, the programme of Jesus—is 'a heart which sees'. This heart sees where love is needed and acts accordingly." The Trustees hope that *Cor Videns* will help its hearers to develop such a "seeing heart", and to respond generously to the charity's appeals.

Although most of the choristers who are admitted as full members of the choir stay for at least five years, it is inevitable that each year some of them should leave. In

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

some cases, this is because they grow up and leave school and no longer have the time; in others because they have competing interests, such as football; and in others it is for family reasons, such as a move to another town. Some of the Probationers also leave because they are not willing to make the necessary commitment, or because they fail to reach the required standard. In order to maintain a balance between a strong top line and a stable nucleus of experienced singers it is clear that *Cor Videns* will eventually need to have at least 20 fully-fledged choristers and a similar number of Probationers.

On school days, the admitted choristers normally stay on in *Casa Bannatyne* after choir practice and spend the night there. This arrangement has proved very popular both with the children and with their parents, and it provides the choristers with valuable extra time not only for additional musical and recreational activities, but also for them to receive help from **Funvini**'s teachers with their school homework.

During the months when Fr Peter is in Colombia, the choristers normally go home on Friday evening and come back into residence at *Casa Bannatyne* on Sunday morning in time to sing at Mass there at noon. Although the Oratory at *Casa Bannatyne* is ideal for Fr Peter's daily Masses, it is too small to accommodate everyone for Mass on Sundays, so the dining-room then has to be converted into a temporary Chapel.

On Friday evenings - and throughout the school holiday - groups of children from **Funvini**'s other programmes usually come into residence. In term time they stay until the Sunday afternoon, or until the Monday afternoon when there is a bank holiday. This ensures that they go to Mass on the Sunday, and that they do their homework - as well, of course, as having the chance to play football and to enjoy other recreational activities. For many of these children, the stays at *Casa Bannatyne* provide a much-needed respite from hunger, neglect or mistreatment at home.

As an economy measure, the choir's weekly periods in residence in 2024 had to be shortened from five nights to four. Fortunately, things have returned to normal in 2025. However, shortage of funds still prevents *Casa Bannatyne* from being used by other groups at weekends when Fr Peter is away.

In order to maintain the necessary balance between the broken and unbroken voices, only a limited number of those whose voices have broken can be allowed to remain as full members of the choir. Knowing that they will not have to leave the choir as soon as their voices change helps to reduce the stress of the voice-breaking process. Moreover, the continued presence of some boys whose voices have broken enables *Cor Videns* to tackle a more advanced and extensive repertoire; and it also serves to prevent the premature loss to the choir of the older boys' talent and experience.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

In 2024, auditions were carried out in six schools, and 978 boys took part. Of these, 540 were selected; 24 became aspirants; and 15 (1.5%) were still aspirants at the end of the year. By August 2025 8 of these aspirants had become probationers, and 3 had been admitted as full members of the choir. By August 2025, a total of 380 children had been auditioned in two other schools; and 206 of these had been selected. Of these, 4 have now become probationers. As an experiment, in one of these schools, where the Rector was particularly enthusiastic, **Funvini** is helping to form a “satellite” choir to sing in the school, and it is hoped that some of the children who join this will go on to become probationers of *Cor Videns*.

During the year, *Cor Videns* took part in various concerts and as well as singing at Masses in *Casa Walsingham* and *Casa Bannatyne* they were contracted by organisations and private individuals to sing at a number of special events. The choir sang at six Masses that were broadcast by the TeleVid television channel. Most of these Masses were celebrated by the Archbishop of Medellín. However, although **Funvini** did not charge for the choir’s services, and even paid the transport costs involved, TeleVid failed to return the favour by helping to publicise the work of the choir or of the charity, so the services of the choir eventually had to be withdrawn.

In 2024 a total of 5 former members of the choir were at university, reading for music degrees of various kinds. Unfortunately, one of these dropped out at the end of the year. Two of the others expect to graduate in 2025, and the remaining two are continuing with their studies. Two choristers who left the choir at the end of 2024 have now gone on to university to read for music-related degrees. One of them is currently employed by **Funvini** as a part-time educational assistant.

Although shortage of funds has resulted in painful reductions in **Funvini**’s population, both *Casa Walsingham* and *Casa Bannatyne* are still acutely short of *space*. Both houses need more space in which to provide children with more access to books and to the computers they use for their homework. The Chapel at *Casa Walsingham* needs more space in which to accommodate the children at Mass. More dormitory space is needed at *Casa Bannatyne* in order to allow more choristers to stay there during the week when they are in residence, and more children from **Funvini**’s other programmes to stay there at the weekend and when the choristers are away.

More space is needed in both houses for the storage of equipment, materials and archives in easily-accessible but secure and damp-free conditions. And the children need more space in which to play and exercise safely: *Casa Walsingham* does not have a playground, and neither house has an area in which ball-games can be played.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Because *Casa Walsingham* is in a conservation area, there is little that can be done there, although **Funvini** hopes to be allowed to enlarge the Chapel by extending the pitched roof over a wing that currently has a flat roof. This was in the plans when approval for the construction of that wing was granted; but that was back in 2007, so fresh permission will now be needed. This wing already contains a well for a lift, and if planning permission is granted, this would be extended to make all five floors accessible to the disabled, as and when funds become available for the purchase of the lift itself.

Plans for the extension of *Casa Bannatyne* have now been drawn up, and planning permission has been granted. This permission is valid for two years, and if construction has not started, permission must be sought again. The approved plans provide for the building of an additional floor over about two-thirds of the house. This will provide a library, a multi-purpose class-room/ performance space; two offices; two loos; storage space for the choir's vestments, uniforms and instruments; and a central control point for the electronic and tele-communications system. Although the plans show how all this is to be done, they do not cover the necessary alterations to the existing structure because planning permission will not be required for these. Plans for these alterations will also have to be drawn up, as will those for the new electricity and water networks.

The extension will involve roofing over an internal utility patio, and the partial covering of another internal patio. However this will enable the construction of an additional dormitory and bathroom on the ground floor, and of an extension to the dining-room and the Oratory on the second floor. Provision will also be made for the installation of a lift in order to make all three floors accessible to the disabled. It is hoped that it may also be possible to gain some space between the kitchen on the ground floor and the new third floor.

Unfortunately, the cost of building materials has been increasing so rapidly since 2022 that the architects are now unable to provide reliable estimates. In 2022 the planned extension would have cost around £100,000, but it is clear that the cost is now likely to be at least twice that for the construction work alone. The only thing that is certain is that the longer this work is postponed, the greater the eventual cost will be. However, although this extra space is so urgently needed, the extension will not be built until this cost can be borne without harming **Funvini**'s operational budget.

When *Casa Bannatyne* was purchased in 2004, *Pilarica*, the *barrio* in which it is situated, was an oasis of calm because it was composed of a fairly small number of substantial houses set in large gardens. Then the *barrio* was re-zoned, and the construction of high-rise buildings was permitted. Nowadays, *Casa Bannatyne* is

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

almost surrounded by blocks of flats; and where formerly one family lived with one car, now there are 50 families and 50 vehicles.

The area where *Casa Bannatyne* is located now forms an uncomfortably narrow island between the territories of two of the city's gangs. An armed guard has always been necessary at the property throughout the day and night, but the steep rise in the local population has been accompanied by a worrying increase in street-crime and muggings; and on two occasions in June 2023 attempted robberies leading to exchanges of gunfire took place within yards of *Casa Bannatyne's* front gate. Fortunately, no children were entering or leaving it at the time.

In August 2025 it was at last possible to change the telephone systems at both *Casa Walsingham* and *Casa Bannatyne* from analogue to digital to prevent them from being interrupted for weeks at a time by the repeated theft of sections of the copper analogue cables in their respective parts of the city.

Because of its age, *Casa Bannatyne* was built without a damp-proof membrane underneath it. It is located on the side of a mountain in which there are many underground streams, some of which have been forced to find new paths by the construction in recent years of the large blocks of flats that now almost surround the house. Consequently, parts of the ground floor are plagued by damp, and although various remedies have been applied, none have proved effective for any length of time. The problem has been aggravated recently by leaks occasioned by the deterioration of the underground pipework of the house's water system. It is hoped that the replacement of the damaged pipes will take place in September 2025.

Future projects at **Funvini's** two properties include:

- building and equipping the extension at *Casa Bannatyne*;
- installing sound-proof windows in bedrooms at *Casa Bannatyne*;
- extending the Chapel at *Casa Walsingham*;
- improving the air-conditioning in the Chapel at *Casa Walsingham*;
- installing a lift at *Casa Walsingham*;
- providing regular dental care for all the children at *Casa Walsingham*; and
- installing sound-insulating windows and air-conditioning in the dormitories and bedrooms at *Casa Bannatyne*.

Other projects include:

- providing more amplification and lighting equipment for the Choir;
- designing and buying a definitive uniform for the Choir;
- enabling **Funvini** to buy a minibus to transport the Choir; and

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

- helping **Funvini** to provide more vocational training, tertiary education and employment opportunities for its young adults.

If sufficient funds were ever to become available, *Casa Bannatyne* would be sold and replaced by a larger building and sufficient land for a school somewhere in the *Oriente Antioqueño*, the large plateau outside and above Medellin where the international airport is located. However, **Funvini** has been hoping and praying for this for many years, and the shortage of space is so acute that it is clear that the extension of *Casa Bannatyne* cannot be postponed indefinitely in the hope that the dream of a completely new home may eventually become a reality.

Finance

In 2024 the charity met its objects by making donations in cash and in kind to a total value of £344,020 to support **Funvini's** work in Colombia. This sum was £17,862 (9.4%) less than the total that it had donated to **Funvini** in 2023; and it represented 60.1% of total expenditure. A further £90,113 was expended on fieldwork in Colombia. Thus a total of £434,133 - which was 75.8% of all expenditure - was devoted to **Funvini's** activities.

Since the hiatus of three years caused by the Covid crisis and its aftermath, the charity has only been able to undertake very limited work in the field of Development Education. The total of £1,178 spent on giving talks in schools in 2024 was £237 (16.7%) less than the amount spent in 2023. Although these educational talks were not appeals, in most cases the children who attended them subsequently decided to raise funds for the charity.

In accordance with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), the charity's administrative expenditure is classified under the heading of 'Support Costs', and included in the total for Charitable Activities. In 2024, these Support Costs amounted to £104,743 which was 1.7% more than the previous year, and represented 18.3% of all expenditure. This brought the total spent on Charitable Activities to £540,054 (94.3% of all expenditure). This was quite a satisfactory result, but the Trustees emphasise that it is most unlikely that **Let The Children Live!** will be able to continue indefinitely this feat of devoting nearly 95 pence in every pound of expenditure to its Charitable Activities.

Moreover, the Trustees realise that many of the charity's donors are unlikely to consider that Support Costs - no matter how necessary they may be - actually

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

constitute expenditure on the charity's *objects*. The Trustees always preserve a clear distinction in their own minds between the *ends* for which the charity exists and the *means* which have to be adopted to achieve them; and they will continue to endeavour to keep all administrative expenditure - and any bureaucratic procedures that tend to engender it - to a minimum.

None of the Trustees received any remuneration or were repaid for any expenses during the year, so the only expenses to be classified under the heading of Governance were the aggregated Independent Examination fees, which were £5,754. This total was 2.1% more than that of the previous year. These Governance costs constituted 1.0% of total expenditure.

Expenditure on Raising Funds amounted to £32,745 in 2024, which was 3.1% more than the previous year, and was 5.7% of total expenditure. However, as the Trustees have warned repeatedly, it is unlikely that the charity will be able to maintain the very low level of expenditure on fund-generation that it has sustained for many years.

In the last nineteen years fund-generation has never taken up more than 5.5 pence in each pound that the charity has expended. This compares very favourably with the proportion spent on fund-raising by most other charities. In the *UK Civil Society Almanac 2023* the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) estimated that 12% of the charity sector's overall expenditure was spent on fund-raising in 2020/21.

Although, quite naturally, the Trustees are pleased that these figures show that a small charity like **Let The Children Live!** is so much more efficient than many of these bodies - and many of the large ones, in particular - they are concerned that the profligacy of some of charities tends to tarnish the image of charities in general, and may lead to calls for yet more regulation.

The Trustees therefore welcome the fact that the Charity Commission now includes graphics that show charitable spending ratios in the main page on its website of its information about each charity. They hope that this will provide a useful aid to ordinary members of the public who are looking for a quick and easy way to assess how a charity has used - or is likely to use - their donations.

The Trustees appreciate that charitable spending ratios need to be understood in context, and they are very much aware that any charity may experience a difficult year - or a series of difficult years - when the results of its fund-raising campaigns are not very good, or when the cost of fund-generation increases sharply. Consequently, they think that it would be helpful if the Commission were to include these ratios for the *previous five years*, as is done with the charity's financial and compliance

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

histories. The Commission already has this information in its system, so this could easily be calculated automatically, without involving charities in any extra work.

It would also be helpful if the Charity Commission were also to publish on each charity's page the average fund-generation ratios for the previous five years of *all charities of similar size*, dividing them into bands by income. This would put pressure on less efficient charities to improve their performance, and make it easier for prospective donors to find charities that are particularly efficient.

The weight of any additional bureaucratic burden tends to fall disproportionately on smaller charities, and to make them less efficient. The Trustees are therefore concerned about the possible impact on small charities of the introduction of yet another revision to the SORP in 2026. Unless the current SORP is seriously defective, there should be no need to tinker with it every ten years: otherwise, it is a case of the best being the enemy of the good.

Perhaps the changes in the new SORP will be helpful for very large charities, but unless they will simplify and shorten the present SORP they are unlikely to be of real benefit to smaller ones, or to donors who prefer to support smaller charities. It would be much better if only those charities with an income large enough to require a full audit were obliged to adopt the new SORP, and if smaller ones could be allowed to continue using the present version. In that case, if the new SORP were really found to be an improvement, smaller charities would soon start to adopt it of their own accord.

Like increased health and safety requirements, Net Zero and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), *increased accountability, transparency and social responsibility requirements come at a cost*; and it should not simply be assumed that this cost is always justified.

The Trustees believe that the Charity Commission should be required to monitor and publish details of the effect on *small charities* of any regulatory change in order to ensure that the benefits actually obtained really are proportional to the extra cost imposed on them in time, money and efficiency. An important element and indicator of good Governance is the elimination of all non-essential bureaucratic costs and activity, and the Commission could do much more to promote this both by simplifying its own procedures and demands, and by giving this matter greater prominence in the advice it gives to Trustees and to the government.

The income of the Linked Charity in 2024 was £8,187. This constituted 1.8% of the aggregated ordinary income of the two charities, and was £1,405 (14.6%) lower than the previous year's total. All new supporters of Let The Children Live! are asked to make their donations to the Reporting Charity, so the Trustees expect that the income

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

of the Linked Charity will continue to decline as its remaining donors either transfer their giving to the Reporting Charity, or cancel their Standing Orders altogether. However, the Linked Charity is still viable because its only running cost was £2,877 for its Independent Examination. It therefore made a net profit of £5,310, and the Trustees are very grateful for this.

The £76,128 that the charity received from legacies in 2024 was £66,747 (586.5%) more than the legacy income in 2023. This dramatic and unexpected increase was very welcome, particularly in view of the fact that previous years had seen a substantial fall in its income of this kind.

The Trustees fear that future income from legacies is likely to be reduced because of the ever-increasing amount that the elderly have to contribute towards the cost of their personal care, which has been aggravated by the new Labour government's abandonment of plans for the introduction of a social care cap.

The charity's income from Trusts in 2024 fell by £525 (4.9%) to £10,225. This followed a fall of 20.5% in Trust income in 2023. This is a reflection of the fact that most Trusts are now being inundated with requests for support. Indeed, the Chairman of the Trustees has found that many of the Trusts she has approached on the charity's behalf are not even considering new applications.

The Trustees regard the funds the charity receives from legacies and Trusts as *extraordinary* income; whereas donations received from the public and funds received from other sources are considered to constitute its *ordinary* income, unless they are exceptionally large. In 2024, the charity's ordinary income amounted to £454,453. This was 57.3% of its total income.

Traditionally, most of the charity's ordinary income has been generated by appeals in Roman Catholic parishes. However, the Trustees realise that the income of many parishes has not kept pace with inflation since the Covid crisis. This is tending in turn, to diminish the income that dioceses receive from their parishes, and some Bishops are banning charities from making appeals at Mass in their territory.

Even in ordinary times, Parish Priests receive many requests for appeals by charities, and they are also required to hold quite a number of collections for causes chosen by their Bishops. Competition amongst charities for limited parish collection 'slots' is therefore now more acute than ever. Moreover, increased taxation is resulting in shortage of disposable income amongst parishioners and a consequent increase in the already acute competition for their donations from other worthy causes.

Unfortunately, the situation was made yet more difficult by the fact that Fr Peter was unable to undertake any fundraising engagements in September 2024 because he was

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

then recovering from an operation. The Trustees therefore anticipated that the charity's income from general donations would probably be substantially less than that in 2023. This, indeed, proved to be the case: ordinary income fell in 2024 by £57,693 (11.3%).

Providentially, however, the situation was transformed in December by an unexpected increase in extraordinary income, thanks to a munificent donation of £200,000. The donor is known to the Trustees but wishes to remain anonymous. This donation was Gift Aided, so its total value to the charity was increased by a further £50,000. The donor has donated a further £200,000, Gift Aided, in 2025. The Trustees wish to place on record their great gratitude for these extremely generous benefactions. Amongst other purposes, the Trustees intend to use these to help to develop additional means of raising income, and to fulfil their long-held wish to give a very substantial boost to the charity's reserves.

The Trustees are also very grateful for the generosity of those who kindly donated goods for the charity's shop in Walsingham to sell. Thanks to Mrs Seals and her team of faithful volunteers, in 2024 the income from sales there rose by £408 (2.7%) to £15,681. A further £2,384 was received in donations made at the shop, bringing its total income to £18,065.

The running-costs of the shop amounted to £17,977, so it only made a net profit of £88, which is a poor return for so much devoted effort. The Trustees know that the shop continues to be an important point of contact with the charity's supporters, and that it also helps **Let The Children Live!** to retain its identity as Walsingham's own special charity. Nevertheless, they recognise that the viability of the shop is now in question, so it will have to remain under annual review.

Unless the charity receives more substantial windfalls from Trusts and legacies - which is very uncertain - it will not be able to meet the whole of **Funvini's** future funding needs. Additional regular income will therefore need to be generated from other sources. It had been hoped that one such source would be **Let The Children Live! Inc.**, the charity's independent offshoot in the United States. This is recognised by the Inland Revenue Service (IRS) as a 501(3)(C) not-for-profit charitable corporation, so its benefactors are able to offset their donations to it against tax.

It was with great regret and shock that the Trustees heard of the death on 3rd January 2024, after a short illness, of Ms Maggie Walters, the Treasurer and Co-Founder of **Let The Children Live! Inc.** They wish to express their deepest sympathy to her family, and their appreciation of the invaluable service she rendered in helping to set up and run the American charity.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

The Trustees also wish to record their sympathy to Mrs Theresa Chao on the death in November 2024 of her beloved husband, Carlos. Mrs Chao had succeeded Ms Walters as the Treasurer of the American charity, but had to resign when her husband became ill. Although her period in office was so short, her contribution was important because she managed to restore order to the charity's accounts after the disruption caused by the death of Ms Walters.

The loss of two Treasurers in less than one year has naturally hit the American charity very hard. Finding a suitable replacement in the United States is proving to be very difficult, and unless this quest is successful, that charity's future will be in jeopardy. If it were to be forced to close, the income **Funvini** receives from the United States would probably be lost because Americans tend to be reluctant to make donations that are not tax-deductible.

This loss would obviously be a serious blow. In 2024 the American charity sent US\$127,500 to **Funvini**, which constituted 22.2% of its income. As things stand, it is unlikely that the British charity would be able to increase its support to fill the gap that would be left in **Funvini**'s finances if donations from the American charity were to be reduced or to dry up altogether.

So far, the American charity has not received any legacies whereas those left to the British charity have frequently played a vital part in enabling it to fund most of **Funvini**'s work. A substantial legacy can make an enormous difference to a charity like **Let The Children Live!** It is therefore unfortunate that benefactors who wish to leave most of their property to charity so often decide to divide it amongst *several* good causes, instead of maximising the impact of their legacy by leaving the lion's share to *one* small charity.

The Trustees are deeply grateful to those who have remembered the charity in their Wills. The children in *Casa Walsingham* remember their deceased benefactors every working day at the noon Angelus. They are also remembered at various special Masses in the Chapel there.

The Trustees also wish to express their gratitude to everyone who has requested that, when they die, donations should be sent to the charity in lieu of flowers; and to all those who have made this request after the death of a loved one.

Most of the money received by the charity in 2024 was the fruit of the generosity of a large number of individual donors and of parishes and other groups. It is not possible to name them all here, but the Trustees wish to express their warmest thanks to all of them.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

The Trustees are also most grateful to Caring and Sharing for its donations for Funvini's Educational Project; and for unrestricted donations from:

- The de Vitre Fund;
- The Di Paola Trust; and
- The Dromintee Trust.

In 2010 a benefactor made a loan of £200,000 to the Trust; and in 2011 he increased this loan to £225,000. The benefactor has asked to remain anonymous, but he is not a Trustee; and the Trustees, the Independent Examiners and the Charity Commission are aware both of his identity and of the source of the money. With the benefactor's agreement, this sum was subsequently loaned to **Funvini** in order to mitigate the effects of the fall in its income caused by the recession.

As security for the loan, **Funvini** pledged *Casa Bannatyne*, the smaller of its two properties in Medellín. The property cannot now be sold without the consent of **Let The Children Live!** Whether the value of this property goes up or down, the benefactor has agreed with the Trustees that whatever its market value may happen to be at the time of repayment shall be the amount that is to be repaid to him. Because it is interest-free, the Trustees consider that this is the best way to try to ensure that it retains its value in real terms, without endangering the liquidity either of **Let The Children Live!** or of **Funvini**. The Trustees were pleased to learn that the property was professionally valued in May 2024 at C\$2,631,811 (Colombian pesos), or slightly over £500,000.

All being well, the loan will not have to be repaid until September 2029: and the benefactor may well agree to postpone repayment still further. However, under certain circumstances **Let The Children Live!** would have to make earlier repayment to its benefactor. In that event, it would be necessary for **Funvini** to repay its loan early, too. The mortgage therefore stipulates that **Funvini** must repay its loan at any stage at the charity's request, within a maximum of one year.

On 13th June 2019 the Trustees of the Linked Charity and the Directors of the Reporting Charity signed the necessary documents to transfer to the latter the liability of the benefactor's loan to the Linked Charity, and the mortgage securing the Linked Charity's loan to **Funvini**.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Property

Let The Children Live! itself does not own any land or buildings. In 2018 the Reporting Charity took over from the Linked Charity the leases of a three-room office in Doncaster and of a small shop in Walsingham. Unfortunately, in August 2025 the landlord informed the Trustees that he intends to sell the property when he retires in 2028, and that the charity will therefore need to find new premises before then. He has very kindly not increased the rent of £410 per month for over 10 years, and the Trustees are most grateful for this. However, they realise that the rent of the new premises will almost certainly be considerably more expensive.

The Reporting Charity also took over responsibility for the rental of a flat near Oxford to serve as a base for Fr Peter and his colleagues during their fund-raising visits to Britain. The five-year lease of this property expired in February 2019, but fortunately the landlord generously agreed to allow the tenancy to continue at the existing rent for a further five years; and then only increased it by £195 (10%) per month as from April 2024.

Human Resources

The Trustees are most grateful for the continued devoted service of its four employees:

- Fr Peter Walters, the Executive Director;
- Miss Pauline Allan, the Administrator;
- Mrs Shirley Davies, the Book-keeper; and
- Mrs Jackie Seals, the Manageress of the charity's shop in Walsingham.

In accordance with the provisions of the 2014 Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations, the employees whose contracts were transferred from the Linked Charity to the Reporting Charity were entitled to continue to enjoy the same terms and conditions of employment with the Reporting Charity as they had had with the Trust. The basis on which their salaries had been established when they entered the employment of the Linked Charity was therefore not subject to any review or benchmarking when they entered that of the Reporting Charity. The same applied to the non-contributory pension scheme on a sliding scale according to age which the Linked Charity had established for personnel normally based in Colombia, in view of the additional risks involved in living and working there.

However, the Trustees are aware that because, in particularly difficult years - and again in both 2020 and 2021 - the charity's Key Management Personnel refused to accept any increase in pay, their salaries had not always kept pace with inflation.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Although the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) in April 2022 stood at 9.0%, they accepted an increase of 5%. Inflation reached 11.1% in October 2022. In March 2023 the CPI stood at 10.1%, Once again, the charity's Key Management Personnel accepted an increase of only 5%, so although by July 2023 the CPI had fallen to 6.8%, it is clear that these salaries are not keeping pace with inflation or the benchmarks that the Linked Charity originally adopted.

The Key Management Personnel have accepted no salary increase in 2024 or in 2025, so their salaries have now fallen yet further behind. When funds permit, the Trustees therefore intend to raise the salaries of its existing Key Management Personnel to a level closer to those currently paid to those with similar experience and responsibilities in other charities of comparable size. The terms and conditions of any new Key Management Personnel will be decided on a similar basis, and consideration will be given to the possibility of awarding them a compensatory Golden Handshake if they eventually retire.

Sums of money were often given to the charity without any indication as to whether they were straight donations or the results of fund-raising activities. It is therefore impossible to estimate how many volunteers may have been involved in one way or another. The Trustees are very grateful to them all.

The Trustees wish to express their special gratitude to:

- Miss Pauline Allan, Mr Brian Coogan, Mr Slade Baylis and Micron 21 for updating and managing the charity's web site; and to
- all the members of the charity's informal support groups.

The Trustees also wish to pay particular tribute to the great value of the voluntary work that Mr George McAleenan and Mr Peter Lavery have continued to do, in spite of severe health problems, to promote the charity in Scotland.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have taken account of the Charity Commission's general guidance relating to public benefit when reviewing the charities' achievements and performance.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Risk Management

The success or otherwise of **Let The Children Live!** is evaluated by the Trustees in terms of the extent to which they manage:

- to sustain or increase the charity's income;
- to send funds to Colombia that fulfil or exceed the budget agreed with **Funvini**;
- to enable **Funvini** to maintain or increase the numbers of children in its programmes;
- to enable **Funvini** to maintain or improve the quality of care it provides;
- to raise public awareness and understanding of the situation of Medellín's children;
- to raise public awareness and understanding of the grave burden of moral responsibility that must fall on all those in the United Kingdom or the United States who help to fuel violence and corruption in countries like Colombia by *buying* illegal drugs;
- to control and cover the charity's fund-raising costs; and
- to maintain a prudent level of reserves.

The charity continued to try to raise public awareness and understanding during the year, and was able to make a limited number of educational visits to schools.

The Trustees are relieved to be able to report that the total funds available at the end of 2024 was £220,408 (151%) more than the sum available at the end of 2023. However, as has been mentioned above, the donation of £200,000 that was mainly responsible for this increase was received in December 2024. Before its arrival, the situation had been much less favourable, and in order to protect the charity's reserves, the charity's donations to **Funvini** in 2024 had had to be reduced by £35,607 (9.4%) in comparison with the total for 2023. Indeed, this was ££118,104 (25.6%) less than the total in 2019, the last 'normal' year before the Covid crisis.

Taking into account the effects of inflation in Colombia between 2019 and 2024, the reduction in the purchasing power of the donations made in 2024 was even more severe. It was therefore very fortunate that the impact of this on **Funvini** during these years was mitigated to a considerable extent by the donations it received from **Let The Children Live! Inc.** in the United States.

It is always frustrating that many of the factors that have a negative impact on the charity's work are beyond the power of the Trustees to control. However, they remain very conscious of their duty to try to evaluate and monitor the various risks to which the charity is exposed, and to take what measures they can to try to reduce or manage them. Amongst these risks and measures, they wish to draw particular attention to the following:

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

a) Although neither the Linked Charity nor the Reporting Charity had any children directly in its care, the Trustees' prime concern continued to be to ensure the well-being of the children who benefitted from the services of the institutions which they helped to fund. It therefore remained their policy that they would only consider applications for funding from organisations that were duly constituted according to local law and which had implemented, or were actively in the process of implementing, a child protection policy that was in general accord with that of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, adapted to the local circumstances and culture.

In order to minimise the risk both of child-abuse and of financial mismanagement it remained the Trustees' policy to restrict the charity's activities to geographical areas of which they had a fair degree of knowledge and in which they could exercise a reasonable degree of oversight. This meant making donations only to Colombia, and concentrating them on the city of Medellín, where **Funvini** is based.

Funvini was one of the first charities in Colombia to implement a proper Child Protection Policy in all of its programmes. This policy is subject to frequent review, and **Funvini's** designated Child Protection Officer confirmed that the provisions of the Policy had been adhered to properly in 2024, and were continuing to be so in 2025.

b) In May 2018, Medellín's health and safety authorities made very detailed inspections of *Casa Walsingham* and *Casa Bannatyne*. They found the facilities in both buildings to be up to the required standards, and renewed their operating licences for two years. In March 2020 **Funvini** applied for another inspection in order to renew the licences for both buildings, but because of the backlog caused by the Covid emergency, by the middle of August 2025 neither property had yet been inspected. However, the existing licences remain valid in the meanwhile, and Funvini pays an independent health and safety expert to make unannounced, unofficial inspections in order to try to ensure that its facilities and procedures are kept up to the standards required.

Colombian health-and-safety-at-work regulations are now so complex and extensive that even a small organisation like **Funvini** has to employ a full-time, qualified officer to supervise their implementation. All of its staff have to attend numerous safety workshops; and emergency evacuation drills are held with the children both in the daytime and at the dead of night.

c) In order to reduce the charity's exposure to the risk of bank failure, the Trustees decided in 2006 to open an account with the Charities Aid Foundation Bank (CAF Bank), in addition to the charity's existing accounts with Barclays. The new account

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

functioned smoothly until 2017 when the CAF Bank suddenly informed the Trustees, without any explanation, that it was to be closed. There was no question of any discussion or appeal, so the Trustees reluctantly accepted this decision, and a balance of £40,000 was returned to Barclays.

When the Trustees, in conversations with representatives of the Charity Commission in 2020, mentioned what the CAF Bank had done, they were told that they ought to have mentioned this in their Annual Return to the Commission. However, the representatives of the Charity Commission did not explain to the Trustees why what appeared to be a commercial decision ought to have been reported to them; and their guidance notes for the Return had made no mention of any such necessity.

The reasons for both the CAF Bank's action and the Charity Commission's concern about it are now more apparent. A charity like **Let The Children Live!** that regularly sends considerable sums of money to Colombia could be exposed to the risk of abuse by money-launderers, and would therefore be bound to attract the attention of the authorities. However, as a spokesperson for Save the Children was quoted as saying in the same article, "A more aligned approach between governments, regulators, and NGOs will help to reduce financial crime, whilst ensuring critical and life-saving humanitarian work continues."

In the wake of the scandal provoked in the Summer of 2023 by the closure of Mr Nigel Farage's accounts with Coutts Bank for purely political reasons, it has come to light that the accounts of thousands of other individuals and businesses have also been closed without explanation by other banks, including Barclays; and the suspicion has been aroused that in some cases this may have been done for political rather than purely commercial motives. The banks appear to have taken advantage of the same anti-money-laundering regulations to hide these motives.

Although they are perfectly legal, the Christian motivation of **Let The Children Live!**, and the pro-life and morally conservative work it supports, might be considered to be objectionable by some of the individuals or groups with different philosophies that are involved in defining the policies of the banks. There therefore exists the risk that Barclays might decide to follow the CAF Bank's example and suddenly close the charity's accounts.

At the time when their previous Report was written, the Trustees considered this to be a very real risk because for many months the Know Your Customer department had been badgering the charity for more and more information. The Trustees had, naturally, made every effort to comply with these requests, but Barclays repeatedly lost documents or failed to give their staff in local branches proper training about what needs to be done with them, with the result that in June 2023 the charity's

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

deposit cards were temporarily frozen as a compliance enforcement measure. So badly has this whole matter been mishandled that on 19th July 2023 Barclays made a donation of £200 to the charity, with their apologies. However, in August 2024 yet *another* administrative error - this time by Company Barclaycard - resulted in the closure without warning of the charity's credit card account for several weeks.

Unfortunately, the temporary freezing of the charity's deposit cards in 2023 proved to be the prelude to a much graver crisis. On 1st November 2023 one of the charity's employees attempted to pay cheques into the charity's account, Barclays said that the charity's accounts had been closed down. This had been done with immediate effect, with no prior warning. The charity was therefore unable to transfer funds to Funvini, to pay its bills or its staff, or to receive any new donations by cheque or Standing Order. The bank gave no explanation to donors, who were therefore left with the impression that the charity itself had been closed down.

As Barclays subsequently accepted, their devastating action had been entirely caused by a mistake on their part. In desperation, the Chairman of Trustees sent an email to the CEO of Barclays. As a result, the case was escalated to the highest level, and the bank agreed to pay compensation for the very grave problems their error had caused. Even so, the charity's account was not reactivated until 17th November. An initial offer of £300 compensation was subsequently raised to £500, but the Trustees did not consider that this sum was at all proportionate to the damage that Barclays' mistake had caused.

Barclays' high-handed and irresponsible action had brought both **Let The Children Live!** and **Funvini** to the very brink of collapse. The charity was only able to remain afloat because Fr Peter agreed to pay some of its bills with his personal funds. The charity's office in Doncaster was inundated by enquiries from anxious supporters, and the charity's employees were subjected to a great deal of stress and extra work as they struggled to resolve the situation. If the crisis had lasted a few days longer, **Funvini** would have been unable to pay its staff, and would have had to close down, and thereby abandon all the children whose welfare depends on it.

The Chairman of the Trustees then filed a Serious Incident Report (No 668580) with the Charity Commission. This deplorable episode shows that the arrogance, incompetence, ignorance and indifference of banks like Barclays poses an *existential threat* to many charities in the United Kingdom. The Trustees therefore welcome the announced introduction of new rules to give customers 90 days' notice before closing accounts, and to provide the time and information needed to challenge such closure decisions.

However, the Trustees are concerned that these new rules will only apply to contracts agreed from and including 28th April 2026, when the legislation is expected to come

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

into force. This would appear to leave accounts opened before this date without this protection. They therefore believe that legislative action is urgently required both to extend the new rules to cover all existing accounts, and to make banks liable for any consequential damage that the unjustified debanking of their clients may occasion.

The scandal that developed after the debanking of Mr Farage made it clear that if one's business or personal accounts were to be closed by one bank, it would now be extremely difficult to open a new account with another UK bank. The Trustees therefore asked the Chairman to try to take on this task in order to spread the risk in case the charity were ever to be debanked again. It has taken the Chairman several months to achieve this, and to provide all the necessary paperwork, but she hopes that the charity's application to open new accounts with the Coop Bank will be approved before the end of 2025. If this happens, the charity's existing accounts with Barclays will be retained.

After these experiences, the Trustees consider that banks ought to be pressured into regarding the services that they provide for charities to be an integral part of their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework. Indeed, the number of charities they serve ought to be an important metric of the ESG commitment. The banks ought to consider it their duty actively to *encourage* legally registered charities to sign up with them, whether or not their employees happen to sympathise with the particular cause these charities espouse. And they ought then to provide their charity customers with proper, specialised support.

In January 2025 Barclays announced that they were going to conduct yet another review of the charity's account. The Trustees suspect that the trigger for this may have been the arrival the previous month of the above-mentioned donation of £200,000, even though the donor had long been a Barclays Wealth customer, so Barclays ought already to have been fully satisfied about the origins of the funds in his account.

The review dragged on for the next two months, with a lengthy exchange of e-mails. Once again, the charity was required to provide numerous documents and to answer many questions. The nature of some of the questions revealed that Barclays had no real understanding of how a small charity has to function. Although banks like Barclays benefit from being able to manage many millions of pounds deposited by charities, it seems that only acute social pressure - or legislation - will oblige them to make the investment in staff training that would enable them to provide charities with a satisfactory level of service.

The Charity Commission stressed the importance of proper training for bank staff in its letter of 15th November 2023 to the Chief Executives of UK Banks: but if the Trustees' experience is in any way typical, precious little progress seems to have been

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

made since then. The Trustees therefore urge the Commission to continue to press this matter publicly, in the hope that the banks may be shamed into taking appropriate action.

Although at the beginning of Barclays' review process the Specialist CDD (Customer Due Diligence) Associate who was conducting it assured the Trustees that he would "bring the review to conclusion", as of August 2025 they have still not been notified that the review has been concluded - let alone what the conclusion was. However, since they have heard nothing further about the matter, they can only hope that it has indeed been concluded, and that the conclusion was positive. But they consider it disgracefully irresponsible for Barclays to leave a charity in a state of such uncertainty for so long about a matter so vital to its continued functioning.

In order to try to reduce the risk of the charity being left without an account if Barclays were ever to decide to debank it again, it was agreed that the Chairman should approach a number of other banks to see if it would be possible to open an account with them. When the Trustees met on 1st July 2025 she told them that the Coop Bank was the only one she had found that seemed at all promising. The Trustees therefore passed a motion to authorise her to open accounts with this bank for both the Company and the Trust, if this proved to be possible. They hope that this process will soon be brought to a successful conclusion.

The Trustees are also concerned that the banks may be using anti-fraud and anti money-laundering policies as pretexts for trying to force customers into accepting moves towards the creation of a "cashless society".

Although the charity itself receives very few donations in cash, a very considerable amount of its income is received in cash by the parishes that take collections on its behalf; by groups and individuals who hold fund-raising events for it; and by its shop in Walsingham. Many of its donors do not wish to give by credit or debit card, and some of them do not hold such cards. And on many occasions people who have heard the charity's appeals, and who are not carrying much cash, have hurried off to make a cash withdrawal from an ATM even if they could have used the same card to give to the charity directly. Any significant limitation on the daily and annual amounts of cash deposits would therefore pose a direct threat to the income of charities like **Let The Children Live!**

The lowest denomination Sterling banknote currently in circulation in the United Kingdom is worth £5. Many people - children and the elderly, in particular - who contribute to collections for charities are unable to give as much as that, so they donate their small change. Individually, these may be very small amounts - too small to be worth giving by card, even if the donor has a card: but accumulatively they often form a significant part of the collection. The loss of this income would therefore

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

be a considerable blow to the charities. Moreover, the loss of the ability to donate small change would either deprive these potential donors of the dignity of making their own limited but much appreciated contributions, or put them in the invidious position of having to place on record the small amount of their donations.

The Trustees believe that donors should retain the right to give to charity anonymously, provided that the amount of their donations is not so large as to constitute a serious risk of money-laundering. For all these reasons, they hope that the Charity Commission will urge the government to take steps to protect charities from the negative effects of any moves towards the creation of a “cashless society”.

d) Although Medellín no longer appears in the list of the world’s 50 most violent cities, the issue of safety continues to be one of the greatest importance for the Trustees. They have therefore continued their policy of not inviting foreign volunteers to work in Colombia on its behalf. On the other hand, when foreigners who in any case intend to visit Colombia - entirely at their own initiative and risk - ask if they may visit *Casa Walsingham* or help with the work there, they are always referred directly to **Funvini**.

In such cases **Let The Children Live!** can, of course, accept no liability for their conduct or their welfare. For its part, **Funvini** requires any foreign volunteers it accepts to provide a current International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) or equivalent clearance document, and to agree to abide by the terms of its Child Protection Policy.

e) The unrestricted funds held by the Linked Charity effectively serve as a reserve for the Reporting Charity. For most of 2024 the Trustees continued their policy of aiming to maintain reserves in unrestricted funds which, when combined with those of the Reporting Charity, amount to at least £150,000. This was equivalent to about three months of the Reporting Charity's unrestricted charitable expenditure. The reserves are intended to provide a buffer in case of fluctuations in the charity’s income and in the value of the pound against the peso.

The Trustees considered that, in normal circumstances, this level of reserves would provide sufficient funds for both charities to continue to operate, although they hoped to maintain a higher level of reserves in order to ensure greater stability in the funding of **Funvini**’s work. They realised, however, that this will only be possible in years when the charities’ income is sufficient to permit this.

Although the Trustees are under no *contractual* obligation to provide any particular level of support to **Funvini**, they are acutely aware that the welfare of hundreds of

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

children in Medellín depends on the funds sent by **Let The Children Live!** The Trustees do not believe that the charity's supporters would wish it to maintain a rigid policy of maintaining any particular level of reserves above that required to comply with its legal obligations if **Funvini**'s children were to be exposed to danger or hardship in consequence of this. The charity's reserves policy must therefore remain a very flexible one.

The charity's aggregated balance of unrestricted funds on 31st December 2024 was £365,966. This sum was £220,008 (150.7%) greater than the previous year's total. However, as has been explained above, this very satisfactory result was only possible because of the receipt earlier that month of an extraordinary donation of £200,000. Nonetheless, it left the charity in a considerably stronger position than the Trustees had anticipated, and in view of the probable negative impact on donations of the ongoing weakness of the British economy, they now plan to try to maintain a reserve of at least £200,000.

Because of the volatility of the political and security situation in Colombia, the Trustees have hitherto been reluctant to provide **Funvini** with funds that are much in excess of its immediate needs, and thus to accumulate some reserves of its own. However, because of the continuing risk of the sudden debanking of the British charity by Barclays, they now consider that it would be more prudent to allow **Funvini** to build up a modest reserve that would enable it to continue functioning for a limited period if the usual monthly flow of funds from Britain were to be interrupted by Barclays. This new policy is now being implemented.

f) The charity does not possess any investments. The Trustees have done their best to protect the charity's funds against the fluctuations of the currency markets by keeping these in a mixture of pounds, US dollars and euros in order to spread the risk. However, the fate of the euro has become so uncertain that reserves are not now being maintained in this currency, and the account is only being kept open to receive the donations that are occasionally received in it.

Funvini maintains an account in US dollars at its bank's branch in Panama so that donations sent from Britain can be converted into Colombian pesos when the exchange rate is favourable, rather than being converted automatically into pesos, regardless of the exchange rate, as has to happen when donations are sent direct to Colombia.

g) Since 2010, **Let The Children Live!** has sent its donations to **Funvini** via foreign exchange companies such as Custom House, Western Union and Moneycorp. The Trustees initially decided to do this because these companies offered more favourable

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

exchange rates and lower transfer fees than Barclays provided. In more recent years, however, the use of these companies became the only practical means to send its donations because Barclays no longer permitted the transfer form to be signed by two authorised signatories in their own homes, but required them to come in together to sign the form in one of their branches. This was not practical, because the signatories lived more than 180 miles - and more than three hours' drive - apart. Unfortunately, Barclays did not permit its customers to make transfers to Colombia via electronic banking.

Over the years, a total of more than £6,000,000 has been transferred to **Funvini** by means of these foreign exchange companies. This has involved more than 130 individual transactions, and these have been made with no difficulties and no losses. However, the Charity Commission has become concerned about the use of foreign exchange companies because - although their use by charities is perfectly legal - they are outside the regulated banking system, and their use involves a greater element of risk than transfers effected through the regulated banking system.

In 2019 the Charity Commission asked charities that used foreign exchange companies to mention this in their Annual Return; and this the charity duly did. As a result, the Commission summoned the Trustees to a virtual Compliance Meeting, which took place on 23rd June 2020. The representatives of the Commission expressed their concerns about the possible risks involved in the making of transfers to Colombia outside the regulated banking system.

The Trustees, for their part, explained why they considered this practice to be necessary in their case, and the steps they had taken to try to manage the risks involved. They also showed that a proper paper-trail existed for each transaction, and that no funds had ever been lost. Neither at the meeting nor subsequently was the Commission able to suggest a more practical way to effect these transfers.

The Trustees consulted their Solicitor about this practice, and he confirmed that it was legal, and that it was still within their powers to employ it. They therefore informed the Commission that whilst this continues to be the case they would continue to make use of foreign exchange companies to make transfers to **Funvini** until an alternative that is practical in their circumstances becomes available.

The Trustees reviewed this policy at their meeting on 14th June 2023. They decided that in view of the fact that it had continued to work perfectly satisfactorily, and that they had not become aware of any better alternative options, it would remain in force until it was reviewed again at their Autumn meeting in 2024, unless there had been any significant developments in the meanwhile.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

In August 2024 Barclays said that they would now allow the charity to make international transfers telephonically, but the rate offered and the speed of the transfer were still inferior to those that were being offered by foreign exchange companies such as Convera and Equals. It was intended that a small trial transfer should be made by Barclays' new service for purposes of comparison. However, it was eventually decided that this should not be done in case using this service might trigger Barclays into conducting yet another of their unnecessary, stressful and time-consuming reviews of the charity's account.

h) The cost-of-living crisis in the United Kingdom in 2022 had a very severe effect on the income of **Let The Children Live!** Its effects have been intensified and prolonged by the continuing weakness of the British economy. Although the total aggregated income of the linked charities in 2024 was £258,529 (48.9%) more than it had been in 2023, most of this difference was caused by the above-mentioned extraordinary donation of £200,000. If that donation and other extraordinary income from legacies and Trusts are excluded, it can be seen that the *ordinary* income of the linked charities in 2024 actually *fell* by £7,693 (1.5%).

The amount of ordinary income is always the most important indicator of the financial climate because the income from legacies and Trusts is completely unpredictable, and exceptionally large donations and exceptionally large Gift aid claims are, indeed, *exceptional*.

The Trustees therefore view with concern the fact that the fall in ordinary income in 2024 has not, so far, been reversed in 2025. On the contrary, the charity's ordinary income in the first seven months of this year was 1.2% lower than in the corresponding period in 2024.

Fortunately, however, the aggregated total income of the linked charities for the first seven months of 2025 was £209,155 (64.1%) greater than in the corresponding period the previous year, mainly because of the arrival of second exceptional donation of £200,000. This has gained the charity some breathing space in which to find or devise additional sources of ordinary income.

i) In December 2012 the charity introduced the facility for credit card donations to be made online. In order to do this, the charity registered with the charity donation system CharityCheckout - now known as Enthuse - which continues to handle the whole process of taking credit card donations, and of paying them into the charity's bank account. No sensitive information now has to be handled by, or to pass through, the charity's web site.

j) The Trustees have implemented an anti-money-laundering policy in order to reduce the risk that anyone might try to make use of the charity for that purpose. There are

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

no indications that any such attempt has ever been made. However, at Barclays request, this policy was revised and considerably elaborated in 2025.

k) Most of the funds raised by the charity are the results of appeals made in Catholic parishes, so it is clear that Christianity is the force that motivates the great majority of the charity's donors, but an increasingly - and sometimes aggressively - secular society is not conducive to the flourishing of charities that, like both **Let The Children Live!** and **Funvini**, remain firmly Christian in their ethos. The officials from the Charity Commission who attended the Compliance Meeting in 2020 readily admitted that they had little experience of dealing with Christian charities; and they obviously had no real understanding of their particular ethos. There is a danger that such a lack of understanding could result in misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

The charity's Solicitor confirmed that he considers that the moral views that the charity and its supporters uphold "might be conservative but they are not radical". These views are not universally popular, and the Trustees are aware that they have a duty to "consider the charity's reputation". They know that the charity could fall victim to the 'cancel culture' because the era in which Christians could disagree with some of the conventions and assumptions of secular thinking and still expect to be respected as decent members of society at large seems to be drawing to an end.

However, the Trustees believe that the damage that would be caused to the charity's reputation among its supporters by being perceived to have abandoned or diluted its Christian principles would heavily outweigh any possible advantages of such action, even in merely prudential terms. Moreover, this would threaten the future existence of **Funvini** - and hence the welfare of the children who depend on it - because, as a specially Catholic charity, **Funvini** would not be able to accept funding from a source that was not in sympathy with its own moral views.

The Trustees are therefore concerned that there is a danger that their duty to "consider the charity's reputation" may be interpreted in some quarters as a duty not to express views, or to fund activities, which - even though they are perfectly legal - are currently *unfashionable*. This, in turn, is likely to result in a tendency towards excessive caution and self-censorship by charity Trustees who became afraid of being considered 'politically incorrect' or insufficiently 'woke'.

l) In 2020 the Charity Commission also expressed their views about the reporting by the charity of the criticisms expressed by Venezuelan refugees in Medellín of the policies and failures of the extremely socialist Venezuelan government, which they blamed for the events and conditions that had obliged them to seek refuge in Colombia. However, it is hardly to be expected that many admirers of the present

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Venezuelan regime will be found amongst those who have had to flee from it or from the consequences of its policies.

The Trustees consulted their Solicitor on this point, and he said: “The Commission’s guidance is clear that charities can campaign for a change in the law, policy or decisions where such change would support the charity’s purposes. Charities can also campaign to ensure that existing laws are observed.” Therefore if the charity “identified government policy that negatively impacted on your beneficiaries then ‘speaking out’ on such an issue would be acceptable”.

Although the Trustees certainly do not consider it to be the charity’s mission to campaign on political issues, they therefore reserve the right to criticise - and to publish comments by third parties that are critical of - the Venezuelan government, the Colombian government, or the British government, or any other body that they believe to be wholly or partly responsible for any policy, decision or situation they consider to be prejudicial to the welfare of the children - born or unborn - whom **Funvini** serves.

m) Another cause for possible concern is the way that the attitude of the Colombian authorities towards the Venezuelan refugees/migrants has changed for the worse since the socialist President Petro came to power in 2022 and restored diplomatic relations with Venezuela.

Funvini’s employees have reported that it is extremely rare to hear the Venezuelans in Medellín saying anything positive about the Maduro regime, whereas harsh criticisms of it are common. Many of these Venezuelans were really refugees more than migrants, and they are therefore deeply suspicious of the *rapprochement* between Bogotá and Caracas.

They fear that this may lead to them being forced to return to the clutches of the very regime from which they sought refuge in Colombia. The authoritarian Venezuelan government, which was still clinging to power in August 2025 despite having lost the elections that were held in the previous year, does not look kindly on any form of dissidence, and some of the refugees are alarmed about the risk of reprisals if they go home. So, although the Maduro regime is promoting a “Return to the Motherland” campaign, many of the exiles remain highly sceptical about this.

When Venezuelan exiles who are determined not to return home feel that they cannot remain in Colombia, they are often tempted to risk their lives by making a 60 mile trek through the jungle, swamps and mountains of the area between Colombia and Panama called the Darién Gap - where there are no roads.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

This trek can take up to ten days because the terrain is extremely hazardous. The objective is to reach Central America - and, eventually to try to enter the United States illegally. From Yaviza in Panama to the US border is a further 2,700 miles, and another six international borders must be crossed on the way. The whole journey from Colombia to the US border is expensive and dangerous because it is controlled by the *Clan del Golfo* and other criminal gangs of drug-smugglers and *coyotes* (people-smugglers). Those who cannot pay them in cash may have to do so in sexual services. Nevertheless, according to the Panamanian government, more than 248,000 people crossed the Gap during 2022.

On 26th January 2024 the Colombian *Defensoría del Pueblo* (Ombudsman's Office) reported that 520,085 people - including 113,180 minors - had made the crossing in 2023; and that 328,650 (63.2%) of these people were Venezuelan. Perhaps deterred by the stern measures that Mr Trump had threatened to take against illegal immigrants if he were elected President, the total of people who crossed the Gap in 2024 was reported by the UNHCR to have fallen to 302,203. This figure was 42% lower than the previous year's total. However, the *proportion* of these people who were Venezuelan actually rose to 68%. This indicates that the determination of many Venezuelan refugees/migrants to avoid having to return home remained firm, even if that involved taking such an extreme risk as crossing the Darién Gap.

n) Presidential elections are due to take place in Colombia in May 2026. President Petro will not be eligible to stand for a second term. In July 2025 there were more than 70 pre-candidates in the race to replace him, so the probable outcome is still impossible to predict.

Although Colombia has long been the closest Latin-American ally of the United States, President Petro's hard-left policies, hostile rhetoric and pro-China sympathies have incurred the displeasure of President Trump. Moreover, since President Petro took office in 2022, the area in Colombia under coca cultivation is estimated to have increased by about 70 percent.

In March 2025, President Petro's officials gained the support of 63 countries to achieve the support of the 68th session of the the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna for his proposals to ease the war on drugs on the world stage and to create a "high level panel of independent experts to critically analyse the global drug regime," which will report back in 2029. This could lead to the decriminalisation of products such as coca leaves that are currently classified as dangerous substances.

All this means that there is a real danger that in September 2025 Colombia will be "decertified" as a counter-narcotics partner of the United States. This would lead Washington to slash bilateral aid by 50%, which would be a very severe blow after

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

the loss of funding from USAID (the U.S. Agency for International Development) when that body was closed down by President Trump. It could also entail diplomatic and financial sanctions, including government officials being barred from the U.S. and restrictions on Colombia's banking systems.

The Trustees are concerned about the possible impact of such restrictions on the ability of **Let The Children Live! Inc.** to transfer its donations from the United States to **Funvini**. Moreover, substantial cuts by the United States in its funding for Colombia's security forces would reduce still further their ability to control violence and crime in its territory.

o) The long-term loan of £225,000 made to the charity will eventually have to be paid back. As has been explained above, this money has now been loaned to **Funvini**, and the Trustees have therefore had to consider the risk that the Colombian charity might fail to return it. However, the Trustees are satisfied that the terms of the mortgage on *Casa Bannatyne* by which the loan has been secured have reduced this risk to the minimum. As has been mentioned above, the property was professionally valued in May 2024 at C\$2,631,811 (Colombian pesos), or slightly over £500,000.

If the worst came to the worst, and **Funvini** failed to meet - or were to be prevented from meeting - its obligations, the Trustees could reduce their annual grant to **Funvini** by £225,000, and the charity would therefore still be able to meet its own obligations to the benefactor.

p) In 2003 the Linked Charity established a notional benchmark for the salary of its Executive Director, with those of other Key Management Personnel being determined in reference to this. The Trustees did this by consulting the press to see what other charities were then offering for the posts that they were advertising.

For example, they noted that on 11th August 2003 The Children's Society advertised for a Youth Campaign Coordinator in London, with a maximum salary of £25,536. Applicants had to be under the ages of 25, and would therefore have had neither experience nor responsibilities commensurate with those of the Executive Director of **Let The Children Live!** At the other end of the spectrum, World Vision, a very much larger charity, advertised on 14th March 2003 for a Chief Executive with an annual salary of £70,000.

The Trustees therefore considered that a notional benchmark figure of £30,000 of basic salary would be appropriate, and they hoped to be able to sustain this at least in line with inflation. According to the CPI UK Inflation Calculator (www.officialdata.org), £30,000 in 2003 would be the equivalent of £59,443.64 in August 2024 - without any increments in recognition of increased experience and

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

responsibility - but the Trustees regret that the financial circumstances of the Linked Charity did not permit the salaries of the Key Management Personnel who are now employed by the Reporting Charity to be increased to that extent.

According to the 2024 Pay and Equalities Survey of almost 900 charity leaders published by the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), the median annual basic salary reported by charity C.E.O.s in the early Summer of 2024 was £60,000. The Trustees therefore realise that if it ever became necessary to seek to replace the charity's Executive Director, it is probable that the present terms of remuneration would have to be improved considerably, and that this would require painful adjustments to its budget.

q) The constant intensification of the competition for funds is placing increasingly heavy burdens of work and stress on the charity's employees. The Trustees realise that an excessive work-load poses a risk to the charity's efficiency, and limits the possibilities for its expansion. Some extra help was provided in 2018 by an Office Trainee, but she left the charity's employment at the end of the year; and it is clear that a more experienced - and therefore more expensive - person will be required when funds permit a replacement to be appointed.

r) As has been mentioned above, Fr Peter's illness in the Summer of 2024 caused the length of his Autumn fund-raising tour of the United Kingdom to be reduced by half. If he were to be incapacitated for a prolonged period, the Trustees know that it would not be easy for them to find a suitable replacement. Indeed, in such an eventuality, it might well be necessary to wind up the charity. For that reason they continued to ensure that it did not incur any debts or contractual obligations which could not be met from its reserves.

s) The salaries of **Funvini's** team of psychologists, social-workers, teachers and other staff constitute by far the largest item in the Colombian charity's monthly budget. It can do little to control these because they are calculated in terms of multiples of the Colombian National Minimum Wage, which is increased every year by government decree.

In 2023 the working-week in Colombia was reduced by two hours to 38 hours. Moreover, it was also decreed that extra night-time payments should be made to those who work after 6:00pm, rather than after 9:00pm, as had previously been the case. The National Minimum Wage was raised by 16% in 2023, by 12% in 2024, and by a further 9.53% in 2025. The salaries of **Funvini's** employees all increased accordingly. This represents a compound increase of 42.3% in only three years.

Furthermore, when student teachers, psychologists and social-workers undertake the practical work required by their universities, they now have to be paid the minimum

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

wage. And employers who have more than 19 employees in their workforce are now legally obliged to take on an apprentice from the SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje), who is also entitled to receive the minimum wage.

All these measures have resulted in a dramatic increase in **Funvini's** wages bill, and consequently in the proportion of its expenditure that has to be devoted to staff costs. This obviously leaves a smaller percentage to be spent directly on the children whom **Funvini** exists to serve. This presents the Colombian charity with the invidious dilemma of having to reduce either the number of children it helps, or the range, frequency and quality of the services it provides for them. Reducing the workforce would offer no escape from this because the cost of making long-serving staff redundant would be so high, and because **Funvini's** team is already so small that reducing it any further would necessarily lead to a corresponding reduction in the number of children who could be attended safely.

The only escape would therefore be for **Funvini's** income to be increased. However, there is little hope that the Colombian charity will be able to do this for itself. The 2024 World Happiness Index revealed Colombians to be one of the least generous nations on earth. In terms of generosity, Colombia ranked 131st out of the 142 countries in the survey. Although the accuracy of the survey may be open to question, it may to some extent explain the difficulty that **Funvini** has always experienced in trying to raise funds in Colombia.

Fortunately, the United Kingdom ranked 6th in the index in terms of generosity; and the United States ranked 16th: but even so, neither the British nor the American charity is currently in a position to provide the extra funding needed to meet **Funvini's** ever-increasing needs. The Trustees of both charities very much regret that the constant statutory improvements in the working conditions of **Funvini's** staff are likely to have to be implemented at the cost of the suffering of the children for whom the Colombian charity will no longer be able to provide services. The Trustees are therefore acutely aware of the need to try to devise and invest in additional fund-raising strategies.

t) As the competition for donations becomes ever-more intense, **Let The Children Live!** faces an increasing need to develop new ways of appealing for the public's sympathy. There are constant appeals in the media for the victims of disaster, and stories and images of children who are being enabled to go to school and to avoid catastrophe tend to have less emotional impact than those that feature children who have fallen victim to it.

The charity may well need professional help to surmount this public-relations hurdle. In the meanwhile, the Trustees believe that the best way to retain the confidence of

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

the charity's supporters is to be completely transparent about this problem, and to explain both what is happening and why it is happening.

In particular, the Trustees think that it is very important to stress what a very small proportion of the United Kingdom's Overseas Aid Programme is devoted to helping children in Colombia, in marked contrast to the enormous sums that British drug-users squander each year on Colombian cocaine and heroin. The money they spend on their 'recreational habit' helps significantly to fuel the violence and corruption in Colombia to which so many children there continue to fall victim.

Supporting charities like **Let The Children Live!** is one way by which people in Britain can help to undo some of this harm. Unfortunately, however, some people regard drug-consumers as innocent victims of their habit. They fail to recognise that the *purchase* of illegal drugs is *not* a 'victimless crime'; so they take offence when the charity maintains that drug-users ought to accept responsibility for the part that they each play in sustaining the drug-trade with countries like Colombia through their purchases.

According to a report in *The Daily Beast* on 11th August 2024 in relation to the Duke of Sussex's impending visit to Colombia, a friend of the Prince of Wales said, "Harry admitted to doing coke in his book. His trip to Colombia should include an admission that the country has been destroyed by narco-terrorists servicing wealthy drug users in the West, and he should stand up and apologise for his own participation in that disgusting trade."

The Trustees very much regret that the Duke does not seem to have made such an apology. They call on the government to a great deal more to educate the public about this in order to make the *purchase* of illegal drugs as socially unacceptable as the purchase of child pornography or of items made of ivory or animal fur.

u) As has been made clear above, the Trustees are very much aware of problems caused by the charity's dependence on the income it receives from such unpredictable sources as Trusts and legacies. Attempts to reverse this trend are likely to require a significant increase in both the overall amount that the charity spends on fund-generation, and in the proportion of the charity's expenditure that is used for this purpose.

The Trustees of **Let The Children Live!** fully support the measures being taken by **Funvini** in response to all the problems they have mentioned, and they will do their best to raise extra funds to help the Colombian charity to meet these grave and continuing challenges. However, it must be accepted that the outlook both for the remainder of 2025 and for 2026 is not very encouraging.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Governance

Let The Children Live! is governed by a Board of Trustees/Directors, who usually meet twice a year. They are a small, well-integrated group of non-executive volunteers, who share the Christian principles upon which the charity was founded, and who are motivated by a commitment to the welfare of the children whom the charity exists to serve.

The day-to-day conduct of the charity's affairs are managed by Fr Peter Walters, as its Executive Director. None of the Trustees have any personal interests to declare, and all of them have signed the Trustees' Code of Conduct, which includes provisions to manage any potential conflicts of interest.

There must always be a minimum of *three* Trustees and there may be a maximum of *five*. The policy of the Trustees in relation to potential candidates for election to the Board is that in addition to being legally qualified to serve, the person concerned should be one:

- of whose integrity and other qualities at least either one of the existing Trustees or the Founder has considerable personal knowledge;
- who has an established history of support for and interest in the charity;
- who would be willing to subscribe to the charity's Mission and Vision Statements; to its Donations and Funding Policy; and to the Trustees' Code of Conduct, which contains a conflict of interest policy;
- who is likely to inspire the confidence of the charity's supporters;
- who is likely to be able to devote to the charity the time necessary to be an effective Trustee; and
- who would be able to attend the Trustees' meetings without undue inconvenience or expense.

It is the Trustees' policy to try to keep the affairs of the charity as simple as possible, and to conduct them with the minimum of formality and bureaucratic procedures compatible with efficiency and compliance with the law; and that such professional expertise and advice as may be necessary should normally be obtained externally.

Because a new Trustee must already have some knowledge of the charity, and because the governance of its affairs has been designed to be so straightforward, the process of induction normally consists of a briefing by the Director and the other Trustees, and the reading of the Charity Commission's publication *The Essential Trustee*. The Trustees may subsequently undertake such further reading or training as they deem necessary.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

On 10th September 2024 Miss Pauline Allan, the charity's Administrator, attended a workshop on "Working Overseas: Risks, Responsibilities and Legal Duties". This was held in Manchester, and it was organised by the Charity Commission. When Miss Allan subsequently reported back to the Trustees about this event, they were pleased to find that the charity had already implemented all of its relevant recommendations.

However, as has been mentioned above, the Trustees continue to regard with grave concern the failure of the Government and of the Charity Commission to value and protect the essentially 'amateur' status of the Trustees of small charities. They suspect that part of the problem here may stem from the lack of a distinction in law between Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and charities.

Each of these types of not-for-profit body has a valuable role to play in contemporary society, but although they have elements in common, their regulatory needs and, indeed, their whole ethos tends to be very different. NGOs require detailed regulation and considerable formality in their structures and procedures, particularly if their funding depends on grants from - or contracts with - statutory bodies.

In the case of small charities, however, any excess of regulation or formality may prove stifling. They rely for their governance upon the good will and enthusiasm of part-time, non-specialist volunteers whose mentality reflects that of the private donors upon whose generosity their income chiefly depends.

The Trustees remain firmly of the opinion that the tendency towards over-regulation poses a real threat to the survival of small charities like **Let The Children Live!** because the greater the administrative burden, the harder it will be to attract new Trustees; and the more disproportionate the administrative costs, the more difficult it will become to inspire the generosity of donors who wish their money to be used for the benefit of children, not for the funding of bureaucracy. Every aspect of the regulation of charities ought always itself to be subject to strict and clear 'public benefit' criteria, including the regular evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of any public reporting burden that it imposes on smaller charities.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Charities Act 2011 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its income and expenditure for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required:

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE! REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

- to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- to make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- to comply with applicable accounting standards subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- to prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it would be inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its operations.

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the charity's assets, and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent Examination

The Trustees share the view expressed in *The Government Response to the Consultation on Charity Audit and Independent Examination* (2015) that, except in special circumstances, “professional independent examination is a more proportionate form of scrutiny” than a full Audit for a charity with an annual income below the government's threshold of £1,000,000.

In preparing this Report, the Directors have taken advantage of the small companies exemption provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

A resolution to re-appoint Mazars LLP as Independent Examiners was passed by the Trustees at their meeting on 18th June 2024.

Approved by the Trustees, and signed on 14th September 2025 on their behalf by



Paulette Brown,
Chairman

Let The Children Live!
2, Roberts Road
Doncaster
DN4 0JW

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

I report on the Financial Statements of **Let The Children Live!** for the year ended 31st December 2024, which are set out on pages 57 to 68.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of the Reporting Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the Financial Statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the Financial Statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for Independent Examination, I report in respect of my Examination of the charity's Financial Statements as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my Examination I have followed the directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act.

This Report, including my Statement, has been prepared for and only for the charity's Trustees as a body. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body for my Examination work, for this Report, or for the statements I have made.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My Examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An Examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the Financial Statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the Financial Statements, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an Audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the Financial Statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LET THE CHILDREN LIVE!

Independent Examiner's Statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, your Examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales which is one of the listed bodies.

In connection with my Examination, which is complete, no matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of **Let The Children Live!** in accordance with section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- the Financial Statements do not accord with those records; or
- the Financial Statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the Financial Statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an Independent Examination; or
- the Financial Statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the Examination to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the Financial Statements to be reached.



[David Hoose \(Sep 26, 2025 13:03:11 GMT+1\)](#)

David Hoose FCA

Forvis Mazars LLP
2, Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3AX

26/09/2025

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
AGGREGATED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024	Restricted funds 2024	Total funds 2024	Restated Total funds 2023
	13				
INCOME:					
Voluntary Income:					
General Donations		598,837	0	598,837	397,616
Shop Donations		2,384	0	2,384	1,933
Trust Donations		2,100	8,125	10,225	10,750
Legacies		78,128	0	78,128	11,381
Income Tax Recovered		87,536	0	87,536	97,255
		<u>768,985</u>	<u>8,125</u>	<u>777,110</u>	<u>518,935</u>
Trading Activities					
Sales - Mail Order		0	0	0	53
Sales - Walsingham Shop		15,681	0	15,681	15,273
		<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
Investment Income:					
Interest Receivable		15	0	15	16
Foreign Currency Valuation		0	0	0	0
		<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>784,681</u>	<u>8,125</u>	<u>792,806</u>	<u>534,277</u>
EXPENDITURE:					
Expenditure on Raising Funds	3	32,745	0	32,745	31,772
Expenditure on Charitable Activities	4	531,929	8,125	540,054	568,660
		<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
TOTAL EXPEND ITURE		<u>564,674</u>	<u>8,125</u>	<u>572,799</u>	<u>600,432</u>
NET (EXPENDITURE) / INCOME	5	220,007	0	220,007	(66,155)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:					
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		<u>145,959</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>145,959</u>	<u>212,114</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	14	<u>365,966</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>365,966</u>	<u>145,959</u>

This Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended relate to continuing activities.

**AGGREGGATED BALANCE SHEET
31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	Notes	2024 £	Restated 2023 £
	13		
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	7	<u>1,881</u>	<u>2,508</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors (amounts falling due within one year)	8	52,269	977
Debtors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	9	225,000	225,000
Bank and Cash		<u>320,076</u>	<u>161,138</u>
		<u>597,345</u>	<u>387,115</u>
CREDITORS - AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	10	<u>(8,260)</u>	<u>(18,665)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		589,085	368,450
CREDITORS - AMOUNTS DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	11	<u>(225,000)</u>	<u>(225,000)</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>365,966</u>	<u>145,958</u>
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	14	365,966	145,958
RESTRICTED FUNDS	14	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>365,966</u>	<u>145,958</u>

For the year ending 31st December 2024 the Company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The Members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476, and the Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Approved and authorised for issue by the Directors/Trustees,
and signed on 14th September 2025 on their behalf by



Paulette Brown,
Chairman

**BALANCE SHEETS OF REPORTING CHARITY 1159113 AND LINKED CHARITY 1159113-1
31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	Notes	2024 £	Restated 2023 £
	13		
BALANCE SHEET - REPORTING CHARITY 1159113			
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	7	<u>1,881</u>	<u>2,508</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors (amounts falling due within one year)	8	52,269	938
Debtors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	9	225,000	225,000
Bank and Cash		<u>217,480</u>	<u>63,951</u>
		<u>494,749</u>	<u>289,889</u>
CREDITORS - AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	10	<u>(5,383)</u>	<u>(15,848)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		489,366	274,041
CREDITORS - AMOUNTS DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	11	<u>(225,000)</u>	<u>(225,000)</u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>266,247</u></u>	<u><u>51,549</u></u>
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	14	266,247	51,549
RESTRICTED FUNDS	14	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u><u>266,247</u></u>	<u><u>51,549</u></u>
BALANCE SHEET - LINKED CHARITY 1159113-1			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors (amounts falling due within one year)	8	<u>0</u>	<u>39</u>
Bank and Cash		<u>102,596</u>	<u>97,187</u>
		<u>102,596</u>	<u>97,226</u>
CREDITORS - AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	10	<u>(2,877)</u>	<u>(2,817)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>99,719</u>	<u>94,409</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>99,719</u>	<u>94,409</u>
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	14	99,719	94,409
RESTRICTED FUNDS	14	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u><u>99,719</u></u>	<u><u>94,409</u></u>

**AGGREGATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	Note	2024 £	Restated 2023 £
	13		
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by (used in) Operating Activities	A	158,923	(58,442)
Net cash provided by (used in) Investing Activities		15	16
Net cash provided by (used in) Financing Activities		0	0
Purchase of Tangible Fixed Assets		0	(1,599)
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities		158,938	(60,025)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		161,138	221,163
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	B	320,076	161,138

**NOTE A Reconciliation of Net Expenditure to Cash Flow
from Operating Activities**

Net Movement in Funds	220,007	(66,155)
Less Investment Income	(15)	(16)
Decrease/(Increase) in Debtors	(51,292)	(383)
(Decrease)/Increase in Creditors	(10,405)	7,276
Add back Depreciation	628	836
Net cash provided by(used in) Operating Activities	158,923	(58,442)

NOTE B Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

Cash in hand	320,076	161,138
Total cash and cash equivalents	320,076	161,138

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities, applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

After considering the future potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trustees consider that the Charity has sufficient reserves available to it to secure its immediate future for the next 12 to 18 months; and on that basis the Charity is a going concern.

Income

Income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the resources, it is probable that the resources will be received and their monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation to pay the expenditure. All costs have been directly attributed to one of the functional categories of expenditure in the SOFA. The charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly expenditure is shown gross of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on charitable activities

The expenditure on charitable activities includes payments to related undertakings, support costs and governance costs.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

Unrestricted Funds

The Designated Fund represents the proportion of the unrestricted funds which the Trustees consider is immediately available to them for the purpose of assisting children and young people in Colombia in accordance with the policy agreed by the Trustees. The remainder is held to protect the charity against fluctuations in income.

Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Items of a capital nature costing in excess of £200, or with an economic life of more than 4 years, are included in fixed assets. Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of fixed assets on a reducing balance basis over their estimated useful lives.

2 LEGAL STATUS OF THE CHARITY

The charity is a company registered in England Wales (No. 07140869). It is limited by guarantee, and has no share capital. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of its registered Office is: 2, Roberts Road, Doncaster DN4 0JW.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	2024 £	2023 £
3 AGGREGATED EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS		
Appeals	5,115	5,963
Shop	4,525	3,881
Staff costs	23,105	21,928
	<u>32,745</u>	<u>31,772</u>
4 AGGREGATED CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Development Education costs:		
General	757	770
Staff costs	421	645
	<u>1,178</u>	<u>1,415</u>
* Donations made to Funvini	<u>344,020</u>	<u>379,627</u>
Fieldwork costs:		
General	19,603	19,347
Staff costs	70,510	65,275
	<u>90,113</u>	<u>84,622</u>
Support Costs:		
General	61,773	61,709
Governance	5,754	5,634
** Staff costs	37,216	35,653
	<u>104,743</u>	<u>102,996</u>
Total Charitable Activities:	<u><u>540,054</u></u>	<u><u>568,660</u></u>

*** Funvini**

Let The Children Live! has the right to nominate a member of the Board of the Colombian charity Fundación ¡Vivan Los Niños! (Funvini). This representative has a voice but not a vote. In 2024 the representative nominated was Fr Peter Walters.

**** Support Costs — Staff**

No person was paid more than £60,000 in either year.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

		2024	2023
		£	£
5 AGGREGATED NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS			
The net movement in funds is after charging:			
Independent Examiner's fees		5,754	5,634
Employment costs	6	131,252	123,501
Depreciation of owned tangible assets	7	628	836
		=====	=====
6 STAFF COSTS			
Salaries		102,264	99,549
National Insurance		4,526	2,799
Pension		24,462	21,153
		=====	=====
		131,252	123,501
		=====	=====
The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:			
		Number	Number
Administration & Shop		3	3
Field-work & Appeals		1	1
		=====	=====

The Charity considers that its Key Management Personnel comprise the Trustees, the Executive Director and the Administrator. No Trustees received any remuneration or were repaid any expenses for either year. The total employment benefits - including employer's National Insurance and pension contributions - of the Key Management Personnel were £104,459 (2023: £98,867). No employees had salaries in excess of £60,000 in either year.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

7 FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and Equipment £	
COST		
Accumulated	3,344	
Additions	0	
Disposals	0	
At 31st December 2024	3,344	
DEPRECIATION		
Accumulated depreciation at 1 January 2024	836	
Charge for year	628	
Disposals	0	
Accumulated depreciation at 31 December 2024	628	
NET BOOK VALUE		
At 31st December 2024	1,881	
At 31 December 2023	2,508	
Depreciation Rate	25% RB	

	2024 £	Restated 2023 £
8 AGGREGATED. DEBTORS - AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Gift Aid receivable	52,269	977

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	2024	Restated
	£	2023
		£
8 REPORTING CHARITY DEBTORS		
- AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Gift Aid receivable	52,269	938
	<u><u>52,269</u></u>	<u><u>938</u></u>
8 LINKED CHARITY DEBTORS		
- AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Gift Aid receivable	0	39
	<u><u>0</u></u>	<u><u>39</u></u>
9 DEBTORS - AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR *		
Loan to Funvini	225,000	225,000
The Reporting Charity's loan is secured against a property owned by Funvini , is interest-free, and is repayable in 2029.	<u><u>225,000</u></u>	<u><u>225,000</u></u>
* The Linked Charity did not - in either year - have any Debtors with amounts falling due after more than one year.		
10 AGGREGATED CREDITORS - AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Trade Creditors	1,014	2,533
Other Creditors	1,622	5,474
Accruals	5,624	11,057
	<u><u>8,260</u></u>	<u><u>19,064</u></u>
10 REPORTING CHARITY CREDITORS		
- AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Trade Creditors	1,014	2,533
Other Creditors	1,622	5,474
Accruals	2,747	7,842
	<u><u>5,383</u></u>	<u><u>15,849</u></u>
10 LINKED CHARITY CREDITORS		
- AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Accruals	2,877	3,215
	<u><u>2,877</u></u>	<u><u>3,215</u></u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

	2024 £	Restated 2023 £
11 REPORTING CHARITY CREDITORS		
- AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR *		
Loan from Benefactor	(225,000)	(225,000)
The loan is interest free and repayable in 2029.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

* The Linked Charity did not - in either year - have any Creditors with amounts falling due after more than one year.

12 REPORTING CHARITY PENSION COMMITMENTS *

The Company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Company in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the Company to the fund, and amounted to £24,462 (2023: £21,153). Contributions totalling £1,807 were payable to the fund at the balance sheet date (2023: £1,703).

* The Linked Charity did not have any Pension Commitments in either year.

13 PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENT

The comparative figures of Let The Children Live! have been restated to reflect the following adjustments:

Because a Gift Aid claim of £399 was inadvertently miscategorised, the amount of Gift Aid received in 2023 was understated by £399, and the amount owing to creditors as at 31st December that year was overstated by the same amount. As a result of the above adjustment, the income for 2023 has been increased by £399, and the amount owing to creditors as at 31st December 2023 has decreased by £399.

Also, a rounding error of £1 caused the the total funds carried forward from 2022 to be understated by £1, and the total brought forward in 2023 has therefore been increased by £1.

14 AGGREGATED ANALYSIS OF FUNDS	2024			Total £
	Unrestricted General fund £	Designated fund £	Restricted Funvini fund £	
Income	784,681	0	8,125	792,806
Expenditure	564,674	0	8,125	572,799
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Net inflow/(outflow) of funds	220,007	0	0	220,007
Transfer between funds	(170,007)	170,007	0	0
Balances at beginning of year	50,000	95,959	0	145,959
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Balances at end of year	100,000	265,966	0	365,966
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The Trustees designate funds held at the year end in excess of their reserve policy for the benefit of **Funvini** because of fluctuations in the rate of exchange between the pound and the Colombian peso.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

**14 REPORTING CHARITY -
ANALYSIS OF FUNDS**

2024

	Unrestricted General fund £	Designated fund £	Restricted Funvini fund £	Total £
Income	776,494	0	8,125	784,619
Expenditure	561,797	0	8,125	569,922
Net inflow/(outflow) of funds	214,697	0	0	214,697
Transfer between funds	(164,697)	164,697	0	0
Balances at beginning of year restated	50,000	1,550	0	51,550
Balances at end of year	100,000	166,247	0	266,247

**14 LINKED CHARITY -
ANALYSIS OF FUNDS**

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
Income	8,187	0	8,187
Expenditure	2,877	0	2,877
Net inflow/(outflow) of funds	5,310	0	5,310
Balances at beginning of year restated	94,409	0	94,409
Balances at end of year	99,719	0	99,719

15 CORPORATION TAX

The charity is exempt from tax on income to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

16 RELATED PARTIES

Included within creditors - amounts falling due after one year (Note 11) is an interest-free loan of £225,000. This was made by a related party to the reporting charity, and is repayable in 2029.

17 LINKING OF ACCOUNTS

On 26th July 2021 the Charity Commission confirmed that the Reporting Charity should be linked to the charity Let the Children Live! (charity registered with the Charity Commission No. 1159113-1, originally 1013634) for the purposes of Part 4 (registration) and Part 8 (accounting) of the Charities Act 2011.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

18. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Restated Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restated Total funds 2023 £
INCOME				
Voluntary Income				
General Donations		397,616	0	397,616
Shop Donations		1,933	0	1,933
Trust Donations		10,750	0	10,750
Legacies		11,381	0	11,381
Income Tax Recovered	13	97,255	0	97,255
		<u>518,935</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>518,935</u>
Trading Activities				
Sales - Mail Order		53	0	53
Sales - Walsingham Shop		15,273	0	15,273
		<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
Investment Income				
Interest Receivable		16	0	16
Foreign Currency Valuation		0	0	0
		<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
TOTAL INCOME		534,277	0	<u>534,277</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Raising Funds		31,772	0	31,772
Charitable Activities		568,660	0	568,660
		<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		600,432	0	<u>600,432</u>
NET (EXPENDITURE) / INCOME		(66,155)	0	<u>(66,155)</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS: TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	13	212,114	0	<u>212,114</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		145,959	0	<u>145,959</u>