

Step report *Colombia*

Iglesia Comunidad P.A.S.

We attended our first church service at Iglesia Comunidad P.A.S, our local church here in Barranquilla. It was nice to worship in Spanish and to learn some new songs, as well as hear ones we already know in a different language!

We also attended the 5am Easter sunrise service together as a team. It was very hard to get up for, and stay awake during, but it was a lovely celebration of Jesus' victory over death. We sang a lot of Spanish praise songs that were joyful and full of the Easter spirit, and then 'desayunamos' (we had breakfast) after as a church.



Los Angeles Youth Group

Our team has been going to Los Angeles youth group to run the Friday night sessions while we are here. We do fun games and songs to help them practice English, and also try and share the gospel through it all. Many of the children from the community are Venezuelan, whose families migrated over when they were younger due to political, economic and social instability.

The migration tears many families apart. Fathers often go elsewhere to search for work to send money back to their partners and children, but often end up setting up different lives away from them. This leaves mothers more vulnerable with their children, and they often turn to prostitution to try and provide for the kids, there is a lot of drug abuse, or living with a man who is not the children's parent. This often causes an issue of its own, because there are a lot of situations where the children are abused, with a particular pattern of sexual abuse from the men who aren't their fathers.



The children who come on a Friday night are full of joy and love the games and songs we play with them. Also, as a team we have so much fun getting involved and playing as well, for example we participated in a high-intensity game of ladders this week!

This Thursday three of the children in the group (two guys, one girl) went back to Venezuela to live with their grandma. It would be really great if they could be kept in prayers:

- That they would be well received in Venezuela and feel a sense of community over there
- That their mum would be able to get better work, as currently she works in prostitution.
- That spiritually the three siblings would put their faith in Jesus and give their lives to Him, so they would not worry for earthly things, but would have a peace that surpasses understanding.

New Life Store

Four of the team helped by sorting the clothes into male/female/kids, satisfactory/good condition categories. They then tagged the clothing with the categories listed and organised them into tables. Then they made sandwiches and poured drinks for the women that came to collect clothing to resell in their communities. They took the clothing they wanted, and gave bags of clothing to our volunteers to sort (they were counted so when they came back they could pay for how much they bought). Then the team helped clear up the clothing and store them for the next meeting.



Conversation Clubs

Adult conversation clubs: Tuesday and Thursday evenings

These conversation clubs happen in the evenings as they are aimed for adults looking to improve their English, so need to be accessible for people who work. They usually have a theme/topic to discuss and depending on the size of the group, can split into smaller groups to allow each individual more chance to practice.

University free english practice: Thursday morning.

The long term missionaries here, Jessie and Judah, have set up a conversation club in partnership with CRU (a christian organisation across the universities in Colombia) in Universidad del Norte. It is a space that allows students to practice their English, a subject that is sometimes compulsory to pass in order to graduate. It also introduces them to CRU and they get invited to more Christian events. It is still very early days for this group, but it has great potential, in that many people want to practice their English for work opportunities and it enables them to do that for free.

Aaron, Soledad - teaching english

In Soledad, there is a Christian school that we are going to twice a week to teach English to the students. The levels vary between ages and people, but generally aren't that high. We have had the opportunity of planning ways to help them learn English; through songs such as 'Our God is so big, so strong and so mighty', Pictionary, 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes' etc. Most of the kids get really involved, and the novelty of the fact we are from England is still fresh!

The classrooms are quite small and it's very warm during the day, so the concentration levels of students often aren't the best, and lessons aren't super structured.

We would be grateful for prayer:

- **That we would find ways to engage the kids and encourage them to learn English in a way that has a long lasting impact, as it helps them for future opportunities.**
- **For the teachers that are already there, that they would be helping the kids grow both academical, but also spiritually, as the Headteacher's vision for the school is that it is a Christian school where the students can learn about Jesus.**



Fundacion Horeb y Hesed- Football ministry

We have been once to help out in a town called Juan Mina with an organisation that brings the gospel to youth and parents through sports. They have big ideas for the community, including introducing English classes and planting a church. As an organisation, they are brilliant at genuinely caring for each child, and looking out for signs of mistreatment at home, as well as any particular needs that can be helped with.

At the root, their aim is to bring more souls to Jesus and build Gods kingdom, teaching the kids they are immensely valued and loved when often it may not seem like it. On top of this they seek to provide for physical needs as well, by collecting clothes, shoes, presents for the kids.

We went on Saturday again, and were received with such love from the children when we got out the car (it was a tiny car that all 8 of us squished into, some sat on knees and some in the boot!). It is genuinely a joy each week to share time with them, and we all love the dancing and football we do with them. It is also so lovely to see children that started off shy, quieter or upset because of home situations, have a space of peace and happiness among friends, kind volunteers and where God's name is preached. We hope to keep bringing joy and, most importantly, pointing the kids towards Jesus, as most of them are not Christians.

Prayer for the children would be brilliant:

- **That they would come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour**
- **That we would be a light to them and the Lord would use us for His will in their lives.**

Campfire Colombia

The weekend of the 27th - 29th the team participated in the adults Campfire camp. We had a tight squeeze on the journey there in a tiny van, with a lot of people and bags, but made it to the camp venue in high spirits! The first evening was British night, where the England Team (us) lead activities to do with British culture (e.g. British slang, pub quiz, rugby challenge, 3-legged race, karaoke). We had made some British 'scraps' with the resources we could find here in Colombia - flapjacks!!.

The memory verse we had was Isaiah 61. We studied part of Matthew 4 across the weekend, and did reflections on the text in our teams (purple, red, green and blue). We also had fun activities and games throughout the day, and workshops/talks. We had worship in the evening, with a lot of singing and praise Colombian-style, with a good beat, clapping and dancing. Our team also lead some songs in English with actions (My Lighthouse and Praise)!! **We had a worship night on the final night with space to pray in small groups and praise the Lord, and also a time for testimonies to be shared. Zoe shared her testimony from our team, which was really powerful and helpful to hear.**

It would be great to have prayer for the participants, the majority were Colombian (some Venezuelan), and a lot were Christians but also a fair few weren't. Campfire aims to provide a space for people to develop their English but also know more about God. There were participants there that are not yet Christian,

Let's pray that any seeds planted would keep growing!



Mom's Moments

This week at Mom's moments, we had an Easter-themed sparkly carros humt that the younger children participated in. With it being semana santa (holy week/Easter), the younger kids took part in painting some beautiful easter eggs, while the mum's had a talk from the pastor in a separate room. We then had an english class for the older kids, but not before singing a Feliz Cumpleaños (Happy Birthday) for the first team birthday, Bethany's. In the classes we were teaching family members in English!



Celebrating Bethany's birthday!

Thanks for reading and praying!

Wholehearted mission

Our verse of the year is from Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..." Our 'whatever' can only happen because of your support. Please consider donating to help keep us serving:

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