



ANNUAL REPORT



2020

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About La Vida

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

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

Although La Vida is a relatively small charity, so far we have raised over £850,000 through sponsorship, our annual La Vida fundraising events, direct donations and partnerships with other foundations. The funding we have deployed we estimate will have directly impacted the lives of over 60,000 disadvantaged children and their families in Latin America.

Our mission

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

Why La Vida?

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

Our Achievements



Our trustees



**Katy
Vatis**

Founder

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



**Helen
Ilsley**

Founder

Helen spent 15 years as a stockbroker in the Latin American investment community. Having left the City in 2012 and set up her own property asset business, Helen is now an executive coach, heading up Business Development for the Executive Coaching Consultancy, specialising in helping businesses retain and develop their talented women. Helen has a Business Economics degree and is an accredited member of the Association of Coaching.



**Rosie
Bichard**

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

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



**Ivonne
Cantu**

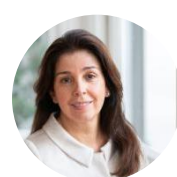
Ivonne grew up in Mexico and has been living in London since 1996. Currently she is head of Investor Relations at Benchmark plc, a global aquaculture business, and a Director of Creo Medical plc, a medical devices technology company. Prior to joining Benchmark, Ivonne was a corporate finance adviser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



**Ana
Beatriz
Alencar**

Ana Beatriz is Brazilian

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



**Zary
Feeney**

Zary joined La Vida in

December 2012. She began her career with Ernst & Young's Financial Advisory Team in Washington DC where she focused on Latin America. She moved to London to join Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein's M&A team. She has subsequently become involved in the non-profit sector and serves on the boards of foundations that are having a significant social impact in the areas of the arts, health, education and the environment in Latin America. She has a MBA from George Washington University. She is fluent in English and Spanish, with conversational Portuguese.

Summary of 2020 projects

In 2020, we had another very strong fundraising year, receiving £90,871 mostly through donations and our main fundraising event. In early February, we held our 14th Anniversary Fundraiser in London, raising over £15,000 through ticket sales, a live and silent auction and a raffle.

This year we had significant donations from the Royal Bank of Canada, Mercia Asset Management, Generation Asset Management, Genesis Asset Management and EM Funding. We also had a number of large donations from private individuals.

Due to Covid restrictions, we have not been able to visit the projects in person in 2020, but we have continued to keep in regular contact over video calls and we have provided additional help to our projects throughout the Covid crisis by granting extra funds for food, medical equipment etc. We funded this through a specific Covid appeal we launched in May 2020. This raised over £8,000 and combined with La Vida's existing funds we were able to send over £12,000 to several Covid relief projects throughout Latin America. Many of our projects have had to adapt their activities to the current situation and we are working with them to see how they can best be supported going forward.

Summary of the year

During 2020, we granted £67,139 to causes throughout Latin America. We continued to support the following projects: Cuca Legal in Angra do Reis, Brazil; Helping Hands in La Paz, Bolivia; Poder Joven in Medellin, Colombia; Fundesoc in Santa Cruz, Bolivia; Viva a Vida in Camacari, Brazil and Villa Maria in Lima, Peru. More details can be found below.

In 2020, we funded a new environmental project, the Corcovado Foundation, in Costa Rica and Maya Midwifery, a project providing essential medical equipment to rural midwives in Guatemala.

In May we launched a direct appeal for Covid relief funds and we raised almost £9,000 which we sent in June to our existing projects Poder Joven in Colombia, Cuca Legal in Brazil and Villa Maria in Peru. In addition, we approved the change of use of existing funds for Fundesoc in Bolivia and Corcovado in Costa Rica both of whom had to adapt their projects to the change in circumstances due to Covid. We also sent Covid Relief to Children Change Colombia, Healing Venezuela, Fundación para la Asistencia Educativa (F.A.E.) in Mexico and the Rotary Club Sirari in Bolivia. More details on each of these are provided below.

Our projects

Covid Relief Appeal



Emergency Relief

Grants in 2020: £12,710

Locations: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela

Bolivia:

Fundesoc – provided essential PPE to over 200 health professionals and medical supplies serving 35,000 people in the Chiquitano region

Rotary Club Sirari Santa Cruz, Bolivia – provided essential PPE to 3 hospitals in Santa Cruz city and province

Brazil:

Nucleo de Referencia - Cuca Legal - We funded 180 basic baskets to the Frade community in Angra dos Reis. Each basket had 22 kg of food and cleaning products for a family of 4 to last 20 days on average.

Colombia:

Children Change Colombia – Provided food packages, toiletries, housing support and psychosocial support in Bogota and Quibdo.

Poder Joven - Community kitchens set up for 180 children to have 2 meals a day and 112 bags of food and hygiene supplies for 56 vulnerable families in Medellin.

Guatemala:

Maya Midwifery – provided 6 months supply of food for 71 midwives and 30 families, and raincoats to protect the midwives in the rainy season.

Mexico:

Fundación para la Asistencia Educativa I.A.P. (FAE), Mexico City – distributed 400 relief packs to the disadvantaged community of Escalerillas in the state of Mexico City.

Peru:

Quest Overseas/VillaMaria, Lima – distributed food relief packages to vulnerable families in Villa Maria, particularly affected by the lack of informal work.

Venezuela:

Healing Venezuela - funded 10 PPE kits, which included 500 pairs of gloves and 500 masks, 10 litres of antibacterial gel and 10 gallons of disinfectant.

Corcovado Foundation



Environmental Education

Grant in 2020: £9,806

Location: Costa Rica

Partner since: 2020

Beneficiaries: 30 families

The Family Ecological Garden Workshop has been a training process in which local families from Drake Bay have developed basic knowledge of regenerative agriculture. This practice will allow them to abandon the use of agrochemicals on their farms and restore the natural components of the soil by reincorporating organic waste as compost to create more fertile lands.

Regenerative agriculture is a conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems. It focuses on: topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting biosequestration, increasing resilience to climate change and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil.

Practices include recycling as much farm waste as possible and adding composted material from sources outside the farm. As soil health improves, input requirements may decrease, and crop yields may increase as soils are more resilient against extreme weather and harbour fewer pests and pathogens.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, they started a process with the community in which they began creating awareness among 30 families. The workshop was carried out partly remotely, which consisted of both theory and practice. The theoretical part was carried out through workshops provided by video calls, in which the educators transmitted knowledge to the families through presentations and videos. The practical part was carried out through visits by the instructors to the participants' farms, where they worked in groups and used their knowledge to learn, shared their successes and their limitations.

Additionally, participants that completed their process received US\$200 in materials such as plastic to build plant nurseries, wood, tools and seeds.

The process was highly successful, and the timing was perfect, especially given that during the pandemic people not only had more time on their hands, but also because they struggled to bring food to the table, in particular, good, healthy food. The vegetables in Osa are brought from San Jose or Cartago, are expensive and also full of chemicals, so to start this new culture is an important effort to:

1. change the mindset of many families towards agriculture,
2. teach how to recycle organic waste and the importance of compost
3. and recognize their own capacity to produce their own food.



Cuca Legal



Education

Grant in 2020: £4,500

Location: Brazil

Partner since: 2018

Beneficiaries: 60 children/teenagers and their families

At the beginning of 2020, Cuca Legal had a record number of children (116) enrolled in their workshops. This was due to strong partnerships the project established with La Vida and other local organisations, which allowed for an enticing programme of activities. A military intervention that jailed drug lords and inhibited drug dealing activities in the area also meant that families were walking more freely and participating in community activities. However, on 13th April, all schools and community activities were prohibited by the local government because of the pandemic.

Part of La Vida's funds had already been used to buy materials for the workshops and to pay for the tutors' salaries during the first semester. La Vida also helped to buy a new computer for the project, and hand sanitiser and cleaning products for the community. Cuca Legal was not able to fully open their doors and restart the workshops for the rest of 2020.

Many of the families in the community lost their income and the project saw a need to help the families by distributing food and basic hygiene and cleaning products. Keeping the project's doors open was fundamental to distribute the packs and also as a safe haven for members of the community.

La Vida's funds for the second semester paid for electricity bills and the salary of a full time employee that ensured the project's house was open for the community. It also contributed to renewing the project's community library. With children losing so much of their education, the project aims to intensify support lessons for children as soon as activities are back to normal.

Fundesoc



Environmental Education

Grant in 2020: £8,242

Location: Bolivia

Partner since: 2018

Beneficiaries: 450 students

In July 2020, we decided to conclude the Project "Youth in Action for the Environment 2020" in Santa Cruz since schools were closed in March due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it was no longer

possible for FUNDESOC to continue implementing the project as planned. Instead, we decided to assign remaining funds to respond to requests for emergency assistance received by both La Vida & FUNDESOC from rural municipalities in the Chiquitano region of Santa Cruz department in their battle against the Covid-19 pandemic. FUNDESOC proposed to redirect efforts and funds to this Covid solidarity initiative to 5 rural municipalities that La Vida trustees approved.

That initiative provided support to vulnerable populations in the Chiquitano region, in their response to the Covid-19 crisis, through the donation of medical and biosecurity supplies for frontline health staff, according to their requests for help. Support was made effective by Fundación Boliviana para el Desarrollo Social (FUNDESOC) that joined this voluntary campaign without charging staff, administrative or operating costs, coordinated with local medical and municipal authorities to establish priority needs, found best purchase options and coordinated with other organizations (NGOs & indigenous organizations) to avoid duplication, join forces and reduce transport costs. The provision of supplies included PPE for health staff, medical oxygen bottles, bed linen to equip rooms for patients, infrared thermometers and oximeters.

Helping Hands



Education

Grant in 2020: £6,321

Location: La Paz, Bolivia

Partner since: 2009

Beneficiaries: 4 students

Beneficiaries since 2009: 44 students

Helping Hands provides financial support and mentoring to help disadvantaged young people in La Paz, Bolivia, complete their studies and take their first steps into the world of work. Originally focused on teenage boys leaving care, Helping Hands has expanded its activities, supporting more than 300 boys and girls since its foundation in 2004. In 2020 Helping Hands supported 100 students (65% female) between 13 and 28 years old.

Like in many countries around the world, Covid-19 created enormous challenges for students and their families in Bolivia. With limited access to internet or to mobile devices, continuing education was challenging and compounded by financial difficulties and illness in many of the students' families. Helping Hands owes its success in outcomes over the years to its personalised, consistent follow-up and mentoring, and it was this which enabled it to maintain close contact with its students through the lockdown, and to identify and meet their specific needs which in some cases meant sourcing medicines, providing internet access cards or indeed basic sustenance.

In 2020, La Vida funded support for four students, two of which are in high school with the other two pursuing university degrees.



Maya Midwifery



Health

Grant in 2020: £4,996

Location: Guatemala

Partner since: 2020

Beneficiaries: 71 midwives

Our Maya Midwifery Project provided funding for an association of 71 midwives who serve indigenous Mam communities in Guatemala. This is essential as many communities do not speak any Spanish and are

so remote that women would not otherwise see a doctor or any health visitor/midwife throughout their pregnancy and birth - thus resulting in a high death rate of both mother and baby.

Working out in the rural communities is a hard vocation; most of the midwives work without electricity, running water or basic health accessories. The midwives are wives and mothers first before being midwives and have family commitments to meet daily in addition to their work. They all come from very modest backgrounds living in houses with dirt floors and very limited financial resources.

La Vida helped to fund basic equipment for the midwives to be able to do their work safely and effectively.



Poder Joven



Education

Grant in 2020: £7,267

Location: Medellin, Colombia

Partner since: 2010

Beneficiaries: 75 children and their families

We continue to support the Poder Joven Foundation who work within areas of Medellin, Colombia where street kids have a great need for a healthy, safe and nurturing environment. Poder Joven uses its resources with care and focus and achieves positive changes for many at-risk children with a long-term impact on their life chances. The children are given access to doctors, dentists and psychologists, practise yoga and meditation and are helped with homework whenever required. The children come from very poor families of which around 70% are subjected to violence in the home. There is a two year waiting list to join the Poder Joven programme, which runs weekly sessions on different topics such as prevention of drug use and violence, communication, how to behave in society etc. Our funding continues to provide food, medical and school supplies for 75 children at Casa Maren.

During the Covid crisis they managed to secure local government funding to keep them operational, which allowed them to feed 70 kids twice a day (as well as their siblings). Schooling went online but most of the kids had no access to computers or phones so Poder Joven liaised with the school and they were sent the work which they printed off as worksheets for the kids, and then helped them with the school work when they were at the centre. Many of the parents have struggled to work (a lot of the mums are cleaners in the wealthy areas and those houses did not let them clean due to fear of catching Covid). In addition, La Vida provided 112 bags of food and hygiene supplies to help these families get through some difficult months.



Viva a Vida



Education

Grant in 2020: £5000

Location: Camacari, Brazil

Partner since: 2015

Beneficiaries: over 1700 students and their families

Viva a Vida reinvented themselves during the pandemic. They ran online workshops and talks reaching an even larger number of people than before. Hundreds of people took part in Viva a Vida's online sessions, whilst the Viva a Vida house continued to be a safe space for the local community. They also produced a documentary called 'Ascending ideas - for a new policy on drugs'.

La Vida's donations paid for the salary of a key youth worker in addition to costs associated with Zoom and producing videos. Below is a summary of what the sessions entailed.

SUMMARY:

- 942 young people listened, discussed, or learned about Human Rights, Racism, and Youth.
- 320 people listened, discussed, or learned about sexual abuse and exploitation.
- 245 people listened, discussed or learned about Preventing Child Labour.
- 180 people joined drawing sessions which included discussions about the impact of art in advocacy.
- 16 families were assisted by therapy sessions.

Work directly related to pandemic relief distributed in the community:

- 300 face masks
- 300 menstrual kits
- 100 basic baskets (essential food and hygiene supplies)
- 1000 informative leaflets

Villa Maria



Education

Grant in 2020: £8296

Location: Lima, Peru

Partner since: 2007

Beneficiaries: 100 Primary school children and their families, school staff.

In Peru, the schools closed in early March last year and remained shut the whole year. In these difficult circumstances the primary school in Villa Maria, which La Vida supports, has done a remarkable job in enabling its students to continue to learn as best it can. In many cases they report the students' results are actually better as they had more support from their families. Unfortunately, however, 40 of the 140 students had to leave the school as they could not afford the fees and had to switch to using the public system, educating their kids through local tv channels.

The Villa Maria school managed to teach the remaining 100 children remotely in very difficult conditions, using Zoom and Whats App video calls, delivering worksheets weekly to parents and using a Google drive with photographs of their work for teacher evaluation. The commitment from the staff has been phenomenal with a reduction in teacher salaries and increased working hours, using the utilities in their homes and improving internet capacity at their own expense to be able to have adequate communication with their students. During the pandemic, the school has also served as a hub for distribution of food parcels and other aid for the most needy, cementing its role within the local area.

Last year, La Vida supported 32 children's education at the school. Together, we have been supporting the school since 2008, during which it has developed and grown significantly. One of our aims in 2021 is to continue to seek ways for it to gain more local funding, something which was obviously hard to achieve in 2020.

Financial statements and notes

Financial review

Policy on reserves: For 2020, La Vida kept 6 months of our ongoing commitments to projects as reserves. We will continue to do this in 2021.

For the period from January 2020 to December 2020

Section A: Receipts and Payments

A1 Receipts	Unrestricted Funds (nearest £)	Restricted Funds (nearest £)	Endowment Funds (nearest £)	Total Funds (nearest £)	Last year (nearest £)
Donations	60,678	15,367		76,044	58,928
Fundraising events	14,827			14,827	2,793
Interest on Deposit					
Sub total (Gross Income AR)	75,505	15,367		90,871	61,720

A2 Asset and investment sales					
Sub Total					

Total receipts	75,505	15,367		90,871	61,720
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A3 Payments					
Cost of fundraising events	3,688			3,688	553
Internet costs					
Grants to Latam projects	34,886	32,253		67,139	36,538
FX and bank charges	116			116	170
Sub Total	38,690	32,253		70,943	37,261

A4 Asset and investment purchases					
Sub Total					

Total payments	38,690	32,253		70,943	37,261
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Net of receipts/ (payments)	36,814	-16,886		19,928	24,459
A5 Transfer between funds					
A6 Cash Funds last year end	30,513	35,850		66,363	41,904
Cash funds this year end	67,327	18,964		86,291	66,363

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

B1 Cash donations	Unrestricted Funds (nearest £)	Restricted Funds (nearest £)	Endowment Funds (nearest £)
CAF cash funds	67,327	18,964	
Total Cash Funds	67,327	18,964	

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all trustees:

Helen Ilsley , date of approval

Katy Vatis, date of approval

Independent examiner's report

**Report to the
trustees/
members of**

LA VIDA Vital Investment for Development Aid in Latin America

**On accounts for
the year ended**

31 December 2020

Charity no.

1115796

**Set out on
pages**

15 - 16

**Responsibilities
and basis of
report**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2020.**

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

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

**Independent
examiner's
statement**


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

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

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

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

Signed:



Date:

10 Aug 2021

Name:

Tracey Falero

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

Association of Chartered Accountants (ACA)

Address:

c/o LA VIDA

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

Administrative details

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

Charity Number: 1115796

Registered Address: GORDON HOUSE
GORDON AVENUE
LONDON
SW14 8DZ

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

Independent Examiner: Tracey Falero (ACA)

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document: Trust deed

How the charity is constituted: Trust

Trustee selection methods: Appointed by existing trustees

Additional governance issues

La Vida - Trustee Selection Process Statement

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

Objectives and Activities

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

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

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

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

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

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

We continue to fund health, education and environment projects throughout the region. In 2020, we continued to support our existing ongoing projects in Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. We funded new projects in Costa Rica and Guatemala. We also funded specific Covid relief projects in Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

Additional details of objective and activities

Policy on grant making:

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

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

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