



# ANNUAL REPORT

Supporting communities' health, education and  
environment

20  
22



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# About La Vida

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

La Vida has since supported highly effective grassroots projects in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela, 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 £ 1 million 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 100,000 disadvantaged children and their families in Latin America.

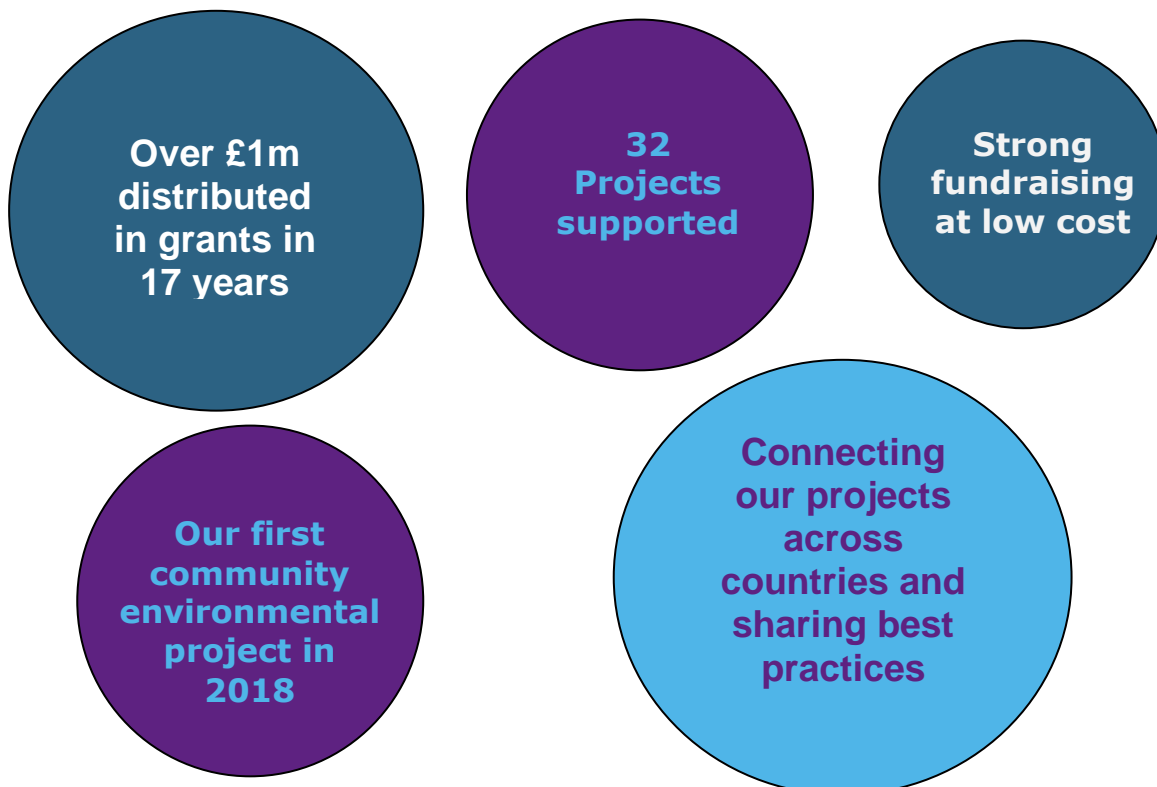
## Our mission

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.



**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.



**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 tech company. Prior to joining Benchmark, Ivonne was a corporate finance adviser for 20 years at Merrill Lynch and at Cenkos Securities. She has an MBA from the Wharton School of Business and a BSc Engineering. Since 2016 she has been advising small UK charities as a member of Pilotlight, a charity that connects professionals with charitable organisations.



**Ana Beatriz Alencar**

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

# Summary of 2022 projects

In 2022, we raised £37,173 through donations which was lower than previous years as we did not hold our annual fundraising event and did not run any specific fundraising campaigns.

This year we had a significant donation from the Royal Bank of Canada. We also had some larger donations from private individuals and companies and our usual supporters continued to 'sponsor a child's education'.

We have continued to keep in regular contact over video calls with our projects and we have continued to provide additional help to certain projects still suffering the impacts of the Covid crisis, by granting extra funds for food etc. where needed. Some of our projects have had to adapt their activities but many have returned to normal operations following the pandemic.

## **Summary of the year**

During 2022, we granted £44,297 to causes throughout Latin America. We continued to support the following projects: Amantani, Peru; El Rio Foundation in Colombia; Helping Hands in La Paz, Bolivia; Poder Joven in Medellin, Colombia and Villa Maria in Lima, Peru.

We funded three new education projects in 2022; Mano Vuelta and Fondo Guadalupe Musalem (FGM) in Mexico and Education for the Children in Guatemala. More details of these projects can be found below.

# Our projects

## Amantani



### Education

**Grant in 2022:** £4000

**Location:** Peru

**Partner since:** 2014

**Beneficiaries:** 100

Amantani's Transitions Project was developed in response to the growing need for support for school leavers in rural communities. Residents of

rural Cusco are 75% less likely to enter further education than their urban peers and studies show that people who study after secondary school can access better job opportunities than those who don't.

The project facilitates access to further education for over 100 indigenous young women and men from two rural communities in the southern Andes near Cusco, Peru. It has three phases that help young people prepare for further education, support them throughout their studies and facilitate access to fair and formal employment.

When the project started in 2016, only 7 residents in the District of Ccorca had accessed further education. Since then, Amantani's work has expanded to the district of Huanquite, and 130 young people from these communities have had the opportunity to study after secondary school. Today, 83 young people – over half of them women – are studying at further education institutions, with Amantani's support. 36 young people have completed further education courses so far, and of these graduates, 19 are currently employed in jobs with fair working conditions, 12 with formal contracts.

La Vida's support enables young people to access high-quality further education, through the provision of financial scholarships, as well as academic and psychosocial support. Further education enables indigenous young people to access fair employment and earn better wages, empowering them to break the poverty cycle for their families.

For more information about the project, please visit [Amantani's website](#).

# Educate.



## Education

**Grant in 2022:** £5334

**Location:** Honduras

**Partner since:** 2021

**Beneficiaries:** 330

In 2022 we funded the educate. Youth Centre computer lab which is located in a newly renovated municipal library building in Trinidad and will be the base for their scholarship programme, workshops, and community events going forward. This computer lab provides public access to computers, printers, and a projector for community events. It will also be used to organise weekly classes on computer literacy for primary and secondary school students, including their high school scholarship students. These will be run by one of their current university scholars, Javier Reyes, who is in his 3rd year of Computer Science and who himself proposed this idea. The Computer Lab will strengthen educate.'s contribution to the local community by providing a space where Trinidad's youth can develop their IT skills and be inspired towards pursuing their education in this area.

La Vida also started sponsoring high school students in 2022. educate. works to empower children and youth in Honduras through community-driven educational initiatives. In 2017 they started a university scholarship programme, which has been running since then. However, through conversations with families, local educators and young people, a clear need emerged for greater support towards access to high school as well.

In the "zonas cafetaleras" (coffee zones) of Trinidad, Santa Barbara, most schools only go up to 6th grade. After primary school, the majority of students from these communities start to work. According to the World Bank, only 43% of students in Honduras finish 9th grade, let alone their "bachillerato" (12th grade) diploma. In rural areas like Trinidad, this percentage is even lower. The greatest barrier impeding students from the mountain villages in accessing high school is distance: the high schools in Trinidad centre are too far away to walk to, and transport is too expensive. By hiring a minibus, they are able to collect and drop off students each day so that they can attend classes. They also provide uniforms (a requirement in Honduran public schools) and essential school materials.

Aside from a passion to continue their formal education, educate. seek out students who are also driven to give back to their communities. The scholars therefore also act as community leaders and role models. Each Saturday, they gather at the Trinidad Youth Centre for workshops and community engagement activities focused on arts, literacy and environmental protection. Ultimately, the goal of this programme is to provide opportunities for young people to pursue their passions, and to catalyse a community of youth who are engaged in driving long-lasting change in their communities.



# Education for the Children



## Education – New Project

**Grant in 2022:** £2430

**Location:** Guatemala

**Partner since:** 2022

**Beneficiaries:** 9

This year, La Vida introduced a new project in Guatemala. Education For The Children runs the School of Hope: 'La Esperanza' in the Jocotenango region. Jocotenango is an urban area with one of the lowest literacy rates in the western hemisphere.

The school's admissions process ensures that those children accepted would not have had access to an education otherwise, and ensures that students are fed, clothed, have safe water to drink and any medical and mental health issues identified. The school has a holistic approach - while it follows the Guatemalan curriculum, they also focus on wellbeing, health and entrepreneurial skills.

EFTC's School of Hope has more than 400 students ranging in age from 5 - 15 years with the ultimate aim of accessing employment in jobs readily available to those with qualifications in neighbouring cities.

La Vida provided funding for 9 students from June 2022 to May 2023 covering all the student's classroom materials, two nutritious school meals daily, and a small proportion of the teacher's salary.

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## El Rio Foundation



## Education

**Grant in 2022:** £4020

**Location:** Colombia

**Partner since:** 2021

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

In 2022, the Academic Tutoring programme we supported with the Lata Foundation and is now the flagship programme of the El Rio Foundation. They provided 300 Tutoring sessions across four communities. Excluding holidays and the worst of the rainy season,

they provided 24 hours of teaching each week with an average of 17 children attending every session. Overall they had 5,116 attendances at Tutoring.

Their Academic tutoring programme was designed in response to a request by local parents and community leaders to help provide educational opportunities for local children, who as a result of the Covid pandemic, didn't go to school for nearly two years and still have huge gaps in their education.

They are delighted to report that children have improved skills across the board, not only in core subjects like Spanish, Maths and English but also in the soft skills they identified as most important through their community consultation: concentration, team-work, problem solving, empathy, confidence and communication.

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## FGM Mexico



### Education – New Project

**Grant in 2022:** £3100

**Location:** Oaxaca, Mexico

**Partner since:** 2022

**Beneficiaries:** 2 bursaries

Fondo Guadalupe Musalem ("FGM") supports disadvantaged young women, mainly from rural, indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities in Oaxaca, so that they can carry out their studies and achieve personal development grounded on ethical values. 62% of the population of the state of Oaxaca live in poverty and 21% in extreme poverty. Oaxaca is the entity with the largest indigenous population in Mexico representing almost 44% and located mainly in rural localities. Access to education, particularly secondary education is limited for the indigenous population and takes on worrying dimensions when it comes to women.

By providing educational bursaries and one-on-one support to bursary recipients, FGM supports talented girls from indigenous backgrounds so that they can complete secondary and university education. In the 2021 – 2022 school cycle, FGM supported 25 high school and 16 university students. From 1996 to 2022, the Guadalupe Musalem A. C. Fund has awarded a total of 173 scholarships for high school studies and has supported 56 of these young women into university.

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# Helping Hands



## Education

**Grant in 2022:** £1757

**Location:** La Paz, Bolivia

**Partner since:** 2009

**Beneficiaries:** 4 students

**Beneficiaries since 2009:** 52 students

Helping Hands provides tailored financial support, mentoring and an enrichment programme to help disadvantaged young people in La Paz, Bolivia, complete their studies and take their first steps into the world of work. Originally focused on teenagers leaving care, Helping Hands has expanded its activities, supporting more than 300 students since its foundation in 2004.

In 2022, Helping Hands supported 122 students of which 79 are female. Of the 122 students supported in 2022, 46 were in elementary and high school, 30% are in high school, 32% were in technical careers, and 38% in university.

In 2022, Helping Hands was able to resume normal activities after the Covid-19 pandemic. At the core of these activities is an enrichment programme for all students delivered monthly. Helping Hands encourages its students to volunteer in their community. In 2022, students donated blood, gave presentations on the environment in schools, cleaned streets, gave food to the homeless, tutored younger students and much more. This effort receives very positive feedback from the students.

During the year, Helping Hands worked more closely with former students who are now well established in their careers and are able and willing to provide internship opportunities for current students and other forms of support for the Foundation.

In 2022, La Vida funded support for four students, two of which are in university and two are in high school. One of the students who received support from La Vida is a young single mother in the process of completing a university degree.

# Mano Vuelta



## Education

**Grant in 2022:** £4517

**Location:** Oaxaca, Mexico

**Partner since:** 2020

**Beneficiaries:** 30 camp participants

Led by a multidisciplinary team of indigenous and Afro-Mexican professional women from Oaxaca, Mano Vuelta's mission is to promote an equitable life and rights for children, youth and women through research, training and community and educational initiatives with a focus on gender, cultural and ethnic diversity.

In 2022, La Vida supported Mano Vuelta by sponsoring an annual summer camp for girls and young women focused on gender equity. Issues addressed include human rights, domestic violence and family planning. Mano Vuelta applies a holistic approach incorporating drama and arts to raise awareness and promote self-confidence in young women creating a positive impact in their lives and in their communities.

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# Podar Joven



## Education

**Grant in 2022:** £12,609

**Location:** Medellin, Colombia

**Partner since:** 2010

**Beneficiaries:** 75 children and their families, 61 teenagers on vocational training course.

We continue to support this pre and after hours school facility in a deprived area in the outskirts of Medellin which provides children with food, educational, medical and psychological support on a daily basis.

In 2022, we also funded vocational training courses for 61 teenagers who had finished school and wanted to learn beauty therapy or to be a barber. 24% of these found employment in these professions immediately following the completion of the courses.

# Villa Maria



## Education

**Grant in 2022:** £6530

**Location:** Lima, Peru

**Partner since:** 2007

**Beneficiaries:** 100 Primary school children and their families, school staff. 33 sponsorships in 2022.

In 2022, face to face teaching resumed in Peru. For Villa Maria, 2022 was a year of transition and reflection with the aim of incorporating the learnings from the pandemic and addressing student needs' arising from the return to the classroom. The use of technology which became an imperative during the pandemic has been incorporated into classroom teaching as a tool to enhance the teaching and maintain engagement with the students outside of the classroom.

In addition, the school has aimed to maintain the strong ties and collaboration with the students' families which was established during the pandemic and which enables the school to understand and address the specific needs resulting from each student's circumstances. This has been particularly important for certain students who required emotional support as they transitioned back to in-person schooling.

# Financial statements and notes

## Financial review

**Policy on reserves:** For 2022, La Vida kept 6 months of our ongoing commitments to projects as reserves. We will continue to do this in 2023.

**For the period from January 2022 to December 2022**

## Section A: Receipts and Payments

<b>A1 Receipts</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Restricted Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Endowment Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Total Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Last year</b> (nearest £)
Donations	33,043	4,130		37,173	57,757
Fundraising events					
Interest on Deposit	79			79	
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross Income AR)	33,121	4,130		37,251	57,757

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

<b>Total receipts</b>	33,121	4,130		37,251	57,757
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<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Cost of fundraising events	750			750	
Internet costs					
Grants to Latam projects	37,767	6,530		44,297	55,639
FX and bank charges	81			81	96
<b>Sub Total</b>	38,598	6,530		45,128	55,735

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

<b>Total payments</b>	38,598	6,530		45,128	55,735
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<b>Net of receipts/ (payments)</b>	-5,476	-2400		-7,876	2,022
<b>A5 Transfer between funds</b>					
<b>A6 Cash Funds last year end</b>	70,500	17,814		88,314	86,291
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	65,024	15,414		80,438	88,313

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

<b>B1 Cash donations</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b> (nearest £)	<b>Restricted Funds</b> ( nearest £)	<b>Endowment Funds</b> (nearest £)
CAF cash funds	65,024	15,414	
<b>Total Cash Funds</b>	65,024	15,414	

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 2022

**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 **31/12/2022**.

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**

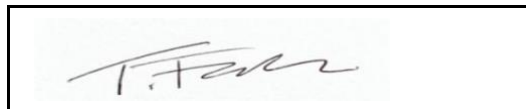
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- 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:**

07/09/23

**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  
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

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## 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 100,000 children and their families across Latin America.

We continue to fund health, education and environment projects throughout the region. In 2022 we continued to support our existing ongoing projects in Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras and Peru. We funded new projects in Mexico and Guatemala.

## 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.