

# Partnership America Latina (PAL)

with the Little Sisters of the Assumption

Newsletter Christmas 2020

*Wishing all our readers a very Happy Christmas!*



## Overview of 2020

### Projects:

PAL are currently supporting twelve projects through co-funding with Misesan Cara and another four projects which are not Misesan Cara funded projects. They are in Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Madagascar, Niarobi, South Africa, and the Congo. Of the twelve projects, nine are children's' supplementary education projects with one human rights, one skills training and one in health. The other four are; FRATER in Peru who are receiving support due to the Covid-19 virus, a Weaving Project with the Religious of the Assumption in Nairobi, a childcare project in Bomfin, Brazil, and a homeless elderly project in South Africa. PAL are also supporting a number of students in Peru and Brazil.

In 2020 PAL will have made contributions to various projects of in excess of €30,000, which in most cases have been matched with funds from Misesan Cara (State Funding) of four times this amount. This could not happen without the generous support of our donors.

We would like to thank those people who made contributions during 2020, our direct debit contributors who fund us on a monthly basis and all those people who took part in the Hardy Annuals Challenge.

**A Covid Hug**



## EDUCATE FOR THE FUTURE FOUNDATION, COLOMBIA

The mission of the Educate for the Future Foundation is to train young people and mothers who are heads of households in a situation of vulnerability in the arts and crafts so that they can join the world of work.

Camilo is one of the many people receiving support from this foundation. He was abused by his mother until she abandoned him at the age of seven, leaving him at the door of a state institution that cared for abandoned children. At the age of twelve he escaped from that shelter and lived on the streets for two years in the midst of great danger and need. Camilo is currently undertaking the practical part of the Waiter and Bar tender course at the Foundation and will soon begin a two month internship in a restaurant and will receive a certification for attendance and training in this area.

This is just one example of how the Foundation fulfils its mission, which benefits young people and Mothers who are looking for a solution to their lives through the knowledge of a trade and personal improvement that leads them to become part of a society that seeks peace through work opportunities and equality.



## LUZ ANGÉLICA TARAPUEZ, COLOMBIA



Luz Angélica Tarapuez is a leader and traditional doctor of the Pastos Indigenous Reservation in the municipality of Cumbal, Colombia. For her, receiving our support in times of the pandemic, has been an opportunity to accompany 38 indigenous women, as well as to promote with a group of young people and social leaders the protection of a moorland from the deforestation and fires it has suffered.

Between May and November, 2020 Luz Angélica has promoted self-care practices among the women, the exchange of knowledge in home gardens and medicinal plants, encouraged family businesses and advised them on how to deal with the gender-based violence they suffer in their homes.

Also with their indigenous companions, they managed to get a group of military men to close down a house where they had set up a camp when it was prohibited. They also organised a sit-in to protest against the actions of members of the army who have been denounced for raping indigenous girls in different parts of the country. Luz Angélica points out:

**“The most relevant thing about this beautiful project is that we received support of PAL in moments of crisis, which allowed us to make our lives more bearable and more responsible.”**

**We would like to remind our readers of PAI’s ethos of voluntary service so all monies collected by PAL go directly to Projects. We have no employees.**

# CEPA, BRAZIL

Statement by Lucia Synara

I have always participated voluntarily in the Centre for Popular Education of the Assumption. I am a 'creation' of CEPA (as we like to refer to those who attended the courses and workshops offered by the NGO). In other words, I was an educator at CEPA, being part of the computer project in 2003 and since then I have not moved away from the NGO. However, I formally joined the organization in 2014 when I was invited to be part of the Supervisory Board of the organization, and in 2018 I took on the voluntary position of Treasurer, which I remain until then.

Something that has marked me a lot during my time at CEPA is how the NGO has become a great reference and social support in its field, not only for our community and surrounding neighbourhoods, but for all Caruaru where the work of CEPA is known, which is very gratifying, especially in this period when we have been affected by the pandemic of the new Corona Virus. Seeing the work of the collaborators in the movement to give basic food baskets to the families of the students, also reaching other families, as well as all the mobilization of the other members of the NGO to collect donations, was very moving and significant for us, in the face of this catastrophic political and social scenario in which we are living.

## New Treasurer

Paul Creadon has stepped down as Treasurer of PAL and has been replaced by Jim Doyle.

We would like to thank Paul for his work over the years and wish Jim well in his new role.



# CESOLES, COLUMBIA

The economic situation hit by Covid-19 called on us to take action to respond to the many needs of Cesoles.

Through telephone calls we identified that many families had lost their jobs or were receiving less money, as their working hours had been reduced. We were also informed of situations of anguish, anxiety and stress.

This situation alarmed us as a working team and we decided to act, first by generating bonds of empathy, giving a voice of encouragement and listening to the families, as they did not have ears to hear them.

Secondly, we thought about how to alleviate their economic situation, which is how we went and received the support of entities such as Misesan Cara and Pal who were compassionate about this problem and decided to support.

One of the most significant aspects of this whole process was the call for solidarity between neighbours, we located three places in the neighbourhood so that families could donate food. In this way, we were able to collect food hampers from the same inhabitants of the sector who, despite not having many economic resources felt encouraged to give what little they had and live in solidarity with others who were in worse situations.

This campaign by Solidaridad made us feel united in pain, anguish and uncertainty, but sure that the provident God was always present, with those gestures of love between neighbours.

Today we are sure that in such difficult situations union is the strength to continue, as there are always others in need who need our support.

"I'm Juliana, I'm 17 years old, I arrived at CEPA in October 2018 as an educandate of DocCEPA. In the beginning, I went to the workshop without giving much importance, until the teacher gave me the responsibility of the production of the photos for our exhibition. This moment marked my life, making my vision of the world expand significantly. Being part of something, creating, building, telling stories. I find that incredible!" **Juliana Cardoso**

## EMPOWERING WOMEN (WEAVING PROJECT), NAIROBI

The religious of the Assumption opened a Juniorate Community in Kawangware, a slum on the north-west outskirts of Nairobi, on April 26, 1996.

Challenged by the dire condition of the women around us, many of whom originate from dysfunctional families living in poverty with no means to provide for their families. The community sought to respond to the urgent call to improve the quality of life of these women through transformative educational programs, as they are the breadwinners. This has been through empowerment in the weaving project. This has also been a place of forming the characters and giving them family life education.

This took root since 2009, and 128 women in eleven groups have been empowered. All those who have gone through this course can now earn a living from the skills attained and can face the daily family life challenges with a different perspective. Since our target has been marginalized women, the project has not been able to plow back any profit. The sisters have requested financial assistance from PAL for the ongoing running of this project.



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## SERCOLDES, COLOMBIA:

SERCOLDES is a human rights project and normally its two therapists run self-care workshops in 5 cities around Colombia. Its 3 target groups are: Indigenous women leaders, women leaders of NGOs, and women ex-guerilla combatants reintegrating into society. Because the therapists (including an LSA) cannot travel to the cities and because the women cannot gather due to COVID restrictions, SERCOLDES enlisted 43 women leaders who had done previous self-care workshops.

During the first month of the crisis, these 43 women made contact with 1,140 local women throughout Colombia, using cell phone, WhatsApp groups, and email. Their contact work mainly included listening to peoples' experiences, passing on information on preventative care re COVID, offering exercises on management of stress, and organizing WhatsApp/ Zoom discussion groups on themes proposed by the beneficiaries. Some of the practical outcomes of this contact work were: beneficiaries were empowered to approach local Family Comissions on gender violence, local Agriculture Secretariat on provision of seeds for food autonomy, and inputs into the Territorial Development Plans.

To carry out this work, the 43 women leaders received a small monthly stipend for communication expenses and had the back-up of SERCOLDES staff through provision of COVID preventative materials, audio therapies, and video conferences on stress management.

2020 has been a difficult year with the Covid-19 virus. Unfortunately for PAL it has meant no opportunities to hold fundraising events and additional appeals from some of our projects.

**If you would like to send a donation to PAL this Christmas;**

Cheques can be sent to: - PAL, Little Sisters of the Assumption, 42 Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin D6W NY67

Or lodged directly to our bank account: PAL at AIB, Account No 04846553 IBAN: IE34 AIBK 9313 3004 8465 53 BIC: AIBKIE2D