

Colombia Child sponsorship programme

Background - Colombia is a notoriously dangerous country due to its high crime rate, from drug trafficking to kidnappings and murder. Many people live in appalling conditions of extreme poverty where children are forced to live on the streets and can fall into child prostitution, drug addiction and recruitment in to the militia just to survive. Our ROPEholder in Colombia has highlighted the plight of a number of destitute children who are in need of financial assistance to break out of the cycle of poverty they are living in.



The scheme – Based in Santa Marta and nearby Cienaga where 70% of the population live in varying degrees of poverty. Families have to scavenge for materials to build their houses in communities lacking basic amenities. Cienaga has no local industry so employment is hard to find. The area is extremely dangerous where it is not unknown for men and children to be abducted to become soldiers for the militia. The children supported by the program are from the poorest backgrounds, many suffering from malnutrition. Most are from one-parent families where drug and alcohol abuse are commonplace household events in Colombia.

Photo: Street Children receiving a meal

The cost of sponsoring a child is £20 per month. This will provide the child with a regular balanced diet, health checks and preventative medical care, Christian education and a school uniform until the age of 18. Your help enables the child to be cared for physically, developed spiritually and equipped educationally, allowing them to remain in their home environments rather than be forced on to the streets.

ROPE will send a photograph and brief description of the child being sponsored and will endeavour to provide an annual update on the child when we receive the details from our ROPEholder in Colombia. You can send a Christmas Gift (in the form of cash/cheque as parcels are difficult to send) and letter to your child in October so to get there in time. Christmas gifts contribute to paying for a Christmas event and toy for all the children so please give generously.

Below is a photograph and a brief profile of one of the children ROPE has been asked to find sponsors for. All of the children have very similar stories to that of *Ciro*.



Ciro Mendez Blanco: *Ciro's* father died in an accident when *Ciro* was 2 months old. His mother looks after the family and *Ciro's* grandfather helps her a little when he can. The family live with *Ciro's* grandparents where 8 people share 4 rooms. The house has only basic facilities. *Ciro* would like to be a policeman when he is older as he loves Colombia and wants to serve his nation.

Love through the changes - Occasionally children leave our sponsorship programmes. This can be because of family circumstances changing. The reality of poverty is that often families uproot for the promise of a new job or a better prospects. It's not always possible to locate the child although we do our best. We understand this can be a painful for the sponsor but do ask that you would transfer your sponsorship to another equally needy child. We will send you a photo and information of the new child. Transferring love to a new child can be likened to bringing a new child into the world. We don't love the first one any less, we love them both equally.