

Colombia



The Republic of Colombia is located on the northwest corner of South America. It is the only country on that continent to have coastlines on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In area, it is almost twice the size of Texas, which is the second largest state in the United States! Colombia's population measures up against that of Texas in the same way. The official language of Colombia is Spanish. The capital city is Bogotá.



The Andes Mountains of Colombia

Most Colombians live in the north and west of the country where they can farm or find work in

the gas, mining, or hydropower industries. The south and east of the country are grasslands and make up about 60% of the land area. They are sparsely populated. Colombia has a varied climate because of the changes in its' geography. The coastlines and eastern lowlands are tropical. The Andes Mountains keep the central highlands cooler.

Although Colombia is rich in natural resources, the income gap is large. According to their own National Administrative Department of Statistics, almost 27% of Colombians live below the poverty line. For comparison, according to the US Census Bureau, just over 9% of people in the United States live below the poverty line.

The rural poor—about 20% of the population—are also the most likely not to have access to clean running water and improved bathroom facilities.

Colombians are also currently battling the COVID 19 pandemic with the rest of the world. Those in the urban areas are benefiting from a recent upgrade in standards in their health care.

MCA in Colombia

In Colombia, Missionary Childhood Association or MCA is known by the initials IAM. They stand for Infancia e Adolescencia Misionaria. School-age children pray and sacrifice for the missions, just like our students. Generally, they have their mission gatherings after school, so their IAM work has been severely cut back due

to COVID 19. Like true missionaries, they are finding ways to share their faith, even in the face of a shutdown.

Using WhatsApp, IAM members in the Archdiocese of Medellin held their regular meetings where they shared their feelings, recited prayers that they wrote, and talked about their commitment to live

in faithful solidarity with children everywhere.

Their prayers and sacrifices are joined with others from around the world. The donations go to places like the Apostolic Vicariate of Inírida, which is in the far eastern part of Colombia, near the Venezuelan border. An Apostolic Vicariate is a mission area that cannot support itself financially—there are not enough Catholic there yet to be self-sufficient! Inírida has only five parishes and 13 priests spread across an area that is three times the size of Massachusetts.

Bishop Joselito Quiñonez asked for help from the Missionary Childhood Association to feed the young children he works with who don't get enough to eat every day because of the poverty in which they live. The Vicariate runs a

“comedor” or feeding program where children up to the age of five can come for a daily meal. Bishop Quiñonez calls this program “providential.”



Most of the children come quite a long distance to be fed by volunteers, five days a week. The volunteers also play games with the little ones, dance with them, and show them God's love. The program runs for eight months a year. Two hundred children are served.



Check out the giant World Mission Rosary on the wall behind the happy children and volunteers!

Last year, MCA and IAM members from around the world sent \$10,000 to Bishop Quiñonez to help feed the children of Inírida. God bless you for your sacrifices!

Missionary Childhood Association

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