
Colombia

**Total area:**

1,141,748 km²

Population:

49,310,151 (2017)

Literacy:

70%

Official languages:

Spanish

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$14,609 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

74 years

Religions:

86% Catholic, 9% Protestant, 1% indigenous religions, 4% other religions

Prayer points

Christian student groups sharing faith

Students in Colombian universities face many challenges, but established University and College Union (UCU) Christian student groups in Armenia, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Bogotá and Popayán are sharing their faith. Pray also for pioneering groups in Ibagué, Cali and Pereira. Pray that student leaders would be equipped and manage their time well. Pray for Christian students to be bold in sharing the gospel, for non-believing students to be open to study God's word, and for God's help for students facing challenges like drug addiction and riots on campus. (IFES - August 2019)

Freedom of religion or belief in Colombia

Pray the Colombian government would recognise the rights of indigenous peoples and put in place legislation that will protect the right to freedom of religion or belief for all Colombians, including those living on indigenous lands. Pray for lasting peace in Colombia. "Move in power in the hearts of the government and the leaders of the illegal armed groups; protect those who are working for peace and justice in the country and bless their efforts richly." (Christian Solidarity Worldwide - April 2019)

Praying for peace in Colombia

In Colombia, praise God for the many children and young people who have been given new opportunities through the sports clubs. Pray that they continue making good decisions and can be a positive influence in their families, schools and neighbourhoods. Lift up the local church and our partners as they support local communities in finding solutions to the challenges they face. Pray for physical and spiritual protection for those working in these areas. Pray for peace in Colombia, for an

end to the conflict and violence that have characterised so much of its recent history. Pray for those who have been affected by the violence, that they might find support and restoration. (Tearfund - December 2018)

Transformation of Christians in the workplaces

1. Pray that Christians in the workplaces in Cambodia will follow Christ in every aspect of life as agents of transformation who give glory to God. 2. Pray for more workers to join OMF Cambodia to serve in workplaces. (OMF International UK - October 2018)

Rana Bacana

As a result of over 50 years of civil conflict, Colombia has one of the largest number of displaced people in the world – 7.4 million according to a recent National Geographic article. Many live on the Atlantic coast. Rana Bacana, a partner project of Latin Link, trains local Christians to run a club for the displaced children in their communities. In the clubs, children play, worship and learn the Bible. They are being transformed by the gospel as the leaders are being empowered. Pray that God continues to grow Rana Bacana and that more children and adults will have their lives changed. (Latin Link - March 2018)

Hope for a New Generation

The north coast of Colombia has one of the largest concentrations of displaced people in the world as a result of the decades of drug wars in the country. Yet hope is being given to the next generation. Vive Foundation, in partnership with Latin Link, is helping to bring transforming Sunday school classes to hundreds of children each week. They are training and equipping local church members to lead the groups of children in their own churches with over 50 churches already participating. Vive Foundation is training local leaders in Medellin city too. Pray that Jesus' message of grace, reconciliation and hope has a lifelong impact on the children. (Latin Link - July 2017)

La Casita

Open Doors has opened a new home for indigenous children facing persecution called La Casita de Aracataca, in the Magdalena region of Colombia. At La Casita, youngsters are able to live close to their parents whilst receiving biblical teaching and a good education; something which Christian children are denied in their indigenous communities. Out of the few who are given permission to go to school by the local leaders, the majority are forced to undertake indigenous religious rituals. Please pray for the ten boys and five girls at La Casita - all of them are in their teenage years. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - May 2017)

An Instrument of Reconciliation

The ongoing peace process between the Colombian Government and the FARC guerrillas has reached a critical phase. Pray that its implementation would bring real peace to the areas of the country most affected by the conflict. Pray for the victims of the long-running armed conflict. There are up to 8 million victims, 6 million of whom were victims of forcible displacement. Pray for the Church to be an instrument of healing and reconciliation. Pray for the evangelical Church in Colombia whose growth has led to it having a more prominent role in national life. Pray for wise and godly leaders. (Latin Link - March 2017)

The Word for the Wayuu

IMC (In Ministry to Children) has a vision to work into the Northern Desert Region of Columbia, La Guajira (pronounced 'Waa hear ra'). It is home to a large tribe called the Wayuu. They are desperately poor and exploited by the government. Schools and churches have been planted among the tribe. They have no water or electricity so a well was built to provide bacteria-free water. Pray that alongside such outreaches the tribe will be reached with the Word. (Links International - February 2017)

Children in Colombia

North Colombia has suffered years of civil conflict. Many children are victims of forced displacement, or sexual and physical abuse, and live in extreme poverty. Many church pastors are beginning to understand the importance of children's ministry but lack training and resources. Vive Kids, which includes a number of workers serving with Latin Link, equips churches in poor areas to disciple children in their communities, helping them to run clubs for children and provide a space where children's needs can be met in a holistic way. Pray that these children who have suffered so much come to know the love, peace, and healing of Jesus. (Latin Link - March 2016)

Civil unrest in Colombia

Many people on the Atlantic coast of Colombia are displaced as a result of the decades of civil unrest relating to the drugs wars. They were forced to leave their communities at short notice and start a whole new life from scratch. Many of the children are victims of sexual and physical abuse and live in extreme poverty. Vive Kids, in partnership with Latin Link, is working with churches in poor areas to disciple children in their communities, providing them with the hope of Jesus in the midst of their suffering. Pray that through the work of Vive Kids and others, this next generation in north Colombia will grow up to live productive lives and break the chains of injustice, poverty and abuse that surround them. (Latin Link - November 2015)

Young Life

Karla Contreras is a 20 year-old student at the seminary where CMS mission associate Christopher Hays teaches. She says, "I came to the seminary to get trained in theology so that I can teach the Bible in a responsible manner. Right now, in addition to my studies, I am working in Young Life, an organisation that reaches out to youth and has a vision of presenting Jesus in a engaging way, as well as by means of developing sincere friendships. It's work that I'm really passionate about! Since I have been here at the seminary I have realised that my heart feels pulled towards urban missions. So, when I finish my studies, I hope to keep working with Young Life for the expansion of the Kingdom of God, in order to fulfill the calling that God has on my life." Pray for her and all such students in Colombia. (Church Mission Society - July 2015)

Preventing further drought

Last year the Wayuu people of La Guajira struggled to survive a devastating drought which destroyed their crops. Levels of malnutrition were so serious that 15 indigenous children were reported dead. Thanks to your prayers and the quick response of Tearfund's partner Red Viva, Wayuu families have been provided with medical care as well as vital food packages. At the start of the project, the children were listless and sad. But now they have the energy to attend school again. Praise God for the restored health and hope of the Wayuu people, and pray for the rains they desperately need to come this year. Red Viva is helping the Wayuu community to advocate to the authorities for longer-term solutions to the lack of water, such as wells and water cleansing systems. Please pray that they will be successful in finding a way forward. (Tearfund - March 2015)

Coping with drought

For the past four months, Tearfund's partner Red Viva has been helping the indigenous Wayuu community deal with a crippling drought in northern Colombia. After four months, some things have not changed: there is still an extreme drought in this area. But what has changed dramatically is the smile on the faces of the children. The first time we visited, we saw sad children with very low levels of nutrition. Now, though, they are smiling and eager to play again. Some 640 children and more than 400 adults will continue receiving nutritional support through January. Please pray for rain in this area so that next year will be an easier one for the Wayuu people. (Tearfund - January 2015)

Discipleship courses

The Wayuu people, the largest indigenous people group in Colombia, live on the border with Venezuela and number some 400,000. Three years ago, CIPEP (Corporation Institute for Pastoral Education) Colombia started using SEAN (Study by Extension for All Nations) discipleship courses to

train leaders. Now, over 150 Wayuu leaders representing are studying the materials and the goal is to see 100 pastors graduate from four years' training by 2014. Give thanks for the prospect of these much needed leaders and pray that God would continue His work among the Wayuu. (Church Mission Society - November 2013)

Red Viva Colombia

Hundreds of boys and girls in the cities of Barranquilla and Cartagena are escaping the lures of gang life, violence, drugs and crime by taking up football. Pray for the ministry of Red Viva Colombia, working with local churches and youth groups to run 30 sports clubs offering football training sessions and tournaments for seven to 15-year-olds. As well as providing a safe environment, in a country where children as young as seven have been encouraged to join gangs, the youngsters learn life-skills at the sessions, which take place outside of school hours. They also work with a personal mentor and take part in classes looking at health education, human rights, social issues, preventing violence and how to resolve conflict - all within a caring Christian setting. (Tearfund - November 2013)

Illegal armed groups

Armed groups continue to threaten churches in Colombia. The FARC's 32nd Front ordered the closure of 12 churches in Putumayo department and as a result, hundreds of Christians must travel for more than 10 hours in boats across two rivers to hear God's Word. In Guaviare department, illegal armed groups have forced pastors to stop preaching the gospel, warning that anyone who becomes a Christian will be killed. Pray for the safety of pastors and their families, and ask God to open new ways to preach and teach the gospel. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - May 2013)

Prison fellowship

A man sentenced to 190 years behind bars for a brutal murder is now leading a prison church in Colombia. Mission partners in the area have shared that this came about through the prayers of Christian prisoners. "This man was so violent he'd served eight years in solitary confinement. But his Christian fellow prisoners prayed for him daily - they would sit outside his cell singing and praying... One night God touched this man and he believed." This had a big impact in the prison. The man eventually graduated from the *SEAN* theological education programme in 2005 and now helps lead the prison church. His sentence has been reduced to 19 more years for good behaviour and the *SEAN* programme has been welcomed in 23 out of 25 major prisons in Colombia. (Church Mission Society - January 2013)

Protection for pastors

Large areas of Colombia are under the control of drug cartels and paramilitary groups. Most Christian persecution comes from the alliances that exist between non-Christian indigenous populations and paramilitaries, who view Christians who openly oppose their activities as a threat. At least five Christians were martyred in 2011, but the real numbers are probably much higher. In February a pastor and two of his relatives were killed by rebel groups in retaliation for the growth in the number of believers. Please pray for protection for pastors seeking to share the gospel in their communities. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - November 2012)

Forced to fight

So far an estimated 15,000 children have been forcibly 'recruited' into illegal armed groups. Here the girls often suffer repeated rape and the boys are forced to kill even people they know. Others are made to work the coca fields used to supply cocaine around the world. One child shared, "This happened last year while we were in school. Some flyers were passed around to recruit the children from our school. They ordered that the first ones to come must be the pastor's daughters." Pray for the protection of children vulnerable to being targeted in this way and for the ministry of Christians working through prayer, love and care to transform the lives of children who have suffered at the hands of these groups. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - January 2012)

An ongoing civil war

More than 62,000 people have disappeared since the beginning of the Colombia's decades-long civil war between left-wing guerrilla groups and right-wing paramilitary forces. The war peaked in the 1980s, but at the end of 2010 at least 3.6 million people remained uprooted from their homes and Colombia's Ombudsman says numbers of missing people have risen by 30% during the last 12 months. Pray that Colombia's government will offer more support to affected families and cut through the bureaucracy that currently prevents them from grieving. Pray too that God will strengthen and mobilise the Colombian church to help bring a just and lasting peace. (Tearfund - November 2011)

Children in conflicts zones

In Colombia, thousands of children live in conflict zones or communities displaced by fighting. Many of them work on the streets and are at risk of being recruited into gangs or armed groups. Vive Kids is a programme that trains local churches to work with the children at risk in their neighbourhoods, through kids' clubs and advocacy. The response has been overwhelming and it's hoped that in the next two years kids' clubs will be piloted across 750 churches. Pray that God would work through the programme to transform the lives of children in Colombia. (Latin Link - July 2011)

Caring for traumatised communities

The fifth largest economy in Latin America, Colombia exports principally coffee and oil as well as emeralds. However, in the 1990s illegal coca growth and processing for cocaine grew substantially, with significant associated economic, social and environmental costs. As a result of the extreme levels of instability that Colombia has since experienced, there have been many opportunities for Christians to work in resettlement and care for traumatised communities. This process often includes devising income generation strategies for those who have lost their principle means of earning a living by having to move away from the land they own. Pray that these ministries would bear fruit and for the small but growing Evangelical Church for which church leadership training remains a keenly needed resource at many levels. (Latin Link - January 2011)

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