



Daily devotions at Paz de Ariporo Lutheran School

IELCO FAQs:

IELCO: Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Colombia (Lutheran Church of Colombia) formed in 1936 by two Lutheran women from southern Minnesota!

Population of Colombia: 52 million, over 25 million identifying as Catholic.

IELCO membership: 1,800 confirmed

Number of congregations: 22

Website: www.ielco.org/en (English)

Nickname: *God in the Streets* for IELCO's presence in Colombia's impoverished neighborhoods (barrios)

National Presence: Prominent role in the Colombian Peace Process, including the current national initiative of Peace and Reconciliation.

Welcoming Church: Leading local communities in the welcome of refugees fleeing Venezuela.

Funding Opportunities

Colombia Education

Scholarships

Special projects

Colombia Undesignated

Food insecurity (hunger)

Community ministry (Diaconia)



*Explore a virtual
accompaniment relationship
with an IELCO school or
congregation!*

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Global Ministry

Southeastern Minnesota Synod,
ELCA

See Christ in the Neighbor
Be Christ to the Neighbor

IELCO:
LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF
COLOMBIA

IELCO Ministries

Education

Education remains central to the ministry of the Lutheran Church of Colombia, with its **four Lutheran schools (CELCO)** spreading the **grace and love of Jesus** among children and the greater community. Due to a reputation of **educational excellence** within an environment of **Christian values** based on the Gospel, CELCO schools are highly sought after within the communities they serve. Indeed, **only 5%** of CELCO students identify as Lutherans!

Designated funds for Colombia Education provide underserved children a quality pre-K through grade 12 education in CELCO schools.



CELCO students and staff

Throughout the pandemic, synod Colombia Education funds provided food and tuition assistance for CELCO students and staff. The generosity of SEMN congregations kept CELCO schools open and children fed during this challenging time!

Diaconia

For over 40 years, IELCO has showed up as a transformative presence within impoverished Colombian communities. Although worship happens in buildings, ministry happens with people on the streets; hence IELCO's national reputation as *God in the Streets*. Here are just a few examples of IELCO's Ministry of Diaconia:

Protecting My Future (Caracolí): With temporary housing built into the sides of the Andes mountains surrounding the capital city of Bogotá, the barrio of Caracolí is known for its abject poverty. IELCO's ministry, **Protecting My Future**, provides adolescent girls an opportunity to gather in a safe environment with a pastor and social worker to explore career paths (hospitality, health care, fashion design, selfcare) while providing a vision for the future.



Caracolí barrio

Gender Safety: Violence against women and LGBTQIA+ is prevalent in machismo communities. IELCO walks with the people by providing safe spaces of empowerment.

Diaconia

Migration Ministry: Since 2019, IELCO has been a leader in local Colombian communities by welcoming refugees who are fleeing violence throughout the world. The January 2025 closing of the U.S./Mexico border created a bottleneck of refugees in Colombia. Since August 2024, the number of Venezuelan refugees alone has increased from 2 million to 3 million. In addition to affirming its commitment to 'welcome the stranger', IELCO has recently expanded its ministry to include assistance to migrants traveling through the Darien Gap, one of the most dangerous places in the world.



The True Vine ministry

The True Vine: People with disabilities, widows, and cancer survivors are often isolated in Colombian society. Through the True Vine ministry, IELCO provides a safe space for these 'forgotten ones' to gather as community, create and sell handmade goods, and enjoy a hearty, home-cooked meal. With the goal of long-term sustainability, the True Vine ministry is moving down the street into the soon to be renovated Por de Sol Fe (By Faith Alone) Lutheran Church, eventually becoming a ministry of this congregation.