

Mission Paraguay 2017 Report together with plans for 2018



Working together, changing lives, growing in faith

We first met Catalina a member of the church at Zeballos Cue in July 2016 when Pastor Luis asked for our assistance to improve her housing situation. She lived with her family in a wooden hut with earth floors located on steeply sloping ground. During wet weather water from higher ground ran through her home bringing frogs and debris. She had saved to build brick walls for a new single roomed home with a higher floor level to overcome the rainwater runoff but owing to her financial situation she could not progress. Mission Paraguay paid for and gave practical assistance in the construction of a roof, concrete floor, door and window. When the team from churches across England visited again in July/August 2017 Catalina had painted her new home, saved to install electricity and built entrance steps. With the assistance of family members she had begun to construct a brick toilet to replace a wooden hut without a door. It was a joy for us to supply new toilet fittings and plumbing to assist her. The church at Zeballos Cue works in some of the poorest areas of Asunción and this was one a number of the self-help home improvements we funded in 2017 to assist people living in very basic homes often built of old discarded materials and without essential services such as electricity and drainage. The nearby community of Ipvu is located in a low lying area which suffers from regular flooding owing to its close proximity to the huge Rio Paraguay. Toilet effluent discharges directly into the nearby tributary whose banks are strewn with refuse. Rocio, whose family this year we provided with materials to construct an additional small room to house her recently widowed father-in-law, spoke of the worsening problem of snakes inhabiting the nearby rubbish dumps.



Catalina with Pastor Luis outside her new home



Rubbish in river tributary



Providing medical supplies for Diosnel Vega the voluntary medical worker at Ipvu



Fishing boats in Rio Paraguay

For the second year in succession the base throughout our 2017 stay was on the church site at Zeballos Cue, which being located northeast of the centre of Asunción is ideal for visiting different communities where the Anglican Church is active. It was a joy and blessing to join in the services and other church activities and once again develop friendships built up over many years of visits. A small school has operated for a number of years in converted former storage buildings on the church site at Zeballos Cue but, owing to the recent influx of additional families to the area many of whom have built simple wooden homes on areas of waste land, the school capacity is insufficient to meet needs. Consequently a new school to cater for about 80 children was under construction when we visited and is scheduled to open in spring 2018. Tuition was continuing in temporary accommodation in some adjacent church buildings and we were able to supply stationery materials to assist Gloria the teacher. We have also provided the major proportion of the funding for the construction of the nearby new church toilet block opened in early 2018.



The new school completed in January 2018



New toilet block at Zeballos Cue church

Remansito which is an hour's journey from the centre of Asunción is located on a low lying area characterised by earth roads and a mixture of small homes of brick or timber. The local Anglican Church is one of a number in different communities that Mission Paraguay visits on an annual basis to distribute second-hand spectacles donated in the UK. A total of 7,000 pairs have now been provided for a small nominal sum each to people unable to visit an optician because of the high cost involved. All of the income is used to fund work with children.

In October a new albergue (hostel) was opened on the church grounds at Remansito for use by Indian people who have to travel from the Chaco in North West Paraguay to Asunción for a variety of reasons such as medical care but have no overnight accommodation. The new facility is conveniently located close to the bus route along the only road from the Chaco and provides good male, female and family accommodation. It has replaced a facility near the Anglican Diocesan Office and Cathedral complex enabling this area to be redeveloped. As well as not being very conveniently located for travelling by bus from the Chaco, the old building had proved inadequate to meet needs. Through the generosity of our supporters Mission Paraguay has been able to fund over 70% of the cost of the new hostel.



New albergue at Remansito nearing completion



Visitors from the Chaco at opening of new albergue



Glasses distribution

2017 was the tenth year that during our visits sewing workshops have been organised in a number of different church premises to encourage self-sufficiency for local women by developing their skills in producing small easily manufactured low cost items for their families or for sale. Some of the participants meet regularly to sew while others operate from home.



A sewing workshop



Craftwork for children



Toy library at Zeballos Cue Church

For the past few years Mission Paraguay has paid all operational costs of the mobile toy library (ludoteca) organised by FEISA the Anglican Early Years Teacher Training College based in Asunción. On a regular basis the ludoteca visits many deprived communities on the outskirts of the city providing the opportunities for children who have few toys of their own to learn through play. The visits are part of the training programme for FEISA student teachers who as well as assisting to supervise the play sessions help in the delivery of Bible stories to the children. As in past years the Mission Paraguay group of 2017 assisted with the operation of the ludoteca and we supplied toys and dressing-up clothes donated in England. We are committed to continuing the total necessary financing of the ludoteca throughout 2018.



Some of the many clothes supplied to different communities this year

Following a chance conversation when visiting St Andrew's Chapel in Asunción we were invited to spend a memorable day at Su Refugio, a centre began in 2008 at Tobati which is a small country town located about 2 hours drive north of Asunción. It is funded by donations

from the US and provides residential care for children suffering from abuse, abandonment or living in impoverished conditions by providing safe accommodation with a variety of facilities and programmes focused on changing lives by bringing hope to the hopeless. Another visit was to a cancer hospital near Areguá a small town east of Asunción renowned for pottery production. We were greatly impressed by the team of very dedicated caring staff that we met and who clearly appreciated our visit. We had been invited by Christina and Maria two volunteers living near Zeballos Cue who provided support for the hospital and were accompanied during our visit by Robert Giesbrescht an outstanding volunteer pastor who spent many hours each week giving pastoral support to patients and their relatives. Next to the hospital was basic accommodation for the families of patients who were assisting with care and food for hospitalised loved ones. Following our visit we were able to supply a number of beds, mattresses, clothes etc. for the family accommodation. This year beds and mattresses were also supplied for Indian families in the Chaco.



Pastor Robert, Christina (right) and another volunteer at the hospital

For a number of years Mission Paraguay has provided annual funds for a variety of building projects to assist the ministry of the church in the Chaco and to help individual Indian communities and families living in isolated regions. Improvements to living accommodation and rainwater storage facilities are also provided. Missionary Chris Hawksbee regularly visits Chaco communities providing pastoral support, training and encouragement for church members and local pastors as well as facilitating self-sufficiency projects such as beekeeping. We are greatly indebted to Chris for his assistance by organising all of the work in the Chaco which we have been financing. As well as organising the supply and transport of building materials, Chris arranges for local labour where necessary and undertakes all related arrangements with local communities. During summer 2018, a group of builders from Annaghmore in Northern Ireland will be working with Chris to construct a new church at the village of Caroa I which is in the La Patria community located approximately 80km down earth tracks. This is the third of the new churches funded by Mission Paraguay that the group will have worked upon in recent years. We will also be funding a number of repairs and improvements to smaller church buildings to be completed by the group during their visit and supplying materials for self-help home improvements for Indian families living in very basic housing.

We express grateful appreciation to Bishop Peter Bartlett and his wife Sally, Pastor Luis Echeverria at Zeballos Cue and members of the Anglican Church for their hospitality and assistance in enabling Mission Paraguay 2017 to take place. While all members of groups fund their own travel and all other costs associated with their visit, we rely entirely upon the generosity of our individual supporters and supporting churches for the projects which we fund. A special thank you to Bishop Ken Clarke, Mission Director of SAMS UK & Ireland for his continued enthusiasm and encouragement of the work of Mission Paraguay. It was a blessing to have him visit the group at Zeballos Cue this year. We also thank Silvia Torres, Mission Paraguay's official driver, translator and dedicated assistant who provides valuable advice in so many situations. A huge thank you also to Davie Kay and members of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for including items for us in their containers being sent to Paraguay.



Service at Redeemer Church Zeballos Cue

Thank you to everyone who supports our work through your prayers and generosity.

Mission Paraguay works through the South American Mission Society UK and Ireland to support the ministry of the Anglican Church in Paraguay, share the love of Jesus and change lives by providing funds and a volunteer work force for:

- **practical projects, usually buildings;**
- **activities with children and young people;**
- **community based work to relieve hardship and encourage self-sufficiency.**

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