

SCIAF EDUCATION

LEARN, PRAY, ACT IN YOUR PARISH



Canon Michael Hutson
and Fr Romero Lopez walking
together in Chocó, Colombia

 **SCIAF**
Uniting for a just world
Caritas Scotland

**WEE
BOX**

60 years of change

SCIAF EDUCATION WEE BOX 2025

This Lent, we invite parishes across Scotland to use their WEE BOX to learn, pray and act for global justice.

SCIAF are committed to faith-filled Development Education in schools and parishes across Scotland because we believe that understanding and acting on global injustices is an essential part of living out our Catholic faith.

This year's WEE BOX Appeal focusses on our work in Colombia and the peace and justice issues we are tackling there, with the support of parishes like yours.

We invite you to explore these issues together as a parish community and encourage practical action, so that together, we can build a more peaceful and just world.

Thank you for learning, praying and acting with us.

God bless,

Handwritten signatures of Jenna and Michael in blue ink.

Jenna and Michael
Community Engagement Team



LEARN

COLOMBIA



Bogotá, Colombia



COLOMBIA FACT FILE

Location:

South America

Sea borders:

Caribbean Sea and the North Pacific Ocean

Land borders:

Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela

Population:

49 million people

Capital:

Bogotá

Time difference to Scotland:

GMT -6 hours

People living in poverty:

More than 1 in 3

Peace:

Least peaceful country in South America



Use the **WEE BOX Parish PowerPoint** and **notes** to learn more about SCIAF's work in Colombia.



ON THE FRONT LINE OF CONFLICT

SCIAF works with Church partners in the poorest part of Colombia to build peace in a forgotten conflict zone – one that never makes the headlines.

LUIS' STORY

Luis was sheltering in the church of San Pablo Apóstol in Colombia with his family and hundreds of local people when an armed group surrounded the building.



"When the bomb hit the room, everything went dark and smoky," Luis told SCIAF. "When the darkness lifted, a little two-year-old begged me not to leave him. I picked him up and took him out of the church. He died in my arms. When I got home, I just cried and cried."

Miraculously, Luis' whole family survived that terrible day. But 119 others were not so fortunate and perished in the explosion. The attack left the church in ruins. But despite the carnage, the 'mutilated Christ of Bojayá' – a crucifix of our Lord Jesus – survived, albeit with His arms and legs missing.

Today, the relic has been venerated by many, including Pope Francis during his visit to Colombia, as a reminder of the suffering endured by communities but also as a sign of hope for a better future.

ENRIQUE'S STORY

Enrique's town was taken over by an illegal paramilitary group. They wanted access to his community's land so they could traffic people and move illegal drugs and gold through the area.

Enrique and his family were forced from their home, with nowhere to go. Enrique told SCIAF, "But the Church was there when we were displaced, and when we returned to our homes too."

Thanks to your support, and the dedication and bravery of our local partners, we've helped displaced people like Enrique's family return to their homes, keeping them safe during the process.

"For those that finally returned to their homes, the state did not help – the Church, however, has helped us return with all their might. Their presence has helped guard us from the armed groups that still operate here."



"With the help of Christ, Christ alive in the midst of the community, it is possible to usher in a new Colombia."

Pope Francis

**LEARN**

GLOBAL CHURCH ACTIVITY

Do this activity on your own or facilitate with a parish group.

“The Church was there when my community were displaced [by conflict] and helped us return to our homes with all their might.”

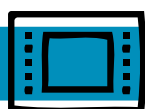
– Enrique, Colombia



In the book of Acts we can read the story of the early Church.

READ:**Acts 2:42-47**

Write down the similarities and differences between the early Church and your own parish. People of the early Church were very close.. The Bible tells us that they shared everything – money, food, possessions. They gave to those who were in need, they ate together, praised God together and learned together.

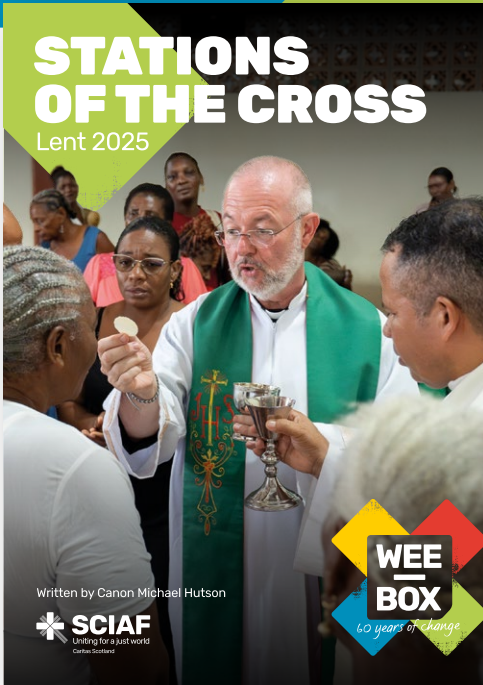
WATCH:**WEE BOX video
– our work in Colombia**

Write down ways that the Church today, through SCIAF, is responding to those in need in Colombia. SCIAF's local partners stand alongside those in Chocó, despite immense danger to themselves. They are there when communities are attacked, when families are forced to flee and when children are overwhelmed by fear and suffering. They are the symbol of what Pope Francis calls “Christ alive in the midst of the community.”

REFLECT:**What can we do**

Our parish, along with SCIAF, is part of the global Church. Reflect on your own God-given gifts and talents and write down ways you can use them to meet the needs of others locally and globally.

RESOURCES

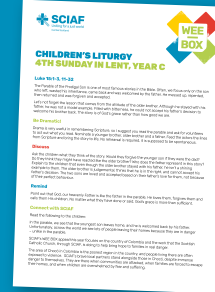


STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Use the SCIAF Stations of the Cross booklet and PowerPoint. This year the Stations have been written by Canon Hutson, Parish Priest at St Mary's Griminish in Benbecula.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

For children's liturgists, the 4th Sunday Gospel story and activity related to SCIAF's WEE BOX campaign.



VIDEO REFLECTION

If you have AV equipment available, use this short reflection during Lent.



WEE BOX Reflection
PowerPoint



WEE BOX Reflection
Video



PRAY

WEE BOX PRAYER

God of Peace and Justice

As we journey through Lent, help us to be mindful of those with whom we share God's Creation, our Common Home.

May our praying, fasting and giving, help us to draw ever closer to You, and inspire us to find new ways to bring dignity, joy, peace and justice to others, especially this year to the people of Colombia.

Amen

PRAY FOR US

We asked Luz, Dora and Daliz what special intentions they would like Catholics in Scotland to remember in their prayers. This is what they said:

Please pray that the whole planet is protected from harm

Please pray for peace, for the region of Chocó and the whole of Colombia

Please pray that indigenous people feel connected to their land and that their culture is safe from harm

Please pray that everyone can enjoy life, especially young people

Please pray that young people choose the right path in life, and don't make bad choices

Please pray that more projects with SCIAF and their partners can begin in Chocó, so more communities can be reached

Please pray with and for the people we serve in Colombia



Dora, Luz and Daliz, Colombia



PRAY

SCIAF BIDDING PRAYERS FOR LENT 2025

We pray for Pope Francis, our Scottish Bishops, priests, deacons, and all who lead and serve in the Church. May they continue to guide us with humility, faith, and courage during this Holy season of Lent, helping us to grow closer to Christ.

Lord, in Your mercy: *Hear our prayer.*

We pray for world leaders, that they may lead with wisdom, justice, and compassion, working tirelessly for peace and reconciliation wherever there is conflict.

Lord, in Your mercy: *Hear our prayer.*

We pray for the poorest communities in our global family, especially those in Colombia, who are in need. May our actions this Lent be signs of hope for all.

Lord, in Your mercy: *Hear our prayer.*

We pray for our families, friends, and parish community, that this Lenten season may bring renewal, healing, and deeper faith, and that we may support one another to walk faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus.

Lord, in Your mercy: *Hear our prayer.*





PRAY

SCIAF BULLETIN ENTRIES

Sunday 2nd March:

WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE LAUNCHES

On Ash Wednesday, SCIAF launches the WEE BOX, BIG Change Appeal. This year's Lent Appeal focuses on the country of Colombia. In Colombia, violence lurks around every corner, displacing families, forcing children into crime, and leaving communities dominated by armed gangs. In Chocó, the poorest region, people face conflict, poverty, and isolation, and feel forgotten by the world. This Lent, in this Jubilee year, let's give in hope and use your WEE BOX to make a BIG CHANGE. To find out more please visit sciaf.org.uk/weebox or call 0141 354 5555.

Sunday 9th March:

SCIAF DAY OF PRAYER

SCIAF invites you to join their WEE BOX Day of Prayer on Friday 14th March. On this day, as a community, we pause to reflect, connect, and pray for peace and hope for communities in Colombia. We know that through prayer we can deepen our relationship with God, seek guidance, and offer support to those in need. For more information about the Day of Prayer please visit sciaf.org.uk/weebox or call 0141 354 5555.

Sunday 16th March:

HAVE YOU PICKED UP YOUR WEE BOX?

This Lent, use your WEE BOX to make a BIG CHANGE in the lives of our sisters and brothers overseas, especially children affected by conflict in Colombia. If you don't yet have a WEE BOX at home, please pick one up today, visit sciaf.org.uk/weebox or call 0141 354 5555.

Sunday 23rd March:

SUPPORT SCIAF THIS LENT

In Colombia, many people are impacted by ongoing violence and conflict. With your help, we can give shelter, food and water for those caught up in violence, provide safe havens for children affected by conflict, and help communities rebuild their lives, long into the future. For more information on how you can support communities in Colombia, please visit SCIAF's website sciaf.org.uk

Sunday 30th March:

SCIAF SUNDAY

On this SCIAF Sunday, we pray for all mothers around the world. We thank you, Lord, for giving us this precious gift – and we thank our mothers for the love and care they provide. We especially give thanks for mothers in Colombia, who, despite the challenges they face, provide their children with the love and support they need to survive. Please give what you can in today's collection for SCIAF. You can also donate to SCIAF at sciaf.org.uk/donate or by calling 0141 354 5555. Thank you!

Sunday 6th April:

REFLECT WITH SCIAF

This Lent, your prayers and donations are making a BIG difference to people in Colombia and around the world. As you prepare for Easter, SCIAF has created several prayers and reflections to use as part of your Lenten worship. Please visit sciaf.org.uk/resources to download your prayer resources today.

Sunday 13th April:

WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE

With your support, a peaceful world is possible. In this final week of Lent, please continue to pray for the work of SCIAF – and use your WEE BOX to make BIG CHANGE.

Sunday 20th April:

WEE BOX, BIG THANKS

From everyone at SCIAF, we wish you and your families a joyful and blessed Easter filled with peace and love. Thank you all so much for your support of SCIAF's WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE Lenten Appeal again this year. Please return your WEE BOXES as soon as you can. You can also donate to SCIAF by visiting sciaf.org.uk/weebox or by calling 0141 354 5555. Thank you, once again, for your wonderful generosity.



CANCEL DEBT, CHOOSE HOPE

In the world's poorest places, millions of people do not have enough food, water or adequate shelter to live dignified lives.

Yet, despite this deep poverty, the poorest countries are paying back enormous debts to some of the richest groups in the world. This debt money should be spent on improving people's lives but is instead lining the pockets of bankers, hedge fund managers and greedy governments.

In this Jubilee year we're asking supporters to sign our petition calling on world leaders to cancel unjust debts and build a permanent system that puts people and planet first.

P Use the Debt Justice PowerPoint to share details of the campaign and how to take action.



Brother Marcial,
Colombia

Visit sciaf.org.uk/canceldebt to find out more!

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 196 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1 4JY. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327. Photos by James Cave (SCIAF).