

Missionary greetings from Bogota, Colombia! This is our June 2011 update for Leadership & Development LIZWAN and its sister organization in Colombia, the Emmaus Road Foundation.

In this update we share the personal perspective about LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation as experienced by Alicia W. Lizarazo. Alicia is the daughter of pastors Natanael Lizarazo and Barbara Wangsness. In doing so, we also congratulate Alicia for her recent graduation from the University of South Dakota. Furthermore, we take this opportunity to officially thank Alicia for her role in the founding of LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation and for her patience in sharing the tireless work of her parents with us and with all those we serve here in Colombia. Such patience has not been in vain and continues to produce many good fruits!



Here is Alicia's perspective...

"Throughout my life, there have been many experiences that have impacted me. For me, my most outstanding accomplishment has been the establishment of the Colombian Scholarship Fund. Even though this non-profit organization founded by my family and I happened because of the loss of my brother, it still brings great joy to my heart!

In 1992, I lost my younger brother. He was stillborn. After the death of my brother, friends and members of my parents' congregation asked us if there was anything they could do to help us in our time of grief. The answer was simple; any donation received would fund one scholarship for a poor child in Colombia. The first ones to respond were the children of the Sunday school class from Trinity Lutheran Church in Edgemont, South Dakota. As members of the congregation generously gave memorials and other Sunday school classes and friends joined this mission, the seeds of The Colombian Scholarship Fund, were planted. The Scholarship Fund was established to help children, youth and adults in Colombia, my father's native country. Through this Fund we grant scholarships to people of all ages, ranging from elementary ages to adults who want to study at the university level. In Colombia, poverty overwhelms a significant percentage of the population (about 54%) and education is a precious gift that poor families desperately want for their children.



In the photo, Alicia playing with the first pennies collected by Trinity Lutheran Church Sunday School Class. These pennies became the seed to what is today the LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation Ministry.

When we first founded The Colombian Scholarship Fund as this ministry was first called, we had received only pennies from the kids at our congregation. The pennies added up to a total of \$112.96. With that initial money, we were able to provide two children in Colombia with a scholarship, something these kids only dreamed of in their particular situation. Because we initially started gathering pennies, the story of this mission seems very practical and doable to many others as well. Thanks to the support of other Sunday schools, congregations, other non-profit organizations and friends, The Colombian Scholarship Fund has grown to become two sister organizations: Leadership & Development LIZWAN Inc. in the United States and the Emmaus Road Foundation in Colombia. Over the last 19 years, we have been able to provide over a thousand scholarships and see with much joy many deserving poor students become professionals in different fields. Before the economy of the United States suffered recession, Emmaus Road/LIZWAN was supporting as many as 112 students per year with much needed scholarships. Even though the current number of students receiving scholarships is only about half of this amount, it is still a much needed and satisfying mission because LIZWAN not only invests in education per se but also in Christian leadership development.



In the photo (left): Alicia and her parents Pastor Natanael and Pastor Barbara on her graduation day.

In the photo (below): Pastor Larry, Founding Member and Board Member of LIZWAN, also present on Alicia's graduation day.

The reason I feel this is my most outstanding accomplishment is because I firmly believe education has a huge impact on someone's life. I do realize kids and youth here in the U.S. tend to take the opportunity of going to school and getting an education for granted. I also feel that throughout my life I have experienced many things that most kids in the United States have not such as moving frequently, experiencing the loss of your only brother, learning a different language and culture and living as missionaries with my family in Colombia. From all I have experienced so far in my life, founding the Colombian Scholarship Fund is indeed the one accomplishment that has meant the most to me. It's all in memory of my brother and knowing that we are doing something for a good cause, is a very rewarding feeling.



Speaking about the importance of education as a passport to a better life, I take this opportunity to share with all of you the supporters of LIZWAN the joy of having accomplished my undergraduate degree from the University of South Dakota. I am thankful to the Emmaus Road Foundation in Colombia



for having considered me with a much needed scholarship at the exact same level of our sponsored university students in Colombia. Education here in the United States is very expensive and receiving this scholarship was very helpful for purchasing my text books. It also made me feel very connected to the Colombian university students who are pursuing their own dream of higher education.

In the photo, Alicia and one of her university professors

Though I already have education loans of about \$25,000 (dollars) I will be starting a post-graduate degree in Occupational Therapy at the University of South Dakota beginning on July 2011. By the time I will accomplish it, easily I will have accumulated education loans of about \$60,000. It is somewhat scary to have this much debt but with a good education I am confident I will be able to succeed.

As I constantly remember my beloved brother and reflect on the tireless and committed work my parents continue to do in order to support education and other missions in Colombia, I realize there is a great joy in investing in the education of very promising Colombian students who are also becoming committed Christian leaders in their families and congregations.

Please know I am so thankful for the scholarship I received from Emmaus Road Foundation for my undergraduate studies. I thank each and every one of you who donates or has donated financially to the LIZWAN Ministry. This Ministry generously assisted me in my undergraduate career at the University of South Dakota. I put this gift towards the cost of my books and this helped considerably to avoid further financial stress. As I said before, I graduated this past May with a double major in International Studies and Spanish. Now looking forward in life I am about to start the Occupational Therapy Program at USD and am very thankful for the aid I was given previously. It not only helped tremendously regarding financial aspects but also instilled an appreciation for those who donate their time, money, and energy towards a better future for others. Such generosity has created a desire in me to do the same.

Again, I am personally grateful to the Emmaus Road Foundation and to all of you who support it. Together we are making a significant good difference. Having experienced your generosity in this tangible way causes me to remember my beloved brother in a healing and life-giving way!"

This month we are praying for:

- ✚ Internally displaced individuals, families and communities in Colombia who have been forced to leave their land because of the ongoing armed conflict.
- ✚ Upcoming visit to Colombia of Ascension Lutheran Church in Canada and First Lutheran Church in the USA.

Feel free to communicate with us! We like to hear from you! Our e-mail addresses are the following: ldlizwan@ielco.org (Colombia) lizwan@alliancecom.net and 4290@flcsf.org (USA). If for any reason you change your e-mail address, we greatly appreciate letting us know so that we can keep you in our e-mailing list. If you know of anyone interested in our ministry, feel free to share this information! Our English and Spanish Webpage is now in place. We invite you to communicate with us that way too. You can find us at <http://www.emmausroadfoundation.org>. Follow us on [Facebook](#) by searching for Leadership & Development LIZWAN.

In Christ's love,

Stella Lizarazo
Executive Director Emmaus Road Foundation – Colombia