For Inga, trips are no small undertaking. She lives in the city of Nicosia on the small Mediterranean island of Cyprus, near Turkey. The trip from her home to that of her sponsored child in Barranquilla, Colombia, meant nearly 24 hours of travel. Despite her anxiety about such a long journey, Inga overcame her fears to meet Yuselfi, whom Inga has sponsored since 2009. Along the way, she learned how even small things give big hope to an impoverished child.

I was very afraid to come. I did not sleep for two nights because I was anxious and worried. The first impression, [however], was incredible. When we arrived at Yuselfi’s house and she hugged me, that touched me, and I began to cry.

It was not only me who loved her and thought about her, but she also felt the same.

It was my dream from the beginning – since I sponsored the girl – my dream was to come visit her.

Although Inga sponsors children around the world – Honduras, the Philippines and Zambia – Yuselfi was the first one she’s been able to visit.

It is different when you see her through pictures or read her letters. With a visit, you can see the things with your own eyes, what her conditions are. [So], on the one hand, it is nice to see her, to meet your sponsored child. But, on the other hand, it is sad. I knew that she had no bathroom, and that the floor was dirt. But it is different to read it than to see it.

Abandoned by their father, the family of three – Yuselfi; her mother, Aracely; and little brother, Diego – survives thanks to the charity of a neighbor who gave them a place to live. Even with this generosity, however, life is extremely difficult. So, what little the family owns is never taken for granted. They hold tight to even the smallest items Inga has sent Yuselfi over the years.

When I saw that she kept my letters and all the things I have sent her – the toys, clothes, pictures – it meant a lot to me that she thinks about me and that I am important to her!
After the emotional challenges of visiting Yuselfi’s home, the rest of the trip focused on giving the sponsored girl and her family some happy experiences. First, Inga took the family out to lunch. Then Inga, Yuselfi and Diego enjoyed some fun at an arcade. Finally: Grocery shopping!

Later, Aracely reflected on the visit and her child’s relationship with Inga. “I really prayed to God so that she [would come] someday to meet us. I really thank her for everything she has given to [Yuselfi]. I thank God for having put her in our way; this is a huge blessing. She is like a mom for my daughter, and I thank her and [give thanks] to God for coming so far to meet the child.”

Yuselfi and her family may be living in terrible poverty, but visiting her sponsored child reaffirmed Inga’s commitment to helping the girl.

I wish I were rich to buy a house for her, but I think we can help with little things.

Inga had no doubt that Children International was an organization that marshals small things into big changes.

A reliable, organized and sincere organization; I could see it with my own eyes.