

YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

Thanks to your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Santa Elena. Learn more about the valuable ways your support has benefitted them.

This past year, the Because I am a Girl movement helped youth become agents for change. Young women certified as trainers, forming leadership schools throughout the region. In addition, four young women took power in public positions in the Santa Elena province.

Mothers and fathers practiced positive parenting, challenged harmful cultural norms regarding fatherhood and masculinity, and nurtured healthy, gender-equal families.

Your sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Santa Elena.



576

Youth and adults learned about rights, resilience and self-esteem



247

Parents learned Positive Parenting practices



133

Young women attended Leadership Schools



COVID-19'S IMPACT IN ECUADOR

Hear from Jennifer about how COVID-19 has impacted her community.

“The pandemic affected many families, they faced economic problems, separation and pain from the loss of loved ones. In my family, we went through a very hard stage, my mom lost her job due to the pandemic. Plan helped us a lot and despite the economic downturn, my family is together and blessed.”

CASE STORY: FULFILLING HER LIFE DREAMS



NAME: DAYANA

AGE: 17 YEARS OLD

HOBBY: READING

"Let's not be overcome by our problems, let's face it because we are strong, and with our heads held high, let's fulfil our goals and dreams. Thanks to Plan's support, girls can see their present and future in a different way. I want to study medicine and become a doctor, and I'm sure I will."

Meet Dayana

Like your sponsored child, Dayana has been empowered by Plan International to change her life. Before her participation in the leadership school, Dayana was shy and reserved. She was afraid to express herself in public, and she wasn't confident talking with her family about issues she was curious about.

Facing Gender Challenges

Now Dayana is attending her last year of secondary education, after which she will go to university and study for the future she always wanted—to be a doctor. Dayana is the fourth of five siblings growing up in the Ecuadorian highlands, surrounded by high mountains and a river where her family caught fish.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted her family, who found themselves lacking money and food. In her family, there are more men than women, which meant Dayana was responsible for domestic responsibilities, such as caring for her younger brother as well as the animals.

Unlike her brothers, Dayana wasn't able to participate in social, cultural and sporting events, and had little time to play.

Encouraged to Participate

With Plan's support, Dayana learned about her rights—and discovered her dream of becoming a doctor. Along with 43 friends, she took workshops on gender equality, self-esteem, communication, sexuality and leadership. Today, Dayana is confident and secure. She has her family's support and her priorities for her future are clear. Even better, she's encouraging other girls to pursue their dreams. Recently, Dayana participated in a TV interview to promote girls' rights and commemorate International Women's Day. With her newfound leadership abilities and confidence, Dayana—and girls like her—are changing the world and their places in it.



Dayana's TV interview for International Women's Day

WE CURRENTLY WORK WITH 7,561 CHILDREN IN SANTA ELENA

OUR PROJECTS IN SANTA ELENA ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY



Girls in Santa Elena face threats of gender-based violence and discrimination. The Because I am a Girl Movement was established to help young people defend girls' rights and promote gender equality.

The project empowers adolescent women with self-esteem and leadership skills, enabling them to plan and achieve their life goals. Adolescents and youth received training in communication and life skills.

Because I am a Girl helps foster leadership abilities of young girls and women. This year, 50 youth trained in communication, self-esteem and life projects.

Participants also gained the necessary tools to become agents of change in their communities. As a result, 20 female leaders formed seven leadership schools in different areas, and 95 adolescents and young women graduated from Leadership Schools. Since the training programme, 20 young women are now certified to train other trainers—and inspire a new group of leaders dedicated to promoting gender equality.

SKILLS TO SUCCEED



Youth in Santa Elena, especially young women, lack the skills to achieve economic independence and financial security. Seven out of 10 young people work in unstable, informal jobs.

Strengthening the social, financial and technical skills of young people, especially women, is key to fostering employability and developing entrepreneurship. Through our economic empowerment programme, 598 youth gained vital financial, social and technical skills to obtain work. In addition, 275 young women and men learned welding, carpentry and cell phone repair, enabling them to gain employment or start small businesses. And as the women succeed in traditionally masculine trades, they're challenging cultural stereotypes and paving a path for others.



"In the training project, I learned that I can achieve everything if I set my mind to it. There are no impossible things, the only impossible thing is what you don't try." - **Marcia (29) from Santa Elena**

YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES

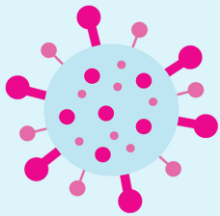


FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



158

Pregnancies are registered daily in women between ages of 15-19



219

Schools were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic



37%

Of children from 0-5 years old are malnourished



Your support helps children to stand up for their futures

- In Santa Elena, one in three children under the age of five is malnourished. Family gardens will help address this problem, also serving to strengthen family ties and foster resilience.
- We will continue to promote the Because I am a Girl movement, helping empower girls with the skills and resources to challenge harmful cultural norms.
- Leadership Schools will provide a place for youth to advocate for girls' rights, encouraging the participation of girls in decision-making spaces.
- The Free Zone of Teenage Pregnancy Project helps communities access knowledge and resources for sexual and reproductive rights.

We know the best is yet to come and together we will continue to work for a brighter future the children in Santa Elena.



"Thanks to you, families received garden kits to guarantee child nutrition, and children remained in school during the COVID-19 pandemic. With you, we will work for a just world, where children are our priority."

Gianni Torres Klinger
Programme Area Manager, Santa Elena

YOUR GENEROSITY WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN IN STANDING UP FOR THEIR FUTURE AND RIGHTS