

## YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

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

This past year, positive parenting, gender equality, and economic empowerment were key. Mothers and fathers learned about positive parenting practices, improving their family relationships. Parents challenged harmful cultural norms regarding fatherhood and masculinity, and learned how to nurture healthy, gender-equal families.

Youth and adolescents gained valuable skills and the knowledge to plan for, and achieve, their life goals. More women were empowered economically, leading to stronger, more secure families.

We know the best is yet to come and your sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Loja.



# 181

Scholarships awarded to children in rural areas



# 160

Parents learned about children's right to education



# 187

Families learned how to improve children's nutrition



## 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 3,207 CHILDREN IN LOJA**



# OUR PROJECTS IN LOJA ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



Over 800 adolescent girls and boys participated in youth clubs in 10 communities, where they learned about sexual health and gender rights.

## IMPROVING SEXUAL HEALTH



**Sexual violence and early pregnancy have a profound impact on the health and future of young people, especially girls.** In 2019, more than 51,000 adolescent mothers gave birth in Ecuador, nearly 2,000 of whom were under 14.

Education, resources and youth involvement are key to change. Participants of the “Free Zone of Teenage Pregnancy” programme used learning spaces to host meetings, forums and events to discuss about gender rights and health. In coordination with families and community leaders, the programme promoted access to sexual and reproductive health services. It empowered families with the tools and resources to provide their daughters and sons with clear, healthy sexual education through effective parenting practices.

As a result, adolescent pregnancy has been reduced by 70% in the project areas, giving girls access to a healthier future.

## FEEDING THE FUTURE



**Due to poverty and unemployment, many families struggle to provide their children with healthy, nutritious food.** In fact, 25% of children in Loja are malnourished.

We partnered with communities to supply 180 kits for raising small animals and establishing family gardens, helping approximately 900 children to access healthy food, and empowering parents to improve their families' nutrition.

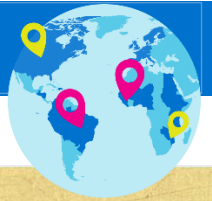
Positive parenting workshops raised awareness of children's health for 187 families. They also learned about the importance of supporting women in decision-making roles. In addition, 32 fathers took part in the “Caring Dads” project, promoting the importance of men's participation in the home, including daily care, and nutrition.



“I'm very thankful for the changes I've seen in my family. My mother is lovelier and my parents now play a lot with me and my siblings.”

- Mayeli (9) from Loja

# YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



## FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



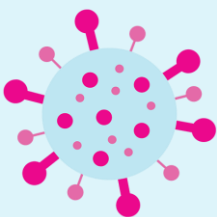
28%

Of children lack economic resources to attend school



47%

Of people lack access to sanitary toilets



84%

Of families experienced reduced income during the COVID-19 pandemic



**Your support helps girls and boys to stand up for their futures.**

- In Ecuador, psychological violence is the most current form of gender violence. Leadership Schools will help girls generate social change that promotes gender equality and reduces violence.
- Children at risk of leaving school will be able to access scholarships, enabling them to remain in the formal education system.
- Parents can participate in workshops and trainings on positive parenting practices and active fatherhood, helping them nurture strong, gender-equal families.
- Women can more easily achieve economic independence with access to seed capital and support for micro-enterprises.

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



“We are happy about all the results achieved through our projects, the positive and lasting impact on the lives of children and youth in Loja. Thank you very much. We invite you to continue your support so more children can achieve their dreams.”

**Freddy Romero**

Programme Area Manager, Loja

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