

YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

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

This past year, community initiatives, gender equality and positive parenting were key themes. As Cotopaxi is at risk of climate crises, Safe Zone projects helped the communities prepare for and respond to disasters. Ten Risk Management committees were formed, and seven initiatives were implemented and led by girls.

Young people participated in leadership initiatives, advocating for gender equality at local and national levels. Parents practiced positive parenting techniques, and learned how to nurture healthy, gender-equal families.

Your continued sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Cotopaxi.



5000

Food & hygiene kits helped address COVID-19 shortages



1500

Kits to grow family orchards helped with food security



49

Mothers received educational scholarships



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 5,004 CHILDREN IN COTOPAXI

OUR PROJECTS IN COTOPAXI ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



TOOLS TO SUPPORT PARENTS

Early childhood—from birth to eight years old—is considered the most important stage of life for health and development. Yet malnutrition and food insecurity are a problem for families with children in Cotopaxi, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is vital that parents, especially fathers, are empowered with tools and resources to develop the nutritional, mental and emotional well-being of their children.

Fathers can play an active role in the physical and emotional health and development of their children.

To address these needs, 300 families from 10 communities received orchard kits for family gardens. This enabled parents to provide their families with healthy, nutritious food and strengthened their self-reliance.

In addition, 28 parents developed active parenting practices to improve their children's health and development. Fathers became involved in the different stages of growth, providing children with security and educating them for life.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY



Gender discrimination limits access to leadership opportunities for girls and young women in Cotopaxi. In addition, 64% of women aged 15 and older have experienced gender-based violence.

The Girls Get Equal Project helps communities address gender-based violence and discrimination and empowers youth to act as agents of change. A Leadership School helped 25 adolescent girls develop valuable life skills. The Because I am a Girl movement, led by girls and young women, successfully advocated with public institutions for gender equality. Several representatives participated in training at the national level on topics such as sexual and reproductive rights. Young men promoted positive masculinity and gender equality in the Champions of Change project.



"I participated in the Leadership School and it helped strengthen my self-esteem to participate. We talk about problems that exist in my community, and all the girls look for solutions so the situation changes."

- Lizeth (16) from Cotopaxi

YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



25%

Of 15- to 17-year-old students drop out of school



50%

Of the population lacks access to sanitary toilets



54%

Has water coverage by public water mains



Your support helps children to stand up for their futures.

- Cotopaxi has one of the highest records of violence among Ecuador's highlands. To reduce violence and abuse, we will help promote community networks of protection for children and adolescents.
- We will continue to promote the Because I am a Girl movement, helping youth to act as agents of change.
- In Ecuador, 30% of people in the economically active population has adequate employment. We will help young people access investment and entrepreneurial opportunities so they can achieve economic security.
- We will continue working to strengthen girls' access to school, and their ability to remain in the educational system.

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



"The lives of many children and families have changed—thanks to the support from their sponsors. They developed self-esteem and autonomy and were supported with life projects and access to education. Thank you for being a part of our Plan family."

Vinicio Cifuentes

Programme Area Manager, Cotopaxi

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