

ANNUAL UPDATE

ECUADOR

SANTA ELENA



Together with your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Santa Elena. Learn more about the valuable ways we work with children and communities.

This year, girls and young women in Santa Elena acted as leaders and agents of change in their communities. In response to the region's environmental vulnerability, young people took on advocacy roles as they learned how to address the impact of climate change. Youth also learned about sexual and reproductive health and rights and worked to reduce the high rates of early pregnancy and gender-based violence. As a result, girls – and their families – have a brighter, more empowered future ahead.



372

People attended sessions on early pregnancy prevention



12

Women gained entrepreneurial skills



192

Families benefitted from poultry-raising kits

“I LEARNED NOT TO BE AFRAID TO TALK ABOUT MY FEELINGS, AND I EXPRESS MY OPINIONS FREELY.”

Jennifer, 16-year-old Sponsored Child





NAME: GRISLY

AGE: 16 YEARS OLD

DREAMS TO BE: A DOCTOR

“I LEARNED TO EXPRESS MYSELF, DEVELOP AND INTERACT WITH MORE PEOPLE FROM A POSITION OF TRUST, RIGHTS AND RESPECT.”

Meet Grisly

Like the child you sponsor, Grisly is making steps towards achieving her goals and building a stronger future for herself. Despite growing up in a community that doesn't prioritise girls' education, Grisly has completed her first semester of medical school and has grown into an active community leader.

A Legacy of Advocacy

Plan International has been in Grisly's life since she was a child – her mother Clara is a community volunteer and took her to every activity. In her early years, Grisly participated in the “Magic Project”. As a teenager, she was part of a leadership school.

Grisly is the first person in her family to study at university. In her community, harmful gender norms discourage women from pursuing education. Throughout her life, Grisly's decisions have always required extra courage, as she must consistently fight against gender discrimination and advocate for girls' rights. However, Grisly's outstanding academic performance has given her the tools to pursue higher education and to become an empowered and independent woman.

A Bright Future for a Natural Leader

Grisly is about to enter her second semester of medicine. Her caring spirit and deeply held values will make her an exceptional doctor. And with support from Plan, she's developed the confidence and skills to address any obstacles in her path.

Grisly's early experiences with leadership and advocacy – along with her mother's influence – have inspired her. Now, her mission is to help people in rural and peri-urban areas, where families often lack medical resources. As a leader, Grisly will help create the change in her community needed so that other young women can pursue their educational dreams.



Grisly is a positive role model for others

OUR PROJECTS IN SANTA ELENA ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



Among girls between the ages of 10 and 14, Ecuador has the second highest rate of pregnancy in the region.

TEENAGE PREGNANCY-FREE ZONE



In Ecuador, 89% of adolescents under 15 had their first sexual encounter with someone older than themselves. Empowering communities – especially youth – with information and resources about sexual and reproductive health and rights is vital.

The Teenage Pregnancy-free Zone project uses a preventative approach by providing children and youth with information and skill-building training. As young people learn about their health and rights, they also work to develop goals for their futures. The programme emphasises the rights of women to decide about their bodies and sexuality. As a result, 19 prevention clubs engaged over 700 adolescents, mothers, and fathers in training sessions. In these sessions, participants learned about sexual and reproductive health and rights as they improved their self-esteem and decision-making skills, enabling them to create plans for a healthy future.

SAFE ZONES



Santa Elena is especially vulnerable to climate disasters such as flooding, landslides, and tsunamis. As a result, the most at-risk populations often lack access to clean water, and the threat of disease increases.

The Safe Zones project empowers community members – especially girls and young women – with tools to address climate disaster response. The programme promotes youth leadership, involving them in risk management activities. This year, 16 community risk management committees learned how to identify vulnerabilities and developed action plans for risk reduction. In addition to addressing urgent needs for climate disaster response, the project addresses harmful cultural norms and stereotypes that affect the participation of girls and boys in decision-making spaces.

“Being part of the Safe Zones project is a totally different experience: new and full of learning, with very good people who performed their work in an excellent way and provided security.”

- Dafne (13) from Santa Elena



YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



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

- High rates of female unemployment have a profound effect on families. We will promote female entrepreneurship and empower women with the skills and resources to develop their own businesses.
- Access to quality formal education is key, especially for youth. In response, we will generate partnerships to raise funds for school and university scholarships.
- 23% of children under five in Ecuador are chronically malnourished or stunted. We will continue to promote access to healthy nutritional development through community actions.

Thank you for your continued support.



“Thanks to your support we have implemented long-term projects that have transformed the lives of children. Your generosity helps us to continue.”

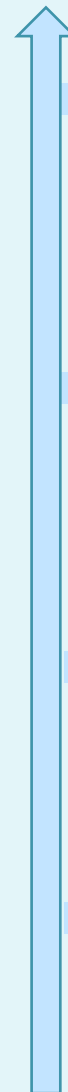
Gladys Rivera Alvarado
Programme Area Manager

THE PLAN EFFECT



Your sponsorship commitment is turned into effective long-term change – providing help for self-help. We involve children at the centre of all projects, bringing effective and sustainable solutions to families and communities. With Plan's Effect, your commitment helps empower communities to transform their lives and futures.

THE LAST 12 MONTHS



JANUARY

1.113

People learned about child protection



MARCH

1,485

People learned about violence prevention



APRIL

357

Flood-affected families received food kits



DECEMBER

573

Youth learned about reproductive rights

