

ANNUAL UPDATE

ECUADOR

LOJA



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

This year, girls and young people advocated for a brighter future, with improved economic and leadership opportunities for all.

Participation in savings and loan associations empowered women with financial independence and the ability to invest in income-generating activities and education. Girls challenged discrimination through the Because I'm a Girl project, taking on leadership and advocacy roles in the community. As a result, girls – and their families – have a brighter, more empowered future ahead.



150

People learned income-generating activities and skills



35

Journalists learned about human rights



187

Families learned to prepare nutritious recipes

“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 LOJA ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



SAVINGS AND LOAN GROUPS



Women in Ecuador have few opportunities to access credit – especially women who live in rural communities.

Savings and loan associations are a proven path for women to save and invest money and achieve financial independence. They offer access to credit and savings practices through a voluntary contribution of the members. The members' activities generate income. In order to strengthen the economic empowerment of women, especially single mothers or heads of households, 17 savings and loan associations were founded. The members established a board of directors and bylaws to help them develop financial activities. The members focus on local enterprises, investing in the purchase of poultry, seeds for agriculture, or children's education. As a result, the savings of each of the 17 associations has grown every year, empowering women as they invest in their lives, families, and community.

89% of the savings and loan associations are made up of women, where they make financial decisions and establish economic independence.



BECAUSE I'M A GIRL MOVEMENT

Young people in Ecuador – especially girls – experience discrimination. Their ideas, opinions and experiences are rarely considered, especially in community processes.

The Because I'm a Girl programme works to encourage the political participation of girls, adolescents and young women. Through the project, they gain skills in communication and advocacy, then participate in leadership opportunities. In Loja, girls advocated for change with 47 institutional takeovers, promoting equal rights for girls and women in leadership positions. In addition, 25 girls participated in the Leadership Schools, developing their skills and challenging discrimination. Trainings addressed how gender norms influence girls and boys, empowering youth with skills and opportunities to work together to create lasting change.

“Being part of the Because I'm a Girl movement for me has been a unique and beautiful experience and I have learned very important topics that have helped me to grow personally and as a student.”

- Aracely (19) from Loja



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 Loja.

- Ecuador has the third-highest highest rate of early pregnancy in the region. We will continue providing information to adolescents and their families to reduce early pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and sexual violence.
- Poverty is the main factor for school dropout. Through the support of scholarships, we will help children remain in the education system.
- In Ecuador, 42% of those living in rural areas experience severe economic deprivation. We will help empower women to develop their entrepreneurial capacity and achieve economic autonomy.

Thank you for your continued support.



“We have been able to generate lasting impact. We invite you to continue so we can strengthen the skills of children and their families, allowing them to achieve their dreams.”

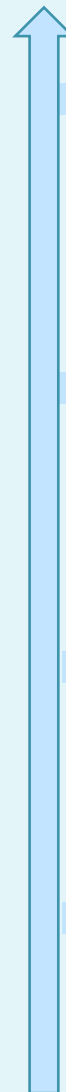
Freddy Romero
Programme Area Manager

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



DECEMBER

137

Youth learned about pregnancy prevention



MARCH

187

Parents learned about positive parenting



MARCH

175

School scholarships awarded to adolescents



APRIL

11

Entrepreneurial mothers received seed capital

