

Cotopaxi Ecuador

Positive changes are happening in Cotopaxi. Learn more about how we're supporting children and girls' rights through our collaborative, equality-driven work.

This past year, key projects fostered skills and strengthened resources so young people and families can plan for a brighter future.

For example, university scholarships enabled young women to access higher education that will set them on a course of economic independence.

Child protection issues were also key. As a result of the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, adolescent girls have been at an even greater risk of violence. By establishing Child Protection Mechanisms and developing awareness of children's rights, we're supporting communities as they work toward a safer, more equitable future.



Together, we're prioritising children's quality of life.

"Teen pregnancy-free zone workshops made me aware of what can happen if we are not informed."
—Aurora (11)



Impact in Numbers

16

New business groups received seed capital

173

Participated in the Because I Am A Girl project

137

Students earned school scholarships

A scholarship transforms Damaris' life



NAME:

Damaris

AGE:

12 years old

DREAMS TO BE:

A doctor

“This scholarship not only gives me the opportunity to get an education, but it also relieves my grandparents of their worries.”



Meet Damaris

Like many children in Cotopaxi, Damaris is optimistic about achieving her goals and building a strong future.

Damaris lives in an indigenous rural community in Cotopaxi, Ecuador, with her grandparents. She is an outstanding student who is passionate about natural sciences and wants to become a doctor.

The Impact of Economic Resources

Damaris dreams of a future helping the sick in her community – but without an education, she has little chance. Her main obstacle is an economic one, as her family has few financial resources.

According to official reports, in Ecuador, lack of access to education is a persistent problem. This is especially true in rural areas like the one where Damaris lives. This situation negatively impacts children's development and places unfair limits on their hopes and dreams.

Damaris' education was at risk without the financial means to cover her school expenses, threatening her goals for the future.

The Power of Education

Damaris excels in her studies – and with her hard work and dedication, she earned a comprehensive school scholarship from Plan. This scholarship covers school expenses, including supplies, uniforms, and shoes. As she gets older, her education will help her access even more opportunities for her future.

Damaris' dedication stands out in the community. With her grandparents in mind, she says she is grateful for the help “to build a better future for me and my family.”



Damaris is a dedicated student with big dreams for her future.

We Work With 4,797 Sponsored Children in Cotopaxi

Projects That Support Lasting Change

Education for All

In Cotopaxi, 55% of children and adolescents live in poverty.

Ecuador's economic crisis has negatively impacted the educational opportunities of young people – especially those who live in rural or indigenous communities or who come from low-income households. This has exacerbated existing barriers to education.

The scholarship project provides a financial stipend to help students attend higher education. This year, five young women are on the path to university. As they focus on their education and future careers, they will be better able to break the cycle of poverty.

The five scholarship-earners are members of the Because I Am A Girl movement, demonstrating community leadership and involvement, acting as agents of change and encouraging others to prioritise their life projects.



These students are reaching for the stars with high academic and professional goals.

5

young women earned five-year university scholarships



1,993 protection kits were distributed to girls and boys.



Safety audits in 10 schools identified high risks and evidence of gender-based violence.

Protecting Children

Post-pandemic child protection measures are a concern in Cotopaxi.

Young people were at home during COVID-19 school closures, and child protection systems were not able to provide adequate response or protection for those in need.

Plan's project aims to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the well-being and safety of youth in 20 areas and directly benefits indigenous communities and rural populations. The first step was the establishment of Community Level Child Protection Mechanisms. As a result, 144 adults completed the training and developed Child Protection plans.

Adults and children learned about children's rights through events held at the community and school level. The workshops and open days reached over 1,000 people, and 426 caregivers attended training sessions on parenting.

"I participated in the workshops with my mother and that helped us learn to identify violence, also about the importance of not remaining silent if there is any type of violence." —Viviana (17)

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



Future business leaders explored sustainable ventures in the Youth Innovation Lab.

Together, we're working to create a more just world.

In Ecuador, 23% of children under five have chronic malnutrition or stunted growth. We're supporting the prevention of chronic child malnutrition through an early childhood project especially designed to support women living in vulnerable circumstances.

Only 24.8% of Cotopaxi residents have completed high school. We will focus on reducing illiteracy rates and supporting students with educational scholarships.

Underemployment and unemployment rates are high. We will help coordinate with institutions that provide training and education so young people can more effectively access employment or entrepreneurship.

Message from Plan Staff

"We continue to move forward in the prevention of violence, teenage pregnancies, and chronic malnutrition. We achieved this thanks to the support of sponsors. We express deep gratitude on behalf of the families and communities of Cotopaxi."



Vinicio Cifuentes Carrión,
Programme Area
Manager,
Cotopaxi

The Plan Effect

Sponsored children are at the centre of everything we do, and they help plan our programmes based on what's important to them. Sponsors' donations are a gateway into a community. This helps build trust and credibility to attract even more funds from new sources. This makes more sustainable programmes possible in sponsorship communities. This powerful synergy is something we call The Plan Effect.

Progress in Numbers

200

**Mothers studied
malnutrition
prevention**

46

**Women learned in
Leadership
Schools**

190

**Community
Savings Bank
participants**

8

**Community risk
committees
certified**