



## OVERVIEW OF

# Ecuador

## Overview of Ecuador



YEAR OF  
**1830**  
INDEPENDENCE

POPULATION  
**15,654,411**  
MILLION

**25.6%**  
Population  
**BELOW**  
poverty line

**Languages** Spanish, indigenous (Quechua, Shuar)

**Under-five Mortality Rate:** 23 per 1,000 live births. Ecuador ranks 83 in the world.

**Infant Mortality Rate:** 20 deaths per 1,000 live births.

**Human Development Index (HDI)** for 2013: 0.711 (ranked 98 out of 187, indicating high human development).

**Maternal Mortality:** 110 deaths per 100,000 live births.

## Brief History of ChildFund in Ecuador

**ChildFund came to Ecuador: 1984**

**Number of enrolled children (FY14):** 26,604

**Number of participants (FY14):** 90,361

**ChildFund works in 5 of Ecuador's 24 provinces:**

**Carchi, Imbabura, Pichincha, Cotopaxi and Tungurahua.**

Since 1985, ChildFund Ecuador's work to effect positive change for children and youth in situations of deprivation, exclusion and vulnerability, and their families has been centered in a community-based approach, with the involvement and leadership of local partner organizations.

ChildFund has consistently promoted the establishment of strategic alliances with communities, enabling them to lead the improvement of their living conditions through work in multiple areas of intervention such as education, health, social organization and environmental care.

The lessons learned have established ChildFund as one of the most recognized organizations in child centered development in Ecuador and positioned us to build strong, collaborative linkages with other public and private organizations.

# Brief Program Overview



At the core of ChildFund's programmatic approach is the promotion and guarantee of the fundamental rights of children and youth, as well as community participation in their own social development processes and endeavors.

ChildFund Ecuador has implemented the **Early Child Development (ECD) program** for infants and young children, ages 0 to 5. This program seeks to overcome the biggest barriers to holistic child development, such as poverty, low educational attainment of parents, and lack of coverage and quality of services in health and nutrition, particularly in rural areas. Further, this program aims to work together with parents, caregivers and communities to ensure that infants have the nutrition, care, safety and stimulation they need to achieve their potential.

The **Children at school age program** aims to improve the living conditions of school age children and their families. Using an integrated approach, involving children, their parents and the educational system, this program puts children at the center of its framework, recognizing them as people with opinions and as decision-makers. Key components of the framework are:

- Active-participatory learning approaches to empower children – including children's clubs to promote and raise awareness around the fundamental rights of children, and Aflatoun training, covering social and financial issues such as saving, and basic financial and business management.
- Parent training through the Family Formation Program which aims to improve parent's knowledge about child development for children 6-14 years of age, including how to support their educational needs, social interactions, nutrition, productive use of free time, the fundamental rights of children, violence prevention, and physical and intellectual development.
- Educational investments, including contributing to classroom materials (e.g., learning and pedagogic resources), developing operation plans for disaster contingency and emergencies in coordination with Local Emergency Committees, with the objective of promoting child-and-community centered education for disaster preparedness and risk reduction and resiliency.

The **Youth Program** promotes a holistic development of teenagers and young people by providing them with opportunities for community participation and personal development. Leadership and empowerment are accomplished through clubs and groups that train them in areas such as advocacy, civic engagement, political participation and human rights. These mechanisms allow youth to engage in meaningful ways and assume an active role within their communities – as active participants in the public decision-making spaces, to amplify their voices in local governance, civil participation and development of community agendas.

## Brief Program Overview (continued)



Life-learning is another key component of ChildFund Ecuador's Youth Program and aims to provide peer encounters through summer camps, sports, and cultural and other social events. These activities promote group participation, and raising awareness about sexual health and rights, violence and drug abuse prevention. Further, life-skills training provided through the Aflateen methodology, fosters proactive and responsible behaviors in youth in three spheres – towards themselves, their families, and their communities.

**Families and communities** engages participants in ChildFund Ecuador's programs in a global development process that aims to significantly increase their social capital, as evidenced through increasing their community participation and ability to articulate children's needs and rights to local authorities and other social actors. Knowledge and awareness around child protection is a crucial element and is made possible through the "Safety Network," a mechanism to prevent, react to and resolve cases of children at risk to violence and child abuse.

Further, capacity building is an indispensable piece in shaping and strengthening local capacities and social capital. ChildFund Ecuador supports a capacity building process for local partners and community leaders in project management, resource mobilization, external relations and advocacy, as well as human rights restitution and protection, democracy and political participation. These efforts lead children and youth and their families, and community organizations toward an empowered vision for their lives and environment that promotes sustainability and well-being.

## 2014 Program Achievements

### Healthy and Secure Infants

ChildFund Ecuador's work in this life stage is critically important, given that early childhood is the most important phase in human growth and development and early experiences determine health, education and economic participation for the rest of life.

ChildFund supports parenting education through the Responsive Parenting Program. In FY13, 4,894 mothers and parents received training related to the psychosocial development of their children (i.e., training related to the social, emotional, mental and motor domains). This training benefitted 4,528 children, ages 0 to 5. Our work in Ecuador has shown that as individual caregivers gain and use knowledge, skills and behaviors to nurture their children, their self-efficacy and confidence rise and they become stronger advocates for their children's needs, and ultimately champions for children's rights.

# 2014 Program Achievements (continued)



Further, 1,450 families participated in discussions about nutrition and public health. These sessions were coordinated through our Local Partners, in collaboration with the different organizations (civil society and government) with whom they have strategic alliances.

Moreover, during FY14, ChildFund Ecuador engaged in efforts to raise the visibility and profile of its ECD program by conducting forums known as "Family Participating in the Development of Early Childhood." representatives of governmental organizations and Local Partners, parents and family members participated in these events.

## Educated and Confident Children

More than 16,000 children, ages 6 to 12, participated in summer camps, aimed at developing their physical, social and emotional skills. These camps were organized by ChildFund in collaboration with six of its Local Partners. The participants engaged in games that allowed them to use their free time in appropriate ways and promoted teamwork.

Through the implementation of the Aflatoun methodology, 36,024 children participated in social and financial activities in their schools and communities. Children learned about themselves, their rights, saving and basic financial knowledge, while forming an entrepreneurial culture. Aflatoun uses a child-centered learning approach, inspiring children to be socially and financially empowered and providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to become active agents, able to transform their communities and society as a whole.

In recognition that children have the potential to actively participate in community life, 4,267 children from the areas where we work developed contingency and disaster prevention plans for their schools. This activity aimed to increase the understanding of the risks involved, in the event of a disaster, how to reduce the effects of disasters on their communities and how to put their solutions into practice.

## Skilled and Involved Youth

Life Stage 3 views youth as change agents in their family and community. ChildFund's youth program approach recognizes young people's need for technical skills, job readiness, as well as other skills and knowledge, such as leadership, participating, problem-solving, confidence, self-efficacy and the capability to make informed choices about sexual health and reproduction. All of these skills and knowledge are essential for a youth's transition to a healthy adulthood. In FY14, ChildFund supported programs that helped over 1,000 youth gain and practice these skills and engage as change agents for the betterment of their own and other's lives.

## 2014 Program Achievements (continued)



Further, more than 6,700 youth, ages 13 to 18, participated in Aflateen. Through this program, youth learned about finances, including savings clubs, and explored concepts such as self esteem, rights, gender, drug abuse prevention, their environment, employability, among others.

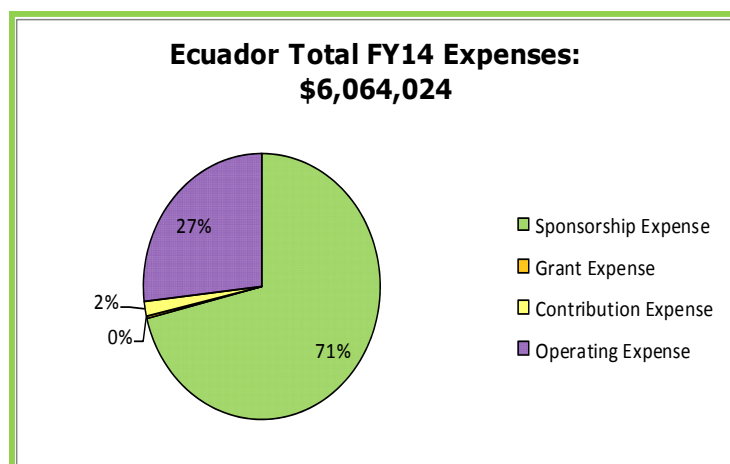
### Civil Society

During FY14, as part of ChildFund Ecuador's capacity building efforts, 220 local committee members were trained in leadership, community mobilization for risk reduction, violence prevention as well as child rights and child protection. These efforts empowered people and communities to respect and uphold rights, especially those of children.

ChildFund Ecuador participated in two major efforts led by ChildFund Alliance:

- The *Free from Violence Campaign* is an effort to bring the voices of children to world leaders, to ensure that children's voices are heard as part of the post-2015 development agenda and goals. Children spoke about being free from violence and exploitation and make child protection a global priority.
- *Small Voices, Big Dreams* is a global survey that provides insight into the minds of some of the world's most vulnerable and overlooked children from 47 countries. The third annual survey included the voices of 6,200 10 to 12 year olds. Their answers reveal deep awareness of what goes on within their communities and how it affects them personally. A major finding is 50% of the children from developing nations say they would improve education if given the power.

## Financial Report



### Ecuador FY14

Sponsorship Expense	4,312,974	71%
Grant Expense	17,315	0%
Contribution Expense	108,401	2%
Operating Expense	1,625,334	27%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>6,064,024</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Financial Report (continued)

## ChildFund Alliance

**Sponsorship:** At the end of FY14, ChildFund Ecuador had 18,597 active sponsorships from the following Alliance members: (1) ChildFund International—11,650; (2) ChildFund Australia – 2,334; (3) ChildFund Deutschland – 1,488; (4) Taiwan Fund for Children & Families – 1,377; (5) Barnfonden—665; (6) Un Enfant par la Main – 541; (7) BORNEfonden - 411; (8) ChildFund New Zealand – 114; and (9) ChildFund Ireland – 17.

**Contributions:** During FY14, ChildFund Ecuador received \$3,949 in contributions for its projects and programs from ChildFund Deutschland.

## Challenges

While the UNDP 2014 Annual Report records Ecuador's HDI as high human development, social and economic inequality persists, affecting mostly indigenous and native populations. The persistence of poverty and malnutrition disproportionately affect young children, women and indigenous populations, despite being classified as a "lower middle income country." Forty-one percent (41%) of the population experiences some level of poverty, while the gap between the rich and poor is increasing, driven by exclusion because of ethnicity, gender and geographic location. While government efforts to address disparities have shown some significant results, given that much of the budget is earmarked for debt repayment, it is difficult for Ecuador to fund levels of social spending that might improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable families.

Further, a meager 12% of infants and young children attend child care centers in Ecuador, making ChildFund, through its Responsive Parenting Program, one of the many actors contributing to the early childhood development landscape in Ecuador.

According to Population and Housing Census data (2010), abuse is a culturally accepted practice which persists in 31% of the population. In most countries, children spend more time in the care of adults in educational settings than anywhere else outside of their homes. While schools have an important role in protecting children from violence, for many children, educational settings expose them to violence and may even teach them violence. In the case of Ecuador, 31% of children attending school reported experiencing violent punishment or treatment while 64% reported experiencing bullying or fights with peers. ChildFund is addressing these issues through its Children at school age program.

Further 17% of adolescents and young people between the ages of 12 and 17, are out of school with 10% involved in child labor. In areas where ChildFund works, between 9% and 14% of girls are out of school due to teen pregnancy. ChildFund's youth program approach works to empower teens to make informed choices about sexual health and reproduction.

# Why Sponsorship is Important



Victoria is a 13 year old girl who lives with her parents Freddy and Virginia, her siblings Evelyn, Karina and Freddy, her three dogs Chamuco, Sargento and Pantera and her two cats, Pepe and Negro. At home, everyone calls her Vicky and she is admired for her tenderness and kindness.

Vicky is in the 10th year of basic education and her favorite subject is science. Her future aspiration is to be a policewoman or an agronomist. At school she is known for her athletic ability, especially in football. Her talent and ability in football has allowed her to participate in provincial and national championships to represent her province.

Vicky loves to participate in all the activities ChildFund organizes in her community, especially football, dance, crafts, drawing and photography. She has been a sponsored child since 2006 and has excellent communication with her sponsor and his family.

This active relationship has been built through the letters she writes to her sponsor as well as the letters she receives from her sponsor. She shares how excited she gets when she receives photos from her sponsor. She learns so much about her sponsor's country and customs and what is happening with his family, especially with his daughter. Vicky remembers when her sponsor's daughter was born.

Vicky appreciates all of the encouragement she receives from her sponsor. He congratulates her on her athletic achievements and motivates her to keep going. She also appreciates that her sponsor remembers her on special days, such as her birthday and Christmas.

Vicky actively participates in the ChildFund programs in her community. She is part of the Youth Group and she shares that this has been a great opportunity to meet and make friends. She also mentioned, *"Before joining the group, I was shy and boring; now I have learned a lot new things."* She recognizes that her participation in ChildFund activities, has helped her overcome her shyness. Her mother supports what Vicky says. *"Thanks to the participation in the workshops, youth are now expressive and sociable. My daughter used to be very shy and now she participates in sports. She feels that her classmates value her. She is a goal keeper. I am very excited about her development in school. She is very participative. When the teachers ask students to participate, Vicky is the first one to raise her hand. This has generated a spirit of leadership in Vicky and as a result, she was elected Culture and Sport Vice President of the Student Council."*

Finally, Vicky says that she feels very fortunate to have the close relationship with her sponsor and knows that through his contribution and the generosity of other sponsors, she and many other youth can participate in the programs and projects implemented by ChildFund.