

An inclusive, quality education for marginalised children in El Oro and Guayas, Ecuador

Year two, six-month interim report: July to December 2010

Project overview

Save the Children is committed to increasing children's access to, and completion of, inclusive quality education in a safe environment. We believe all children have the right to education and to achieve this, we focus in particular on children affected by conflicts and/or disasters, ethnic minority children and the poorest 10% of children.

In July 2009, we began the second phase of Save the Children's work in El Oro and Guayas, supported by the Latin American Children's Trust, to address an urgent need for quality inclusive education for vulnerable children living in these two provinces. This report details the achievements and challenges faced during the first half of year two of the project's implementation.

Our **project goal** is for vulnerable and at risk children and young people in El Oro and Guayas provinces to enrol and remain in inclusive, quality schooling, protected from all forms of violence, in safe and friendly environments.

Our **objectives** are to improve:

Access – 6,000 at risk children have increased access to (and remain in) primary education.

Quality – 12,000 children enjoy improved primary education and achieve better learning in a participatory and child-friendly environment.

Safety and protection – 12,000 children are safer at home and in school thanks to improved safety and protection mechanisms and policies.

Country Context

Since being returned to office in 2009, Rafael Correa's government has overseen the development of a new law on education that remains under discussion within the National Assembly. It is being considered in the wider context of demands tabled by civil society and opposition organisations for the removal of key government figures including local mayors and advisors, and the President himself. Should sufficient public signatures be gathered, government representatives can be removed under the Constitution of 2008; in the case of the President, 1.8 million such signatures are necessary to secure removal from office. The National Electoral Council manages and monitors this process and, to date has ratified the removal of the mayor of Tiwintza, a canton in the Amazon region. There is the potential therefore for localised political upheaval to hinder our progress on promoting child's rights with governments in the target regions of this project if our points of contact are removed from office.

Economic growth has been slower than anticipated throughout 2010 and therefore the Government has continued its policy of investment in social programmes to help alleviate the impact of the economic crisis in some of the poorest parts of the country. The Government's support in these areas is of particular importance as violence and insecurity continue to rise in the coastal and border regions. Ecuador has become a country of transit for the drugs trade, stimulating illegal networks that have been responsible for the escalation of violence in our target provinces of El Oro and Guayas.

Executive Summary

During this reporting period we have focused our efforts threefold; on achieving an increase in enrolment in the target schools come the new term in March, improving the quality of education delivered, and providing greater safety and security to children. As the school year end approaches, we are working now to raise awareness in our target communities of the importance of a quality education, and to achieve an increase in the numbers of children attending school. We are preparing teachers, local school authorities and communities to assist in promoting the importance of education and are supporting teachers in the target schools with technical assistance. This will help to ensure that children receive a quality education and retain children already enrolled in school. As the new school year begins in March 2011, we will monitor the effects of this period's mobilisation in the communities by recording the new term's registration rates.

We are improving school infrastructures, through the creation of 'learning spaces' in the classroom, painting and improving sanitation facilities. As we reported in August 2010, we are delivering training sessions for teachers on child-friendly teaching methodologies, the use of teaching guides and teaching within learning spaces. We are working with children and strengthening children's movements, consultative councils, environmental groups and first aid groups. Training sessions and workshops for both teachers and children are increasing their knowledge on a child's right to education, protection and participation and are supporting their promotion within the wider community.

We have ensured the participation of local authorities, local government staff, teachers, technicians and children in events that promote the safety and protection of children. Events included over one hundred meetings, workshops, one congress, an exchange visit and training sessions, which addressed a wide range of topics from preparedness in an emergency (such as flooding) to the development of a local bylaw for the eradication of sexual violence against children. With LACT's support, we are creating and strengthening local communities that are better informed to support children's rights to safety, protection and a quality education.

Key Achievements

With your support, we have:

- Supported 8,848 children previously excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from education to improve their learning capabilities through our work in 83 schools.
- Held 10 events to raise awareness of child rights, education, protection and positive family relationships for a total of 878 direct and 10,500 indirect beneficiaries across the 80 target communities.
- Helped 480 children from six youth groups, two consultative councils and three children movements to develop child rights materials and understand safety measures in emergency

- Improved the infrastructure within 50 target schools by enhancing interior spaces and creating ‘learning spaces’ in classrooms. We have equipped schools with key materials to provide an improved environment for child-friendly teaching.
- Encouraged over 200 children to participate in the improvements made in six schools by designing and painting wall illustrations.
- Improved sanitation facilities within 18 schools in collaboration with the National Directorate for School Services (DINSE) and encouraged community participation in the upkeep of local schools by hosting 16 cleaning sessions.
- Developed and delivered, in collaboration with the Red Cross and Fire Department, 14 workshops to give children in schools at risk of flooding the knowledge to react safely in emergency situations.
- Developed and distributed 600 teaching guides to teachers in 37 schools.
- Delivered training in innovative teaching methods, lesson planning and children’s rights to over 100 teachers in 37 schools.
- Provided 11 refresher training sessions for 250 teachers in 50 target schools on the creation and use of child-friendly materials for ‘learning spaces’ (in the classroom).
- Helped to ensure that 350 parents and tutors understand a child’s right to live without threat of violence through 10 workshops in five cantons on good treatment and child rights.
- Delivered two training sessions for 55 officials and local technicians on public policy development and monitoring the implementation of children’s rights in their cantons.
- Supported 10 journalists to enhance their knowledge of child rights issues, giving them the skills and understanding to raise awareness of child rights in the media.
- Supported three children, as representatives of their respective consultative councils, to share their experiences of living in border regions and propose new ways of defending child rights through the first of two exchange visits.
- Secured in-kind and financial support for the project from the cantonal governments to a value of £13,945.
- Oversaw the first ‘Provincial Congress Against the Sexual Abuse of Children’ for over 400 delegates and agreed a set of outcomes to work towards the eradication of sexual violence against children in El Empalme canton.
- Facilitated the formation, and first 60 meetings, of a local education watch group to hold local authorities to account.

Our activities this period

I: Practical action at a local level

- **Improve the physical learning environment of 80 schools - building classrooms and providing furniture and educational materials and improve the sanitation facilities of 40 schools.** Guided by our needs assessment conducted during year one of the project, and with the support of the cantonal authorities in Naranjal, El Triunfo, El Guabo and Pasaje, during this period we have painted classrooms and created ‘learning spaces’ in a total of 50 schools. Learning spaces are child-friendly areas in a classroom which can be assigned for the study of a specific topic and utilise a more hands on teaching approach than was possible under the previous classroom infrastructure in the target schools. We are ensuring that ‘learning

- **Build relationships between adults (parents and teachers) and children, through training and workshops in 80 communities.** This period, 350 parents participated in a total of 10 workshops in five cantons. In these sessions, we focused on ensuring better communication between parents and their children, better treatment of children and an understanding of a child rights. Parents stated they were now more aware of the impact of violence in the home on children, which is currently accepted by families and the wider community.
- **Support and strengthen the capacity of 80 schools to implement safety and protection mechanisms and policies.** Safety policies and plans are now being implemented in the first eight of the 40 schools which were assessed during year one. These eight schools are situated in areas considered to be most at risk from disaster and emergency and were thus targeted first. This semester, we have conducted situation assessments in a further two schools and worked with students and the Red Cross and Fire Department on 14 workshops to strengthen Children's First Aid Groups. The groups now have confidence to respond in emergency scenarios such as fires and floods. The implementation of safety plans and policies will continue into years three and four.
- **Produce 3,000 guides on teaching, education planning and children's rights – to use in teacher training and in lessons across 80 schools.** This period we have produced and distributed a total of 600 teaching guides, through which we have trained over 100 teachers from 37 schools (in the El Guabo, Pasaje and Naranjal cantons) in innovative teaching methods. Themes addressed by our guides included: innovative teaching methodology, education planning, and child rights. During the next six months, we will expand the reach of the guides and associated training to include teachers in El Empalme and Milagro cantons.
- **Hold training events and provide technical assistance for 300 teachers from 80 schools and 40 officials from the Ministry of Education in six municipalities.** Refresher training sessions were delivered for a total of 250 teachers from 50 schools. The sessions focused on the teachers' development of materials and methods for using the new 'learning spaces'. These teachers will now go on to replicate this training for their peers, with financial support from the cantonal governments. We are continuing to support these teachers through regular monitoring visits to ensure that the 'learning spaces' are utilised to provide quality, child-friendly classes. In addition, 55 officials from local governments and technicians participated in two training sessions on public policy development and the local monitoring of children's rights (focused on education and protection). This training was organised in partnership with Grupo Faro, an Ecuadorian think tank.
- **Support the student councils of 40 schools to follow up and oversee newly implemented policies and practices in schools.** This period we have held nine workshops reaching a total of 270 children through nine student councils, four children's movements, two consultative councils, one environmental group and two first aid groups. Topics explored during the workshops included children's right to education, participation and protection, and themes such as recycling and safety in instances of fire and flooding. Children were supported to develop a series of requests, to be shared with local school and government authorities, including demands for more participatory teaching, more information on sexual and reproductive health, the establishment of recreational areas, improved school health centres

and greater investment in education. Children who participated in the workshops are now more able to oversee the implementation of policies and practices in school through holding meetings with school authorities and holding them to account. On more challenging issues, such as the mistreatment of children, they will receive support from our education advisers to work with schools and local government. During the next semester of implementation, we will expand this programme to reach a total of 40 student councils.

2: Mobilising communities

- **Carry out campaigning and awareness raising work across the six municipalities using various forms of media: local and regional radio, newsletters and TV – reaching 80,000 people.** Co-financed by the European Commission, we are supporting 10 journalists on a five-month course organised by the International Centre for Higher Education on Communication in Latin America. Through this training, the journalists will be given the skills and understanding to raise awareness within the six target municipalities about the importance of children's rights to education, protection and participation. During the course, participants will be required to create documentaries and reports presenting children in a positive light, instead of focussing on themes such as violence and abuse. Following their studies, the journalists will be monitored to record how they are applying a child's rights focus in their work.
- **Implement awareness-raising with, and mobilisation of, 80 communities (3,500 parents). Raising understanding of and ability to advocate for: the right to quality education for all children and the right of children and adolescents to be assured of safety and protection at school.** During this period we organised three festivals, two bicycle-tour days, two open-house events, and three night-celebrations promoting issues around children's right to education and protection and positive family relationships. The events were delivered in collaboration with schools, parents, children's organisations and local authorities in the cantons of El Triunfo, Naranjal, Pasaje, El Guabo and El Empalme. We worked with children to produce posters and flyers for the dissemination of key messages. Through these events we helped to facilitate community involvement and awareness of child rights: we directly reached a total of 878 adults and, indirectly, an estimated 10,500 people in 80 communities.
- **Provide capacity building support to 500 children in six youth groups (two existing in El Triunfo and Naranjal and four to be developed) who will publicise and advocate for all children's rights to education and protection.** We have delivered twelve workshops for 480 children from six youth groups, two consultative councils and three children's movements. Workshops supported children to create comic artwork and storyboards depicting their feelings towards, and knowledge of, their rights. We also used these sessions to reinforce key messaging around safety in school and responding to emergency situations.
- **Facilitate children from the youth groups in carrying out exchange visits, meetings and forums at the local or provincial level, where they can publicise and demand accountability and their right to education and protection.** Together with Save the Children (Spain), we supported three children, from their respective consultative councils in Naranjal, Pasaje and El Triunfo, to participate in an exchange visit in Quito. There, they attended a workshop on cross border issues, shared the realities of life within their cantons and discussed new ideas for defending children's rights with other children from Esmeraldas, Azuay, Sucumbios and Pichincha provinces. Ideas from this exchange will be included in a project proposal soon to be submitted to the Spanish Government by Save the Children (Spain). A follow up exchange visit will be held in February 2011 and hosted in Huaquillas, El Oro. The focus will be on migration and its implications for children which will then be used by

- **Support children and adolescents to design educational drama and radio productions.** In the next six months, we plan to develop drama and radio productions with support from student interns from universities in Guayaquil so that our beneficiaries can learn from them. In the meantime, we have delivered wall painting sessions for over 200 children in six schools in El Guabo, Pasaje and El Triunfo to improve the school environment. Participants designed illustrations that portrayed their dreams, expectations and understanding of their rights. The children learnt to work in teams, to coordinate with each other and to be tolerant. Children are proud that their designs have contributed to improvements in their schools.
- **Support children and adolescents in designing, producing and disseminating three types of promotional material raising awareness of and advocating for children's right to quality education, in a participatory and safe environment.** In year one we reported our plan to publish a book 'Our Rights Painted and Sung,' which included 23 stories developed by children. For now we have delayed the printing so as to incorporate more stories, as children's understanding of their rights in relation to their own realities increases. Our documentary film on adolescent pregnancy was put forward for the 3rd Film Festival for Children and Youth in Mexico, organised by Save the Children. Unfortunately, our film was not selected as part of the festival programme; results on the contest were publicised in August 2010 at: www.loqueveo.org. We are instead using the film as a promotional material in our work with schools and communities.

3: Directly influencing government at municipal and provincial level

- **Advocate for six municipal governments to allocate sufficient funds from their budgets towards improving the infrastructure of 80 schools.** We are working closely with the municipal governments in the target cantons. In this period, they have contributed technical support, personnel and in-kind donations totalling £13,945. Contributions have included educational materials and paints for decorating the learning spaces in 50 target schools, promotional materials, training fees and daily per-diems for local staff participating in training sessions, and salaries for local technicians that are supporting the delivery of our project activities. The continued support of the municipal governments demonstrates an understanding of the need to promote child rights within the target cantons and, by the end of year two, we will have finalised agreements with them, including financial contributions, for year three of the project. We have also continued to collaborate on strengthening the National Child Protection System. For example, a pilot initiative has been developed in El Empalme to improve the support available for children. This will involve mapping local protection institutions, their roles and responsibilities and how we will approach them.
- **Advocate for six municipal governments to support 80 schools in implementing safety and protection mechanisms and policies, and offering technical training in implementing this.** In collaboration with local authorities and implementing partners¹ we have delivered the first three-day 'Provincial Congress Against the Sexual Abuse of Children' for 400 delegates² and at which the following outcomes were agreed:
 - The definition of a by-law in El Empalme canton that will see the local authorities work to eradicate sexual violence against children;
 - The creation of a Local Standing Committee, with representatives from local public institutions, NGOs, and civil society organisations, to monitor the delivery of the new by-law;

¹ El Empalme Municipality, Guayas Provincial Government, National Council for Children, El Empalme Local Council for Children, National Institute for Children and Family, Plan International.

² Attendees drawn from: Cantonal councils, civil society organisations, local government authorities, local/national institutional representatives, child-focused organisations, teachers, and education institutions.

- A declaration to celebrate ‘Tenderness Week’ every November to raise awareness of sexual violence against children;
- A set of institutional commitments to defend children’s rights and provide protection, from the: Ombudsman’s Office, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

To engender greater accountability amongst local education authorities we have also developed a local education watch group. The group, consisting of local partner organisations, meets with local authorities on a regular basis in El Empalme to discuss and improve authorities’ delivery of child rights promotion and protection within schools and assist in the delivery of children’s events. To date, 60 such meetings have taken place.

In Milagro, we have temporarily reduced the scope of our advocacy work while the political bodies there remain de-stabilised by the current debates and petition process. Instead we are focussing our promotion of education, protection and children rights in the Mariscal Sucre Parish (in Milagro), and are working through the parish team here to garner authorities’ permission and support for our activities.

- **Advocate at provincial and national levels for the Ministry of Education to implement existing child protection laws and to incorporate new strategies and pass new laws to combat the exclusion of vulnerable and at risk children.** The current climate of political instability, as people invoke their rights under the Constitution of 2008 to petition for the removal of government figures, has delayed progress under this activity. Progress will begin once the current situation clears which we anticipate will be in the coming months.

How your support has improved children’s lives

Our direct work with children, teachers, school authorities, local authorities and communities continues to increase our impact on some of Ecuador’s most vulnerable children’s lives. Children are growing in confidence as their understanding of their rights and the means by which they can influence both their own school environment and personal safety develops through the project. Teachers are integrating participatory teaching methodologies into their teaching, which is enabling them to deliver a higher standard of education to children. A quality education will improve children’s life chances and demonstrates the importance of education to future generations. Community and authority attitudes towards education and abuse are changing slowly and children are being empowered with the knowledge and skills to make communities listen and government authorities more accountable.

Challenges and Key Learning

As reported above, the current political instability is affecting many regions in Ecuador, including the cantons of El Oro and Guayas. This situation has hindered our advocacy work during this period, as it has been challenging to secure commitment from some local governments, particularly in Milagro. Though we secured in-kind contributions towards the project from the municipalities, national institutions, NGOs, the private sector and civil society, it has been a struggle to secure all the resources required from the municipal governments. Save the Children in Ecuador is stepping up its fundraising activities in order to secure the co-financing needed to deliver this project. So far, we are pleased to report that £145,233 has been secured from the European Commission (EC) and cantonal governments to supplement the project budget in years two, three and four. The EC funding will enable us to increase the effective participation of disadvantaged children in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies to secure their rights at both local and national government levels.

Through the delivery of the Provincial Congress Against the Sexual Abuse of Children and the creation of our local education watch group, we have learnt that institutional personnel will play an important role in achieving our aims for vulnerable Ecuadorian children. We will continue to focus on developing and creating processes to empower local institutions through whom we will work to ensure the accountability of government and education authorities. To contribute to the sustainability of the project, we have ensured that the teachers we train on child-friendly teaching methodologies are also given the skills they need to train their colleagues.

Year Two - Financial Report

Expenditure this semester has reached a total of £43,654, as reported in the table below. This represents 88% of funds confirmed from LACT for the full 12-month period. This large proportion of spending from LACT funds is a direct consequence of difficulty and delays experienced in securing sufficient funding from Government in the first half of year two. We thank LACT for their understanding in this matter and are pleased to report that £145,233 has now been secured from the European Commission and cantonal governments which will be used to support the delivery of project activities in the second half of year two. We will report against the use of the remaining £6,049, and associated co-funding, in the year two report.

Activities	Planned expenditure July 2010 to June 2011	Actual expenditure July to December 2010	Notes
	GBP £	GBP £	
Improve infrastructure and sanitation at 40 schools	2,016	1,330	
Provide educational materials at 80 schools	1,500	648	Expenses incurred in the delivery of teacher training on the use of learning spaces and guides
Train and support 300 teachers and 40 officials in teaching methods and practices and Train 40 officials in public policy, inclusive education and children's rights	3,500	3,471	Short-term training of teachers and officials to continue with additional support from the EC and Educidadania
Produce and disseminate guides for 300 teachers	2,000	1,655	Part costs incurred in the organisation, promotion and delivery of the Provincial Congress Against the Sexual Abuse of Children. Second semester activity supplemented through EC funding

Activities	Planned expenditure July 2010 to June 2011	Actual expenditure July to December 2010	Notes
Carry out two exchange visits amongst teachers	3,500	3,705	One exchange visit and part costs incurred in the organisation, promotion and delivery of the Provincial Congress Against the Sexual Abuse of Children. Second semester activity supplemented through EC funding
Subtotal	12,516	10,809	
Mobilising communities			
Raise awareness and mobilise 80 communities	2,184	2,385	Part costs incurred against the organisation, promotion and delivery of 10 awareness raising events. Second semester activity supplemented through EC funding
Produce and disseminate three types of promotional material	1,800	2,266	Part costs incurred against the organisation, promotion and delivery of 10 awareness raising events. Second semester activity supplemented through EC funding
Support children in designing and producing three educational products on children's rights	1,000	562	Costs incurred in the delivery of three sessions to produce comic & artwork based on children's responses to rights education
Train and capacity build six youth groups	1,600	1,578	Delivery of 12 workshops for 480 children. Second semester activity supplemented through EC funding
Hold four meetings, exchange visits or festivals with six youth groups	1,000	1,606	One exchange visit and part costs for delivery of 12 workshops for school councils. Over-spend and second semester activity supplemented through EC funding
Subtotal	7,584	8,397	
Monitoring and evaluation			
Gather information, organise photo archive and prepare documentation	500	302	

Activities	Planned expenditure July 2010 to June 2011	Actual expenditure July to December 2010	Notes
Carry out monitoring visits	800	1,824	More monitoring visits were delivered than planned. Over-spend and second semester activity supplemented through EC funding
Baseline study in four municipalities	0	0	
Subtotal	1,300	2,126	
Delivery			
Project Coordinator salary (100%); based in Guayas	15,021	9,002	Second semester supplemented through EC funding
Contribution towards Education Advisor salary (remit includes teacher training, awareness raising)	3,100	4,701	Includes salary contributions for six local technicians. Second semester supplemented through EC funding
Contribution towards Overall Programme Coordinator salary (remit includes monitoring, evaluation, advocacy work)	2,000	698	
Travel and subsistence costs (including fuel and maintenance)	1,750	2,014	More monitoring visits were delivered than planned. Over-spend and second semester activity supplemented through EC funding
Subtotal	21,871	16,415	
Support			
Save the Children local office running costs in Guayas	1,850	1,939	Second semester supplemented through EC funding
Save the Children local office consumables costs	810	734	Second semester supplemented through EC funding
Bank charges	90	0	n/a
Subtotal	2,750	2,673	
Save the Children's organisational capability (8%)	3,682	3,234	
Total	49,703	43,654	

Co-Financing

The following table shows the co-financing amounts secured for years two, three and four of the project. Fundraising activities will continue to ensure additional co-funds for the project.

Donor	Amount	Information
Cantonal Governments	£42,857	Support for teachers and schools
European Commission (Participation Project)	£102,376	Support general project activities
Total	£145,233	

The activities described in this report were also possible with an additional £32,502 in-kind contribution to the project provided by local governments, national institutions, European Commission, private sector, personal donors, and national & international NGOs. The detail of each contribution is presented below.

Donor	Amount	Information
Cantonal Governments	£13,945.11	Salaries, trainings, school material, infrastructure, printing materials, awareness raising events and festivals
Private Sector	£1,116.71	Awareness raising events and festivals
Personal Donors	£436.50	Awareness raising events and festivals
Plan	£3,148.85	Provincial Congress Against the Sexual Abuse of Children
Grupo Faro (European Commission)	£5,982.82	Public policy trainings and local education social watch trainings
Children National Cantonal Council	£1,259.54	Teacher and technician training
Participation Project (European Commission)	£3,778.62	Journalists trainings
National Institute for Children and Youth	£629.80	Children guides reproduction
Elice Project (USDOL)	£944.70	Teaching guides reproduction
CORPEI (Investment and Exportations Production Corporation)	£1,259.54	Teaching guides reproduction
Total	£32,502.19	

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