



Volunteer with Indigenous Children in the Ecuadorian Andes - Learn Spanish, live and work with an indigenous community and explore South America

Översikt

Volunteers joining this program will be working with children aged 4 and upwards. Volunteers will plan and teach classes to support the children through the early years of their educational lives, and will be working on basic education and literacy. Working with young children is an immensely rewarding experience and although often challenging, every day is full of fun and laughter. Volunteers are able to make the classes fairly informal, fun and interactive with lots of different activities for them to master.

As part of the project volunteers will be able to learn Spanish, live with a local family in the beautiful market town Otavalo, experience indigenous Andean culture, and explore the stunning Ecuadorian area.

Projektet

Please note: our education projects in Ecuador are unique to Global Vision International. All funding of these projects comes directly from Global Vision International and volunteer contributions, included in the programme fee. We receive no other outside source of income, apart from that raised through GVI and volunteer contributions. Suffice to say, without this funding from GVI and the volunteer contributions, the projects simply would not exist.

Working with the Andean Indigenous Communities

The project is based in Otavalo, assisting the rural indigenous in 3 different communities. The Indigenous people of Otavalo and its surrounds represent 30% of the Ecuadorian demographic (the remainder being 50% mixed Spanish, 10% African Ecuadorian and 10% Other). The communities we work in are 100% indigenous and are very much removed from the influence of the western civilisation. The families are generally farmers, growing potatoes and maize and live very self sufficiently, eating their home grown food and raising pigs, cows and chickens to provide meat. They make money by selling their produce in the markets in Otavalo. The poverty level in our communities is extreme, however most of the houses in our communities have electricity now, and the children are no longer malnourished as we have been providing them with a quality balanced diet for over 3 years.

One school has 55 kids, the second 40, the third has 30 kids and our smallest school has 18 kids ranging from 3 years up to 13 years old. We place volunteers in different schools depending on the numbers of younger children, and which will be the best fit for the volunteer.

Tidigare volontärer berättar

"The time I spent on the project in Ecuador was absolutely amazing and without doubt the most immensely interesting, challenging, rewarding and valuable experience of my relatively short life. From arriving in Quito with a Spanish vocabulary of about four words and not having a clue what to expect - I went on to fall in love with the language, the country, my host family and most of all the children at the projects who were all just wonderful. It was great to meet and work alongside other volunteers who were great, and it really felt like together we were making a difference through our work. Many an afternoon would be spent trudging around Otavalo trying to find feasible solutions to any number of random missions posed to us by the projects, but the work was always enjoyable if not highly unpredictable! I would absolutely recommend doing something like this to anyone, as I feel like I've gained so much from my own time in Ecuador. It is such a great opportunity to meet some really great people and immerse yourself in a completely different culture, as well as hopefully making a positive impact through the work being done at the projects."

Meredydd Russell-Jones

"I spent ten glorious weeks in Ecuador for which, though they flew past, I would need a book to even begin to encapsulate, but here goes... GVI were very efficient to deal with and everyone from the organisation I met in Ecuador; Rowena, Washington, Dom and Doreen, went out of their way to settle me in and make me feel welcome.

The children in the community were fabulous to work with. They were so welcoming on my first day that I forgot how little Spanish I had and when I didn't understand something, they would help me by miming. The nine weeks I had working with them were just not enough. They are so unspoilt and just giving them a pencil will put a huge smile on their faces. By the time I left, I felt I had gotten to know the children in my class really well and had gained their trust.

The project in Ecuador is still quite new so gaining the community's trust is very important. Over the weeks, I could see the parents beginning to acknowledge the volunteers more and more, which was so rewarding. On Dia de la Madre, all of the children who had gotten jumpers from us for their birthday were wearing them at the fiesta at the school and on another day the teachers made a speech telling the children to be grateful for everything we had done for the school. Little things like that, and watching the shy children in the class coming up to you more and more for help, really made me feel we were making a difference.

My mother, who is a primary school teacher in Ireland, is taking my photos to show her pupils to show them how lucky they really are so my trip will hopefully broaden the horizons not only of the children I worked with but also some children in rural Ireland. Definitely a life-enriching experience."

Orlaith Delaney



Ett av skolbarnen

Vilken skillnad gör detta projekt?

With just one or two teachers per school, the volunteers' teaching presence allows the children more opportunity to receive help in their education. Having a volunteer planning and teaching lessons, dedicated to a grade in the school at an early stage in the childrens' education is of great benefit. A substantial part of the fee goes towards the day-to-day running costs of the projects themselves throughout the year, including daily transport, food subsidies for the school meals and fruit for the children (sometimes their only meal of the day), educational materials for classes, painting and maintenance.

Höjdpunkter

Living in the heart of the community in Otavalo; working with indigenous children; learning Spanish (optional); adventure side trips, cultural workshops and excursions, amazing community interaction.

Plats

Nestling high in the Andes, a few hours from Ecuador's capital city, volunteers stay in the town of Otavalo. This market town is famous for its handicraft market and indigenous Andean community, and is a popular destination for visitors to the country. The town has many amenities including the Spanish school, internet access, bars and restaurants. Volunteers work either within communities situated about a one hour minivan ride up from Otavalo, up in the mountains as high as 3500m or a short bus ride and a half hour hike.

Ute i fält

Living with local families in Otavalo in comfortable accommodation allows for an enriching cultural experience and the valuable opportunity to practice Spanish! You will have your own private room, with hot water and three meals a day provided. The food is very typical of the area, being varied and including meats and plenty of vegetables and fruits. Vegetarians are also well catered for. Travel upgrades are available on this project see dates and costs for more information.

Otavalo has been one of the most important textile markets and trading posts in the Andes since 500BC. It is situated at the foot of the Imbabura volcano, next to the San Pablo Lake, with the Cotacachi volcano looming in the distance. Today, with a population of under 50,000, Otavalo's paved streets are teeming with colour, especially as the indigenous people descend to sell their wares in the Plaza de Ponchos. There are several internet cafes, bars and restaurants to relax in, and beautiful parks to sit and watch the world go by, listening to local folkloric pipe music and marvelling at the traditional dress still worn today by the majority of the population.

Förkunskaper

Spanish classes are ESSENTIAL for those Volunteers with no previous Spanish experience and highly recommended for those who want to brush up on their Spanish language. For those taking Spanish classes, you have forty hours of one-on-one Spanish classes, which are flexible to your level and start from basic to advanced. The lessons take place in an excellent Spanish school in the centre of Otavalo. The classes are structured to give you everyday conversation and grammar, and also an insight into the type of Spanish you will need to teach the lessons. You will be taking 4-6 hours of Spanish lessons per day from Monday to Friday for your first week. Volunteers will then complete their hours as 2-hour classes to be taken during the course of their stay, after school has finished in their community.

Blueberry Volontär

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Livet på projektet

If you are taking Spanish, the first two weeks will be spent mainly concentrating on this, though you will get a chance to go to the communities to shadow existing volunteers.

Once the Spanish classes have been taken, you will travel to the communities on a daily basis from Monday to Friday in a minivan (or a safe public bus if you are working in Larcacunga) the price of which is included. The journey takes approximately 1 hour from Otavalo up into the rural mountains where our communities are based. We leave Otavalo at 7am and are back in Otavalo by 2.30pm. The school day starts at 8.00am, and the morning classes runs until around 10.45am. At 11.00am we feed the children lunch that we cook with help from the local mothers.

The afternoon class runs from 11.30 until 1.00pm. After this we clean up the classes with the kids, and give out fruit. The minivan, or public bus leaves to go back to Otavalo at 1.30pm after some playtime with the kids. The classes are mainly based around broad topics such as mathematics, language, social sciences, sports, and art. You will be informed of all the classroom information and structure when you get to Otavalo. You will also be trained in lesson planning and classroom management before you get to the schools, and you will be eased into the teaching environment slowly and gently, based on your confidence levels.

The aim of our project is primarily around education for the children, with a secondary view to help the community as a whole wherever we can. With our help we can reduce the teacher to student ratio from 40 kids to 1 teacher, down to 10 to 1, or less. In doing this we can give the kids a lot more individual attention, identifying weaknesses and building on their strengths and interests. We can bring in resources to aid teaching that the kids would not otherwise have, and can create lessons that are exciting, practical based and fun.

We try to make the classes dynamic, using various methods of teaching, including oral, copies, exercise books, games and other methods the individual volunteer can bring in. We promote the idea of the volunteer bringing in their own ideas too and also to teach other subjects, as well to reach the goals by the end of the year.

The rate of transition from primary school to high school in Ecuador is alarmingly low. Only around 12% of children attend high school. In our communities we are not only trying to change the mindset of parents and encourage our kids to continue their schooling after grade 6, but we are also providing the necessary funding to allow them to attend high school in Otavalo. Our aim is to ensure that the children are physically, mentally and emotionally prepared for secondary school education and then financially support them through it.

Anat att göra

The excursions organised by GVI (at a small additional cost-see dates and costs for more information) are a weekend with the perfect mix of adventure and relaxation in the quaint town of Mindo, which sits in the cloud forest on the western slope of the Andes Mountains and is home to over 350 bird species. This trip includes an overnight stay (including breakfast); an exhilarating white water tubing trip down one of Mindo's gorgeous, churning rivers; a visit to a local hummingbird garden and a breathtaking canyoning trip.

There is also a day on horse back and trekking (or just trekking if you prefer) through the perfect green countryside of an indigenous community called Taxopumba, south of Otavalo, to an amazing hidden gem of a waterfall, yet to be discovered by the package tourists.

There are also plenty of other great places to see within a 5 hour drive of Otavalo, including the Amazon rainforest, the Ecuadorian Coast, a rooftop train journey in the mountains around Riobamba and numerous other adventures. There are areas for hiking, active volcanoes to visit and climb, and natural hot pools to sit and soak in.

Additionally, in your own time, there are plenty of opportunities for cultural tours, museums, volcano hikes, yoga and cookery classes, which have proved very popular with previous volunteers and also relaxing spas for those wanting to pamper themselves at the weekend after a hard week's work!

Utflykt till Quilatao-kratern



Foton från projektet



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