



Andrew
Finch
Education
Trust

Newsletter 30

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Hello, and here is our latest news from our projects in Ecuador! We have John's overview on the political, economic and health situation, an update on our Education Centre, Child sponsorship project, Online School Project and fundraising.

Our move to help the families in the community by providing secondary students with computers and primary children with tablets, and to pay for Wi-Fi expenses has been really successful, enabling 17 children to attend school online while the schools in Ecuador remain closed. More details of this are below!



The Health, Economic and Political Situation in Ecuador by John Potts



Political News

We have a new president, Guillermo Lasso -an ex banker - who promises to vaccinate quickly, open up the economy and improve national safety and security. This marks a change to 14 years of very left wing populist politics that has left the state close to bankruptcy. Whether Lasso is the man to get the economy back on track remains to be seen, but trade deals with Europe and the US are on the table. Whilst the country is still divided, it is interesting that many indigenous communities have sided with Lasso, and there is certainly optimism in the business community now.

Health News

The good news is that Ecuador is one of the few countries in South America to have kept Covid-19 largely in check. The hospitals have been under great strain of course, but obligatory mask wearing and quarantines seem to have helped.

Lasso has promised 9 million vaccinations in his first 100 days ... this compared to fewer than 1 million vaccinations so far in the past 6 months. The challenge will be contracting enough vaccine doses - developing countries have struggled secure Pfizer and Astra Zenica, so contracts have been made with Sinovac (Chinese) and Sputnik (Russian). Fingers crossed the rollout will be fast, as this is a vital step to reactivate the economy.

Education News

Schools and universities have been closed across the country since March 2020. While classes have continued online, typically only 1 or 2 hours are taught each day, and not all children have access to internet or tablets / phones to access classes. The result has been a lost year in the education of millions. Last week the government announced that more than 1000 schools will return to action next week with voluntary attendance. Hopefully with vaccine rollout and re-opening of schools the education situation will improve, but it may be a slow process throughout 2021.

Our projects in Ecuador by Maria Teresa Lopez



In January we began online classes in reading and maths to our supported children run by our group of local volunteers. We also started to loan library books with our volunteers making sure this process is Covid compliant with regards to any overcrowding and quarantining and cleaning the books. We also pay the volunteers' travel expenses, so they can take private transport rather than public buses.

Andrew Finch Education Centre, Semester Two, 16 Jan 2021

Main activities at the Centres: We have 60 members and an average of 42 children participating in the online contests, which was beyond our expectations. We had much more participation in the contests than before.

Courses, lessons and others activities with children: We gave classes and individual help with homework to primary and secondary students. Our three volunteers organised online contests for reading, creativity and Christmas song,

the participations of children and parents was very good. We continue with the course in abstract knowledge, mathematical logic, reading comprehension, math, and physics, to secondary school students.

Equipment: We maintained our library computers with the purpose of lending them to children. They needed cameras and external Wi-Fi adapters.

Community relationships: Our personal relationship with children, parents and other people in the communities continues to be very good and more close than before. We had very fluent online communication with the families.

Local volunteers: Diana was our library coordinator this semester, with help from 2 mothers and 6 local volunteers from secondary school. They help with organizing contests, maintenance and cleaning.

School fund: We helped seven secondary students to pay for Wi-Fi. Sixteen secondary students were helped with costs for their printed homework. Five students that finished secondary school were helped with their graduation expenses. Two students received cameras for their PCs, enabling them to take part in remote schooling. We continue the preparation of secondary school students for the national test, which according to the score will allow them to continue with their studies after graduation.

CHILD SPONSORSHIP-Taitakuna Programme, Report from January 2021

Children: A total of 44 children were covered by the program. There were 13 sponsored children and a further 17 siblings received nearly the same benefits. 14 other children received partial benefits of the program. We had continuous communication with the parents and children online.

Food & Clothing: 78 deposits were made to parents for their market expenses, and shoes were given to three children.

Education: The economic help in education was focused on the primary students, 22 children received help for school supplies. 14 children members had support to take online classes. Other activities were focused on interaction through internet contests with the children and their families.

Health: We provided support for health conditions including allergies, Covid medicines and opticians appointments. We paid for x-rays, transport and treatment following some accidents including a child falling from a 2nd floor, a dog bite and an accident involving some cows.

Parents, children and I, are very grateful for your continued support, that in these difficult times has been extremely important, as many parents lost their job. We are really grateful to all our supporters.

Online school project

Canada Life Re-insurance – Supporting Sustainable Community Life project - and AFET funded 12 PCs, laptops and tablets, and funded internet expenses for these families for 2020. We have also updated and learnt computers that were not being used in our Education Centre to students to use for home-learning. Some siblings also benefit from this help.

In March 2021 Canada Life made a further educational bursary, and this will help greatly with the Wi-Fi expenses for the children who have received tablets and computers. We would like to thank former volunteer, Fergus Cooney, from Canada Life for help with this project and our supporters in the UK and beyond who have donated in order to make this project to help children continue studying successful.



Fundraising

Our biggest fundraising event is always Christmas, and this year with your support we sold **ALL** our Christmas cards and received generous donations from many of our supporters. As well as Christmas we have these fundraising projects planned for the summer.

1. Online Bridge Social

We have had one bridge afternoon since the last newsletter. It was highly successful raising just over £1000. Obviously on line bridge is not as sociable as playing face-to-face, on the other hand it is a great deal less work with our not having to put tables up and get tea ready for 40 people. I am enormously grateful to Keith who has been our bridge director for all our online events so far. We think it is unlikely that we will return to our traditional bridge events until we are well clear of Covid.

So our next online bridge event is on July 11th and we are really grateful for the help of Mark from Pinner Bridge Club who is going to direct this event. If you would like to play please email Adrienne for more information adriennefinch28@gmail.com

2. Ros's Surrey half marathon challenge



I did my first 10 mile run last October and this was much harder than I anticipated! I ended up having a running accident around 2 weeks before the event which meant my training stopped while I recovered. So I did the 10 mile run having not completed my training schedule which meant the final 3 miles were a real struggle! I was supported by a team from St John's Running Club which enabled me to complete the run and smash my fundraising target.

So now I am in training for my first half marathon – **The Surrey Half on 26th September**. I have 100 days to go until the run so I have a rigorous 14 week training schedule ahead!

You can sponsor me here | <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/AFETSurreyhalf>.

3. Declutter and Donate

If you have some good quality and recently published 2nd hand books, you can package them up and sell them, donating the proceeds to our charity.

Find out more | <https://bit.ly/3eUhGcd>

Website John and Ros have updated our website following a period where we had lost access to it. You can have a look at the website here www.afetuk.org

Facebook [Follow us here](#)

Best wishes, Ros, Adrienne, John and Rose