



### Wiñari: Combating Indigenous Child Labor

*Agro-Technological Training and Accelerated Education for Better Opportunity*

Ecuador's indigenous children are more likely to enter into the work force at a young age than attend school, often being deprived of their right to an education. Many of these children will help provide for their families by working in agriculture, carrying loads too heavy for their age, fertilizing crops without the necessary protective gear, fishing with dynamite, and hunting with guns. These activities, while helping to contribute to the livelihood of their families, put the children at risk of injury or serious illness. According to Ecuador's 2001 census, about 29% of indigenous children work as paid laborers. That number dramatically increases to nearly 9 out of 10 children when unpaid labor, such as working on the family farm, is included. Only 40% of indigenous working children aged six to ten are in the school grade that corresponds with their age. This percentage drops to 9% for children aged twelve to seventeen. Only 30% of indigenous children stay in school until the age of 16, with most dropping out of school around the age of 12 for work. The high rates of drop-out and child labor contribute to an intergenerational cycle of poverty. Studies show that only about 20% of the children of poorly educated parents are able to finish secondary education, a level judged to be the minimum necessary for moving out of poverty.



To ensure that children do not reenter hazardous work environments, World Learning, with generous support from the US Department of Labor, is working with parents, teachers, and community leaders to provide education for the children as well as trainings for the adults on the importance of education and the implications of child labor. Educating parents about the importance of an education is vital, as many indigenous parents do not appreciate the actual value of their child's schooling. This project enlightens parents on the ways in which their child's education will actually benefit the family in the long run. The children will be trained in how to increase production, diversify crops and keep livestock, skills which will in turn increase production on family farms.



World Learning has already actively supported the removal of over 3,000 of Ecuador's indigenous children from hazardous work environments through their enrollment in education-based programs. World Learning has been conducting accelerated education programs at the primary, junior high and senior high school levels. In addition World Learning has been conducting after-school and summer school programs. Each of these programs involves contextualized school curriculum and training materials developed in Spanish and in Kichwa, the local language. Teachers are provided with specialized trainings in both child labor prevention and in how to use the new curriculum.

In addition to the accelerated education program, the World Learning's Wiñari project has also established and developed curriculum for two specialized agro-technological senior high schools in rural Ecuador. These schools educate indigenous youth about safe and improved farming practices, such as the importance of using protection when fertilizing crops; how to diversify income generation through new crops and livestock; and how to manage the financial aspects of a farm. This new knowledge will help increase productivity on family farms, enabling students and their siblings to complete higher educational levels and gain essential skills for life.

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World Learning, an international NGO and educational provider based in Washington, DC, and Vermont, USA, has been focused for 75 years on bridging cultures and transforming lives. Today, World Learning runs international development programs, study abroad, and graduate education in more than 75 countries, directly impacting the lives of thousands of people each year. The organization has an annual operating revenue in excess of \$100 million.

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