



## GOOD PRACTICES TO END CHILD LABOUR

### Co-management for the prevention and progressive eradication of child labour in indigenous populations

#### Wiñari Project



**Country**  
Ecuador



**Creation year and validity**

It was implemented from September 2005 to April 2010. Subsequently, the experience was resumed and developed in various initiatives.



**Responsible institution(s)**

The practice was carried out in a joint action between the American non-governmental organization *World Learning for International Development* and the Ecuadorian non-governmental organization *Desarrollo y Autogestión (DYA)*, in close collaboration with local actors, indigenous organizations, provincial head departments of education, school principals and community leaders.



Child labour in  
Indigenous Populations

In the framework of the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour, eight factors with potential for accelerating the rhythm of the reduction of child labour and advancing in the achievement of the goal 8.7 of the SDGs have been prioritized.

In the Latin American and Caribbean region, children and adolescents belonging to indigenous peoples are more exposed to child labour, particularly hazardous labour and illegal forms, as a result of the precarious living conditions of their families and of their communities and the weak presence of government institutions in their territories. Protecting them from child labour and ensuring the full exercise of their rights implies jointly identifying sustainable responses based on the values and cultural practices of these peoples.



## Background

As indicated in the report *Good parliamentary practices for the effective implementation of laws and policies for the prevention of trafficking*<sup>1</sup>, developed by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the Government of Ecuador estimated that by 2016 near to 360 thousand children in the country were involved in child labour or in the worst forms of child labour<sup>2</sup>, including commercial sexual exploitation, often as a result of trafficking. Similarly, it had been identified that the trafficking of children, in this country, was also associated with domestic or forced agricultural labour and street begging. In the case of indigenous children, they were also affected by falling behind in their schooling.

To reduce the incidence of child labour, particularly in its worst forms, the Wiñari Project was adopted in two sub-regions in Ecuador so that boys and girls had better access to quality education. Prior to its inception, different preparatory activities were carried out: it was established that the indigenous organizations of Ecuador, with whom it was expected

---

1 Source: Good parliamentary practices for the effective implementation of laws and policies for the prevention of trafficking (2016). AFPPD. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/parliamentary-good-practices-effective-implementation-laws-and-policies-prevention>

2 These are not strictly forced labour, but child labour in general, including its worst form. This number corresponds to the last specialized survey on child labour of 2013. Thus, for 2016, the official number continued to be the same, based on this source.

## To reduce the incidence of child labour, particularly in its worst forms, the Wiñari Project was adopted in two sub-regions in Ecuador so that boys and girls had better access to quality education.

---

to interact during the execution, have work plans that include relevant aspects for their development, such as bilingual education, intercultural health, the defense of their ancestral territories, agro-ecology and the improvement of family income. However, the issue of child labour was not addressed, among other reasons, because it was not considered as a problem that could have a negative impact on their communities or affect the development of indigenous children.

Taking into account the above, the project's objectives included the introduction of the debate on child labour in the agendas of indigenous organizations and the discussion on alternatives to eradicate hazardous forms, reintegrate boys and girls into the educational system and contribute to this way to their development. The prior relationship with indigenous organizations and the establishment of a dialogue, which maintained permanent recognition of their organizational structures, was essential for the development of the initiative.



## Issue we proposed to address

The Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC) (National Institute of Statistics and Census), as the entity responsible for the production of statistics in Ecuador, and the Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo (SENPLADES) (National Secretariat of Planning and Development), carried out in 2012 the National Survey of Child Labour (ENTI)<sup>3</sup>. The survey proposed a national, urban, rural and natural region breakdown.

According to the results of the survey, with regard to children and adolescents between 5 and 17 years-old, 8.56% performed child labour activities, and of this group, 56% performed activities that are considered to be hazardous and, therefore, prohibited.

It was also established that, although the majority of the population between 5 and 17 years-old lived in urban areas, child labour was concentrated in rural areas where boys and girls worked about five times more than in urban areas. In the case of children 5 to 12 years-old, it was 12.5% compared to 2.7%, and in adolescents it was 26.3% compared to 9.5%, that is, three times more.

---

3 Information available at <https://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/trabajo-infantil/>

The high rate of child labour in rural areas was directly related to the incidence of child labour in indigenous children, which reached 26%, and in the case of the adolescent population it amounted to 39%.

On the other hand, and as part of the final design of the Wiñari Project, a baseline was carried out in 2006 to understand the problem with respect to indigenous girls, boys and adolescents engaged in child labour in Ecuador. The results indicated that 69.9% of those under 18 years of age, who lived in the Wiñari Project's area of influence, worked and studied, while 15% only studied. The study also established that 87% were engaged in agriculture and worked on their own farm; the remaining 13% were engaged in agriculture (41%) or looked after animals (13.8%).

Another relevant result established that bilingual education for indigenous boys and girls in Ecuador was not only of poor quality, but also that parents found it irrelevant to the point that they preferred that their underage children work instead of study.

It should be noted, however, that the work carried out by children and adolescents in domestic and field activities, under certain conditions, is considered educational. This concept is incorporated in the Code of the Boy, Girl and Adolescent of Ecuador and is expressed in the same way by indigenous communities, considering it as a means by which knowledge is transferred from fathers and mothers to sons and daughters. But, it was established as a hazardous activity when, for example, it is performed for more than four hours a day.

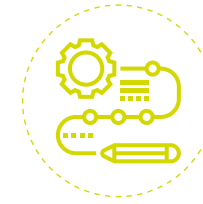


### Objectives of the practice

The Wiñari Project set out to reduce the number of indigenous boys and girls involved or at risk of becoming involved in hazardous forms of child labour, through the promotion of education to increase school attendance, and the progressive reduction of working hours until the elimination of child labour.

The specific objectives were:

- 1 Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children, and mobilize a wide range of actors to improve educational infrastructures. And, in particular, to advocate for the issue of child labour to be adopted as a priority for organizations and institutions that work with indigenous boys and girls.
- 2 Strengthen the formal education systems that encourage the children who work, and those in risk of working, to attend school.
- 3 Strengthen the national institutions and policies on education and child labour.
- 4 Guarantee the long term sustainability of these efforts.



### Methodology developed

#### 1 The selection of zones for intervention

For the final selection of the zones, the following were established as basic criteria: i) the zones in which the indigenous population was the majority and was organized were considered; ii) communities that did not have similar government programs were targeted, in order not to duplicate efforts and open the possibility to the most excluded communities; iii) the level of poverty was taken into account; iv) it was avoided, for logistical reasons, that the areas to be targeted were very dispersed; and v) the potentialities that the zones presented to address the issue of child labour were assessed.

The final prioritization of the zones was carried out in coordination with indigenous organizations, provincial education head departments, and representatives of local governments.

The project was targeted in three geographic areas: indigenous communities in the central highlands of the country, the northern Amazon and the Metropolitan District of Quito. In the highlands and in the Amazon region, the project focused on boys and girls engaged in agriculture; while in Quito, the efforts were directed at minors who were engaged as street vendors.

2

## Drawing the base line

A diagnosis of the characteristics of child labour and the educational situation of the child population was carried out to establish the baseline of the intervention.

The resistance of indigenous communities to sharing information was overcome thanks to the trust and certainty that was generated about the actions that would be carried out together. As a result, it was possible to accurately register the beneficiaries of the project.

3

## The process of socialization and dissemination of the proposal at the local level

Once the diagnostic information was collected, it was possible to share and comment on the results with the communities. Through workshops, it was possible for the communities to make visible that there was a tendency to minimize the problem. In other words, there was the idea that sons and daughters did not work, but only helped around the house. But in reality, the help meant, for example, demanding days of five hours or more per day, even completing workdays longer than those of adults. Also, boys and girls assumed responsibilities that were not commensurate with their age; for example, the grazing of sheep that was carried out from the age of six, in the early morning hours, interrupting their sleep hours.

Based on the results, dialogues and agreements were generated on the actions to be undertaken.

4

## The beginning of educational opportunities in the field

From the socialization of the results with the indigenous communities, there was a dialogue about the pedagogical proposals raised to face the educational problems detected. Based on the agreements that were reached, a preparation stage began on the ground for its implementation and development. Basic operational issues related to the operation of the programs, the layout of the classrooms, the level of educational lag of each of the boys and girls were adapted to place them in the different cycles, and the printing of the modules to offer them in the classrooms. Once the competencies were established, the fathers and mothers, indigenous organizations, schools and each one of those involved assumed part of the responsibility.

On-site monitoring during this start-up stage was very close and what was called the “early warning system” was put into operation: if a child or adolescent was absent for two days in a row from class, the teacher in charge had to immediately notify the local technician of the program for their intervention in the family group.

After a year of work on getting closer to the areas, characterization of the forms of child labour to be faced, design of the monitoring and management system, concretion of the pedagogical proposal in a curriculum and in a didactic material to be applied in the classroom, and then after the selection and training of teachers, the Wiñari Project concluded the preparatory stage to start the intervention in the communities and schools selected.

## The methodological pillars of the Wiñari Project

The model proposed by DYA gathered its experience of more than 15 years of work and was built on three main pillars as axes of the intervention: 1) the participation of the organized community; 2) the strengthening of public institutions and 3) territorial management.

The first pillar referred to the participation of the organized community laid out the project management from the same indigenous organizational structure, assuming a facilitating position in the background. It was proposed not only to make the project known to the community, but they also planned strategies for their participation in the implementation and in decision-making over time. Likewise, it committed the community with the purpose of protecting children and adolescents and eradicating child labour.

The second pillar was directed towards strengthening public institutions. Care was taken to avoid the provision of parallel services in the intervention areas. The project designed educational content to be integrated into the public school curriculum, in such

---

**The resistance of indigenous communities to sharing information was overcome thanks to the trust and certainty that was generated about the actions that would be carried out together. As a result, it was possible to accurately register the beneficiaries of the project.**

**One of the specific activities included an enhanced training program on the agricultural skills that children and adolescents were likely to need both in the future, as well as in the part-time work they could participate in while still of school age.**

---

a way, that the accelerated education offer and the extended day school support reached the community as school services and not as an intervention provided by external agents.

This design favored that, by involving the indigenous organization with the community in an alliance with the public school, a greater commitment was achieved on the part of indigenous families.

The third pillar considered child labour not from a branch of activity (child labour in bananas, in flowers, in mines, in construction, among others) but from the territory. This is because indigenous boys, girls and adolescents are involved in child labour in different occupations. From this approach, the diagnosis focused on identifying in detail the areas with the greatest educational deficiencies and with the highest concentration of child labour.

An important aspect of the implementation was identifying and reaching indigenous boys, girls and adolescents who had fallen behind in school and were at risk or already involved in the labour market. One of

the specific activities included an enhanced training program on the agricultural skills that children and adolescents were likely to need both in the future, as well as in the part-time work they could participate in while still of school age. These vocational skills programs kept students busy outside of school hours and decreased their exposure to the risks of child labour. Then they were able to increase their skills related to agriculture and other basic economic aspects of the family, in such a way that they could improve their economic situation. This provided parents with direct evidence of the value of education in contributing to the well-being of the whole family.

In addition, through the development of vocational training and other basic education courses, the Wiñari Project improved the capacity of local educational institutions. Provided teacher training and curricular support to enhance the student experience and project effectiveness. The teacher training was designed not only to increase the quality of teaching in the Wiñari Project courses, but also to create lasting change in predominantly rural educational systems and institutions.

Finally, the base of the three pillars was supplemented with a system of co-management of the Project with the indigenous organization and the public educational system. In each province, a management committee was formed with the participation of indigenous organizations, representatives of the Provincial Head Department of Bilingual Education and of the Project. The committee managed and coordinated each of the aspects related to planning, prioritizing actions, targeting, and budgeting, as well as solving problems and meeting the agreed goals.

The following is a brief synthesis of the components that the Project developed:



**Educational Component**

- Accelerated Elementary (AE), which included the assessment of skills and abilities and preparatory cycles.
- Abbreviated Basic Cycle (ABC), which included the assessment of abilities and skills and preparatory cycles.
- After-school assistance program, which included personality development activities.
- Improvement of the secondary school program in two schools.
- Additional attempts to reinsert and retain children and adolescents in schools, through summer school programs and practical workshops during Christmas.
- Improvement of the quality of education, through the training of teachers and tutors and the preparation of suitable didactic and educational materials for each program.



**Control and Monitoring Component**

- Student attendance.
- Verification with the home of the reasons behind the non-attendance and the working conditions (visits to the homes).

- Follow-up of the working conditions.
- Class attendance with tutors and teachers and compliance with the curriculum developed.
- Performance assessment of teachers, tutors and technicians in the meetings of the Committee held in the area (with the participation of the community representatives).



### **Child Labour Value Change Component (raising awareness and community mobilization)**

- Raise awareness among parents, communities, all teachers and school leaders and those responsible for education offices.
- Disseminate public information and awareness campaigns by radio.
- Participation in national campaigns on child labour with other stakeholders.



### **Community Participation Component**

- In the project design.
- In the project management (through the Local Management Committee).
- In the teacher, tutor and technician hiring and assessment processes (through the Local Management Committee).
- In the plan to make the actions undertaken sustainable.

Two years after starting the project, the implementing agency partnered with the Government of Ecuador to expand some components, including research on trends and patterns in trafficking in minors and child labour, as well as programs of accelerated education.

Complementing the above, the experience developed in the Wiñari Project served to contribute to the design and execution of a program with similar characteristics and objectives in Bolivia: the Ñaupakman Puri Project for the prevention and eradication of indigenous child labour in Bolivia. The project also had financing from USDOL.

In terms of methodologies, the Wiñari Project was the initial “laboratory” with which DYA designed and validated the accelerated education methodology to serve children and adolescents with severe school lag or extra age that, due to child labour and other associated factors, are significantly behind and maintain an age gap with respect to the corresponding educational level, which ranges from two years or more.

This methodology was later adapted and implemented in both Bolivia and Peru. The Wiñari Project was also the initial space in which the strategy to address the problem of child begging was designed and tested, which later became a national program in force until now in Ecuador.



### **Expected results**

As a general result, the project proposed to reduce the number of indigenous boys, girls and adolescents at risk or in a situation of child labour, providing direct educational services to 6,323 children, of whom 2,124 had to be withdrawn and 4,053 prevented. At the end, the project managed to meet and exceed the objective to which it had committed: during the four years of intervention, it served 7,065 children and adolescents in educational programs, of which 4,735 were withdrawn and 2,330 prevented.

---

**In terms of methodologies, the Wiñari Project was the initial “laboratory” with which DYA designed and validated the accelerated education methodology to serve children and adolescents with severe school lag or extra age that, due to child labour and other associated factors, are significantly behind and maintain an age gap with respect to the corresponding educational level, which ranges from two years or more.**



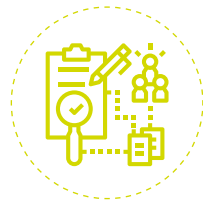
### Economic, human resources and inputs required

World Learning and DYA designed the Wiñari Project to be implemented over a period of four years, with a budget of 4 million American dollars. The USDOL provided DYA 95 thousand additional American dollars in the fiscal year 2006 to fight the trafficking of minor persons for forced begging in the provinces of Cotopaxi and Tungurahua.

With regard to the human resource and the personnel structure, the team was mainly made up of local tutors, teachers and technicians. A total of 174 persons were linked to this, of which 96 were tutors (55%); 29 were Accelerated Elementary teachers (17%); 20 were teachers from the Basic Cycle (11%) and 12 were local technicians (7%).

---

## The Wiñari Project proposed as a basis the design and implementation of actions integrated into the services and programs provided by the previously existing public institutions in the intervention areas.



### Criteria that identify it as a good practice



### Innovation

The Wiñari Project proposed as a basis the design and implementation of actions integrated into the services and programs provided by the previously existing public institutions in the intervention areas. This marked an important difference between the project and the majority of educational programs aimed at working children and adolescents, in which a structure is often developed parallel to public programs.

The Project chose to carry out the programs to the public school itself, so that the accelerated education offers and the Extended Hours School Support program reached the community as school services rather than as intervention mechanisms from external agents.

The project innovated, in the same way, in the design established for its management. A co-management system was created and implemented which, although it was clear that it implied more complex processes and longer times for dialogue and agreement, it favored achieving more forceful and lasting results.

It should be noted that the co-management system did not consider that the project's executing agency renounced its technical responsibilities, but rather it ensured an adequate level of participation, execution and administrative responsibility for the actors involved.



### Relevance

Taking into account the specificity of indigenous child labour and, in particular, the negative impact on the educational capital of indigenous children and adolescents, it was relevant that the design of the project focused on strengthening education from the different components it addressed. It contributed to raising awareness about the importance of education and mobilized a significant group of people to improve and expand educational structures in Ecuador. In addition, it strengthened the formal and alternative educational systems to make education more motivating for children and adolescents at risk or in situations of child labour.



### Effectiveness

In terms of prevention and eradication of child labour, the extension of the school day had an immediate effect in reducing the number of hours during which children and adolescents could perform domestic and/or agricultural tasks. During the evaluation, parents

were asked if their children's return to school and extracurricular programs were inconvenient for them in terms of household and/or agricultural tasks. The responses indicated that, when observing the positive results, the families were willing to take on the tasks that their sons and daughters previously performed.



### Efficiency

Initially, the Wiñari Project committed to withdrawing 2,197 children and adolescents from child labour and preventing 4,127 from entering such activity, over a period of four years; as well as to provide direct education services to 6,324 children and adolescents. This number increased to 6,470, with the inclusion of 146 children and adolescents, thanks to the increase in the budget in 2006. As of March 2009, six months before concluding its activities, the Wiñari Project had already provided direct services to 6,812 children, girls and adolescents, 5% more than the estimated group of beneficiaries. In addition, the Wiñari Project reported having removed 4,520 minors from child labour, more than double their initial commitment, and prevented 2,219 from entering such activity. In other words, 54% of its initial commitment. Having achieved these results before the established time period shows an efficient use of financial and human resources.

The selection and choice of intervention areas and the design of the entire system with different components also contributed to this.



### Replicability

For replicating the practice, the implementation of all its components must be taken into account. The application of only the educational component, without the control and monitoring component, or the community participation component, for example, would not produce the expected results. This aspect of the program is of great importance.



### Sustainability

The designed strategy proposed as a sustainability factor the joint development of actions with the public institution. To do this, it worked closely with the then National Institute for Children and the Family (INFA), which is currently, part of the Ministry of Social Welfare and with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion.

The INFA assumed the accelerated education program as part of its institutional offer to serve working children and adolescents. However, the mid-term evaluation of the Wiñari Project noted that this strategy could be weak because this institution, although it had jurisdiction over the protection system and resources for specific services for the eradication of child labour, was not the governing body in the matter of Education. In any case, it was recognized that, at that time, the issue of child labour had not permeated the structure of the Ministry of Education

and was not a visible issue or of interest to that portfolio, and there was only a commitment from the provincial head departments with which the project had worked.

Only after several years of implementation of the Accelerated Primary and Accelerated Basic Cycle programs and once the Mayor's Office of the Metropolitan District of Quito (capital of Ecuador) also assumed the program as part of its educational model, did the Ministry of Education take into consideration this model, which by then had been developed as a "Flexible Basic Education Program". Four years after the Wiñari Project ended, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education signed an agreement with DYA to expand the program nationwide, with emphasis on adolescents who were outside the educational system and who, having finished primary school, had not been able to complete the last three years of basic education<sup>4</sup>.

The Ministry of Education, together with DYA and UNICEF, undertook the largest effort made at the national level and managed to reinsert 50 thousand minors into the educational system. They participated in the educational acceleration program so that, later on, they would be able to continue with their regular course in the baccalaureate cycle.

The Municipality of Quito proposed, for its part, to eliminate the severe school gap or extra age among adolescents in the district and to reinsert those who were outside the school system to take

---

<sup>4</sup> (or access secondary education, according to the nomenclature of most countries).



the Accelerated Basic Cycle program. When the program started in 2011, 25 thousand adolescents and young people were in this situation. After eight years of sustained implementation, the Metropolitan District practically reached the goal. According to the latest survey of living conditions, there are only 980 adolescents in this situation. In other words, the program managed to reinsert and level 96% of people in the aforementioned condition.

DYA supported the Municipality of Quito to implement the program in its education system; trained the team of the Metropolitan Head Department of Education and the teachers in charge and transferred the program designed within the framework of the Wiñari Project, so that after three years of technical assistance, it could be implemented autonomously. Likewise, in order to strengthen the sustainability of the practice, the Project transferred the activities to INFA.

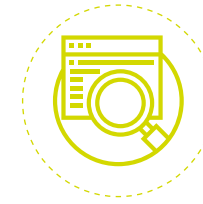
In the same way, the co-management system and strategic alliances with the indigenous organization and with public institutions contributed to the sustainability of the practice. For this, the training of human capital was assumed as a priority, promoting the transfer of knowledge and management and development techniques to the people of the communities.



### Transfer of the practice among the countries

The Wiñari Project served as the basis for, later on, designing and launching the Ñaupakman Puri Project in Bolivia. The proposal made by this country included an educational offer similar to the one developed in Ecuador, taking into account that they faced problems of a similar nature among working boys, girls and adolescents in the country.

The Project in Bolivia advanced and produced new knowledge and experience and based on this previous development, DYA designed the “Semilla” project in Peru, also with funding from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL).



### Bibliography

ICF Macro & USDOL. (2009). *Independent Final Evaluation of Combating Exploitive Child Labor Through Education in Ecuador: the Wiñari Project*. U. S. Department of Labor. Retrieved from [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/evaluation\\_type/final\\_evaluation/Ecuador\\_WFCL\\_feval\\_0.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/evaluation_type/final_evaluation/Ecuador_WFCL_feval_0.pdf)

AFPPD. (2016). *Parliamentary Good Practices for Effective Implementation of Laws and Policies for Prevention of Trafficking*. ReliefWeb - Informing humanitarians worldwide. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/parliamentary-good-practices-effective-implementation-laws-and-policies-prevention>

Memoires Wiñari Project: For the prevention and progressive eradication of indigenous child labour. (2010). World Learning for International Development. (Work Document).

Find more good practices at [www.iniciativa2025alc.org](http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org)  
or contact [iniciativaregional@ilo.org](mailto:iniciativaregional@ilo.org)