



**GOBIERNO AUTÓNOMO DESCENTRALIZADO
PARROQUIAL RURAL DE GUASUNTOS**

Rincón Quillaco...Donde nace la Patria.

Letter No. 145-GADPRG-2018
Guasuntos, November 30th 2018

Dear Sr.,

I, José Azogue Hurtado, in my capacity as President and Legal Representative of the Guasuntos Parochial Board, and as a member of the Shuid community, community in which for almost 10 years Free The Children / WE Charity has worked with us hand in hand creating the necessary conditions to provide a better future for our children. I have the honor to say that it has been an honor to be part of this great movement that is WE.

For the members of the Shuid community, the association with the Foundation Free The Children / WE Charity and the socially responsible company ME to WE has been very beneficial. Not only for the projects and programs promoted by the Foundation, but also for the experiences lived thanks to the cultural exchange programs with the volunteers from the ME to WE Trips.

Although Ecuador is a mega diverse, multicultural country, with a growing tourist industry, there are marginalized rural areas where the benefits of this development has not arrived in an equitable manner. It is in these areas, where WE with the help of ME to WE Trips has achieved great success in correcting this inequity, which is truly inspiring.

My community Shuid, is one of these marginalized communities where for years we have not access to drinking water, sanitary batteries or sewage system; the school did not have the necessary infrastructure to provide education to all the children of our community; and families did not have dignified opportunities to generate resources to support themselves. All this we are changing significantly in less than 10 years thanks to the intervention and association with WE. Which for me as an indigenous Cañari and commune, is wonderful to see the level that we have achieved working together.

Thanks to a respectful association between WE, the communities, and the Parish Councils, it has been possible to build drinkable water systems, sanitary batteries, sewage treatment systems for educational units, school classrooms and other educational infrastructure where our children can receive an education with warmth and quality, thus creating a generational change within our communities.

The educational spaces built by WE are perfectly adapted to our climate and height, while respecting and value the ancestral knowledge of our people. The classrooms are built with wooden roofs and tile roofing to withstand the strong winds and frosts which are common in the mountain or highlands, and the walls are made of adobes - a traditional mixture of earth, straw and dung, technically improved with cement - to control an adequate room temperature inside the classrooms.

Llankakunchimi Tandanakushpa alli Kawsaita Charinkapa! / Trabajamos Unidos por el Progreso de Guasuntos!



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The trainings and community development programs are also adapted to the needs and culture of the community. For example, the extra-curricular program of the Girls Club, implemented by an indigenous leader, is taught in Kichwa, our mother tongue, and it is targeted to encourage young girls to finish their secondary school through the development of their own innate abilities. The Healthy Families program, also taught in Kichwa, provides training in health, hygiene and nutrition, and promotes the undertaking of positive actions such as implementing family gardens, proper water management and use of sanitary batteries, and putting into operation of ecological free of smoke kitchens.

Young people here are excited to have the opportunity to educate themselves within their own community and without losing their culture or exposing themselves to the risks involved in migrating to cities. Entire families benefit from the multiple projects and development programs implemented in their communities.

It is normal to see the interaction of the community Minga - dozens or even hundreds of people - that comes to support in the construction of a new classroom or water project. Minga is a Kichwa tradition, part of our Andean cosmovision, where we all unite as a community to work and achieve a greater good.

The volunteers of Me to WE Trips, are very welcome here, they work hand in hand in the Minga with the community. The association and respect for our culture are directly integrated with the values of this volunteer program. ME to WE make sure that travelers are respectful and leave with a full understanding of the challenges and beauty of life in rural Ecuador. Many leave a part of their hearts in these communities, and their donations fund projects that improve the lives of our families every day.

The young people of the communities want to learn more every day to improve themselves and reach their goals, on the other hand, the adults want to be healthy and support the welfare of their families, the trips from ME to WE have made these dreams possible for many of us.

José Azogue Hurtado

President

GAD Parroquial Guasuntos

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