



DCF Newsletter – March

Small steps, real change

In the first months of this year, something meaningful has been unfolding. Not loud or headline-making, but real.

Young people are staying connected.
Conversations are deepening.
New ideas are quietly taking shape.

Community doesn't grow overnight.
It grows when people choose to stay and to build, step by step.



Jean Paul: A Full Circle Moment

Jean Paul first walked into the Adolescents Club as a participant, curious, a little reserved, like many young people searching for a place to belong. Over time, he found more than activities. He found trust, developed skills, built relationships and discovered his own voice. This month, he signed a volunteer agreement with DCF. It may look like a simple step, but it carries something powerful: he is now giving back to the same

space that once supported him. This is what long-term presence makes possible. Not just participation, but ownership.



A Seat at the Table: The Observatory on Childhood and Youth

At the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, representatives from 18 organizations gathered to strengthen responses to the violence affecting children and adolescents. We were there together with members of the Pifo community and adolescents themselves. Because data matters. Evidence matters. But so do lived experiences. Protection systems become stronger when community voices are present in the conversation. When local realities meet institutional frameworks. When responsibility is shared.



Showing Up Where Community Lives

In Pifo, the community fairs brought many people together. Families stopped by, children walked around, and neighbors took time to talk. The Parish Government and the local Health Center organized the event, and DCF and the Community Center were there as well. We were not only sharing information about our programs - we were listening. Listening to concerns, ideas, and questions. Prevention is not only about workshops or policies. It is about being present. It is about meeting people where they are and building trust step by step.



A Conversation with Another School That May Grow

In Itulcachi, a neighborhood of Pifo, we began conversations with the Enrique Ponce Gangotena school. The idea is simple, yet powerful: strengthen the Local Protection System through community-led initiatives — just as we have done in Sigsipamba and Palugo. In those neighborhoods, the community proposed its own solutions. Here, a new idea is emerging: a fair called *“Knowledge Protects.”* Because prevention does not begin with intervention. It begins with connection. And schools are often where that connection starts.



Strengthening Local Entrepreneurs

Six members of the Independent Vendors Association of Pifo have begun a new journey. They are drafting their project and preparing to participate in a Business Plan workshop. Economic stability creates breathing space. And breathing space reduces vulnerability. Strong families build strong communities. And strong communities protect their children.



Climbing Mountains, Supporting Children

In recent months, we had the chance to welcome two different groups of climbers in Ecuador, each arriving for the mountains, and each connecting, in their own way, with the community in Pifo.

In November, we welcomed a group of climbers from the United States, Sweden, and Canada: Norm Crooks, Mickael Mattsson, Hannah Pierce, Mickael Strandberg and David Volman, all connected to the Kensington Alpine Club. After their time in the mountains, they came down to Pifo and were quickly recruited by a group of adolescents as local guides. What followed: a walk through the community, lots of conversation, plenty of laughter, and, most importantly, pizza.

What started as a simple visit turned into a lively neighborhood gathering, with more children and families joining and no one in a hurry to leave. We're very grateful for the support they raised for DCF, and we hope this is just the start of staying connected.



Sometimes personal challenges become something more. This was the case for Erik Ebinger and his friend Peter. Eric has been close to DCF for many years now and together with Peter decided to turn a climb of the Cotopaxi volcano into a way to give back. Although their climbing team couldn't reach the summit due to the bad weather conditions, something important remained: The commitment to contribute. As Eric shared:

"To climb a mountain, you need perseverance. When I think of DCF, I see that same perseverance every day, reaching a summit in their work with children."

Eric and Peter, you've already taken us higher with your support. We're incredibly grateful! A big thank you to everyone who climbed, supported, and followed along.



How can you support the community of Pifo?

The last months brought something very important: **continuity**.

Young people stepping forward. Institutions collaborating. Community members organizing.

And that is how protection becomes sustainable.

We invite you to support our work. With your help, we can continue promoting community leadership, protecting children, and strengthening communities in Pifo and beyond.

Every contribution, big or small, helps us take the next step on this journey.

Support us here:

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