



DCF Newsletter – October 2026

Quite a lot has been happening in Pifo... Clowns in the town centre, healthy cooking, young people taking the lead, a trip to the Middle of the World and a visitor from the Netherlands who ended up at 4,000 metres in the rain and taking a cow called Corazón for a walk. It's been a busy few months in and around Pifo.

Barbara, one of DCF Holland's board members, returned to Ecuador after 12 years and decided that simply visiting wasn't enough, she wanted to join in. Meanwhile, in Pifo, young people have been performing, writing, talking about the issues that matter to them and trying out new ways to get involved. Local groups have been busy too, organising activities, cooking, running stalls and taking their own ideas forward.

So, plenty to tell you about. Let's start with an ordinary Saturday in Pifo..

The DCF team

A day at the Health Fair: a place to come together

One Saturday, while walking through Pifo with her parents, Sofía found the town centre rather busier than usual. The **Health Fair** was in full swing, with health and wellbeing activities, food to taste, local products to browse and plenty of people stopping for a chat. The fair was organised by the **Somos Pifo Community Centre**, together with Reinas de Pifo, Pakakuna and Pifo's Independent Vendors (VAP), with local people helping to organise the day and running their own stalls.

Among all the activity was a group of young people dressed as clowns, performing a short sketch about looking after yourself and making different choices. It made Sofía laugh, but also curious enough to have a chat with them afterwards. She discovered that they meet every Thursday to talk about what is happening in Pifo and find their own ways to get involved.

When she returned home, Sofía felt there had been food, laughter, new ideas and plenty of conversations. But what stayed with her most was simply seeing people coming together, getting to know one another and finding new ways to be part of the Pifo community.



Learning about healthy eating

In July, the community asked for a workshop on healthy eating, with a practical focus on meals that families could prepare at home. Together with lecturers from Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ), members of Pakakuna–VAP and local mothers, we tried out simple, healthy recipes using everyday ingredients.

But what happened next was perhaps even more interesting. The Pakakuna–VAP members who joined the workshop decided to organise another session themselves for those who had missed it. They brought the recipes, explained what they had learnt and led the session in their own way.

For us, that was the best part: an activity that began as a workshop had taken on a life of its own.



Young people taking the message into the community

Eight young people became community promoters, using clowning, humour and performance to bring the **4P Community Strategy** to life. The strategy focuses on **Promotion, Prevention, Protection and Participation**, helping children and young people understand how they can protect themselves from the risks of drugs and substance use.

The group created their own choreography and short sketch, turning a serious topic into something children could easily understand and engage with. They took their performance on the road, giving five shows at holiday programmes in Cumbayá, Yaruquí, Mulauco and Itulcachi, together with Casa Somos. They were also invited to the Fair for the Promotion of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities in Tumbaco, where they had their own stand and met people from across the community.

And they weren't just learning themselves. **They were taking what they had learnt and sharing it with other children, using their own creativity, voices and ideas to make a difference in their community.**



More ways for young people to get involved

There's plenty happening for young people in Pifo. In July, we opened the **Young Adults' Club**, creating a new space for those who have turned 18 and are ready for something a little different. The activities are shaped around their changing interests and ideas ...and there's still room for new members.

Writing has also been on the agenda. A group began preparing for a local writing competition, and Jean Paul, one of the club members, made it through as one of the top participants.

Young people have also been joining conversations on more difficult subjects. In a series of focus groups, they talked about how children and teenagers experience armed violence and insecurity in their everyday lives. **It gave them the chance to say what they see, what worries them and what they think needs more attention, in their own words.**



Learning, leading and exploring

The summer holidays were a busy time for young people in Pifo. **More than 40 teenagers and young people joined a leadership course**, taking part in activities, conversations and new experiences while exploring their own ideas about leadership and their role in the community. One of the highlights was a trip to **Ciudad Mitad del Mundo**. The group spent the day exploring the site and its history, enjoying a change of scenery and, of course, having plenty of fun together. **A summer holiday with a little bit of everything: new ideas, new places and good company.**



Barbara, board member of DCF Holland – Back in Ecuador after 12 years

Through my voluntary work with DCF in the Netherlands, I have always felt closely connected to Ecuador. But my last visit was back in 2014, so returning in June felt both familiar and completely new. A lot has changed. DCF has moved from Ambato to Quito, there is a new team, and much more of the work happens digitally. But some things haven't changed at all: the vision, the commitment and, above all, the warmth.

I didn't want to spend my visit simply looking around. I wanted to experience the work in Pifo for myself and the team made sure I did! They had prepared a full week of meetings, workshops and activities. After taking Monday to adjust to Quito's altitude, I met the whole team on Tuesday. We had a meeting followed by a very good lunch, with everyone bringing or preparing something to share.

Then it was off to Pifo. At the Community Centre, I explored the kitchen, library and homework spaces, met volunteers and interns, and walked through Pifo's town centre with its traditional square and beautiful sculptures. I joined young people for an art class with a local mural artist, helped cook lunch for children, prepared flyers for the youth clubs and even joined a first-aid workshop — practical, clear and surprisingly good fun.

And then came Antisana...

On Saturday, I swapped workshops for walking boots and headed up towards **4,000 metres at Antisana Volcano**. Before leaving the Netherlands, I had asked friends and family to sponsor the challenge and raised an amazing **€1,495 for DCF**. With Javier providing breathing tips and plenty of encouragement, much needed in the cold, wind and rain, I made it to Lake Mica and the beautiful páramo. Wet, cold and absolutely worth it.

Taking the cow for a walk

After the weekend came a very different experience: an overnight stay with a local family near Pifo. Before sunset, we went to collect **Corazón, the family cow**, rather like taking the dog for a walk, only considerably bigger. I met the other animals, saw the crops and we prepared fresh fish and yucca for dinner. The next morning started early: feeding the animals and milking the cows, followed by a well-earned breakfast of eggs and fruit salad. It was a wonderful glimpse of rural life and also got me thinking. With the right partnerships and trust, experiences like this could offer interesting opportunities for local families interested in rural tourism.

I returned home with plenty of stories and a few sore muscles! **A huge thank you to the DCF team and everyone in Pifo who welcomed me, included me and let me join in. It was very good to be back.**

How can you support the Pifo community?

Over these past months, we have seen many stories of participation, learning and connection. **We invite you to be part of this journey.** With your support, we can continue strengthening the leadership of children and young people, creating safe spaces, walking alongside families and supporting initiatives that grow from within the community itself. Every contribution, large or small, helps these stories continue to grow and enables us to take new steps alongside the Pifo community and beyond. **Thank you for walking alongside us.**

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