

Seeds of Hope in Ecuador: Prem Rawat Foundation Supports Sustainable Food



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The Prem Rawat Foundation (TPRF) is supporting a project in collaboration with former gang members to feed people who are struggling with food shortages in Ibarra, Ecuador. The group, Street Peace and Respect, was inspired by TPRF's [Peace Education Program](#) to relinquish violence and contribute positively to their community.



Ecuador's lockdown to control the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) has severely exacerbated hunger problems in the group's neighborhood of Alpachaca, as well as surrounding rural areas. The grassroots humanitarian initiative includes ongoing emergency food deliveries to the elderly and handicapped, as well as seeds and seedlings for family gardens to develop vital food security and sustainable nourishment for years to come.

TPRF has so far supported the project with grants of \$15,000. It has also attracted support from the Vibrant Village Foundation, the Jen Lee Foundation, local leaders, and government officials, who are providing logistics and transportation to ensure that thousands of people with the most urgent needs are receiving the aid.

“Thank you with all of my heart—that you have come to my house to give us a hand in this situation,” said a mother who recently received food to feed her family. “I have three handicapped people here and we do not have work. Thank you to all who are collaborating.”

“It’s hard to be inside all day. There’s no end. Our income is reduced. Thanks for the help. It’s a blessing, truly,” said another beneficiary who is wheelchair bound.

As much of the food as possible for the deliveries is being purchased from small family farms, giving them a boost as well as those being fed.

“The Prem Rawat Foundation’s support is invigorating lives at both ends. People were running out of food. It’s crucial aid at a crucial time,” says Project Manager Paul Murtha. “Thank you to the



TPRF donors across the world who are making this possible. Everyone involved is so appreciative. This project is bringing out kindness in people, and the unity being generated in the communities is really touching.”

The economic upheavals of the pandemic have spurred many locals to start building longer-term solutions to food insecurity. Families and neighbors are banding together to start seed banks and community gardens.

In coordination with community leaders, TPRF is empowering the bottom-up effort by funding more than 1.5 million seeds and seedlings, as well as field workshops on how to maximize production for family nutrition in thousands of local gardens.

“This is an excellent strategy to improve quality of life in extensive ways. The family gardens are becoming the basis for a well-focused and sustainable program,” says Murtha.

The humanitarian efforts in Ecuador are just one of the many ways TPRF is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic internationally. [You can stay up to date on all of those initiatives efforts here.](#)

TPRF also offers the signature [Food for People](#) and [Peace Education](#) programs to help people live with dignity, peace, and prosperity across the world.

Watch the video below to see how the [Peace Education Program](#) helped inspire the former gang members in Ibarra to change their ways:

And watch the music video they made in partnership with TPRF in support of peace:

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