

Christmas Newsletter from SALEM Ecuador Mindó, December 2023

Dear SALEM friends and donors,

Christmas greetings from SALEM-Ecuador. In this newsletter we look back the past year 2023 and look ahead to new challenges for 2024. Many of you have supported this work with your donations and we are immensely grateful. Your support makes these successes possible. Thank you!



The values of the year 2023

Traditionally, we work with SALEM children and young people under a theme or value. This changes every quarter of the school year. The themes for 2023 were gratitude/dignity, identity/equal opportunities and bravery. The children's groups work on each theme for three months, whether through art projects, music, discussion groups or workshops. We also often invite external speakers.

On the subject of identity, we invited young people from the Afro-Ecuadorian community to talk about their experiences with racism and their path to finding their identity. Of course, this was done very vividly with practical exercises and role plays.

Other workshops were held this year on topics such as responsible sexuality, equal rights, peace and many more.



Support for survivors of gender-based violence and sexual abuse

In 2023, our counseling team not only supported SALEM children and families, but also women, children and teenagers suffering from domestic and sexual violence.

A total of 112 people received psychological counseling in more than 440 therapy sessions. This is an increase of over 40% compared to the previous year and is only possible thanks to the many donations and great voluntary commitment.

More than half of the cases supported were in the area of domestic violence and sexual violence against children, young people and women. The need is still much greater. Next year, we must manage to employ our psychologist and our social worker full-time. We currently lack the resources to do this.

What we have already achieved for next year is a major campaign to prevent sexual violence, which is being funded by the government of the province of Pichincha. This also includes a puppet show that is currently being developed by the puppet theatre ensemble led by our psychologist Marcela Fuentes. It will be performed throughout the region from March. SALEM will travel through Mindo and the neighboring communities with the puppet theatre and many other creative ideas to raise awareness among children and parents.

Our new youth and community center

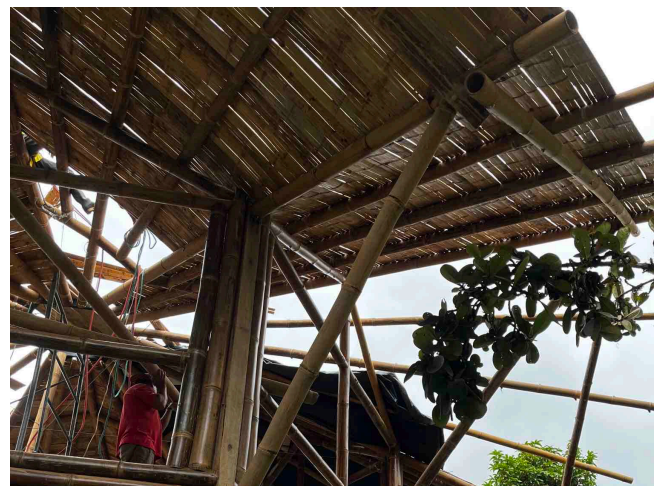
The first construction phase will be completed at the end of December. The roof is finished and next week the floorboards will be laid on the first floor. We have therefore exhausted our budget from subsidies and donations received and from January we will at least be able to use the large meeting and event room.

We are asking for further donations for sanitary facilities, electrical installation, walls, doors and stairs and are also writing grant applications.

[Here are more photos and information on why we are actually doing this.](#)



Construction progress over the last four months



Feria & Café Navideño

Finally, a few impressions of our traditional Christmas market and café, which we held on December 8.

You can also find videos of it on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) channels.





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Thank you for your interest and your continued support!

**We wish you a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year,
Jonas and all the children and staff of
SALEM Ecuador**

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