



**Manna Project International**  
Communities Serving Communities

How MPI Has Continued To Carry Out Our Mission Virtually

# Virtual Impact Report

March 2020 - July 2021

# 01. A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



**Jeff Goldman**  
MPI Executive Director

**Dear Manna Project Community,**

What a wild journey it's been since March 2020, including for those of us committed to international education exchange, and community development. We're extremely grateful to our supporters and donors (including the U.S. government), partner organizations, community participants and volunteers for playing key roles in our quick adaptation to virtual operations and impact. Being a relatively small organization allowed MPI to pivot operations quickly, and customize our community programs and volunteer experience for our core beneficiaries. We've also been able to advance some exciting plans for the future, to grow our impact.

We are proud to share in this report our many accomplishments, with partners, over the past 1.5 years, and appreciate your role in having this impact with us. We are very fortunate to be in good financial condition, with adequate staff morale and health, during this challenging and uncertain time. We hope you're taking good care, and welcome you to let us know if we can help you in any way. Thank you wholeheartedly for staying part of the Mannamily.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Goldman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# 02.

## VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERS



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, MPI had to evacuate our on-site volunteers and pause our Ecuador programming in March 2020. However, we remained committed to our mission and quickly shifted to virtual operations, creating both long-term virtual Program Director positions and short-term virtual internships. We are so grateful to all of the volunteers who have worked with us over the past year and a half to further our impact in Ecuador.

### MARCH 2020 - JULY 2021

46

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERS

JOINED US FROM

28

UNIVERSITIES

DEDICATED A TOTAL OF

9,009

HOURS TO MPI

LED 8 PROGRAMS:

- Adults & Kids English
- Conversation Club
- Mental Health Program
- FNCD activity plans
- Gotitas English classes
- Virtual Summer Camp
- Guangopolo Seminar

COMPLETED

1,343

HOURS OF SPANISH CLASSES  
& EXCHANGES

PARTICIPATED IN

1,000

HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

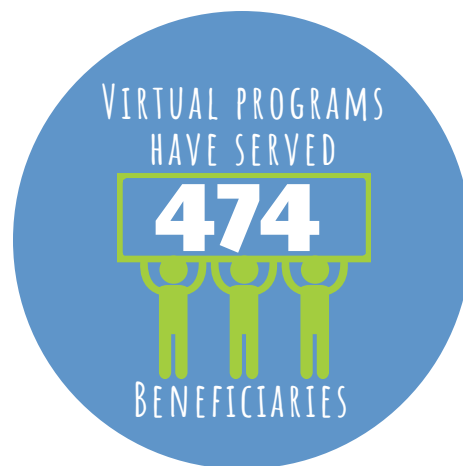
“ Interning virtually for Manna Project has been the **highlight of my summer** so far. I went in with unconsciously high expectations because I had been so excited to go to Ecuador...Somehow **my expectations were exceeded**, and I have learned so much about myself as an individual and about my future career. Knowing that the work I was doing for Manna was actually going to affect the community in a positive way was an experience that I had never had. **I will carry with me the values and lessons I learned** from my time with Manna as I move into different stages of my education and career path. I am grateful for the opportunity to have come alongside an organization like Manna who truly cares for and respects the community it serves. ”

ELENA WALKER,  
SUMMER INTERN 2020



# 03. VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Although we had to pause many of our normal in-person programs due to the pandemic, MPI quickly found new ways to have an impact in our community through virtual programming, new initiatives, and partner organization support!



## ENGLISH

MPI relaunched our **Adult and Kids English Programs** using a new virtual format in September 2020. Classes are led on Zoom by our Ecuador staff and virtual volunteers, and participants are able to join from home. We currently offer 4 levels of Adult English, 4 levels of Kids English, and an Adult Intermediate Conversation Club.

## NEW CURRICULUM

In order to increase the impact of the English program, MPI purchased two new curricula from **National Geographic** in April 2021. Both curricula are evidence-based and aligned with **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** (CEFR), which we hope will better prepare our students for bilingual employment and educational opportunities.

"Currently I am studying fourth level English, which has been a very beautiful experience for me. I have made the most of it, because I have had teachers with a lot of enthusiasm, and care. Since English classes in my country are expensive, I am glad I have been able to take English classes with Manna Project International virtually."

- GABRIEL ALEJANDRO OÑA CATAGÑA

### WORLD ENGLISH

- For Adult English classes
- Focuses on speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills.
- Designed to teach students about peoples and cultures around the world.
- Incorporates TED Talks.

### EXPLORE OUR WORLD

- For Kids English classes
- Introduces young learners to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation through immersive activities.



## NEW INITIATIVES

IN ADDITION TO OUR ENGLISH PROGRAMS, MPI HAS ALSO BEEN ABLE TO LAUNCH A NUMBER OF NEW VIRTUAL INITIATIVES SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC TO INCREASE OUR IMPACT!

### ENGLISH EXCHANGE

Virtual volunteers were given the opportunity to be matched with a Conversation Club participant in Ecuador for a **virtual language exchange**. This is a unique opportunity for volunteers and community members alike to practice their English/Spanish skills with a **native speaker**. Many of our interns became very close with their exchange partners, sharing personal stories and cultural experiences. One of our interns even traveled to Ecuador to visit her partner once it was safe to do so!



### ALUMNI MENTORSHIP

MPI launched a new program to provide our long-term volunteers with the opportunity to be mentored by a **Manna alumni**. Volunteers are matched with an alumni mentor based on their areas of interest and career goals. Pairs meet virtually once or twice a month and work on **career development**, including strengthening resumes, interview preparation, job/graduate school application process, etc.

### MENTAL HEALTH

There has long been a mental health crisis in Ecuador, but since the start of the pandemic, it has become an even more pressing issue. MPI decided to create a virtual space where 21 community members, supported by a **mental health professional**, could learn about mental health topics and acquire skills to apply in their daily lives. For three months, we held **weekly talks** on different topics of interest, created a **support group**, and offered **free virtual therapy** sessions with an Ecuadorian psychologist.

"Individual therapies helped me a lot to rediscover myself and support me in the decisions I made."

- PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

### SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In order to help provide more underrepresented individuals with the opportunity to participate in a career- and life-enhancing experience abroad, and to increase racial diversity in our organization, Manna Project International has created a **Program Director Scholarship Fund** for underrepresented students. This fund is designed for U.S. college students and recent college graduates who are part of the **Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC)** community and also have financial need. The Fund will provide scholarships to eligible individuals to volunteer with MPI as **Program Directors** in Ecuador for **1 year**, giving them the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.

### MICROLOAN PROGRAM

MPI started a **microfinance** program in early 2021 to assist families and small businesses that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in Ecuador. We are working alongside our partner organization, Fundación Niños con Destino, to provide interest-free loans ranging from **\$200-\$1000** to **9 families**. These families live on very low incomes, in some cases no more than \$75 per month.



“ The talk about emotional dependence helped me a lot. There was a moment when it was said that the partner contributes a lot in helping or stagnating. It helped me to be able to communicate with my partner about the things that bother me, not to remain silent. I understood that if I don't talk to my partner, then all those feelings accumulate, which causes us to say hurtful things that we later regret. ”

-MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

# PARTNER ORGANIZATION SUPPORT



## FUNDACIÓN NIÑOS CON DESTINO

- MPI helped to fundraise **\$600** for FNCD to provide food and other essentials to over **150 Ecuadorian families** struggling during the pandemic.
- Our virtual volunteers led **activities for kids** at FNCD focused on art, science, history, and nutrition.
- Most recently, MPI has opened our Community Center for **in-person use** by FNCD! They started a new initiative to reduce begging in the Rumiñahui area, and have been conducting workshops and other activities with families at our Centro 4-5 days per month!

## GOTITAS DEL SABER

- MPI's virtual volunteers were able to run virtual **English classes** with children at Gotitas, an organization that serves 3-4 year olds of low income parents who need to work during the day.



## GUANGOPOLO

- MPI staff and volunteers led a **social media workshop** for some of the entrepreneurs at Guangopolo. The workshop taught participants how to market their online business and improve their presence on social media, including how to create business cards and advertisements using Canva, create and operate a Facebook Business page, and create meaningful content for Instagram!



# 04. OTHER UPDATES



## NEW SITE DEVELOPMENT

MPI is planning to open a **new site** in the rainforest region of **Tena, Ecuador!** The area offers a rural, indigenous cultural experience in an area of high socioeconomic need in Ecuador. This year we narrowed our focus to **4 villages** with needs including access to clean drinking water, access to basic medicines and healthcare, rainforest conservation, domestic violence prevention, and more. All site research was conducted by a **local, Kichwa employee.**

## STRONG POSITION

- MPI was able to support staff with a **wellness stipend** and **Covid leave.**
- We have been able to maintain all of our **staff positions** throughout Covid.
- MPI obtained US government **economic aid** to sustain our finances during these uncertain times.

## CAMPUS CHAPTERS & UNIVERSITY PARTNERS



## FUNDRAISING

### GIVING TUESDAY NOW

In May 2020, the nonprofit organization, Giving Tuesday, created a 2nd global giving day to help organizations impacted by COVID-19. We made GivingTuesdayNOW the launch of our Spring 2020 Gratitude campaign, in which we spent 7 weeks thanking stakeholder groups for their ongoing support. We raised **\$5,700.**

### FALL INTERN CAMPAIGN

In Fall 2020, our 9 virtual interns raised funds for 3 important MPI initiatives: English Curriculum, Community Center and Local Volunteers. The interns had many creative fundraising ideas, including creating and selling an Ecuador cookbook, and hosting virtual movie and game nights. They raised a total of **\$5,380.**

### GIVING TUESDAY & 25 DAYS OF IMPACT

Each year MPI is part of Giving Tuesday, the largest global giving day of the year. In December 2020, Giving Tuesday kicked off our 25 Days of Impact campaign where we shared stories from donors, community members, alumni, staff, board, and current volunteers about how MPI has impacted their lives. We raised **\$10,500.**

### UNDERREPRESENTED SCHOLARSHIP FUND

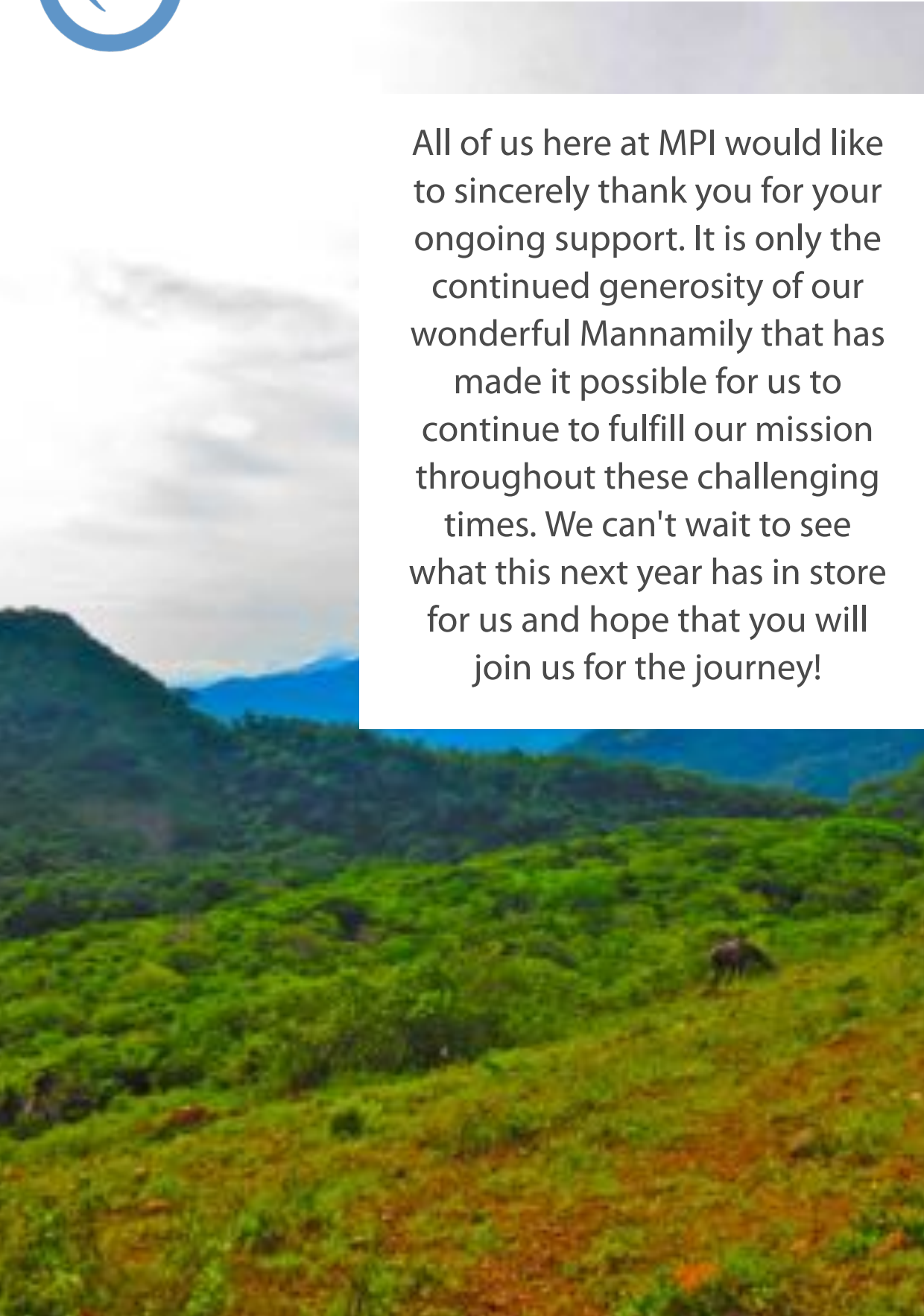
In Spring 2021, MPI launched a campaign to support our new Underrepresented Scholarship Fund, which will provide scholarships for BIPOC individuals with financial need to volunteer as 1-year Program Directors in Ecuador. So far, we have raised **\$4,000** toward our **\$8,400** goal for one scholarship.





# THANK YOU

All of us here at MPI would like to sincerely thank you for your ongoing support. It is only the continued generosity of our wonderful Mannamily that has made it possible for us to continue to fulfill our mission throughout these challenging times. We can't wait to see what this next year has in store for us and hope that you will join us for the journey!



[www.mannaproject.org](http://www.mannaproject.org)

