

# Mentally and Physically Handicapped Child Centre



This daycare centre designed for disabled children opened in 2002. The majority of the children are multiply disabled (they don't speak) and use wheelchairs. The situation for disabled people in Ecuador has improved in recent years; however there is still a real lack of funding and a lot of discrimination. Some type of disability affects at least 13.2% of the population, however only 2% receive any type of attention whether that is through the government or private foundations.

The children who attend this centre are from poor families, who are unable to offer the specialized care that the children need. The parents have to work and many in the past were forced to leave their child at home alone at great risk as these children can't take care of themselves. The centre is an enormous help to these families without which they would not be able to cope both financially and emotionally.

At this moment there are 13 children in the daycare centre: 9 of them have cerebral palsy, one has autism, one is deaf, one has problems with her eyes and one is mentally retarded. There are 4 people working in the daycare centre: the coordinator, a cook and 2 women who work with the children. The children and staff receive a very balanced meal every day and also receive a number of different therapies from physical therapy to hippo or equine therapy since the project was donated its own horse! A doctor also visits regularly to check that the children are ok and have no medical problems.

## **VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

- You can help the women with the daily care of the children which includes: changing diapers and clothes, feeding, brushing their teeth, etc.
- All volunteers can help with hippo-therapy sessions accompanying the children and horses.
- Depending on a volunteers experience and level of study it is possible to also help with therapies. For example: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, musical therapy, etc.
- It is important that volunteers help to organise activities for the children, because most of the time they are bored. The women don't always have enough time to spend with the children as they are busy with other tasks. The children can't entertain themselves and therefore need help. There is a lot of space to realise your own ideas and to take initiatives - this is an extremely rewarding project.

## **WORK SCHEDULE**

Volunteers work Monday to Friday from 9am until 3pm, however working hours are flexible.

## **LOCATION**

The project is located in the south of Quito - it will take you between 45 minutes to 1 hour to reach by public transport.