

## The Rock Family Center

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1/30/2026



Dear Friends,

On behalf of The Rock Family Center (*Centro Familiar La Roca*) and our dedicated team in Ecuador, I am honored to submit this proposal for the **Rock Family Center Initiative**, a project born from a shared vision to restore hope, healing, and family to Ecuador's most vulnerable children.

The Rock Family Center is a faith-rooted, trauma-informed response to the growing need for family-based care in Ecuador. With over 2,400 children currently in institutional settings—many without the possibility of reunification—the urgency to create supportive, stable homes has never been greater. Our initiative addresses this crisis through a multifaceted approach: recruiting and equipping foster families, mobilizing local churches, establishing a centralized care and training hub, and working closely with government and global partners.

This proposal outlines our mission, model, and measurable objectives for 2025, along with a detailed implementation plan. With the support of partners like Casa Viva, My Village Ministries, and World Without Orphans, we are poised to scale sustainable, Christ-centered care solutions for children and families across Cuenca and Guayaquil.

We are seeking funding partners and collaborators who share our heart for justice, mercy, and systemic change. Your partnership will allow us to expand our impact—transforming statistics into stories of restoration. Our immediate need is to raise \$10,000 to help offset the cost for the 10 Ecuadorian families who are currently in the 4 to 6 month training process to become our first Foster Families in Ecuador. This money will be used to pay for professional training, materials and followup costs. Thank you for considering this proposal. We look forward to the opportunity to further discuss how we might work together to bring lasting change to children in need.

With gratitude and hope,

**Kimberly Orellana**

Co-Director, International Liaison/ Member Care  
Centro Familiar La Roca

<https://www.gracov.com/ecuador>

<https://faithbranchingout.com/>



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## The Rock Family Center

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# Executive Summary

*Creating Life Solutions for Vulnerable Children Through Trauma Informed Family-Based Care and Community Partnership*

**10th February 2026**

## OVERVIEW

The Rock Family Center Initiative seeks to address the needs of vulnerable children in Ecuador who have been separated from their biological families by providing loving, stable, and family-based care solutions. Family based care is proven to improve the cognitive, emotional and relational health of children from hard places, reducing problematic behaviors while preventing further victimization and trauma as well as increasing the possibilities of family reunification. This initiative works by recruiting, training, and supporting foster families, empowering local churches to engage in community-based solutions, and establishing a central resource location for care and training. The Rock Family Center is being developed in partnership with **\*\*CasaViva\*\*** and **\*\*My Village Ministries\*\*** to ensure holistic support and sustainable solutions for children and families in crisis to guarantee the rights of children to live in families.

## History

The Rock Family Center was born as a dream inspired by God's love for the world. James 1:27 reminds us that "pure and genuine religion means... caring for orphans and widows in their distress." We understand that this dream is more than just an answer to a social need but rather it's a response of obedience to God and His loving call to the most vulnerable. In 2021 we began to pray for a way to positively influence our society and respond to the real needs of the vulnerable population. In 2023, we saw a significant advance as God opened the doors to have conversations with government agencies and key people for the development of this foundation. At the same time, we began to network to offer family-based services to the vulnerable children of Ecuador. In 2024, we obtained government approval to function as a foundation with the goal of generating a real change in the lives of children and families in Ecuador.



## GOALS

The goal of this initiative is to strengthen and expand the capacity of local faith based communities, such as local churches, train foster families to provide homes that support community integration and thriving, and offer targeted training programs and resources through a centrally located facility. This initiative prioritizes long-term community transformation by engaging Christian families and local churches in proactive solutions that support vulnerable children and their families.

## Context

### A. Vulnerable Children in Ecuador

According to UNICEF, in Ecuador, 1 out of every 2 children under the age of 5 suffers physical or psychological abuse, and in the school settings, 955 cases of sexual violence were reported in 2022. As of November 2024, there were 1,515 children in institutional care; of these, only 300 had a resolved legal status with a declaration of adoptability, and just 19 children were in family-based care. Thousands of children in Ecuador are vulnerable due to family breakdown, economic hardship, violence, neglect, or displacement. The [Consortium for Street Children](#) report that, "Even though the Ecuadorian Government has made child labour eradication a priority, according to the Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics and Census in 2014, there were about 360,000 children and adolescents aged 5-17 working on the street. Domestic abuse, poverty, gang violence, and lack of appropriate adult support exposes these children to high risks of neglect, malnourishment, abuse, and trauma." These statistics highlight the urgent need to strengthen protection systems to ensure the well-being of children and adolescents in the country. Many of these children have been separated from their biological families leaving them without the stable, loving support essential for healthy development. Without proper intervention, these children remain at risk of further marginalization, exploitation, and trauma. ([further research available here](#))

### B. Early Institutionalization and Its Impact on Brain Development in Children

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Early institutionalization can lead to significant alterations in children's brain development. These changes are primarily linked to attachment trauma and the absence of safe, nurturing relationships during critical developmental stages.

As noted directly from [The Karyn Purvis Institute](#) which has found some of the most notable brain alterations resulting from institutional care include:

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### **1. Dysregulation of the Stress Response System**

**Altered Central Nervous System:** Institutionalized children often exhibit either a hyperactive or hypoactive stress response system, with abnormal cortisol levels. They may live in a constant state of hypervigilance or emotional detachment, which impacts their ability to self-regulate emotionally.

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### **2. Dysfunctional Development of the Lower Brain**

The lower brain (brainstem and limbic system) is highly affected because it develops early and is particularly sensitive to environmental input. Children who experience early trauma may exhibit exaggerated fight, flight, or freeze responses, even to normal stimuli.

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### **3. Deficits in the Development of the Mid and Upper Brain**

- **Impaired executive functions:** such as planning, decision-making, and problem-solving.
  - **Difficulties with impulse control, working memory, sustained attention, and language development.**
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### **4. Insecure or Disorganized Attachment**

A child's brain develops through safe and secure relationships. The absence of a sensitive caregiver in institutional settings disrupts brain areas related to attachment, leading to difficulties in forming relationships, trusting others, and developing emotional bonds.

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## 5. Limited Neuroplasticity Without Intervention

*Although the brain has plasticity, damage caused by institutionalization can be long-lasting if there is no early intervention.*

### C. The Role of Family-Based Care and Community Engagement\*\*

The research is clear—the best place for a child to grow is in the care of a loving family. The [Bucharest Early Intervention Project](#) (BEIP) randomized controlled study found that institutionalization leads to profound deficits in many domains examined to date, including cognitive (i.e., IQ) and socio-emotional behaviors (i.e., attachment), brain activity and structure, alterations in reward sensitivity and processing, and a greatly elevated incidence of psychiatric disorders and impairment. The study further found that foster care intervention was broadly more effective in enhancing children’s development including brain activity (EEG), attachment, language, and cognition.

**Family placement** offers a corrective path through intentional relational experiences when children and adolescents are placed with families that provide direct, individual care and attention.

Family-based care results in a recovery of developmental quotient (DQ), often enabling brain function to recover to near the level of children who have never been institutionalized.

It also allows the formation of **new familial models within neural networks**, increasing the capacity to form healthy emotional relationships.

Being integrated into family environments—especially those embedded within communities—broadens interpersonal networks and introduces meaningful relational figures into the child’s life. The **acceptance and love** provided by one or more family members fosters a **resilient attitude** in children and adolescents when facing adversity.

This leads to **comprehensive improvements in development**, enhancing their potential for healthier social functioning and relationships.

[Research](#), experience and [best practice](#) demonstrate that children thrive in stable, loving, family-based settings. However, the shortage of trained and supported foster families and the limited engagement of local faith communities in community care solutions hinder the ability to meet the needs of these vulnerable children.

The Rock Family Center Initiative offers a solution by combining faith-based community support, foster care recruitment and training, and a central location for personalized, holistic care and education. This collaborative approach, grounded in Christian values and community action,

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ensures that vulnerable children experience secure relationships and holistic, faith-rooted care.

### **Our Commitment**

We are a team of Christ-centered professionals dedicated to serving vulnerable children and adolescents.

- We are committed to listening to, submitting to, and being led by Jesus in all that we do.
- We are committed to advocating for justice and extending mercy to every child and adolescent in our care.
- We are committed to aligning our work with the heart of God, serving as His hands, feet, voice, and heart on earth.

### **Our Culture**

We cultivate a healthy, collaborative, and accountable community.

- We are committed to maintaining balanced rhythms of work, rest, and play to support sustainable service.
- We are committed to mutual accountability, engaging one another with honesty, integrity, and healthy conflict resolution.
- We are committed to personal growth and healing, striving to be whole individuals who foster healing in others.

### **Our Approach**

We serve with both compassion and competence.

- We are committed to honoring and elevating the voice of every individual.
- We are committed to pursuing thoughtful, child-centered solutions that prioritize the best interests of vulnerable children and adolescents.
- We are committed to continuous learning and professional development to enhance the quality and impact of our work.

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## Meet our Cuenca Team

**JONNATHAN CUESTA:** Family Advocate

Bachelor's Degree in Family Counseling from University of Cuenca

"I deeply value the foundation's commitment to family issues, and especially its heartfelt care for children and adolescents living in vulnerable circumstances."



**Elizabeth Fajardo:** Clinical Psychologist

Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the Private Technical University of Loja

Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of The Americas UDLA

"God has called me to serve with compassion and love."

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**Xavier Gómez:** Social Worker

Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Cuenca

Master's Degree Forensic Social Work from University of Cuenca

"I am committed to the promotion, protection, and restoration of the rights of children and adolescents, always safeguarding their best interests and overall well-being."



**ANGY HERNANDEZ:** Administrative Assistant

Technician in Computerized Accounting

Cesde Technical Institute, Medellín, Colombia

"An untold idea will never spark a soul. I want to join with this great vision to help shape a brighter future for the children of Ecuador."

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**DIANA MALO GONZALEZ:** Lawyer

Doctor of Jurisprudence and Licensed Attorney before the Courts of Justice from University of Cuenca

“I pray that God would lead us and guide us with all wisdom and authority to serve the vulnerable and bring light to His world”.



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**Matias Francisquetti y Hadlai Salas:** Church liaisons/ Community Coach



- Matias and Hadlai hold Technical Degrees from Rio Grande Biblical Seminary, Texas
- Matias has a Degree in Financial Management from the Instituto Superior Bancario, Argentina
- Hadlai also has a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education from The Normal State School in Mexico.

"As a family, we dream of a church that embraces the most vulnerable children, and of countless homes and hearts opening wide to welcome a child in need."

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**Dania Petronila:** District Coordinator for Cuenca

Bachelor of Educational Psychology, with a specialization in Educational Psychology from University of Cuenca

“I want to help vulnerable children by planting seeds of hope, justice and opportunity in their lives.”



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## Meet our Guayaquil Team

**Marcela Allen** - District Coordinator Guayaquil

Bachelor's Degree in Social Communication from The University of Guayaquil, Ecuador

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"



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**Solange Paulina Campuzano Lasso** - Psychologist



Bachelor's Degree in Psychology

Universidad de Buenos Aires- Argentina

**Daniela Henríquez Villegas:** Abogada

Doctor of Jurisprudence and Licensed Attorney before the Courts of Justice from Loja

"Si Dios cuida de las aves, cuidará también de mi"



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**Jennifer Jara - Family Advocate Facilitator**

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**Karen Macias, Trabajadora Social**

La Universidad Católica Santiago de Guayaquil

“No tengas miedo, porque yo estoy contigo; no te desalientes, porque yo soy tu Dios. Te daré fuerzas y te ayudaré; te sostendré con mi mano derecha victoriosa.”Isaías 41:10



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**Nathalie Yerovi - Psychologist**



Bachelor's Degree in Clinical Psychology from University of Católica Santiago de Guayaquil

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**Kimberly Orellana:** International Consultant and Member Care

Bachelor's Degree in Criminology from The Ohio State University

Master's Degree in Community Mental Health: Crisis and Trauma Counseling from Liberty University.

TBRI Practitioner

Certified in Trauma Informed Care from Trauma Free World



**Heather Wheelock:** Co-Director and District Coordinator for Guayaquil

Associates Degree in Secretarial Science from Atlantic Baptist Bible College

TBRI Practitioner

Certified in Trauma Informed Care from Trauma Free World



“We pray that the evangelical church of Ecuador would be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities as they care for vulnerable children and families.

**Sheree Wuertz:** Director of The Rock Family Center Foundation

Bachelor's Degree: Psychology/Organizational Leadership from Kansas State University

Master's Degree: Marriage and Family Counseling from Kansas State University

Certified in Trauma Informed Care from Trauma Free World



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## Project Goals and Objectives

Key Goals:

1. **Engage and Mobilize Churches:**

- Equip and train local Ecuadorian churches to become active agents in their communities, prepared to respond to the needs of vulnerable children identified by the Ecuadorian department of family services and promoting family-based care.

- ❖ My Village Ministries will offer in person training to church leaders in November 2025 and follow up with further training and consulting.
- ❖ The Rock has 4 direct church liaison's working in Cuenca and Guayaquil as well as our family advocate in Cuenca.

2. Recruit and Train Foster Families:

- Identify, recruit, screen and train families from local faith based communities to provide loving and stable homes for vulnerable children.

3. **Establish a Centralized Family Care and Training Hub:**

- Develop the existing Rock Family Center as a location to provide individualized care for children and host training programs for foster families and community members. This center has been functioning since 2010 to serve local families with various ministries including a church, vacation Bible school, and soccer academy. These activities will continue alongside the Training Hub for Family Care. The need is to refit for a therapy room to make it kid friendly, convert old classrooms and make all areas kid safe.

4. **Promote Sustainable, Christ-centered Solutions:**

- Foster long-term change by training local leaders and churches to organically involve their families to support kids from vulnerable places and building sustainable community solutions rooted in faith and service to avoid institutionalization by providing a home for those where staying in homes of origin is infeasible.

- ❖ - Currently working in conjunction with the Ecuadorian government and Social Services where we have been invited since 2022 to train the states technical teams as well as government leaders in workshops on trauma informed care, offer training and care services for existing orphanages, foster relationship and connection to Casa Viva resources and to collaborate to structure a family based care option for the country. The Rock is currently in the final stages of signing an agreement with Social Services in

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Cuenca where they will financially assist in operational expenses of the Rock's technical team with a start date of June 2026. The government has assigned up to \$80,000 to be used next year for special protection programs/family based care. The Rock has signed contracts with a fully trained [technical team](#) and is awaiting the government to approve with final signatures.

### **Specific Objectives:**

- Objective 1: Recruit and train a minimum of **10 foster families** in 2025.
- Objective 2: Partner with **20 churches** across Cuenca and Guayaquil to provide training and resources for vulnerable child care as a pathway to building awareness, community support network as well as recruiting foster families.
- Objective 3: Operationalize The Rock Family Center to include both care and training spaces by end of year 2025.
- Objective 4: Host **4 training events** annually, equipping foster parents, church leaders, and other community members.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

The Rock Family Center is being developed in [partnerships](#) with **CasaViva** and **My Village Ministries**, [World Without Orphans](#) internationally recognized organizations with proven expertise in child welfare, community development, and faith-based community mobilization. These partnerships will ensure the initiative benefits from proven strategies, local insights, and sustainable implementation as well as training programs both onsite and virtual training platforms.

Our collaboration with the Ecuadorian Government and Social Services will continue to be a top priority to building a sustainable and integral program for adaptation into the orphan care system within the country.

### **Activities & Implementation Plan**

The Rock Family Center Initiative will utilize a multi-faceted, trauma informed approach to achieve the outlined goals. While traditional caregiving will have successful outcomes for traditional families, the trauma informed approach adapts to the understanding that children who have experienced a history of trauma have changes to their bodies, brains, behaviors and belief systems that necessitate informed caregiving which addresses the unique needs of the whole child.

#### **1. Foster Family Recruitment & Training Programs**

- Work with local community and church leaders to recruit potential foster families.
- Develop and implement structured, faith-based training programs to prepare families for the challenges of foster parenting from a trauma informed perspective.

## 2. Church Engagement & Community Training

- Host community-wide seminars and training sessions for local churches focusing on:
  - Understanding the unique needs of vulnerable/marginalized children.
  - Supporting families and children through faith-rooted action.
  - Equipping churches with trauma informed tools and strategies to address the needs of their local communities.

## 3. Development of The Rock Family Center

- Optimize the Family Center facility that will act as both a resource hub and a central location for care services, therapy and training events.
- Offer personalized mental health services/play therapy for children in a safe, nurturing environment.
- Provide training space for foster parents, church leaders, and community members.

## 4. Collaboration with CasaViva and My Village Ministries

- Leverage the expertise and local knowledge of CasaViva and My Village Ministries through strategic partnership agreements, joint training sessions, and shared implementation resources.

## Project Timeline

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Operationalizing Training Programs & Care Services	First quarter of 2025
Church Engagement & Training Events	Ongoing
Recruitment of Foster Families & Training Programs:	6 months – 1 year initial start
Facility Development (The Rock Family Center)	12-18 months

Refit therapy room to make it kid friendly, convert old classrooms into family interview room as well as create a play therapy room

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## Budget

**\*\*Estimated Costs:\*\***

1. Facility Development & Operation Costs:

- Building/renovation, utilities, and maintenance: \$5,000

2. Foster Family Training Programs:

- Curriculum development, outreach, and materials: \$600

3. Church Training Events:

- Seminar costs, speaker travel and fees, and logistics: \$1,200

4. Personnel & Administrative Support:

- Staff salaries, administrative expenses, and program support for 2025: \$28,200

**\*\*Total Requested Budget for first year operations:\*\* \$35,000**

## Outcomes and Impact

Upon successful implementation of this initiative, The Rock Family Center will:

- Establish a network of trauma trained, supported foster families capable of offering secure homes to vulnerable children.
- Strengthen local church engagement, creating sustainable, faith-driven, trauma informed community responses to child welfare needs.
- Operate as a centralized resource and training hub, offering personalized care for individual children and critical training opportunities.
- Foster long-term systemic change by creating pathways for stability, hope, and family restoration in the local community.

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## Conclusion

The Rock Family Center Initiative represents an innovative, faith-centered, collaborative response to one of Ecuador’s most pressing social challenges: vulnerable children without families. Through recruiting foster families, engaging local faith communities, and developing sustainable care solutions, this initiative offers hope and opportunity for children in crisis.

We are eager to collaborate with funding partners, local leaders, and organizations to make this vision a reality. Your support will transform lives—creating pathways for hope, healing, and new opportunities for vulnerable children.

Thank you for considering this proposal. We are eager to join hands with you in this important endeavor.

Funding Platforms

[Click here to support the Rock Family Center - Foster Care Program.](#)



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## \*IX. Appendices & Attachments

### - Data/Research on Vulnerable Children in Ecuador

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Professor and Associates. (n.d.). *About BEIP – Bucharest Early Intervention Project*. Retrieved June 20, 2025, from <https://bucharestearlyinterventionproject.org/about-beip>

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## Partnerships

### Casa Viva

[Casa Viva](#) has been working in family based care since 2005 when one family from one church took in one child, a single act that set in motion a movement in the county of Costa Rica. Through their years of experience, Casa Viva has grown to serve over 975 children and youth in family based care with 275 active foster families to date. They believe in learning by doing and sharing that experience to promote vibrant life for children.

#### The Casa Viva Care Model

We start with a local church that recruits and supports families and volunteers.

We partner with the the local government to identify children in need of care, and to pursue their best long-term alternatives.

Local families are trained and supported by Casa Viva's professional staff to open their homes and hearts to children.

Local families are trained and supported by Casa Viva's professional staff to open their homes and hearts to children.

The Rock Family Center has been training and consulting with Casa Viva since December of 2023. We have had the opportunity as an organization to learn from their experienced, professional team. We have also been able to present Casa Viva's program to the Ecuadorian Children's Services to re-imagine the current services by helping leaders of existing projects consider a new path forward. Casa Viva has partnered with La Roca to coordinate two online training workshops for children's workers throughout the country of Ecuador as well as with our own staff and teammates and are in the process of planning an in person training for government officials and judges and their technical teams for November 2025. Casa Viva is committed to journey with The Rock Family Center as we move forward working with the Ecuadorian government to develop and implement family based care in the country.



## **My Village Ministries**

[My Village Ministries](#) is actively building a partnership with The Rock Family Foundation to share gained experience and knowledge to mobilize, equip, and empower the church to "set the lonely in families" and care for vulnerable populations. MVM was started by a small staff and a large network of churches who wanted to provide holistic care to families in crisis. MVM believes that difficult circumstances reach a breaking point when you are socially isolated. They also believe that the local church has a community ready to go to meet that need.

MVM is partnering with The Rock Family to host in person and virtue trainings for local pastors and ministry leaders in Ecuador as well as offering continual support as The Rock Foundation grows to meet the needs in their communities. This ministry seeks to share their understanding of family preservation through Biblical hospitality.

### **Main Objectives:**

- To provide family support and stabilization.
- To prevent childhood abuse and neglect.
- To prevent unnecessary foster care placements.
- To prevent, reduce, and repair childhood trauma.
- To provide holistic care.

Together we will work towards a healthier future for vulnerable children and families in Ecuador.

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## World Without Orphans

[World Without Orphans \(WWO\)](#) is a global movement of Christ-followers who are committed to serving all children and families. We value humility, service, and collaboration across faiths, stakeholders, and sectors. It is manifested through grassroots movements, which implement family-based solutions for orphans and vulnerable children in their communities, nations, and networks.



The World Without Orphans movement began in 2010 as a collaborative effort by Christians in Ukraine to focus on promoting family-based care and the end of the institutionalization of children. The Ukraine Without Orphans movement recognized that children's best interests are served when they are raised in loving families rather than in orphanages or institutional settings.

What began as the dream to see Ukraine without orphans soon grew into a dream to see a world without orphans. Over the last 14 years, we have become a global initiative that brings together leaders from churches, organizations, government, and business in each nation who share in the vision of creating a world without orphans.

We foster active learning communities in a growing number of countries in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Europe that help our partners to develop and implement effective strategies for family-based care. We seek to address the root causes of family separation, including poverty, conflict, and lack of support systems, by promoting strategies and interventions that strengthen families and communities.

WWO is partnering with The Rock Family Center to ignite, train, and develop partners in Ecuador.