



# ECUADOR National Profile



2026-2027

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# About Ecuador



**Ecuador is a multi-ethnic and multicultural paradise located at the middle of the world.**

Ecuador is rich in history and cultures, with beautiful landscapes, charming beaches, magical waterfalls, imposing volcanoes, snow-capped mountains, moors, exotic jungles, friendly people and with extraordinary gastronomy culture.

See you soon,  
VASE team.



Los Frailes Beach  
Manabí Province



Photo by Andrej  
Volunteer from Austria



Quito City  
Pichincha Province

VASE





# GALAPAGOS ISLANDS



 Galapagos  
giant tortoise



 Photo by Maxim,  
Volunteer from Germany



 Photo by Nils  
Volunteer from Germany

The Galapagos Islands are made up of 13 major islands, 6 minor islands, 42 islets and many rocks, covering a total area of 7,850 km<sup>2</sup>.

They are known for its numerous endemic species in addition to the studies of Charles Darwin that led to his Theory of Evolution.

This extraordinary natural laboratory was declared a National Park in 1959, a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1978, and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1984.



Photo by Nils  
Volunteer from Germany



# COAST



 Covachas from Esmeraldas Province




 Photo by Nils, Volunteer from Germany



 Photo by Vivi, Volunteer from Finland

Forests, mangroves and beautiful beaches are part of this region with a wide variety of products from the sea and land such as bananas, cocoa, shrimp and tuna are obtained.

It extends through the provinces of Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo, Manabí, Los Ríos, Guayas, Santa Elena and El Oro. The main and most populated city in this region is Guayaquil.

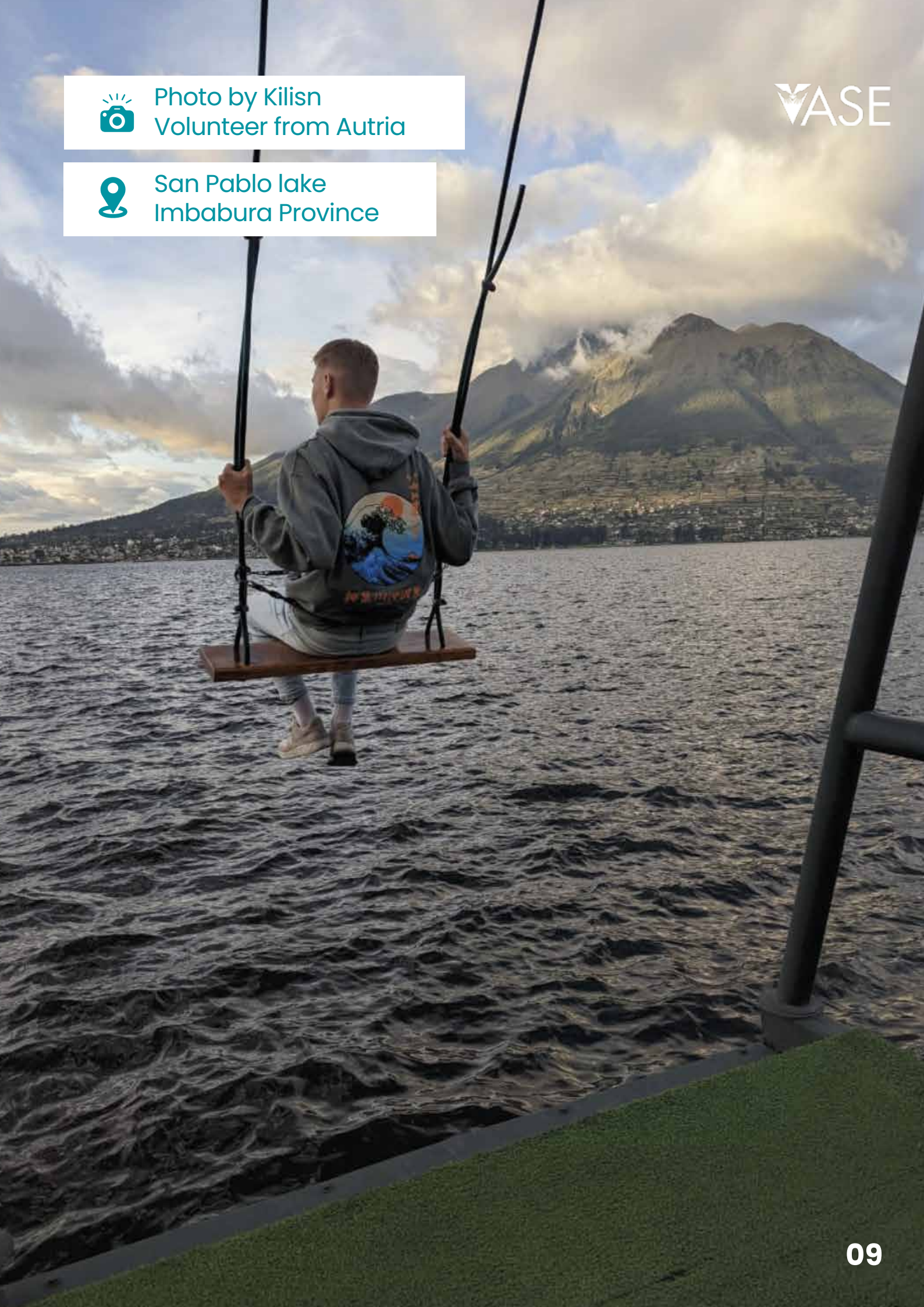
An interesting fact is that from June until October humpback whales migrate more than 7,000 km from Antarctica to the shores of Puerto Lopez here in Ecuador, ¡You can watch them!



Photo by Kilisn  
Volunteer from Austria



San Pablo lake  
Imbabura Province



# THE ANDES



Photo by Jan  
Volunteer from Germany



Chimborazo volcano,  
Chimborazo Province



Photo by Alex  
Volunteer from Germany

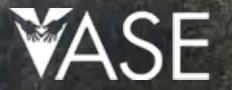
Characterized by its impressive volcanos and snow-capped mountains, among wich the most important are Cotopaxi and Chimborazo.

Its 10 provinces have cities of great historical importance such as Quito, Cuenca and Guayaquil, as well as artisan centers such as Otavalo.

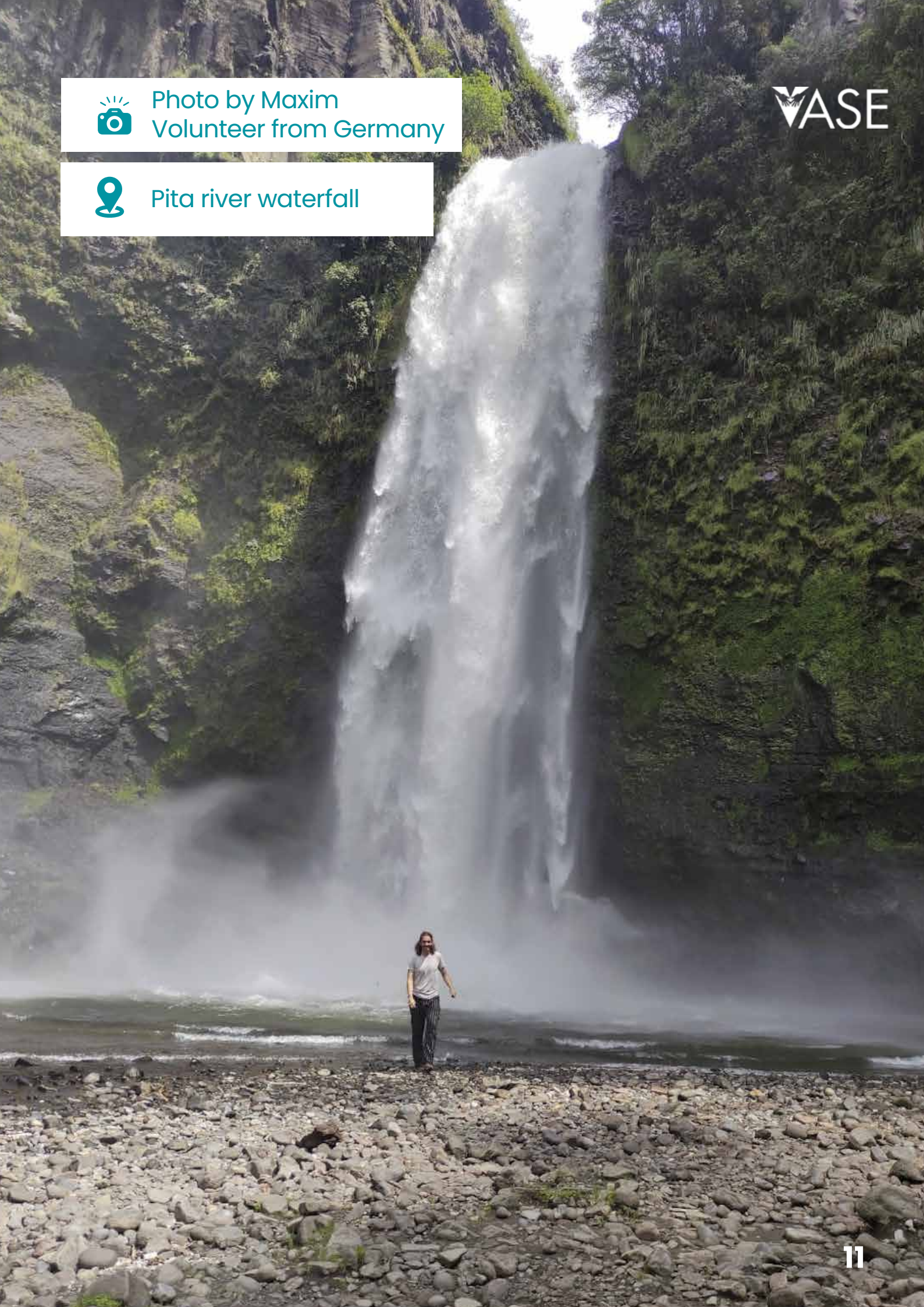
¡Here you can find The Middle of the World! It is located in Quito and is crossed by the equatorial line that conects the Northern Hemisphere with the Southern Hemisphere.



Photo by Maxim  
Volunteer from Germany



Pita river waterfall



# AMAZON JUNGLE



 Animal margay



 Photo by Jan,  
Volunteer from Germany



 Photo of  
The Napo River

The Amazon region stretches from the eastern slopes of the Andes to the Amazon basin. This region includes both the Cuyabeno

Reserve and the Yasuní National Park, the latter declared as a World Biosphere Reserve. The Amazon is made up of the provinces of Morona

Santiago, Napo, Orellana, Pastaza, Sucumbíos and Zamora Chinchípe.



Woman from the Shuar community, photo by proamazonia





Photo from El Universo

## SOCIETY

Ecuador is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country with a population of about 18 million people.

71.9% of the population self-identifies as mestizo, 7.4% as montubia, 7.2% as Afro-Ecuadorian, 7% as indigenous, 6.1% as white, and 0.4% as other ethnic groups.

Nine nationalities and three indigenous people are formally recognized in the country.

The official language of Ecuador is Spanish, but the indigenous languages of Kichwa and Shuar are also recognised in the National Constitution.

## FAMILY

Ecuadorians are known as family-people. The family life plays an important role and children normally live with their parents until they get married. Families often spend the weekends together.



## GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender roles are different than in Europe, placing an emphasis on the woman's role in the household, particularly caring for others. Although the differences between men and women have decreased compared to past years.



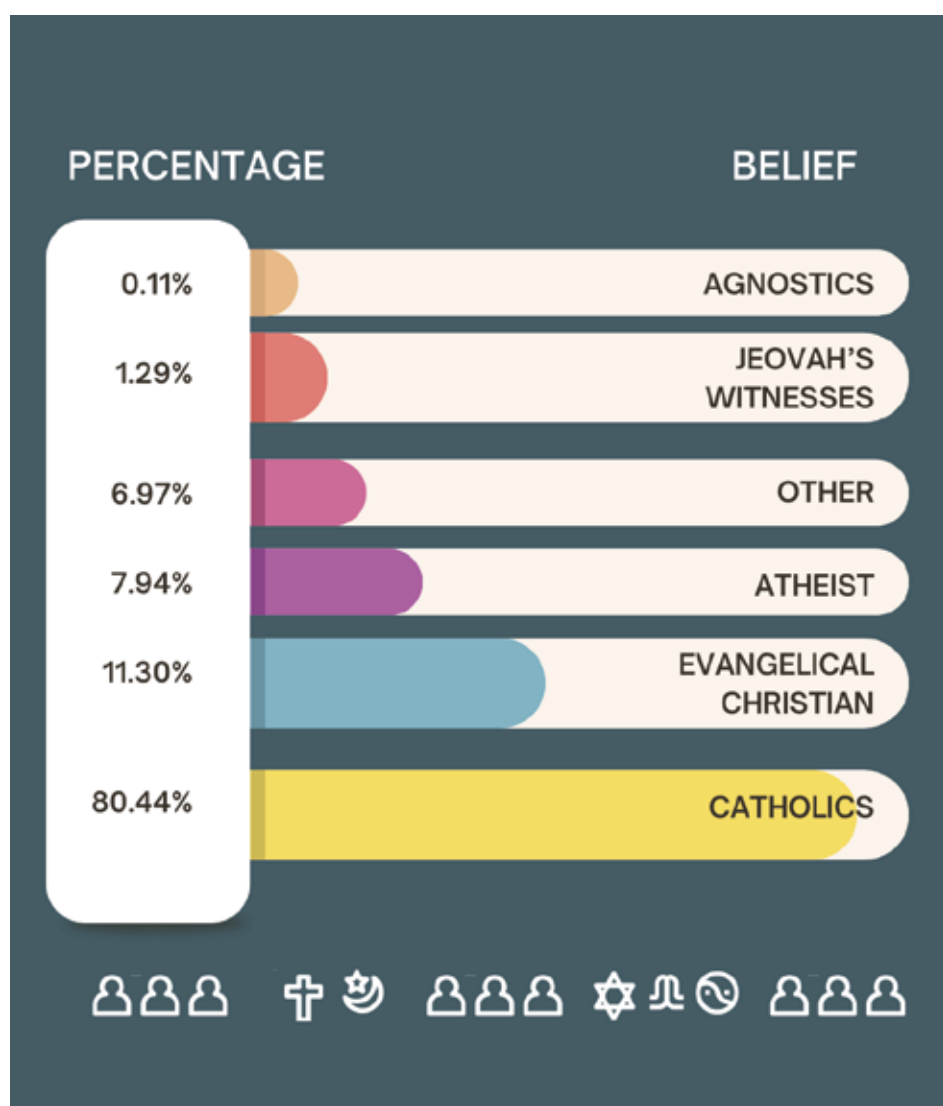
## CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Primary education is compulsory in Ecuador, however only approximately 67% of the population continue their studies in secondary school. In addition, many children work on the street as vendors or shiners.

# RELIGION

Religion in Ecuador is an expression of the different cultural heritages including the Spanish colonization, the natives Amerindian and Afro-Ecuadorian.

**91.95% of the population has a religion:**



\*Ecuador is a secular state. The Constitution ensures freedom of religion, prohibits religious discrimination, and declares public education secular at all levels.

# FOOD

Ecuadorian gastronomy has been enriched by multiculturalism, the diversity of climates as well as the variety of spices and products that exist in the country, specially fruits.



Encebollado

Is a delicious soup that has albacore, yucca, onion, tomato, coriander, and seasonings.



Fritada

The fried pork meat is cooked in water and orange juice with cumin, garlic, onion, shallot, salt and pepper.



Hornado

In the oven, the whole pig is baked in an oven made of clay or mud. The original recipe uses a traditional drink called chicha.



Bolón

The bolón is a mashed green plantain ball mixed with cheese or pork, served with a fried egg or spicy sauce.



Our different climates (cold, temperate, tropical) and regions mean that fruit crops are very varied and with different delicious flavors.



Ecuador is a fruit-exporting country, so banana is the main product, but here are other ones that are very popular in national consumption such as pineapple, coconut, mango, watermelon and papaya, among other more exotic fruits such as uvilla, pitahaya and others which you have to try!





Photo from Primicias

## TRANSPORT

The projects are all as close as possible to your living arrangements, however in most cases you will need to take the bus to your project. You will be given transportation money from VASE for this purpose.

Taxis are fairly cheap in Ecuador (\$1.50 USD for a short ride of approximately 2km). To cover

longer distances (for example to Guayaquil or Cuenca), you should use a well-known bus company. These buses run several times a day.

The ecuadorian transportation system is generally good, but crowded. Taxis run 24 hours, and buses run on average from 05:00 am until 9:00 pm.

# TRANSPORT

Transportation in Ecuador is diverse, with a wide range of options available to travelers. The country has a well-developed road network, as well as an efficient and affordable public transportation system. Since December 2023, Ecuador now have a subway metro system, making it easier for all capital city residents to get around. Here you have the average ticket price:



Bus

\$0,35 ctvs



EcoVía

\$0,35 ctvs



Trole-Bus

\$0,35 ctvs



Metrobus

\$0,35 ctvs



Subway

\$0,45 ctvs



Interprovincial Bus

\$1,50-\$10

# FESTIVITIES

The festivities in Ecuador happen throughout the year, almost every month there is an important festival worth seeing. If you come to Ecuador take note of the following dates.



**Guaranda Carnival**  
March 2-5

Comparsas, colors and happiness is what you will find in one of the most recognized popular festivals in Ecuador.



**Inti Raymi**  
June 21

The summer solstice is celebrated to thank the god Inti (Sun) for the abundance of crops.



**Día de los Muertos**  
November 2

All over Ecuador, the Day of the Dead is commemorated with flower laying ceremonies in cemeteries.



**Año Viejo**  
December 31

The year ends with the burning of small and giant puppets.



Photo from Kseniya Ragozina



Palacio de Carondelet  
in Quito

## GOVERNMENT

Ecuador has been a democracy since 1979. The political situation in the late 1990s and early 2000s was a bit unstable, a condition that led to the removal of numerous presidents.

Ecuador is governed by a democratically elected president, for a four-year term. The current president of Ecuador, Daniel Noboa, exercises his power from the presidential Palacio de Carondelet in Quito since November 2023.

Daniel Noboa Azín became President of Ecuador at 35, making him the youngest president in the country's history.

Although presidential terms normally last four years, he first took office in November 2023 to complete the unfinished term of Guillermo Lasso, serving about a year and a half, and was reelected in 2025 for a full term until 2029. He was inaugurated for his new term on May 24, 2025.



Photo by Bridgette, volunteer from Kenya

# FUNDACIÓN VASE

## Mission

- Provide volunteer service support for the elderly, children, women, indigenous groups, human rights organizations, hospitals, schools, and community centers.
- Implement intercultural education and inspire global citizenship through international cultural exchange program.
- Promote understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- Create sustainable community projects in order to promote social and economic development of the disadvantaged communities in Ecuador.

# VOLUNTEER SERVICE



Volunteer Profile

Over 18 years old, enthusiastic and motivated to work with people in need. Flexible, honest, patient, communicative, proactive, supportive and empathetic with disadvantaged people.



Projects

Areas such as: education, disabled people, elderly, gender, health, and environment. All the projects available can be found in the VASE workprofile.



Accommodation

Either in a family (host families are different, so be prepared to adapt to a variety of circumstances, such as number of people in the house, income level, family rules, etc.) or in the project (there are some projects that require the volunteers to live on site, mostly the ecological ones).

# CAMPS



Arrival camp

You will be taken directly to the orientation venue upon arrival to Quito. You will have an intense, three-day orientation which covers the following topics: volunteering, intercultural learning, safety and Ecuador's culture. You will also be taken on trips to the historic down town of Quito and indigenous villages.

After the orientation, you will have two weeks (30 hours) of Spanish classes before starting to work in the project.

VASE will take you on a retreat for five days, during which you will evaluate and reflect on your living and work situation during the first months. **You will be prepared for the second half of your stay in Ecuador.**



Midterm-Meeting



Final Evaluation

The final evaluation will consist of a two day retreat where all the volunteers and VASE staff will unite to debrief on their time in Ecuador, **reflect on their experiences**, and **prepare for departure to their home country.**

# MONEY

Item		USD
Hamburguer combo	●	5.50
Bus ride	●	0.35
Coca cola (1L)	●	1.50
Bottle of water (1L)	●	0.70
Cinema ticket	●	5.00 - 6.00
Beer	●	2.50
Mobile data plan	●	10.00
Newspaper	●	1.00
Shampoo	●	2.00
Entrance to a club	●	Free - 15.00

## **Mandatory Expenses: From 60 to 100 USD for a cell phone**

Pocket Money: ICYE long-term volunteers will be given pocket money at their arrival and mid-term camps for basic personal expenses. This may not apply for some programs, including WW and IJFD.

## VISA PROCESS

You should generally start the visa process at least 45 days before your departure, since the process can take from one week to two months (working days).

We will send you the list of documents you will need to prepare for applying to the volunteer e-visa. Since the process is online, it's all up to you to apply and upload all the documents correctly. You have to check all the information we send about the e-visas for Ecuador. After you apply, keep checking the application platform the next days in order to know if your visa is already approved.

## PACKING LIST

- **Passport.** All your pre-departure papers.
- **Small gifts** from your country for your project / host family.
- **Clothes for layers** (consider that Quito can go through the four "seasons" in one day).
- **Electronic devices** (cell phone, laptop, etc.).
- **Adapters** (Ecuador uses 110V, 60hz; and plugs have two flat pins).
- **Debit and credit card.**
- Rain jacket and umbrella. Towel, swimsuit and sandals. Soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, and plenty of sunscreen.
- Any **medication** that you take regularly.





# ECUADOR IS WAITING FOR YOU

