

Help us empower at-risk youth to take charge of their future through marine conservation.

In the center of a tiny fishing village in northern Manabí, Ecuador, sits a beautiful bamboo community Library where, along with many other educational programs, Fundación A mano manaba FMM, has been offering conservancy education for the last six years. Local youth arrive to partake in its programs and activities. Our marine conservancy program, consisting of field trips for snorkeling, surfing and scuba diving activities, is a big success. While on the road we openly discuss human reproductive rights as part of natural equilibrium. By addressing two -apparently disconnected- issues: marine endangered species and teen pregnancy we are empowering at risk youth to take charge of their future.

Ecuador leads the highest rates of adolescent pregnancies in South America. Almost 50% of all live births involve adolescent mothers (ages 10-19), (INEC). In the last decade there has been a 78% increase in births among girls who are 10-14 years old. Adolescent pregnancy is exacerbated by inequality, abuse, and access to education. At the same time, the coast of Ecuador has ecosystems that are critically endangered, including marine species such as the hammerhead shark and marine turtles.

These two issues can be addressed hand-in-hand. Help us continue to educate the children of artisanal fishermen as ocean guardians; environmental guides, scuba diving instructors, etc.. so as to protect our ecosystems and endangered marine species, while gaining environmental and biological awareness, as a means for youth to counter the rising adolescent pregnancy statistics. We believe this symbiotic association will prove effective as young people take responsibility for the environment and their own reproductive rights.