Maria Elena Barragan:
Hi, my name is Maria Elena Barragan. I come from Ecuador. I'm the current Executive Director of the Ecuadorian NGO Fundacion Herpetologica Gustavo Orces. I've been working in the field of herpetology for 30 years already, I start volunteering at these organisations where opened the door for me to work with the amazing world of reptiles and specifically snakes. That is when I start understanding that the snakes are amazing animals, but in fact they cause an impact on humans health start does my responsibilities include being part of the education programme that the organisation carries out, and this involves formal education and non formal education. Since the beginning the organisation considered the impact of venomous snakes in communities is important and determined how communities are reacting against snakes. So we consider to develop a programme to create a community awareness about snake bites, how to deal with snake bites, and how to treat those accidents. We also have 300 species of snakes from which 30% belong to the venomous group.

To be able to achieve the goals through our educational programme, we create reptile and amphibian collections with facilities based in Quito where we received already 1 million visitors in 30 years of work. And we show them the most amazing biodiversity, reptile fauna and making a lot of emphasis on venomous snakes, telling people telling children telling the public about the role of snakes in nature. Also, we develop workshops and training sessions in Quito, but also in some other areas in Ecuador, rural and urban areas, going and keeping in touch communities, associations, hospitals and small health centres to be able to receive attention. In addition to this we train doctors and professionals about the use of snake antivenom. The Ecuador unfortunately doesn't produce and we need to import from Costa Rica. My efforts towards snake conservation are to help my organisation and the team I'm working with to keep going with these efforts at different levels, to keep carrying out conservation programmes about venomous snakes. Keep carrying out the community awareness about snakebites, and all of this is possible if I can get your help and I can get you support, please visit our website www.vivarium.org.ec and follow our Facebook Vivariumquito to just follow our activities and be part of that. And don't forget, everyone's voice count!