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Ecuador

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***"Our technical textile training programs aim to provide educational opportunities to populations in vulnerable situations. DiyClub was born from inclusion".***



It was in 2017, two years after moving from Venezuela to Ecuador, when Laura met Daniela Armendariz – her Ecuadorian business partner – with whom she shared her idea to open a space where women could learn how to make their own clothes and become entrepreneurs. At that time Laura was working from home, designing and making clothes, trying to earn a living for her family, and Daniela was 23 years old – a young graduate who struggled to find a job, who liked the idea of starting a venture to generate income and pay back her education loan.

Out of necessity, Laura and Daniela decided to build on each other's knowledge and expertise – fashion design and digital marketing – and a keen motivation to help other women to explore entrepreneurship and create garments.

DiyClub was registered in 2022 with the aim to provide technical training on fashion design and sewing to populations in vulnerable situations, including migrants, refugees and displaced people. Besides technical training, DiyClub caters for vulnerable women needs such as childcare, basic food supplies, subsidized transportation and a work kit to encourage them starting some basic activities in garment repair, for example.

DiyClub also provides some basic training on personal finances, textile production costs and gender awareness. The company links trainees to various entrepreneurship programmes and seed capital competitions, offering technical advice when needed. In addition, the company has a grant system in place to promote continuous upskilling for its beneficiaries. Its focus on inclusion, collaborative work and community support makes the company genuinely different from others offering technical training only.

Through its programmes, the company trained and certified more than 300 women and men of various nationalities, especially migrants like Laura from Venezuela. More than 700 other men and women attended open public courses. Laura estimates that 25% of the beneficiaries managed to create their own brand, raised capital to start their venture and obtained their first sales. DiyClub is endorsed by the Ministry of Labour, and it has submitted a request for endorsement from the Secretariat of Education too.

DiyClub provides vulnerable people with training programmes in partnerships with local NGOs. Most of their beneficiaries are women and men interested in learning how to start a business or make their own clothes. In recent years, particularly after the global pandemic, the country witnessed an increasing number of people interested in starting a business or looking for additional sources of income.

DiyClub's profit margin in the last three years grew by 25% and the team went from two to six people, with the integration of four new trainers in textile design and production.



Laura took the Empretec Entrepreneurship Training Workshop (ETW) in 2019. It helped her develop habits and practices of successful entrepreneurs and her venture to expand its operations from a small living room to an academy with a 200 square meters' training space. During the Covid-19

pandemic, when all in-presence activities came to a halt, Laura seized that opportunity to create tutorials and online courses, including on how to manufacture bio protection suits.

Setting clear and specific goals, taking calculated risks and networking are the three entrepreneurial competencies Laura recognizes helped her business to grow. She attaches great importance to continuous learning and education; she empowers her staff so they can all share the same objectives for the growth of the company.

In the next couple of years, Laura wants to upgrade the company as an institute for technical training in fashion design and textile production; she wants to expand further its training facilities, attract more trainees, create a franchising model and set up a supplies store near the academy. Through strategic partnerships, she has also been discussing ideas for the creating of savings bank that could provide members with easier access to affordable working capital and financing options. Her expansion plans include not only the city of Quito but also Latacunga and Guayaquil.