

- **Where you work in the O2 business**

My name is Laxmi and I currently work as a Project Manager within Customer Service. I have worked at O2 for nearly 6 years since leaving university, working in various roles within Customer Service.

- **Why you applied for Pronino**

I applied for Pronino because I was seeking a challenge outside of the realms of my everyday workplace. Volunteering is both fun and fulfilling, allowing me to gain a variety of opportunities generally not available any other way. I anticipated this experience would be an extremely worthwhile way to support children and the community, not to mention the opportunity of a lifetime. It was an ideal chance to fulfil my aspirations; I had a great desire to help children who need support to sustain their future and wellbeing. I felt it would be encouraging to make a positive change in others lives whilst recognising the needs of children in the 3rd world. I wanted to gain the self satisfaction of knowing that I had been able to bring some joy and fun into people's lives.

- **Your experiences of Pronino**

Before I left I was quite nervous about the challenges that lay ahead of me and my lack of fluent Spanish. I was so excited and really looked forward to meeting and spending quality time with the children in their community. and gaining an insight into a different culture. Nothing could have prepared me for what I experienced in Guayaquil, Ecuador. I was humbled and saddened to see how the community lived. The living standards were poor with no clean water but the children were happy and always smiling. We were placed in two schools and one Panita, it was overwhelming and emotional meeting the children, most had never seen international foreigners before. My days consisted of teaching English / IT, playing outdoors, activities, singing, dancing, having fun with the children and delivering basic skills of life in uncomfortable hot and humid conditions. The children were so affectionate and humble and always wanting to learn and have fun. At one of the schools we renovated a junk room and turned it in to a library, the results were outstanding and the children now have an area to study and read books.

During my time there we arranged a party at the school for the children and their parents. There were lots of fun activities planned throughout the day including a football tournament, face painting, basketball, a dance competition, panyatas, musical chairs etc - the children and parents thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Pronino was an amazing experience that gave me learning opportunities that will last a lifetime. I like to think I made a considerable difference to lives of the children I met and their local community by raising their self esteem, motivation and enthusiasm. This gives me immense satisfaction in being able to give something back. I developed lots of new skills that will benefit me in the years to come and discovered talents and passions I never knew I had.

Your contact number, email

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- **And a bit about you**

- I have previous volunteering experience working with Young Enterprise & local schools promoting lifelong learning & skills development, I am currently a mentor working with year 9 children in the Number Partners Scheme. In my spare time I enjoy keeping fit at the gym, swimming, reading and spending quality time with family & friends. I have spent substantial periods of time travelling around the world and enjoy activity holidays.