



## Water Ecuador Research Fellow

### Investigate the Role of Bottled Water in Waterborne Disease

**Background:** Bottled water is an increasingly important source of drinking water in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). In Ecuador, for example, bottled water in reusable jugs is the primary drinking water source in many communities. Yet little is known about the usage of bottled water in LMICs, and even less is understood about the quality of that water. Water Ecuador's preliminary investigation in northern Ecuador found bacterial contamination in every bottled water brand tested. In some cases, bacteria levels were thousands of times in excess of EPA limits. Water Ecuador now aims to study bottled water quality across Ecuador and other LMICs to raise awareness about risks and benefits of bottled water in this setting and improve the quality of bottled water being consumed.

**Activities:** Water Ecuador will coordinate researchers at multiple sites in low- and middle-income countries to study bottled water in different regions. Researchers will test major bottled water brands for bacterial contamination. They will also survey households to understand water consumption patterns and perceptions about water quality. Data from different geographical sites will be compiled with the intention of publishing in peer-reviewed journals, with researchers as authors where appropriate.

**Requirements:** Researchers must have experience living or traveling in LMICs. Water Ecuador prefers researchers with relevant foreign language proficiency. Experience with lab techniques is preferred but not strictly required. Researchers must be able to operate independently and should be willing to problem solve in unpredictable situations.

**Dates:** Water Ecuador will begin accepting researchers in May 2015 and will take a small number of researchers on an ongoing basis. Researchers must be able to spend at least two months on site.

**Costs:** Water Ecuador is a non-profit with a limited budget. Water Ecuador will support researchers as much as possible with planning research, coordinating logistics, and assembling funding applications, but researchers are expected to cover personal expenses, including travel, lodging, and food. If university funds are available to cover the costs of the research equipment, this would be helpful but is not required.

**Other:** Researchers seeking to travel and work in pairs or small groups are encouraged.

**Contact:** Please email Alex Harding at [aharding@waterecuador.org](mailto:aharding@waterecuador.org) and Daniel Schwarz at [dschwarz@waterecuador.org](mailto:dschwarz@waterecuador.org) with a brief cover letter and resume, as well as any questions about this opportunity.