



Innovative solutions to reduce poverty

Through the Graduation Model, UNHCR and HIAS support the refugee population on the road towards self-sufficiency.

Poverty is not just about economic resources. Access to employment, unexpected situations or the ability to count on friends and neighbors can be determining factors in the ability of a household to reach self-sufficiency. Even though these might seem obvious factors, for a family that has been forced to run away from conflict and prosecution, starting from scratch in a country where you don't know anyone presents challenges, shaped by lack of a support network and other situations that one is not ready for.

By analyzing factors that tie refugee families to extreme poverty, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and HIAS in Ecuador, thanks to the support by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), have developed an innovative approach: The Graduation Model.

This model, implemented in different developing countries, such as Bangladesh, aims to eradicate poverty and is now implemented with the refugee population

Through a process developed in a 12 to 18 month time frame, UNHCR and HIAS assist refugee families through psycho social support, training to generate income through an entrepreneur venture or employment, creation of a savings culture and seed capital. Families that take part in the Graduation Model, by strengthening their abilities and skills, can overcome situations of extreme vulnerability and potential dependency on humanitarian aid.

In a country with the largest refugee in Latin America, with over 60.000 refugees recognized by the Ecuadorian State, finding long term solutions for this group is a priority. In this sense, considering that local integration is the preferred alternative for the families that have arrived in Ecuador requesting asylum, the Graduation Model has become a key tool to promote self-sufficiency. By connecting vulnerable families with their communities, creating networks and starting businesses, a long lasting integration is created, thus bringing benefits to our refugee population and the host country.

Based on an initiative piloted in Ecuador in 2015 in Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas (a bustling commercial city located 152 kilometers from the capital, Quito) the Graduation Model in 2016 has become a national-scale initiative that aims to support refugee households who find themselves in a situation of extreme vulnerability, by offering the potential to generate income. It is a support program for those who, even if their current situation does not allow them to reach the minimum subsistence level of income, could generate a livelihood in the future.

With a goal of supporting around 1.500 families through a period of at least a year, the Graduation Model is an innovative approach in support of the refugee population to mitigate their extreme poverty situation



Ecuador is home for over 60 000 refugees, 95% of whom are from Colombian Origin



Cley: a new beginning thanks to the Graduation Model



By Carolina Loza in Santo Domingo

32 year-old Cley and her daughter ran away from Colombia a decade ago due to violence in their place of origin: Tumaco, in the Colombian Department of Nariño. Despite Tumaco being their home, when Cley received life threats, she decided to flee and start a new life in Ecuador.

In Mocache's small community (located in Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas province) Cley and her daughter built a new home, with Cleys' Ecuadorian partner, Jose. Their home that was hit by the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that shook Ecuador on April 16th 2016. On that Saturday night, the roof in whose construction the family had invested so much effort fell down in a matter of seconds. "We did not know what to do, it was so strong, like a boat moving" says Cley, remembering that Saturday night with a deep sadness on her face. "We had to leave our home, we were forced to start again" she adds.

With her Ecuadorian partner and her daughter they moved to La Concordia, located in the same province, where her sister-in-law offered a place to stay. They had to walk 15 km on foot each day between la Concordia, city located in the Northwest part of the province and Mocache so they continue working the plantain crops located next to their damaged property. Because of these circumstances, as part of the search for long term solutions for the refugee population, HIAS and UNHCR identified Cley and her family because of their potential to be part of the Graduation Model.

"Thanks to the support I've received I've been able to rebuild part of my home and I do not have to share with my sister-in-law. We've been able to buy some chickens to raise and sell" explains Cley, who is expecting a baby in four months. "Before the Model, I just went once to the doctor. Now I go to all check-ups with my family and a social worker who has helped me make all necessary arrangements". Cley and her family look at the process ahead with hope. They dream of a new roof for the house, to rebuild what has shattered, a new livelihood and a new home for her daughter and the baby they expect.

What are the Graduation Model criteria?

1. Members of the household eat three times a day.
2. The household has diversified sources of income.
3. The household receives at least the basic salary (82USD per capita per month).
4. At least one person in the family (head of household) has a savings account.
5. The household is able to save at least 10% of their income.
6. The household participates in community spaces, they have support networks.



graduation model Ecuador
www.acnur.org
www.hias.org.ec



Reducing extreme poverty

IN PROGRESS



542

households targeted

403

Make less than 82 USD per capita per month

75%

live in cities

0.26

Average in the local integration index

Data 30/06/2016



56% eat three times a day



27% Of all family members have necessary documentation for legal residence in the country



4% Save



192 Households have received financial training



26% Generate income of at least 82USD per capita



219 Households with a savings account



Funded by European Union Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection

Graduation Model Ecuador

www.acnur.org
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Participant households Goal

1.500

7.500 PEOPLE

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Innovating Solutions
#WithRefugees