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## Periodic counseling: an added value of the Graduation Model

Through periodic counseling and continued assistance, the Graduation Model allows to consolidate the process that refugee families face on their road to a sustainable and dignified livelihood.

The work experience with the refugee population in Ecuador has shown, throughout the years, that many factors can affect families in the life building process when they arrive in a new country. Family issues as well as unexpected events such as sickness of a family member, job loss and family violence can be a major setback in the integration process in their host country.

Because of this, the Graduation Model, developed in Ecuador by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and HIAS, funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), includes an essential component in the pursue for a stable livelihood: periodic counseling.

Throughout the process, that lasts between 12 and 18 months, a person visits in a regular manner and offers assistance and orientation to the participant homes. The team that assists and visit these households from HIAS, called social promoters, analyzes, on a biweekly basis along the families, their progress and provides orientation over the access to basic services.

*From the beginning of the Graduation Model, over 3,000 people have been part of this process*

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Social promoters, part of the refugee or host community that in some cases have previously participated in these community processes, identify risks and opportunities so the family integrates progressively in their host community and finds a livelihood that develops their potential. This way, households receive orientation over local entities and access to available offers in private and public services, in a way that they can exercise their rights in an active way.

This was Aida's case, a 32-year-old single mother of two, who knew when she left the Putumayo department, southwest of Colombia, she wanted to set her own business in motion. Her biggest concern when she arrived in Lago Agrio, located in the Ecuadorian province of Sucumbios, was that her two daughters would get back to school: the oldest, 10 and her 8-year-old who has an intellectual disability.

"I did not know where to send the youngest to school. Thanks to the social promoter's help, we found where she could go and we got her a spot. She is happy, she's been treated well and I am focusing in my business running well."

With the periodic counseling offered by the Graduation Model, Aida, seven months after arriving in Ecuador, is driving her business forward, while her daughters attend school and the family of three builds a new home.

"Mi beauty parlor is just beside the house. That's how I combine my business and taking care of my daughters" she assures.



Periodic counseling, according to participants is "what makes the difference"



Funded by  
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# PulpiGuanabano: The growth of a business venture

By Carolina Loza Leon in Ibarra



In Ibarra, a city about 120 km from the capital (Quito) soursop consumption is evident. Restaurants and cafeterias mention the benefit of this popular fruit for health. Besides selling juice or selling the fruit, the ways of consuming this tropical super fruit called "guanabana" in Ecuador, were limited.

Rubialba Ramírez y Fernando Mosquera, a couple of Colombian Origin settled in Ibarra with their 16 year old son, saw in this fruit of citrus flavor and creamy texture an opportunity. From the Caquetá Department, the family ran away to Ecuador at the beginning of 2016, hoping to avoid the risk of a potential forced recruitment of the teenager. Even though they started, like many, selling coconut and tamarind juice on the street, the market saturation made them look for other job options.

Fernando then remember a sweet based on the soursop pulp and powdered milk that he prepared in his native Colombia, and decided to experiment. This is how PulpiGuanabano was born, a thick beverage made out of soursop, milk and blackberry syrup that gets clients in downtown Ibarra, where Fernando and Rubialba take their carts to sell sweets every morning.

"After going to food management workshops we started seeing what we could do and how we could improve our business" adds Rubialba, who was part of a series of workshop with the aim to develop business ventures carried out in the framework of the Graduation Model.

After three months, Fernando and Rubialba proudly wear their aprons with their logo. Besides, each PulpiGuanabano serving comes in a container with their contact information.

"Because of the apron and the logo they recognize us and look for us" says Fernando, while he shows plans to expand his business, detailed in a piece of paper.

"Thanks to all the suggestions we were given in the workshops, today we got an order asking for 30 PulpiGuanabano servings. We were called after they tried and saw the number in the glass." The entrepreneurs say.

As in the case of PulpiGuanabano, small changes in initiatives carried out by refugees can be a big boost to their livelihood activities.

Because of the impact of these sort of training, HIAS organizes training in various locations, where learning about business development, finance management, market analysis and marketing techniques are combined with a practical focus to boosts the sustainability of the business.

Follow all the money that has been invested, thus you have a clear idea of how much you earn and how much you spend.

2. When you have a good relation with your client, the client will come back and will repeat the transaction.

3. Don't expect to have a product finish at 100% to run tests. Start getting feedback as soon as possible. Is better to build your product little by little.





Reducing extreme poverty

IN PROGRESS

**HIAS**  
Acoger al extranjero.  
Proteger al refugiado.

**UNHCR**  
ACNUR  
Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas  
para los Refugiados

3239

People  
Included

778

Make less than  
82 USD per  
capita per  
month

81%

live in  
cities

0.26

Average in the  
local  
integration  
index

Data as of 30/09/2016



61% eat three times a day



33% Of all family members have necessary documentation for legal residence in the country



5% Participants Save



368 Households have received financial training



23% Generate income of at least 82USD per capita



293 Households with a savings account



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European Union  
Humanitarian Aid &  
Civil Protection

Graduation  
Model  
Ecuador

[www.acnur.org](http://www.acnur.org)  
[www.hias.org.ec](http://www.hias.org.ec)

Participant households Goal

1,500

7,500 PEOPLE

November 2016

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