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Some criteria for measuring poverty alleviation

How is a process of overcoming poverty measured? The Graduation Model allows establishing criteria on the path to economic autonomy.

One of the fundamental interests of the graduation approach is to generate changes in the lives of refugees, so that they can build an adequate integration process in Ecuador.

In this sense the design of the Graduation Model, an initiative of the UN Agency for Refugees, UNHCR, and the HIAS organization - supported by the European Commission's Department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, ECHO-, has been based on the poverty reduction schemes used by the Ecuadorian government.

Starting from the targeting process for households in the Graduation Model, this process for refugee families in extreme vulnerability, required the definition of precise benchmarks as each participating household move through the program.

In that sense, an essential element to define graduation criteria was considering indicators currently used in national poverty eradication programs used by the Ecuadorian Government.

Graduation criteria relate to indicators used by national poverty eradication programs

As part of the accompaniment of participating households, the Graduation Model includes monitoring of a series of indicators, as well as their periodic measurement, allows a systematic analysis of the evolution towards graduation of participating households.

As stated by Maybritt Rasmussen, UNHCR Program Officer in Ecuador, "taking advantage of the favourable conditions offered by the Ecuadorian context is one of the achievements of this innovative initiative".

"We decided to use as one of the graduation criteria 82 dollars per capita, an amount established by the Ecuadorian government in its social programs, so that we can work together with the State," she adds. "Furthermore, we took advantage of the fact that in Ecuador the refugee population can access financial services, which allows the sustainability of the integration process."

After a period of 12 to 18 months, the Graduation Model aims to help households to reach adequate living conditions, minimum per capita income, savings and the ability to cope with unforeseen situations.

Graduation Criteria

1. Eat nutritious meals 3 times a day.
2. The household has diversified sources of income for at least 6 months.
3. Perceive at least 82USD per capita for more than 6 months.
4. At least one person in the family has a savings account.
5. They have been able to save at least 10% of their income for 6 months.
6. Participate in community spaces, have support networks.



By the end of December 2016, 1512 households were targeted for the Graduation Model

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Graduation Model Ecuador

www.acnur.org
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Graduation in Santo Domingo

By Carolina Loza León in Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas

After more than a year of hard, rewarding work, the graduation day has finally arrived. Relentless and dedicated, about forty households that formed part of the pilot of the Graduation Model's, developed in the locality of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas - about 150 kilometres from the Ecuadorian capital, Quito -, can finally say that they have graduated. They can now affirm that, in short, they have obtained a stable livelihoods to strengthen their path towards integration in Ecuador.

As Lina Rebolledo, who graduated in December 2016 explains, being part of this process allowed her to start a new life. When she separated from her partner, she was able to face the shock and the new necessities that imply raising her one year old daughter alone.

"From what I have learned in the nutritional workshops (offered by the World Food Program) I liked being able to learn how to cook Quinoa and mix the foods to create something more nutritional".

"Additionally, after I moved, it was easier for my daughter and I as we can save and I can keep my child with me while selling clothes from a catalogue. The graduation model helped me develop my business", adds Lina.

The informal graduation "ceremony" being done with each family individually by NGO HIAS and UNHCR, consists of giving the household a planner which has simple tables to guide the family in keeping track of their spending and expenditures.

Olga, one of the participants, acknowledges that, despite the immense satisfaction of what she has achieved, she will miss the visits of field workers. "On the day of her first visit, I was ready to talk, I had all my questions ready," says this refugee who arrived in Ecuador from Colombia more than a decade ago.

However, although consumption support ceases months before official graduation, the home visits do not end abruptly. The targeted family will be visited to monitor the sustainability of their situation and assess the progress of the household in its local integration.

"It does not mean detaching ourselves completely from the process, but gradually moving away and disengaging ourselves, reminding the family that this process is their own achievement," says Besem Obenson, Head of UNHCR Office for Pichincha and Santo Domingo, which piloted the initiative.



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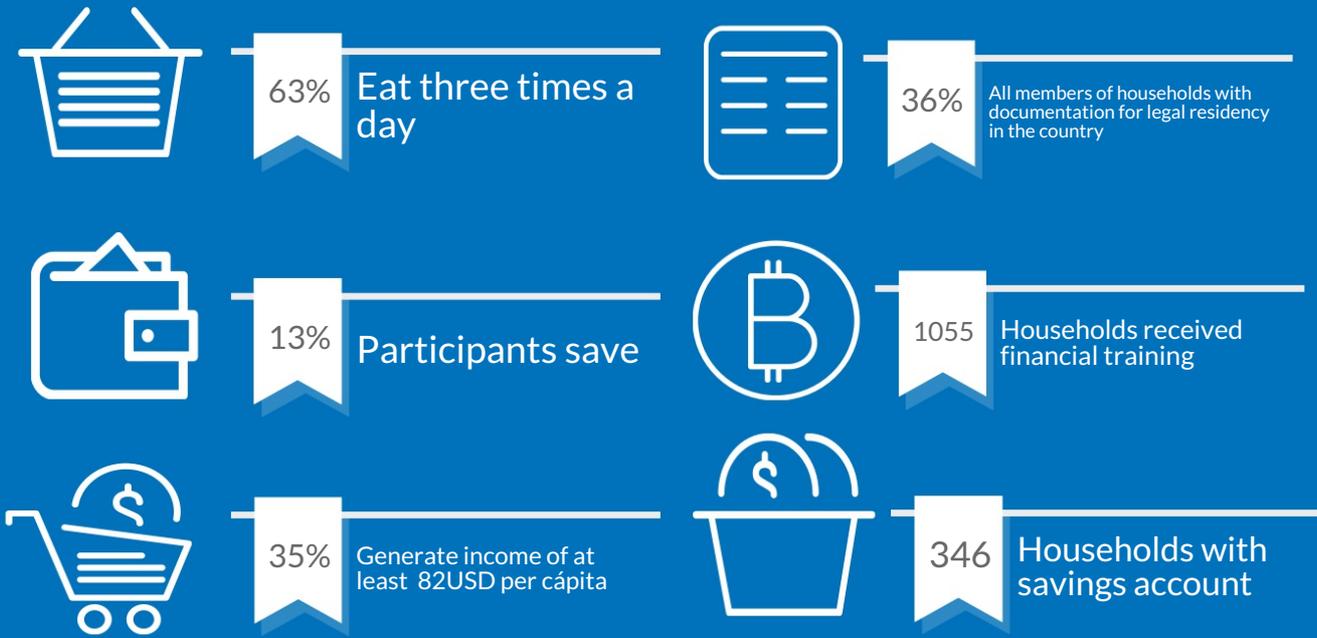
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Data as of 31/12/2016



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Graduation Model Ecuador

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Participating households goal	1 500
7 500 PEOPLE	

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