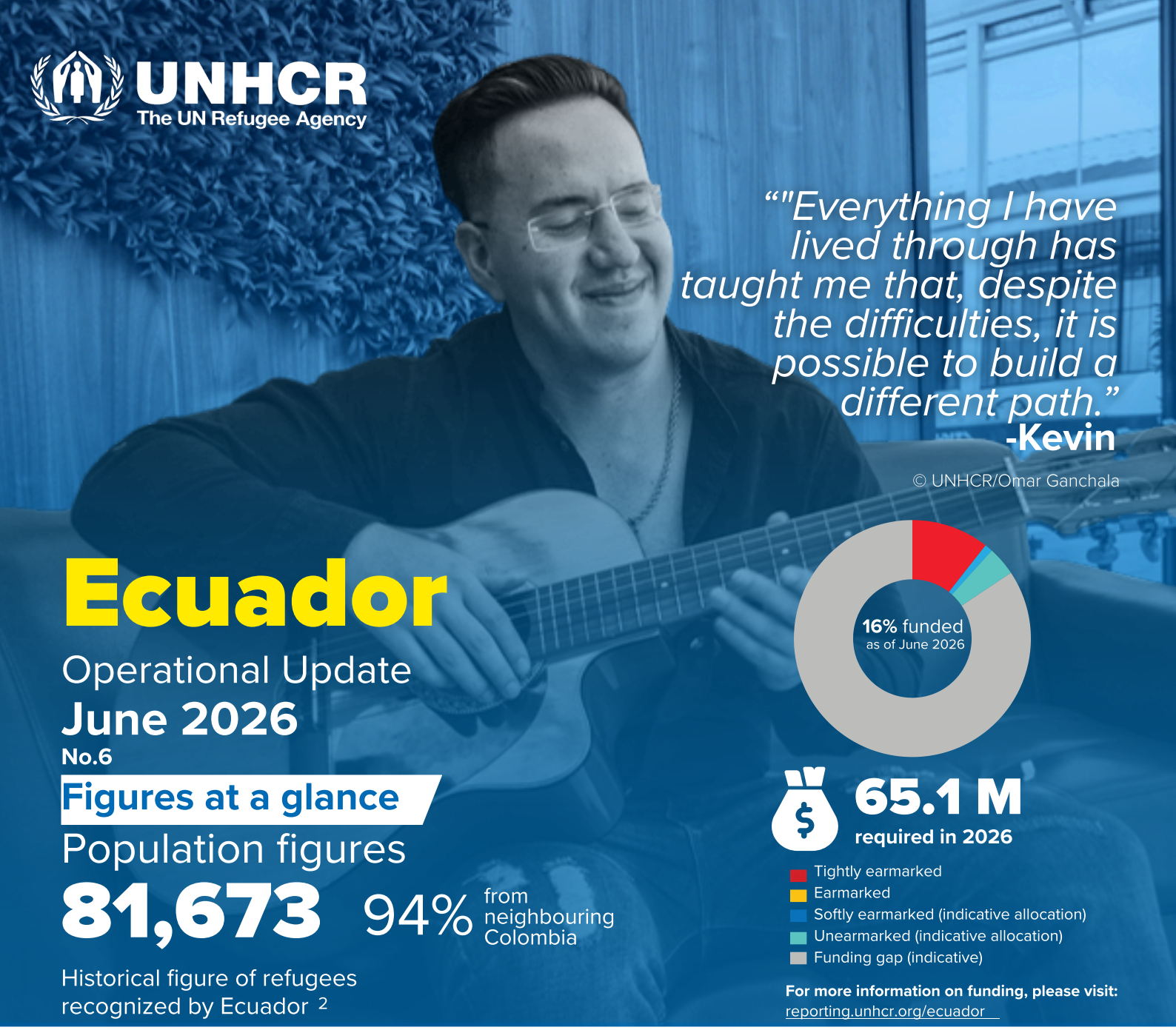
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



“"Everything I have lived through has taught me that, despite the difficulties, it is possible to build a different path.”
-Kevin

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Ecuador

Operational Update
June 2026
No.6

Figures at a glance

Population figures

81,673 94% from neighbouring Colombia

Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador [2]

65.1 M
required in 2026

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

For more information on funding, please visit:
reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador

Our 2026 response in figures

35,417 refugees and other displaced people supported and registered in proGres as of the end of June 2026

4,650 people supported with community - based protection services

4,995 people supported with collective emergency shelter

509 people assisted to cover their basic needs and protection

4,558 people supported with mental health and psychosocial support

236 people linked with a decent employment opportunity

1,600 people received hygiene kits

5,526 people received legal orientation & assistance to access asylum services

172 people provided with technical or skills certification

1. Historical figure registered by the government since 1978 to the end of June 2026.
2. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of June 2026

Operational context

Ecuador's operational environment continues to be shaped by a combination of security, socioeconomic, and community-level challenges that affect well-being, access to services, and opportunities for inclusion. In response to evolving challenges, national authorities have continued implementing measures aimed at strengthening public safety, maintaining stability, and reinforcing institutional responses. In this context, UNHCR works closely with national and local authorities, partners, and communities to support refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced populations, and host communities, facilitating access to protection, essential services, and opportunities for inclusion.

During the first months of 2026, several provinces, particularly in coastal and border areas, continued to face security challenges that affected communities and humanitarian service delivery. In some locations, disruptions to public life due to violent incidents highlighted the importance of maintaining access to information, protection services, and community support mechanisms, particularly for people in vulnerable situations.

In northern and border provinces, including Esmeraldas and Sucumbíos, evolving local protection dynamics continue to influence the operational environment. These conditions may affect mobility, access to services, and community well-being, including exacerbated impacts to Indigenous populations and other groups with specific needs.

Continued engagement with communities and local institutions remains essential to ensuring access to assistance, information, and support.

Alongside these developments, Ecuador continues to experience economic pressures linked to rising living costs. These challenges particularly affect low-income households, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities, and may limit access to basic services, livelihoods, and opportunities for socioeconomic inclusion.

Humanitarian operations continue in this context, with UNHCR in Ecuador adapting their approaches to ensure the safe and effective delivery of assistance. The operation continues to monitor developments, strengthen coordination with national and local authorities and partners, and adapt its activities to maintain access to communities and support field operations across affected areas.

UNHCR remains present across the country, supporting refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced populations, and host communities through protection services, legal assistance, community-based interventions, and initiatives that promote inclusion and self-reliance. These efforts help people access rights, essential services, and opportunities to rebuild their lives in the country.

Main populations forced to flee hosted by Ecuador and others of concern

Colombians

According to government data, 472 Colombians applied for asylum in Ecuador in June 2026 (totaling 1769 in 2026), representing a 33% increase compared to May 2026 and an 89% increase from the same period last year. Ecuador continues to host one of the largest populations of Colombian refugees historically. In 2025, Colombians represented 40% of asylum seekers, a 33% decrease from the previous year. Temporary closures of official crossing points and stricter controls have reduced mobility and access to territory, potentially discouraging people with international protection needs from seeking asylum.

Colombian households face significant protection needs, primarily related to unmet basic needs (30.6%), followed by lack of legal documentation (17.2%), limited access to services (12.2%), and children at risk of not attending school (7.9%), reflecting layered vulnerabilities affecting access to rights and essential services. Many report threats, persecution, intimidation, or direct violence, confirming that violence and armed conflict in Colombia remain key drivers of displacement. UNHCR projects an important number of asylums claims in 2026.

1769 Colombians who have sought asylum in Ecuador in 2026

Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador:

- **56%** access to housing
- **54%** access to food
- **44%** access to employment

Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to account for the largest shares of arrivals to Ecuador, while mobility trends remain relatively stable. In June 2026, an estimated 17,407 people entered the country, with a daily average of approximately 580 arrivals. During the same period, an estimated 16,638 people departed Ecuador. As a result, the net migration balance stood at approximately 769 people who entered and remained in the country during the reporting period, suggesting a continued stabilization of mixed movements with moderate buy positive net entries.

According to government data, 979 Venezuelans sought asylum in Ecuador in June 2026 (3,851 in 2026), a 78% increase compared to May 2026, and a 157% increase compared to the same month in 2025. Venezuelan asylum seekers currently represent 64% of all asylum applications processed in Ecuador in 2026, a trend that has been consistently observed since 2024, while the 2026 number accounts for 66% of the total registered in 2025. This reinforces both the continued need for support and the sustained interest in accessing international protection. Moreover, with no avenues for regularization, the asylum system has become increasingly relevant for those with international protection needs.

Population entry and exit figures have been compiled by the GTRMs in Ecuador's border areas with qualitative and quantitative information on mixed movement trends. These figures are not triangulated with neighboring countries.

440.450[2]
Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador

- **45%** between 18 and 45 years old
- **25%** have a higher education degree

Main needs of Venezuelans in Ecuador:[3]

- **55%** access to food
- **67%** access to housing or shelter
- **53%** access to livelihoods or employment

2. According to data estimated by the Refugee and Migrant Working Group (GTRM, by its acronym in Spanish).
3. Fifth R4V Joint Needs Assessment. www.r4v.info

Ecuadorians

By mid- 2025, over 103,000 Ecuadorian asylum-seekers were pending a decision on their claims, while around 5,000 had been recognized as refugees – the majority in the United States, Spain, Mexico and Italy (followed by Perú and Canada). The Ombudspersons Office, with support from UNHCR and ECHO, launched a report on internal displacement in 2025 which estimates that over 315,000 Ecuadorians had been internally displaced between 2022 and 2024. **See the executive summary here**.

ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD

SPECIAL FOCUS

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

World Refugee Day Exhibition Brings Refugee and Displacement Stories to the Public

As part of World Refugee Day 2026, UNHCR presented "Life in a Suitcase: Stories of Displacement in Ecuador" at the Museo del Carmen Alto in Quito, an exhibition that brought together 26 stories of refugees and displaced people who have found protection, stability, and new opportunities in the country. Through photographs, personal testimonies, and meaningful belongings they managed to preserve during their journeys, the exhibition offered visitors a closer look at the realities behind forced displacement, highlighting not only the losses and challenges people face when leaving their homes, but also their resilience, determination, and contributions to the communities that have welcomed them.

The exhibition, open from 18 June to 26 July, also marks 26 years of UNHCR's presence in Ecuador and showcases the stories of individuals who, despite arriving in the country amid uncertainty and hardship, have rebuilt their lives, integrated into society, and become active contributors to their communities.

Read the 26 stories here.

QUITO

World Refugee Day Community Event Promotes Inclusion and Social Cohesion

UNHCR and FUDELA organized a community event at Parque Futuro in Quito, bringing together refugees, forcibly displaced people, and members of host communities in a space dedicated to connection, inclusion, and shared experiences. Through recreational activities, games, cultural performances, and dance presentations, participants from different nationalities spent an afternoon celebrating diversity and strengthening community ties. The event concluded with a live screening of the Ecuador–Curaçao football match, providing an opportunity for participants to come together in support of the country that has welcomed them.

MANTA

Access to health through community services

UNHCR held the official World Refugee Day commemoration event, "Until Every Person Is Safe," together with the photo exhibition "Life in a Suitcase" at the Manta Cultural Museum. The event brought together local authorities—including the Manabí Provincial Government, MREMH, MDH, the Public Defender's Office, the Ombudsperson's Office, and the municipalities of Manta, Portoviejo, and Montecristi—as well as refugees and leaders of community-based organizations.

GUAYAQUIL, NUEVA ESPERANZA

Commemorating World Refugee Day through culture and community engagement.

UNHCR commemorated World Refugee Day through community and public events in Guayaquil. Celebrations were held in the Nueva Esperanza community in Monte Sinaí and at the University of the Arts, bringing together refugees, host communities, local authorities, and the public to promote solidarity and raise awareness of forced displacement.

LAGO AGRIO

Breaking Borders and Building communities for World Refugee Day

UNHCR organized the first Intercultural Challenge "Breaking Borders" for World Refugee Day. The event brought together refugees, host community members and representatives from key institutions and partners organizations like the Public Defender's Office, the National Police, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Ministry of Human Development, the Ministry of Social Protection, the GTRM, ADRA, the Prefecture of Sucumbíos, Sucumbíos Solidario and the Sucumbíos Women's Federation.

EL COCA

Blue for Refugees: A Beacon of Solidarity in Francisco de Orellana

The Municipality of Francisco de Orella commemorated World Refugee Day through the symbolic illumination of Bocana del Payamino Park in blue. This initiative highlighted the importance of solidarity, respect, and reaffirmed the shared commitment of local authorities and UNHCR to foster inclusive, welcoming, and supportive communities for refugees.

ESMERALDAS

World Refugee Day Activities Promote Access to Rights and Inclusion in Esmeraldas

As part of World Refugee Day 2026, UNHCR carried out awareness-raising and community engagement activities in Esmeraldas together with the One-to-One for Education movement and local community organizations. The activities included sessions with health personnel on their role in promoting access to asylum and international protection, as well as community events in San Lorenzo, focused on education, inclusion, and peaceful coexistence among refugees, displaced people, and host communities.

SAN GABRIEL, TULCÁN

World Refugee Day exhibition highlighting stories of refugees living in Carchi

For World Refugee Day, UNHCR and its partners organized the Life in a Suitcase photographic exhibition in Tulcán, showcasing the stories of refugee and migrant leaders living in Carchi. Through their experiences, the exhibition highlighted resilience, leadership, and the positive contributions they make to their communities. The initiative was carried out in coordination with local partners, including FUDELA and the local government, promoting inclusion and social cohesion.

ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD

PROTECTION

How UNHCR makes a difference:

Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right, and Ecuador has built one of the strongest asylum systems in the region to uphold it. UNHCR supports the Government by safeguarding access to territory and fair asylum procedures, providing legal and community-based protection, and translating international protection standards into real access to rights at the local level. Through its presence on the ground, technical expertise, data-driven analysis and coordination with national and local actors, UNHCR helps address immediate protection risks while strengthening sustainable protection systems, fostering social cohesion and enabling refugees and host communities to live safely, with dignity, and stability. **To learn more, check out protection fact sheet.**

GUAYAQUIL

Strengthening access to international protection through community outreach.

UNHCR conducted an international protection workshop with the Ohana women's kickingball team. Twenty-two participants received information on asylum, rights, and available protection services to promote protection within sports activities. This activity was made possible thanks to the support of LivGolf.

MANTA

Bringing integrated humanitarian services closer to communities

UNHCR, together with HIAS, NRC, CIPS, and the IDB, organized an outreach activity including gynecological and general medical care, as well as information and guidance on regularization, access to asylum, and available services for people in human mobility and members of the host community. This activity was made possible thanks to the support of donors like ECHO and KOICA.

ESMERALDAS

Mobile protection outreach brings services closer to communities

UNHCR conducted mobile protection and information outreach activities in Atacames and San Lorenzo, bringing services closer to refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities in remote and areas with limited access to services. UNHCR provides information on asylum procedures, access to rights and services, identifies protection needs, and offers referrals to specialized support services. This is possible thanks to the support of donors like ECHO and KOICA.

ESMERALDAS

Protection and legal assistance services strengthened in Tonsupa

UNHCR, in coordination with the Tonsupa Municipal Government, the Cantonal Board for the Protection of Rights, and the Public Defender's Office, provided spaces where refugees, asylum-seekers, and host community members received information, protection support, legal orientation, and referrals to available services in the area. These helps facilitate access to rights closer to communities in rural areas This activities are possible thanks of the support of donors like KOICA.

CARCHI, TULCÁN

Reactivating institutional coordination on human mobility.

The Human Mobility Table was reactivated in Carchi under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility. During the session, GTRM presented an updated analysis of migration flows and the main challenges in humanitarian assistance delivery. This space recognized the importance of the working group in strengthening public policy and supporting coordinated responses for people in situations of human mobility. This is made possible with donors like ECHO.

CARCHI, TULCÁN

Providing protection to newly arrived families

In San Gabriel, UNHCR worked alongside HIAS, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, and the Montúfar Local Protection System to support refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing asylum procedures, protection services, and humanitarian assistance. Attention was given to women survivors of GBV, children and adolescents out of school, at risk of child labor or school dropout, and newly arrived families. This activity was made possible thanks to the generous support of ECHO.

IBARRA, TULCÁN

Promoting safe and inclusive environments through GBV prevention

As part of the "Raíces de Oportunidad 2026" training programme, UNHCR, GTRM, FUDELA, PUCESI and the Municipality of Ibarra conducted a workshop on GBV prevention for local entrepreneurs. Participants strengthened their knowledge of rights, protection mechanisms, referral pathways and strategies to foster safe, respectful and inclusive environments within families, communities and workplaces.

IBARRA, TULCÁN

Strengthening institutional capacities to protect people on the move.

UNHCR supported two capacity-building initiatives for key protection actors. Through the UNHCR-led Legal Working Group of the local GTRM, 19 staff from Cantonal Boards and Councils for the Protection of Rights strengthened their knowledge of human mobility and referral pathways. Separately, UNHCR, the Public Defender's Office, MREMH, and IOM trained 50 National Police officers on non-refoulement, access to international protection, due process, and the police's role in assisting people on the move. Together, these efforts strengthened institutional capacities to deliver more effective protection responses, thanks to the support of ECHO.

LAGO AGRIO

Strengthening Communities Through Pride and Dialogue

UNHCR, together with the Amazonía de Colores Foundation and local partners, supported two activities during LGBTIQ+ Pride and Diversity Month. Through the Cine y Carteleada Diversa event, around 70 refugees, migrants, and host community members participated in awareness-raising, dialogue, and psychosocial support activities promoting inclusion and respect for diversity. Separately, UNHCR joined the 6th Amazonian LGBTIQA+ Pride Gathering, where refugees and host communities marched together to promote non-discrimination, peaceful coexistence, and safe spaces for all.

TULCAN

Creating safe spaces and visibility for the LGBTIQ+ community.

As part of Pride Month activities, local community groups in Tulcán organized a film forum to discuss protection challenges and the realities faced by LGBTIQ+ people in the territory. The event promoted dialogue, raised awareness of protection risks and challenges, and contributed to strengthening safe and inclusive spaces for the LGBTIQ+ community.

TULCAN

Celebrating Children's Day and strengthening community integration.

UNHCR with FUDELA and in coordination with local stakeholders, organized a Children's Day celebration in San Gabriel with the participation of 60 children from the Santa Clara neighborhood. The event created spaces for joy, integration, and reflection, promoting community cohesion and providing children with a safe environment for recreation and participation.

PROMOTING DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Forcibly displaced people are part of the solution for Ecuador's development. UNHCR works with national and local systems to promote their social and economic integration, supporting regular documentation, access to formal employment, education, entrepreneurship, financial services and ensuring misinformation and xenophobia are addressed at all levels. Advocating for inclusive policies and partnering with businesses, training institutions and local actors, UNHCR helps refugees build sustainable livelihoods, fill labour gaps in key productive sectors, and contribute skills, taxes and innovation to the local economy. These solutions-oriented approaches strengthen social cohesion, reduce protection risks, and generate long-term benefits for both forcibly displaced people and host communities.

LAGO AGRIO

Promoting inclusive employment through private sector engagement.

UNHCR participated in the launch of the Inclusive Company Seal in Guayaquil alongside Mangle, a local social development initiative, promoting inclusive hiring practices and strengthening private sector commitment to the economic inclusion of refugees and host communities. This activity was made possible thanks to the support of donors like KOICA, whose contribution helps advance socioeconomic inclusion.

TULCAN

Promoting economic inclusion through the Festival del Cuy

UNHCR with Prefectura [CV1] del Carchi, GAD Parroquial de Urbina, and HIAS, supported the launch of the Guinea Pig Festival, an initiative that promotes livelihoods and economic opportunities for refugees and host communities. The event opened registrations for 60 entrepreneurial ventures, announced which categories will be awarded, and is expected to attract approximately 2,000 visitors, creating opportunities for commercialization and local economic development.

Stories from the field

"I was not sure I would ever have access to higher education. However, one opportunity changed the course of my life" -Kevin

Forced to Flee as a Child, Kevin Is Now Pursuing His Dream of a Career in Healthcare

© UNHCR/Omar Ganchala Terán

After fleeing violence in Colombia as a child, Kevin found in education the chance to rebuild his life and move closer to his dream of becoming a doctor.

Kevin was born in Pasto, Colombia, but grew up in a rural area of Nariño where armed conflict was part of daily life. At the age of seven, his family was forced to flee after recruitment attempts by armed groups and death threats against his father. Arriving in Ecuador as a child, he left much of his life behind and faced the challenges of adapting to a new country while dealing with economic hardship, discrimination, and the uncertainty of starting over.

The first years in Tulcán were not easy. The family lived in a small room, and Kevin left school for a period of time to work alongside his father and help support the household.

Despite these obstacles, he never gave up on the idea of continuing his education. A scholarship ultimately changed the course of his life. After not being selected the first time, he applied again and was eventually given the opportunity to pursue higher education, something that had once seemed beyond reach.
"I was not sure I would ever have access to higher education. However, one opportunity changed the course of my life."

Kevin chose to study nursing because of his strong desire to help others. Throughout his studies, he found support from classmates and professors, and his passion for the profession grew through practical experience.

One of the most meaningful moments of his training came during his internship, when he participated directly in a surgery. The experience strengthened his confidence, expanded his professional ambitions, and helped him realize his full potential.

Today, Kevin is close to completing his Nursing degree and hopes to pursue a career in medicine to continue serving others through his work. His story shows how access to educational opportunities can transform lives, strengthen self-reliance, and open new paths for people who have been forced to flee. Although he still misses family members and loved ones who remained in Colombia, he has found in Ecuador the opportunity to build a new future.

You can help us continue building a World of Possibilities for thousands of displaced people and their host communities in Ecuador. **Donate now.**

We thank the contributions of our donors

June 2026

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UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the support from private donors

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