



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# **ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND LIVELIHOODS FOR REFUGEES**

UNHCR Ecuador





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# **1. Strategy**

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Upon arriving at a new country, the opportunity to work and earn a daily living is one of the most effective protection tools for refugees. UNHCR's work in this area is guided by several basic principles, including protection, diversity, equality, access and sustainability. In Ecuador, the UN Refugee Agency aims at helping refugees and others forcibly displaced improve their income generation in conditions of dignity to promote their integration into the Ecuadorian socioeconomic fabric, achieving self-sufficiency and resilience. This strategy includes:



Supporting equal access to financial services and productive resources to respond to both immediate and long-term needs



Strengthening capabilities and supporting people gain the skills and competencies they need in line with labour and business markets



Assisting in setting up and running businesses while fostering employability opportunities in inclusive markets



Supporting people in engaging in circular economies, accessing green jobs and promoting green entrepreneurship

For the implementation of the strategy, UNHCR Ecuador works together with partners, specialized institutions, and the public and private sectors, generating synergies and complementarity, incorporating refugees into existing services and avoiding creating parallel systems.

Refugee self-sufficiency:

- Alleviates the pressure on the country of asylum by reducing the dependency of refugees on assistance.
- Boosts refugees' dignity and confidence by giving them greater control over their daily lives, as well as hope for the future.
- Contributes to building resilience and sustained results over time, as refugees are better prepared for the challenges of durable solutions.

## **2. Partnerships with the Private Sector for Economic Inclusion**

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“The best way to ensure that host communities and refugees fully integrate is to improve their livelihoods through decent employment and sustainable entrepreneurship.”

*Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Quito June 2021.*

UNHCR and the United Nations Global Compact Ecuador Network are leading “Empresas con Personas Refugiadas” (or Companies With Refugees), an initiative to promote the role of the private sector in the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and their host communities, through a human rights approach in corporate and business practices.

[www.empresasconlosrefugiados.com](http://www.empresasconlosrefugiados.com)



Through the Companies With Refugees webpage, UNHCR and Global Compact share successful experiences of the private sector in the inclusion of refugees in Ecuador, to provide guidance and inspiration to other companies.



### Sharing best practices

We share successful experiences of the private sector for guidance and inspiration.



### We provide advice and counseling

We provide counseling and advice on how to hire refugees and how to include them into value chains.



### We inform about the benefits of integration

The inclusion of refugees by the private sector is not only a matter of corporate social responsibility. It brings great benefits in the short, medium and long term. We tell them why.



# Inclusive Company Seal of Recognition



## Participation Categories



La *inclusion*  
es mejor negocio



### EMPLOYABILITY:

Formal employment opportunities, the company must have at least one refugee on its payroll.



### VALUE CHAINS:

Linking products or services made by refugees in the value chains and supply processes of the company.



### TRAINING:

Support the capacity development of refugees through courses, training and mentoring.



### SUPPORT INCLUSION:

Promoting an inclusive corporate and business environment, through internal and external communication campaigns, corporate volunteering, etc.



### AWARENESS AND COMMITMENT:

Other activities and actions in favour of refugees and others forcibly displaced.

## Recognizing good practices in the private sector

UNHCR, the United Nations Global Compact Ecuador Network and Sin Fronteras Programme launched the Inclusive Company Seal, a recognition that seeks to give visibility to private sector companies that have taken action in the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees in Ecuador. The first edition was launched in May 2022 and 60 companies were recognized nationwide. A second edition is expected in May 2023.

[Read more about this initiative](#)



Companies were selected by a Technical Committee and recognized in September 2022:

### Technical Committee

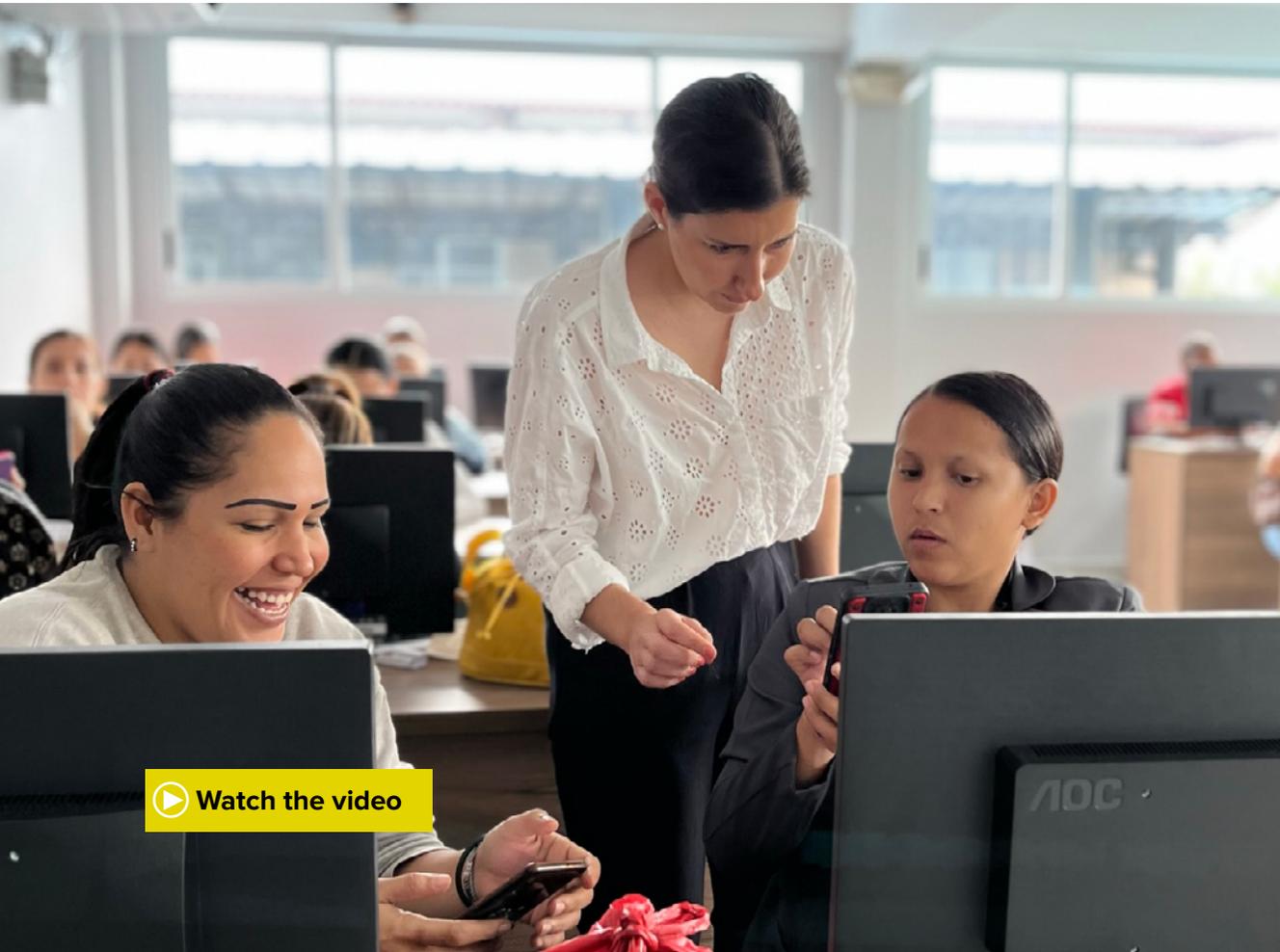
LOCAL GOVERNMENT		CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE	
BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS		UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM	

The Ministry of Labour is part of this initiative as a counselor and ally to promote equitable hiring.

## Entrepreneurial Women

This programme, implemented by UNHCR, Girls in Tech and HIAS, aims to provide a group of 60 women who wish to learn how to start their business or improve their current ones, free and effective tools, as well as knowledge about how to formalize their venture.

The programme is 100% virtual and provides 30 hours of training in each of the business model components, with a focus on digital marketing strategies. Additionally, it includes a module on soft skills, a financial inclusion workshop from Banco del Pacifico, mentorship on business formalization from the Internal Revenue Service (SRI), and 5 hours of group mentoring with recognized businesswomen from Guayaquil.



The first set of classes took place mostly on Saturday mornings, with students working collaboratively using Google Classroom and a connectivity package provided by the connectivity company Claro. Homework and activities were handed in between each session.

This project innovates by fostering partnerships among stakeholders from the private (mentors, Banco del Pacifico, Claro), public (SRI) and civil society (HIAS, GiT) sectors, each delivering on their area of expertise to maximize contributions to participants.

Location:



Allies:



Girls in Tech Ecuador



[Watch the video](#)

# Vocational Training with Private Sector Partners

## Good Food with República del Cacao

With the aim of contributing to an inclusive and responsible diet, República del Cacao created the “Good Food” project. This initiative seeks to promote the development of social enterprises through gastronomy and chocolate workshops taught by affiliated chefs. Different foundations working with República del Cacao through the Quito Food Bank receive training within different technical areas, like chocolate production and pastry. This training allows social entrepreneurs to learn techniques and recipes, as well as to connect and network with specialists.

During the first phase of the project, participants were selected with support from Las Reinas Papiadas Foundation, that supports Venezuelan refugee and migrant women in vulnerable situations through the development of business ventures.

The project was carried out with the support from GQB: Escuela de Arte Culinario in Quito and was divided in two parts: First, a Design Thinking Workshop, where participating chefs got to know the refugee and migrants women in depth to develop a gastronomic workshop model that adapts to their social and economic context, taking advantage of

their previous experience and knowledge in pastry making. This workshop was a catalyst for refugee and migrant women to share their stories through cooking while keeping their Venezuelan culture and history alive.

The second, a Basic Pastry Workshop. The training model of this module went beyond knowledge exchange, and became a space for women empowerment, experience sharing, culture and giving gastronomy a purpose. The workshops delivered by the chefs served as the basis for the preparation of products with an added value that were later marketed at Christmas fairs.



[▶ Watch the video](#)

### Location:



### Allies:



REPÚBLICA DEL CACAO®

[Read more about this project](#)

# Vocational Training with Private Sector Partners



[▶ Watch the video](#)

## Conectados Ganamos

Conectados Ganamos is a joint youth employability initiative created in 2020 in collaboration with Fundación Telefónica Movistar Ecuador, UNHCR and FUDELA. The project responds to barriers in labour insertion, in economic reactivation of the local population, and refugees in Ecuador, through training on soft skills for employment and digital technical modules.

Workshops have reached over 470 young refugees, migrants and Ecuadorians in seven provinces, with more than 107,907 hours of training through the digital training platform “Conecta Empleo” of Fundación Telefónica Movistar Ecuador, Fudela Academy of Fundación de las Américas and affiliated institutes in each territory.

### Location:



### Partners



# Vocational Training with Private Sector Partners

## Courier Operators Course

To date, the Courier Operators Course has graduated four generations through the training delivered by Grupo Entregas S.A., UTPL (the Private Technical University of Loja), World Vision Ecuador Foundation, the Ministry of Telecommunications and UNHCR.

The Delivery Service has been a growing sector in the last decade. The development of communications and connectivity has boosted the movement of goods by parcel. In recent years, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, Internet purchases have multiplied, and courier services are part of the daily life. Courier services with an optimal profile require speed and security, logistics operators must have a responsible and solid team to meet the needs of the local, national, and even international community in cargo transportation, moving, courier and storage services.

Each edition has a duration of 44 Online academic hours. The courses end with a graduation event and incentive prizes for outstanding students. UNHCR grants scholarships to refugees; Grupo Entregas admits 3 interns in its facilities with the possibility of hiring; World Vision provides a productive loan to the best entrepreneurial project and the Ministry of Telecommunications compiles the profiles of graduates to share them among companies and unions within the logistics sector.

Location:



Allies:



## Dual training in the restaurant sector

Dual training is an innovative scheme to promote the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and migrants in Guayaquil.

Thanks to an agreement signed between UNHCR, HIAS, the German Humboldt Institute and the Guayas Restaurant Association, 15 refugees and migrants were trained in professional gastronomy to promote their livelihoods either through formal employment or entrepreneurship.

They have received theoretical and practical classes at the Humboldt Institute Training Centre, and in parallel, real professional experience during the weekends (approx. 80 hours over 2 months) in restaurants in the city.

Location:



Allies:



# Vocational Training with Private Sector Partners



## Mentoring for Entrepreneurship with UISEK

Speed Mentoring is an advisory and mentoring initiative for microentrepreneurs that seeks to strengthen their knowledge and their marketing tools (use of social networks, web pages, etc.). Mentorships are delivered virtually by Senior mentors (professors) and Junior mentors (students) from the Business School – UISEK. The mentoring process includes 2 phases: first, group training on 14 topics; and, second, personalized mentoring that helps entrepreneurs find solutions to improve their business idea.

**Location:**



**Allies:**





## MADE 51

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to create business models that would provide tools and raw materials to refugees who could start their own business. As a result, “Grupo Raíces” was born, a group of 6 Venezuelan women dedicated to sewing from their homes. In November 2020, Kayamamas - a sustainable fashion project based on intercultural collaboration through shared experiences - together with UNHCR trained Grupo Raíces on design, creation and marketing of fashion accessories and home decoration to create attractive products for the national and international market. In 2021, UNHCR Ecuador, with the products developed by Grupo Raíces in collaboration with Kayamamas, joined MADE51.

MADE51 brings beautiful items made by refugees to the international market. Created globally by UNHCR, this initiative connects refugees with partners in the field of social entrepreneurship to design, make or market artisan products around the world.

### Location:



### Allies:





UNHCR and partners have trained and supported entrepreneurs for their businesses to grow enough to promote themselves in new markets. UNHCR has developed catalogues to help promote their products, including the following:

## 1. General Entrepreneurship Catalogues

This is a catalogue of the outstanding work of refugees, migrants and other displaced people in locations where UNHCR works. With the help of expert product photographers and graphic designers, the full-colour catalogue showcases the work of 89 entrepreneurs, including ways to contact them.

Location:



[Read more about this project](#) 

# Emprender sin Fronteras

catálogo de emprendimientos de **Guayaquil, Cuenca y Manta.**



## 2. Christmas Catalogue

Since 2021, a Christmas catalogue has been created with corporate-style gifts of different price ranges to distribute through Global Compact and UNHCR to its allied companies and partners, as promoters of the Companies with Refugees Initiative. This project helps entrepreneurs meet the needs of the market during this festive season.

**Location:**



Catalogues are available on the “Empresas con Personas Refugiadas” webpage:

[Read more about this project](#)



## Entrepreneurship Formalization

The Entrepreneurship Formalization project seeks to strengthen the technical and management capacities of enterprises that have the potential to become more dynamic, improve their sales, and generate future sources of employment. It was carried out in Cuenca and Quito, cities that, in accordance with local regulations, require the regularization and formalization of products to access the market.

Through the technical advice of expert consultants, entrepreneurs were able to standardize their recipes, formulas and processes, improve their production sites to obtain operating permits, and comply with all the technical and sanitation standards. In addition, UNHCR helped improve the brand and packaging to achieve better visibility and product rotation.

As a result, new points of sale have been opened for products with sanitation permits; costs have been significantly reduced with the improvement of formulas and identification of new suppliers; production processes have been simplified through specialized machinery and due to the increase in sales and larger teams.

It should be noted that for ARCSA, the technical body in charge of such regulations, technical control and health surveillance, the registration of new products that do not exist in Ecuador was an interesting challenge that required verification of international regulations and adaptation of local internal processes.

**Location:**



[▶ Watch the video](#)

[▶ Watch the video](#)

## Inclusive Retail

The commercialization of products and services provided by refugee entrepreneurs require collaborators that recognize the value and quality of their offer and the economic impact of *purchasing with purpose* on the families of small producers. UNHCR works hand in hand with local governments to promote safe commercial spaces in local markets, and with retailers and companies to promote inclusive procurement policies.

One example of this strategy is the “Camino de Esperanza” Inclusive Retail project, a community initiative that arose from the sense of collaboration by Venezuelans in Ambato. Its aim is the promotion of products by refugees, migrants, and the host community looking for marketing opportunities in Tungurahua and the rest of the country. The exhibition consists of 10 products by entrepreneurs that are renewed every three months with the purpose of maintaining equal opportunities for all participants.

Location:



CORPORACIÓN  
DE DESARROLLO  
DE AMBATO Y  
TUNGURAHUA



TuFastMarket.com



## Placement Practices and Tools for Promoting Employment

UNHCR has two partners specializing in employability: CORPEI in the Coastal region, a private, non-profit agency providing services that promote productive competitiveness in the country; and Sin Fronteras, a programme that is carried out with funds from private companies.



To promote employability, UNHCR and partners are strengthening and positioning the Sin Fronteras recruitment website which is operated by Multitrabajos, the largest and best positioned recruitment company in Latin America. This job search portal allows companies to publish their vacancies at no cost, while allowing applicants to upload their resumes to be directly linked to these job opportunities, as well as to be registered in a database for reference profiles or “job matching” without the need to reapply. A similar employment exchange, but reserved for members and allied companies, is managed by CORPEI.

These processes are complemented with training by “CV Clinics” providing counseling on how to complete a resume, how to succeed at a job interview and on local hiring modalities. Currently there are 786 profiles, 142 partner companies and 355 active vacancies in the job market.

Additionally, virtual job fairs are held every six months, exclusively for CORPEI and Sin Fronteras users. During these fairs, companies publish their vacancies, free of charge, and candidates apply to those of interest. Subsequently, these applications are followed up by the company.

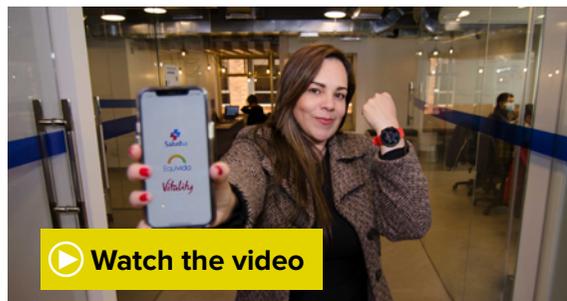
Through the promotion of employment, virtual job fairs and job matching, employers have reported around 15% effective hiring. AR Holdings included more than 60 candidates in its selection process for customer service vacancies during the opening of Old Navy in Quito and Guayaquil. PACARI, one of the main premium chocolate companies, has considered refugee profiles for the opening of their 3 new cafeterias in Quito. Sweet and Coffee, a nationwide coffee shop chain, has included profiles of refugees with physical disabilities in its recruitment process.

[Read more about this project](#)



## Good Practices of the Private Sector

These are companies committed to the inclusion of refugees. Affiliates also include chambers of commerce that leverage the added value and strategic positioning of different private sector actors.



[▶ Watch the video](#)

A labour force that is prepared and ready to contribute: Saluda and refugee collaborators



[▶ Watch the video](#)

An organization built by the people. Chocolate from Republica del Cacao is filled with diversity.



[▶ Watch the video](#)

BP Cia. Ltda.'s philosophy is to have the best allies for their interest groups, becoming promoters of refugee inclusion.



[▶ Watch the video](#)

“We came to give our all”. Germain Martinez and Grupo Entregas: an example of inclusion.

# **3. Financial Inclusion through Banks and Savings and Credit Cooperatives**

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# Advocacy with control entities



International experience shows that human mobility is an engine of development in host countries. For this development to materialize, the financial inclusion of refugees is essential, and an essential part of UNHCR's work is advocating with the regulatory and control agencies within the financial sector. As a result of this effort, in November 2020 three resolutions were approved by the Monetary and Financial Policy and Regulation Board of Ecuador, which provide the enabling documents for refugees and asylum seekers to access savings accounts. Through 2021 and 2022 UNHCR, together with the Superintendencia de Bancos, the Superintendencia de Economía Popular y Solidaria, have socialized these resolutions with banks and savings and credit cooperatives.

Advocacy with:



[▶ Watch the video](#)

# Access to savings accounts and loans for refugees

In February 2022, UNHCR carried out a survey on the socioeconomic situation of refugees in Ecuador. 3,125 (801 households) refugees and asylum seekers from Colombia and Venezuela were polled. Of the tally, only 20.9% of the Colombian population and 19% of the Venezuelan population declared having a bank account. In addition, in a study of financial inclusion of Venezuelans in Quito and Guayaquil carried out by WOCCU revealed that while 86% of Venezuelans had access to financial products and services in

their country, only 18% did in Ecuador. Moreover, barely 3.5% of the refugee and migrant population had been able to obtain a loan in Ecuador.

The following are some of the projects that UNHCR supports to increase financial access for refugees and migrants:

- **UCACSUR:** UNHCR established an inter-institutional cooperation framework with the Southern Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives UCACSUR, signing a Letter of Understanding on 18 April 2022. This agreement aims to promote the financial inclusion of refugees, migrants and their host communities, and in areas of common interest. It promotes the exchange of good financial practices and undertakes joint advocacy actions for the financial inclusion. Currently, financial education training is being jointly implemented for refugees and locals with the “UCACSUR Educacoop” methodology.
- **El Cayambeño:** Henry Chico arrived in Ecuador in 2013 after leaving Venezuela due to widespread insecurity and shortages. He settled in Cayambe and soon realized how difficult it was for many people, both refugees and migrants as well as locals, to access the benefits of the financial system. That is why, in mid-2020, he decided to create El Cayambeño savings bank together with a small group of partners, most of them Venezuelans like him. To get the start-up capital they needed, each of the 6 partners put up \$300 out of their own pockets. To contribute his share, Henry had to sell his truck and provide the money raised as collateral for the sustainability of the cooperative. After almost two years, they have given out some \$90,000 in microcredits, supporting more than 150 families. 65% of the partners are people in human mobility, especially Venezuelans and Colombians, and 35% are from the host community.



# **4. Partnerships with the Public Sector to Expand Opportunities for Access to Work**

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## Public Services to Support Entrepreneurship and Employment in Ecuador

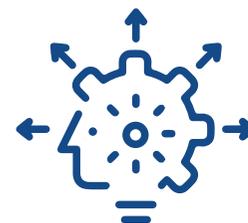
Collaboration with the public sector is key to strengthening existing services and to avoiding the creation of parallel systems. UNHCR's presence in the field enables coordination with government authorities at the national, regional, and district level. Along these lines, UNHCR and partners focus mainly on:



Expanding service coverage for refugees from a community-based approach



Adapting and mainstreaming a human mobility approach in public policies and support services for entrepreneurship and employment



Strengthening technical capacities of public officials in protection and fulfillment of rights



Advocating for the socio-economic inclusion of refugees among the private sector, civil society organizations and society as a whole

# Advocacy with Productive Sector Line Ministries

Ministerio del Trabajo



Gobierno del Encuentro Juntos lo logramos

In coordination with the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNHCR promotes:



The inclusion of a human mobility approach within the public employment service. This includes supporting the technological infrastructure of the “Encuentra Empleo” platform and providing technical assistance to create a specific information module on hiring practices for refugees and companies.



Technical assistance to identify barriers and adapt the regulations of the National Qualifications System. This includes implementing processes to certify labour skills according to labour demand and the qualifications of people in human mobility.



Training public officials on asylum and the exercise of rights.

[Read more about this initiative](#)



Ministerio de Producción, Comercio Exterior, Inversiones y Pesca



Gobierno del Encuentro Juntos lo logramos

- “Entrepreneur’s ABC Guide” with a focus on human mobility.
- Alongside UNDP and the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Alliance (AEI), UNHCR provided technical assistance to the “National Council for Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation”.

<http://ecuadoremprendedor.ec/>



Secretaría de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación



Gobierno del Encuentro Juntos lo logramos

Strengthening the institutional response for the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad.



- Issuance of resolutions to facilitate access to savings accounts for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Advocacy through dialogue with national financial institutions to implement relevant Resolutions.

Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social



Gobierno del Encuentro Juntos lo logramos

- Technical standards for the application of socio-economic integration services with a human mobility approach.
- Training public officials on asylum and refugee rights.

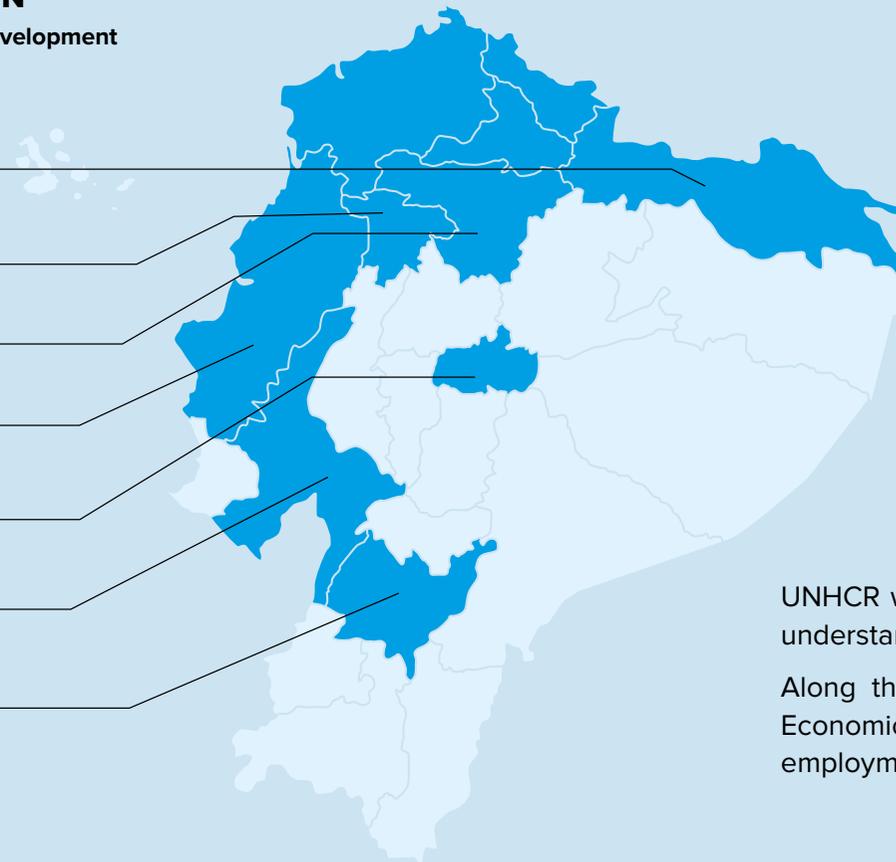
# Economic inclusion services with local governments

Local governments have a deeper understanding of their communities' priorities. They are best placed to facilitate interventions that address social dialogue and localized inclusion, economic development, and to promote employment. In addition, local government authorities are key in facilitating access to social and economic development services for people working in the informal sector.

Local development strategies offer opportunities for comprehensive approaches that link social and economic inclusion services, available within the territorial reach of refugees.

## INTERVENTION

Local economic development agencies:



### Canton-level governments:

- Ambato
- Bolívar
- Cayambe
- Cuenca
- Esmeraldas
- Espejo
- Guayaquil
- Huaca
- Ibarra
- Mira
- Montúfar
- Otavalo
- Quito
- Santo Domingo
- Tulcán

### Provincial-level governments:

- Manabí
- Santo Domingo
- Sucumbíos

UNHCR works closely with decentralized autonomous governments (GAD) understanding the fundamental role they play in economic development.

Along these lines, UNHCR has established partnerships with the Local Economic Development Agencies, which are the municipalities' branch for employment, entrepreneurship, and innovation support.

# Economic inclusion services with local governments



## Learning to Thrive Programme with CorpoAmbato



The “Ambato and Tungurahua Development Corporation” promotes the growth and economic development of the city and province by working closely with local governments, businesspeople, universities, community leaders and politicians.

UNHCR strengthens the intrinsic capacity of CORPOAMBATO adapting its programmes to a human mobility approach; training its officials; adapting and equipping their agro-industrial laboratory; and establishing strategic partnerships with key actors in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, like the Ministry of Production, chambers and business associations, and civil society organizations.

In addition, CORPOAMBATO implements the “Aprendiendo a Emprender” (or Learning to Thrive) Programme, supported by UNHCR and its partner FUDELA.

This programme combines business management, strategy and innovation tools, with the strengthening of self-esteem and entrepreneurial behavior, in order to promote sustainable business models.

[▶ Watch the video](#)

# Economic inclusion services with local governments

## Strengthening CONQUITO capabilities



The Economic Promotion Corporation (CONQUITO) is a private entity that works with the municipality to promote the productive development of Quito and its area of influence.

UNHCR's collaboration with CONQUITO is longstanding. In 2018, UNHCR focused its efforts on adapting the agency's entrepreneurship and

employability support services to make them accessible to refugees. Hence, UNHCR has trained CONQUITO officials and implemented joint projects (urban gardens, business incubation). At the beginning of 2022, the commitments were renewed through a Letter of Understanding.

[Read more about this project](#) 





## EPICO in Guayaquil for the promotion of productivity



EPICO is Guayaquil's Municipal Public Company for the Management of Innovation and Competitiveness, promoting an innovative, transformative, and competitive ecosystem in the city.

UNHCR and EPICO believe in the role refugees have in reactivating the city's economy. Thus, UNHCR provides constant technical assistance in the implementation of EPICO programmes to include people in human mobility.

The economic dynamism of the city provides for better opportunities for UNHCR and EPICO to help identify retailing spaces for entrepreneurs. In addition, UNHCR and EPICO both have a territorial focus, making comprehensive care possible in neighborhoods where people live in heightened conditions of poverty and exclusion.

# Economic inclusion services with local governments



## EDEC provides counseling to formalize enterprises in Cuenca

**edec**

The Municipal Economic Development Company of Cuenca (EDEC) promotes innovative and sustainable enterprises to help boost the economy in the canton.

UNHCR and EDEC implement a training and business plan advisory programme through the GIN-ISUN methodology for refugees, migrants and locals. The programme seeks to mentor and train entrepreneurs so they can develop a business plan, access investment capital, and formalize and grow their businesses through market identification and marketing.

The programme is supported through UNHCR's partner AVSI. In addition, the project has a technical committee composed by partners and academic institutions like the University of Azuay and the Wisen Technological Institute, that provide orientation, mentorship, and assessments to entrepreneurs.

# **5. Livelihood Strengthening Projects with Civil Society Organizations**

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Many refugees and people of concern live in extreme poverty, while also lacking the necessary tools and support to implement their own livelihoods or businesses.



In response and in line with the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR formed a global coalition with the World Bank Partnership for Economic Inclusion and 13 NGO partners.

The Coalition uses the Graduation Approach (GA), a well proven poverty alleviation model. In Ecuador, the model has been implemented by HIAS since 2015 reaching 5,400 households covering eight provinces of the country. UNHCR Ecuador and HIAS continue adapting the model to new emergency contexts and to develop evidence to combine and sequence humanitarian and development streams.

**Location:**



**Allies:**



[Watch the video](#)

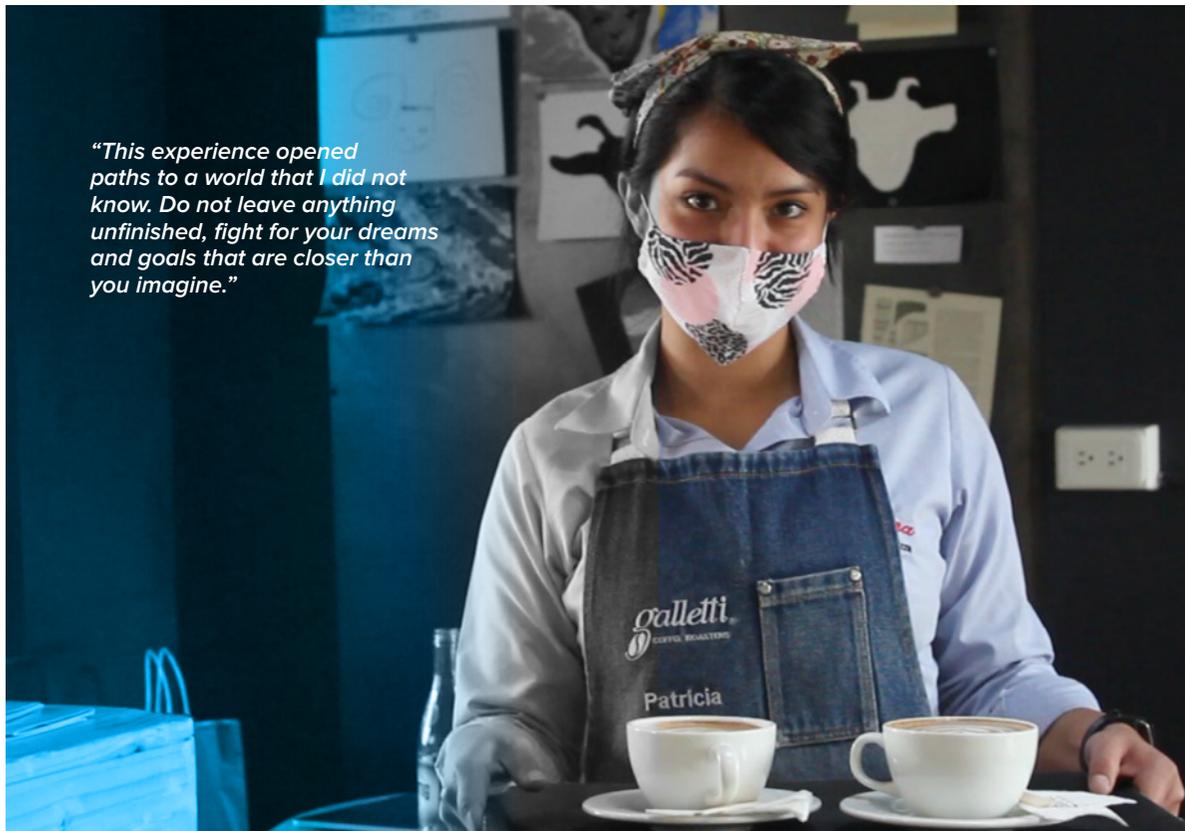


The A Ganar project, implemented by FUDELA since 2016, seeks to enhance the opportunities for social, educational, labour, and productive inclusion of young refugees and Ecuadorians between the ages of 16 and 29. To achieve this objective, theoretical-practical education and training is provided to enhance employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship with seed capital.

Likewise, the programme promotes educational insertion through scholarships -partial or complete- used as income generating support to ensure permanence in higher education.

It is estimated that at least two out of three people who have completed the A Ganar process at the national level have done so with a business idea that had potential to receive support for the design of a profile and the possibility of accessing seed capital. Since this project started six years ago, more institutions, companies and people are involved in more provinces of the country. However, the lack of documentation for some participants continues to be one of the main barriers for them to find work and start their own businesses.

**Location:**



*"This experience opened paths to a world that I did not know. Do not leave anything unfinished, fight for your dreams and goals that are closer than you imagine."*



The Activados project by AVSI seeks to promote employability, training, and inter-institutional links to facilitate the formal employment of refugees.

Employability workshops are held in Manta, Portoviejo and Cuenca, where advice is given on creating a resume, on Ecuadorian labour legislation, job opportunities, etc. Work is done in coordination with CRISFE for other consultancies and for the placement of resumes on the Multitrabajo platform.

These workshops also provide basic financial education, management of family economic resources, accounting, taxation and sales, to contribute to the development of business

ventures as an alternative for generating income until obtaining a formal job is a possibility.

AVSI coordinates with other public and cooperation actors to provide information to participants about job opportunities and/or processes: Courier operators course, regularization processes, formalization of enterprises, obtaining driving licenses for delivery, etc.

In the area of entrepreneurship, a study was developed of market demand and supply of services and/or products of entrepreneurs. In the case of Cuenca and Manabí, information was collected on the profiles in neighborhoods and homes where the project was being implemented, as well as of those who applied to the open calls. On the other hand, 125 support capitals were delivered to promote ventures that were underway and that have been affected by the pandemic.

**Location:**



## Agronegocios

The “Agronegocios” project implemented by HIAS is a response to the refugee population in rural contexts who venture into agricultural production systems without access to land. The programme has a community approach and is based on training, equipping with agricultural machinery and technical assistance to grow organic produce endemic to the area. Additionally, the intervention is combined with protection and community development interventions to guarantee comprehensive social cohesion.

In **Lago Agrio**, Puerto Camacho community along the border with Colombia, where green plantains, cassava, coffee, peanuts, and corn are mainly produced. UNHCR is supporting the community made up of refugees, migrants, and locals who implement

Agronegocios in coordination with the local government and ISTEAC. Ultimately, the produce is integrated into associative enterprises for the elaboration of snacks, as well as in the commercial chain “Tiendas Amigas” to ensure immediate commercialization at fair prices.

In **Carchi**, innovations in agriculture are linked to access to new technologies that allow families to obtain healthy and ecologically sustainable food. The Agribusiness project is focused on the development of hydroponic systems as an option for clean and sustainable production, and access to healthy food that, due to its versatility, adapts to the living conditions of refugees. Likewise, the project has the support of the local government.



Location:



Allies:



## Projects with Bamboo

Bamboo is a cheap, sustainable, renewable, and versatile material useful in construction, furniture making, tools and handicrafts. In this sense, UNHCR promotes various initiatives for economic inclusion where this material plays an important role:

**Beauty in Bamboo in Atacames** is a beauty parlor that serves as a multicultural meeting point for refugees and locals, while also boosting the local economy. Built with bamboo engineering, it is a prototype construction for Community Centers. This is the result of joint work between the government of Atacames, Fundación Raíz-CAEMBA, UNHCR and the workforce of the women of the community and their families.



**Construexpress in Manta** is a business model developed by AVSI with the aim of promoting the generation of economic resources autonomously and independently, through the strengthening of technical capacities in the construction sector. The programme provides training and building materials for construction in bamboo, and students apply their knowledge through internships, building structures intended for the benefit of the community, like bus stops.

**WAMAK in Lago Agrio** is an associative enterprise of refugees in the Ecuadorian Amazon whose objective is to implement socio-environmental activities based on sustainable production, promoting bamboo as the main raw material in the construction and production of handicrafts. The undertaking arises from the Development Networks project implemented by HIAS.

**Location:**



**Allies:**



## Recycling Projects

Recycling projects promote the conservation of natural resources and prevention of environmental pollution. Additionally, they can potentially generate livelihoods for families and promote peaceful coexistence and socioeconomic integration between migrants and refugees and the local population.

**Tulcán Recycling for Life** is an initiative that seeks to encourage citizens to separate solid waste and deliver it to the RECICENTRO, a collection site located at the north of the city or through community recyclers. These are refugees, migrants and Ecuadorian women who provide environmental collection services in neighborhoods and who have experience in the process of collecting, classifying and compacting waste. Thanks to this project, the squandering of solid waste, mainly plastic, cardboard and paper was considerably reduced, allocating them for recycling.

Moreover, sustainable jobs were created, in decent and safe conditions, both for people in human mobility and for the host community. Finally, integration was promoted through recycling and organizational strengthening activities.

**Recycling in Montúfar:** The recyclers' association of La Paz parish has 19 members who clean, collect, and manage solid waste since 2002. The members receive a salary for garbage collection, and the value of the recycled material is an additional fund based on what they collect individually. UNHCR supported the association with the donation of supplies, protection equipment and training.

**Location:**



**Allies:**



# Organizations of Persons of Concern and Diversity Approach



## Enraizar project with women entrepreneurs

Las Reinas Pepiadas Foundation works on entrepreneurship and leadership projects through social and economic inclusion with refugee and migrant women. Their work is focused on territory, which allows them to identify opportunities for communities by designing non-traditional methodologies to develop group spaces, encourage empowerment, cohesion, and the identification of women as leaders of their community.

The ENRAIZAR project provides tools through the consolidation of knowledge for entrepreneurship, focusing on the dissemination of digital communities, providing opportunities to link quality products to the market and to support their family through sustained work. ENRAIZAR has made it possible to generate community, as a meeting space, as well as a space where networks of protection, solidarity and emotional support are created among women.

### Location:



### Allies:



[▶ Watch the video](#)

# Organizations of Persons of Concern and Diversity Approach



## Social Promoters United for Economic Inclusion

The Community Promoters for Socioeconomic Inclusion project was born under the community protection initiative, to deliver training for human rights promoters. Faced with the growing need to address issues of livelihood, interested participants were contacted and leaders of associations of Venezuelans and Colombians from Sierra Centro, Ambato, Riobamba, Latacunga, Salcedo and Baños were targeted to be part of a group of promoters that lead the construction of sustainable livelihoods according to the context of each city.

Currently, the group is made up of 25 promoters who are enrolled in a 5-month training process in all the livelihood intervention components, including on employability, entrepreneurship and access to financial services, mainstreaming the gender approach in each component in order to promote actions to generate livelihoods in each locality.

Location:



# Organizations of Persons of Concern and Diversity Approach



## La Fragancia

UNHCR supported the association of People with Physical Disabilities of Esmeraldas “APDIFE” by strengthening its venture “La Fragancia” which consists of the production and sale of cleaning products (disinfectant, liquid soap and fabric softener). This has impacted its members who have expressed that the ventures have improved their self-esteem, “feeling useful has had a favorable impact on a psychosocial level.”

### Location:



### Allies:



[▶ Watch the video](#)

# Organizations of Persons of Concern and Diversity Approach



## Women Free from Violence

This is an associative project that was born from a group of women survivors of gender violence, who found an economic alternative in embroidery and sewing, as well as a space for support and reflection. Among the textile products they offer are blouses, bags and fanny packs made from recycled fabric, while embroidery is provided in shoes, clothes, and textile paintings.

The project has allowed participants to learn to identify and de-naturalize situations of violence, find support networks, and mainly have economic autonomy.

### Location:



### Allies:





## El Clóset

We worked with the LGBTIQ+ network of human rights activists Red Badeas with their venture “El Clóset”, on various products like t-shirts, mugs, bracelets, and caps, with a social vision, personalized designs and messaging on human rights.

The venture has been supported with tools, supplies and technical assistance from a specialized consulting firm for the development of business plans and marketing implementation, including administrative and financial factors focused on long-term sustainability.

**Location:**



**Allies:**



[▶ See their page](#)

So far in 2022, our work on  
livelihoods at  
**UNHCR Ecuador**

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