



**HIAS**

Welcome the stranger.  
Protect the refugee.

## 2022-2023 Overview HIAS **ECUADOR**

# **HIAS Ecuador**

## **Overview 2022-2023**



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Protect the refugee.**

**HIAS Ecuador 2022**

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## Our History

From our beginnings in the 1880s in a storefront on the Lower East Side of Manhattan providing food and shelter to Jews fleeing antisemitism in Eastern Europe, to our work nearly 140 years later providing social, emotional, legal, and advocacy support to those in need around the world, HIAS has served as a pivotal force for displaced people for generations. Indeed, HIAS began its work even before the world had a legal concept of a “refugee.”

Having helped more than 4.5 million refugees and immigrants escape persecution, HIAS is uniquely qualified to address the modern refugee situation, which has become a global humanitarian crisis. After over 100 years of serving Jews fleeing persecution around the globe, HIAS, starting in the 2000s, expanded its work in the U.S. to include assistance to non-Jewish refugees devastated by the aftermath of conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Hungary, Iran, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Tunisia, Vietnam, and the successor states to the former Soviet Union.

HIAS began a new chapter in 2002 when it established operations in Kenya to provide protection to refugees from African countries plagued by conflict, to advocate on their behalf, and to resettle the most vulnerable. Soon after, we began work in Latin America, serving people displaced by conflict in several countries. Currently HIAS works in 16 countries including Aruba, Austria, Belgium, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Greece, Guyana, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Panama, Peru, United States, and Venezuela. As the only global Jewish organization whose mission is to assist refugees wherever they are, HIAS continues to protect, empower, and resettle refugees of all faiths and ethnicities from around the world.



## Vision, Mission, and Values

### Vision

HIAS stands for a world in which refugees find welcome, safety, and opportunity.

### Mission

Drawing on our Jewish values and history, HIAS provides vital services to refugees and asylum seekers around the world and advocates for their fundamental rights so they can rebuild their lives.

### Values

Impassioned by our mission, we bring the lessons of HIAS' history and Jewish ethics and experience to our commitment to serve refugees and other displaced persons of concern around the world through the following values:

#### Welcome • Acogimiento • Hospitalité • הכנסת אורחים (Hachnasat Orchim)

We **Welcome** the Stranger

#### Justice • Justicia • Justice • צדק (Tzedek)

We Pursue **Justice**

#### Empathy • Empatía • Empathie • חסד (Chesed)

We Approach our Clients with **Empathy**

#### Partnership • Compañerismo • Coopération • חברותא (Chevruta)

We Believe in Changing the World through **Partnership**

#### Courage • Coraje • Courage • אומץ (Ometz)

We Act with **Courage** to Build a Better World

#### Resilience • Resiliencia • Résilience • רוח (Ruach)

We Adapt and Thrive, Continuously Demonstrating our **Resilience**





**Photos:** Glenna Gordon; Michael Datikash

## Our Impact

Around the world, HIAS makes tangible changes in the lives of refugees and other forcibly displaced people, advancing their legal, social, and economic rights. Our experience and technical expertise, as well as our integration of international best practices, allows for our work to have real and sustained impact. We partner with government agencies and other humanitarian organizations to reach the greatest number of those in need. The core areas where we work include:

1. Legal Protection
2. Gender-Based Violence Response and Risk Reduction
3. Community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
4. Economic Inclusion

### Legal Protection

Refugees and other people forcibly displaced from home are fleeing persecution and violence. They need to be able to safely cross borders into countries where their lives are not at risk. Once over the border, they need information and legal representation to secure legal status and access their rights. Without that status, refugees are forced to live on the margins of society, sometimes for generations, without access to healthcare, education, dignified work, or safe shelter. HIAS begins by educating refugees about their rights, then secures protection by engaging in advocacy, legal representation, and strategic litigation, and working with government authorities.

### Gender-Based Violence Response and Risk Reduction

Compounded by rampant gender inequality, forced migration and displacement quickly erode the limited protections women, girls, and LGBTQ populations have, even in times of stability. HIAS is driven by their voices and needs, working to empower them and engage the whole community to reduce the risk of gender-based violence. We raise awareness so survivors know where and how to get help after experiencing violence. We train advocates and support existing services so that no survivor—regardless of age, sexual orientation, or gender identity—suffers alone. We help communities begin the kind of transformative work

that leads to longer-term change. We stay connected to and raise our collective voice alongside those of displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ populations globally.

### Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Violence, conflict, and displacement disrupt relationships and daily life, break down existing support systems, and have a devastating impact on mental health, overall wellbeing, and recovery. A supportive environment is essential to healing and recovery for refugees and other people forcibly displaced from their homes. One of the best ways to build a supportive environment is to strengthen existing relationships, networks, and practices which promote mental health and well-being and allow communities to cope and heal. We facilitate community support groups and psychological support from both lay and professional providers and ensure access to services for more intensive mental health support. Crucially, we sustain our efforts by building the psychosocial competence of HIAS personnel and stakeholders to respond to the acute distress of forcibly displaced persons.

### Economic Inclusion

When refugees and forcibly displaced people arrive in countries of asylum, they often need to adapt their skills to earn sustainable and safe livelihoods. HIAS supports refugees on their road to self-reliance, helping them to find programs focused on poverty eradication, employment, entrepreneurship, and financial services. We advocate for the rights of both refugees and local host communities to access dignified, sustainable, and safe work, alongside economic development.

### Emergency Response

In 2021, with the support of a transformational grant from MacKenzie Scott, HIAS embarked on an exciting new initiative to strengthen our global capacity to respond quickly to new humanitarian emergencies. HIAS' Emergency Department will work closely with country offices to create emergency preparedness plans and provide guidance to adapt core programs to emergency contexts. HIAS will also train a cadre of staff with specialized skills able to deploy quickly during emergencies for assessments, response activities, donor engagement, external communication, and advocacy. Through this multiyear initiative, HIAS will build the skills, systems, and organizational culture needed for effective coordination and response to emergencies.

## Accountability to Affected Populations

HIAS' Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Framework ensures the inclusion of refugees, other forcibly displaced people, and vulnerable host communities throughout the program cycle. Informed by the Core Humanitarian Standards and the principle of "Do No Harm," the framework pillars are: communication and transparency; feedback and response; participation and inclusion; and learning and adaptation.

HIAS ensures that program design is based on evidence from needs assessments, including the annual UNHCR participatory needs assessment, and consultation with affected communities. HIAS shares information about its accountability commitments and available

services in all country offices. HIAS proactively invites affected people to provide feedback on planned and ongoing activities through context-appropriate, accessible channels, ensuring that all affected people can voice feedback, recommendations, and concerns safely and equitably. HIAS uses feedback received to adapt ongoing programs and shape the design and implementation of future programming.

## Governance, Structure, and Policies

Globally, HIAS employs more than 1,300 staff in 16 countries, with headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland (U.S.).

HIAS' Board of Directors is made up of 22 members, including 10 women. It meets at least four times a year. The Board has three officers and operates with six active committees that meet regularly. Board members bring a wide range of professional and business experience to their service, including law, finance, education, and non-profit and refugee advocacy leadership.

HIAS staff are subject to a robust Code of Conduct and set of internal policies, including PSEA, Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment, Conflict of Interest, Privacy, Whistleblowing, Security and Emergency Preparedness, Information Security, Data Breach, Finance and Accounting, as well as others relating to procurement, travel, and reimbursements.



A Venezuelan refugee in Lago Agrio, supported by HIAS and UN Women with seed capital, was able to start her own business breeding chickens. **Photo:** HIAS Ecuador



## Context for Vulnerable Refugees and Migrants in Ecuador



The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Region continues to face intersecting forced displacement crises, including ongoing instability in Venezuela, Colombia, Northern Central America, and Nicaragua. The COVID-19 pandemic has only worsened the economic and social hardships faced by both displaced populations and those hosting them. The more than 18 million people displaced in the region have fled violence, insecurity, persecution, and human rights violations. This number accounts for 20% of all global displacement. HIAS' comprehensive regional response meets the urgent needs of refugees, asylum

seekers, and other forcibly displaced people in Aruba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.

Over the last several decades, Ecuador has hosted millions of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those seeking safety from the years-long armed conflict in Colombia. Ecuador continues to host thousands of refugees and migrants from Colombia including 72,000 officially recognized refugees, the highest number of recognized refugees in the region. Colombians are still arriving in Ecuador seeking refuge due to stalled progress in the implementation of Colombia's peace accords and increasing violence between non-state actors.

Since 2016, more than two million Venezuelans have also arrived in Ecuador seeking safety and economic security. Around 1.5 million continued in their journey to Peru and other countries, but more than 508,000 remain, making Venezuelans the majority of those seeking asylum in Ecuador. In 2019 Ecuador initiated a regularization process for Venezuelan migrants, granting over 56,000 emergency visas for humanitarian reasons (VERHU), and over 202,000 temporary visas to Venezuelan citizens. As a result, more than half of Venezuelans have had access to a temporary legal status. Nonetheless, as these visas expire, and to reach the significant number of Venezuelans who have not had access to any type of documentation, the Ecuadorian Government has announced the start of a new regularization process in 2022. Venezuela's ongoing political and socioeconomic crisis will continue to drive Venezuelans to find safety across the region, making these efforts to offer legal status all the more important.

Ecuador has one of the most advanced regional regulatory frameworks protecting the rights of people on the move. Ecuador's constitution protects and guarantees human rights, recognizing the universal right to citizenship and the right to freedom of movement. The National Agenda for Equality in Human Mobility 2017-2021 (ANIMH) is Ecuador's main public policy instrument on the rights of migrants and displaced persons. The ANIMH aligns with the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Ecuador has also signed and ratified all international conventions on human rights. The government of Ecuador, in partnership with UNHCR, HIAS, and others, is including displaced people in their COVID-19 vaccination campaigns with over 300,000 refugees having received two doses of the vaccine, or a single-dose vaccine, as of March 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an ongoing economic crisis in Ecuador characterized by declining formal employment and economic activity rates. This has led refugees and asylum seekers to experience ongoing barriers to integration and protection gaps. HIAS Ecuador's program participants report they are facing new challenges with lack of income, eviction risks, limited access to healthcare and food, and limited access to education due to the inability to attend remote schooling.

The impact of the Venezuela situation and COVID-19 has also driven up rates of gender-based violence (GBV) across Latin America and the Caribbean. The sheer scale of GBV has outpaced the availability of services across the region, particularly in border areas and for populations in transit. For many women and girls, GBV is a significant driver of their decision to seek safety in another country, but this journey is often beset by further violence and there are limited, if any, response services. Across the region, there are insufficient numbers of trained staff, language barriers for indigenous survivors, and xenophobic and anti-LGBTQ attitudes that impact how survivors are treated when they present for services. Adolescent girls, especially those who are in early or forced marriages, are particularly at risk and have limited options for safe disclosure and support. Regional humanitarian coordination platforms all highlight the need for significant scaling of GBV resources including cross-border approaches and partnerships with women and refugee-led civil society and community-based organizations. In Ecuador, cases of GBV doubled from March-July 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, with more than 14,200 GBV incidents reported. Ecuador faces similar barriers to GBV prevention and response to those experienced across the region.

## HIAS Programs in Ecuador

Since 2003, HIAS Ecuador has served refugees and asylum seekers with comprehensive, innovative programming that advances socioeconomic inclusion and protection, particularly for vulnerable groups. In 2021 alone, HIAS Ecuador served 110,526 people, and since launching nearly two decades ago, HIAS Ecuador has reached more than 460,000 refugees, asylum seekers, and host community members. As the largest international NGO serving refugees in the country, HIAS Ecuador plays a critical role leading civil society's refugee response and coordinating with the Government of Ecuador and other key partners. HIAS realizes people carry a diversity of experiences and intersecting identities requiring unique support and solutions. As such, HIAS takes a holistic approach to its interventions and offers integrated programming in GBV prevention and response, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, economic inclusion, and legal protection.

HIAS Ecuador's **economic inclusion** programs are a model for the region, securing the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of both refugees and host communities through innovative and sustainable approaches to poverty alleviation, entrepreneurship, employment, and financial inclusion. These comprehensive initiatives integrate MHPSS, legal protection, and GBV services, and bring together development and humanitarian stakeholders at the regional, national, and local levels. Through the Graduation Model Approach (GMA) and the Social Economic Support Program (SESP), HIAS Ecuador helps alleviate extreme poverty within 12-18 months, supporting participants to become food secure, enjoy stable and

diversified incomes, increase their assets, better integrate into their communities, and plan for their futures. HIAS Ecuador's entrepreneurship programs create business opportunities in order to increase the self-reliance of refugees and vulnerable host communities. The Entrepreneurship School with a Gender Lens supports refugee and migrant women, survivors of GBV, and those at risk of GBV to develop safe sustainable livelihoods while strengthening their self-esteem, autonomy, and empowerment. HIAS Ecuador's agrobusiness program promotes social cohesion among refugee and host community families through the development of income-generating agricultural activities, including community-managed orchards and other collective endeavors. HIAS Ecuador also works closely with the private sector to develop higher-wage employment opportunities, particularly for women and families. HIAS Ecuador has also been providing cash and voucher assistance (CVA) since 2017 and is the largest provider of cash-based assistance in Ecuador and UNHCR's main partner for CVA. CVA has been critical throughout the pandemic to allow families to meet urgent needs, including supporting children with virtual learning. CVA is also an important component of HIAS Ecuador's GBV programming. In October 2020, HIAS Ecuador was awarded the Sustainable Development Goals Awards from Global Compact and the United Nations in Ecuador for its work on gender equality through the Entrepreneurship School with a Gender Lens and on responsible consumption and production through the agrobusiness program.



An Ecuadorian woman who lives along the northern border with Colombia learns about hydroponic crops as part of a business venture and community bank initiative. Together with another Ecuadorian, a Colombian refugee, and two Venezuelan refugees, she grows hydroponic lettuce. **Photo:** HIAS Ecuador



HIAS Ecuador's **legal protection** programs help refugees and asylum seekers access documentation, basic rights, and protection services through information sessions and local referrals. With the support of UNICEF and IOM, HIAS Ecuador also implements **child protection** programs for refugee children and teenagers. HIAS Ecuador helps families with at-risk children and unaccompanied or separated children, supporting them with cash-based assistance and access to education and other services. HIAS Ecuador tailors economic inclusion programming for adolescents transitioning into adulthood. HIAS Ecuador manages the two comprehensive support centers that UNICEF has established in Ecuador (in Tulcán and Manta), to provide families and children on the move with vital services, play-based programs, protection, and counselling in a single location. Also, with the support of UNICEF, HIAS Ecuador leads the implementation of Child Friendly Spaces throughout the country. Partnering with World Food Program, HIAS Ecuador provides recently arrived or at-risk families with food assistance. With cards or codes, refugee families can buy food that covers their nutritional needs at supermarkets across the country.



On June 22, 2021, during World Refugee Day commemoration events, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visited HIAS in Ibarra and met with Colombian and Venezuelan refugee families. **Photo:** HIAS Ecuador

HIAS Ecuador's **community-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)** programs focus on promoting wellbeing with an emphasis on reinforcing mutual support systems and facilitating integration into host communities. HIAS Ecuador provides individual, family, and group support through both in-person and remote services, including referrals for psychiatric care when needed. HIAS Ecuador also trains key community members and leaders on how to recognize acute emotional distress in children and adults as



a result of crisis, and how to respond with empathy and respect. HIAS Ecuador works with communities to promote the integration of refugees into host communities based on interculturality, empowerment, and a refugee rights approach. HIAS Ecuador also promotes mainstreaming of psychosocial approaches throughout the humanitarian and development sectors.

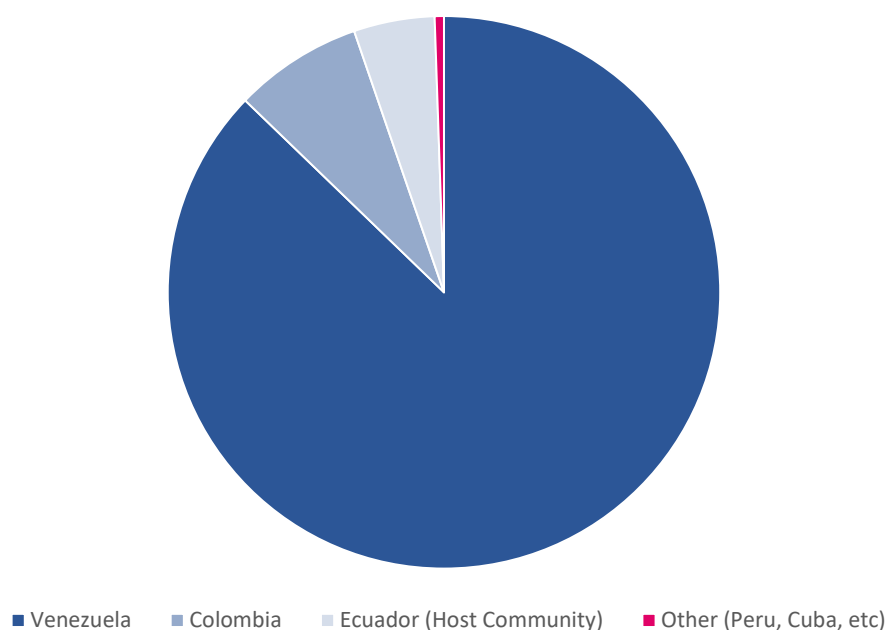
HIAS Ecuador's comprehensive **GBV prevention and response** programming aims to both reduce GBV risks and support survivors to recover, heal, and thrive. HIAS Ecuador provides GBV case management, psychosocial support, economic assistance, and referrals for other services as needed. HIAS Ecuador also works to decrease threats to women and girls, adolescents, and LGBTQ refugees arising from unsafe living environments, unstable economic situations, or isolation. HIAS Ecuador's economic inclusion programs are designed to strengthen women and girls' economic security and reduce their vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse. HIAS Ecuador helps create community banks that help GBV survivors and other marginalized groups access capital and savings as well as social support. HIAS Ecuador's partnership with Airbnb also allows GBV survivors and those at risk of GBV to access emergency housing. In addition, HIAS Ecuador supports transformative change through community-led initiatives, including positive masculinities activities that engage men and boys on ending violence against women and girls and adolescents. HIAS Ecuador also builds the capacity of the humanitarian sector to appropriately support survivors and mitigate GBV risks through training and sharing best practices and data. Thanks to a groundbreaking award from the U.S. State Department/PRM, HIAS is now implementing a regional GBV project in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru in partnership with civil society and community-based organizations. The program provides a cross-border continuum of care and support to survivors by building resilience, generating new learning, and reducing GBV risks faced by women, adolescent girls, and LGBTQ refugees. HIAS is enhancing the capacity of partners through trainings in each country and regional activities that bring partners together to learn from each other. In Ecuador, HIAS is partnering with local organizations Fundación Lunita Lunera and Dialogo Diverso, which focus on the eradication of GBV and the promotion of the rights of LGBTQ refugees and migrants. Through collaborative programs, HIAS and these two local organizations have developed a comprehensive approach that builds on the strengths of each group and expands specialized services offered to girls, women, and LGBTQ refugees and host community members.

HIAS Ecuador implements HIAS' global **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Framework** and staff are trained on AAP principles and standard operating procedures. HIAS Ecuador displays the Code of Conduct in each office location and shares information about its accountability commitments and available services through written information and through standard operating processes for case management with clients. HIAS Ecuador uses feedback and response mechanisms that are accessible and context appropriate, including suggestion boxes in each site office as well as direct email and phone communication channels that help HIAS Ecuador's staff improve services.

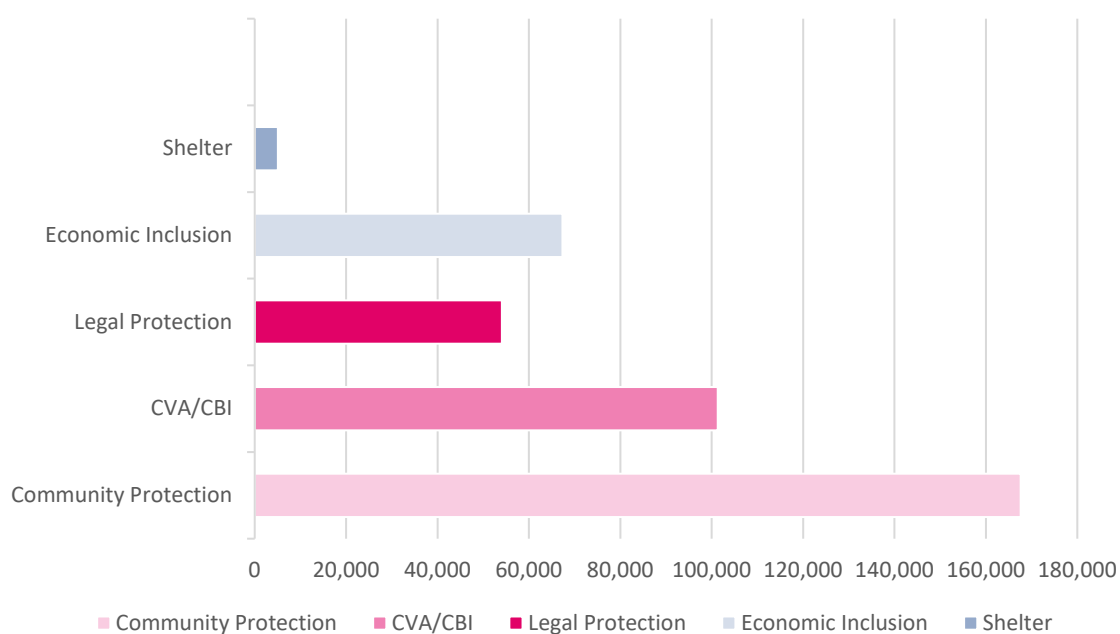
**Looking ahead with programs**, HIAS Ecuador will continue to strengthen comprehensive and integrated approaches that promote community resilience and social and economic integration, as well as mitigate the risks and impact of GBV. HIAS Ecuador's experience with the Venezuelan crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have made clear the critical importance

of long-term, sustainable economic inclusion approaches to protect and empower refugees, reduce xenophobia, and generate support from host communities. HIAS Ecuador looks forward to scaling evidence-based programs and promising models in MHPSS. In the area of child protection, HIAS Ecuador will focus new efforts on early childhood, as well as targeted initiatives with unaccompanied at-risk adolescents, including adolescent mothers or those whose caregivers have left Ecuador for other countries. HIAS Ecuador also plans to strengthen its work in border areas meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ persons with specific needs, as well as individuals engaged in survival sex work, and adolescents in early unions. HIAS Ecuador also plans to strengthen its work in border areas meeting the needs of LGBTQ persons, as well as individuals engaged in survival sex work, and adolescents forced into child marriage. Recognizing growing protection gaps, HIAS Ecuador will marshal new resources to promote positive masculinities and community-based protection structures to prevent and respond to GBV. HIAS Ecuador will continue to build on cash-based interventions to reduce GBV risk and support survivors, as well as opportunities to integrate GBV risk reduction in programming areas like food assistance. HIAS Ecuador will also strengthen the integration between GBV and child protection programming to support the protection and empowerment of girls and adolescents, including through new work on sexual and reproductive health and rights. In addition, HIAS Ecuador looks forward to expanding regional, cross-border GBV programming to better meet the needs of women and girls and LGBTQ people on the move. HIAS Ecuador plans to work in collaboration with the headquarters-based emergency department to strengthen the office's capacity to respond to new emergencies in the future. Finally, HIAS Ecuador will continue to partner with the Government of Ecuador and other key stakeholders to ensure that Venezuelan refugees and asylum seekers are able to access Ecuador's visa program and receive legal status to remain safely in the country.

**Graph 1: Populations Served in 2021**



**Graph 2: People Reached by Program Area in 2021**



## Coordination: Partners and Peer Networks

HIAS Ecuador works closely with the government of Ecuador as well as UNHCR and its partners and will continue to collaborate with international NGOs, local organizations, the private sector, and other key stakeholders supporting refugees and asylum seekers and host communities in Ecuador. HIAS Ecuador is a member of the national and regional humanitarian coordination working groups including the Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM). HIAS Ecuador leads on coordination for food security together with WFP. At a regional level, HIAS leads the group for Child Friendly Spaces, as part of the Safe Spaces network. As part of a comprehensive case management approach, HIAS Ecuador works closely with key actors, civil society organizations, and local governments in each territory. HIAS Ecuador is a member of the education, health, integration, protection, child protection, GBV, CVA, and shelter working groups. HIAS Ecuador is also a member of the Intersectoral Support Group for the COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, supporting site offices of the Ministry of Public Health with the deployment of vaccination campaigns including information targeting refugees and asylum seekers. HIAS Ecuador is also a member of the Ecuadorian chapter of the UN Global Compact on corporate sustainability.



To commemorate Pride month in 2021, HIAS staff organized a wall-painting activity, with participation from other UN agencies and partner organizations, at UNICEF's comprehensive support center near the northern border of Ecuador and Colombia. This center is managed by HIAS. **Photo:** HIAS Ecuador



HIAS is a trusted partner of the government of Ecuador, closely coordinating with the Ministry of Economic Inclusion in the implementation of the Graduation Model Approach for economic inclusion; with the Ministry of Health in the development of a protocol for mental health in emergencies; and with the Human Rights Secretariat implementing GBV prevention and response initiatives. HIAS Ecuador also supports highly vulnerable cases referred from the International Protection Directorate, part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and coordinates on individual cases and policies with the National Police, Ministry of Education, Public Defender, and the Ombudsman's Office.

Finally, HIAS Ecuador participates in specialized working groups like education and health clusters and in the cash collaborative delivery (CCD) initiative, together with leading humanitarian organizations. HIAS Ecuador is committed to sharing lessons learned and programming data with the wider field, including extensive experience with cash-based interventions. HIAS Ecuador also collaborates with UNHCR on information gathering for protection monitoring reports, and expects to build up stronger coordination processes together with capacity-building activities to improve services offered by local organizations and public institutions to refugees.

Moving forward, HIAS Ecuador will reinforce existing partnerships focusing on thematic areas including GBV and livelihoods. Through the GBV national coordination structures, for example, HIAS Ecuador will be scaling up case management services to include emergency case management for survivors in transit, including across national borders in coordination with other HIAS offices in the region. HIAS Ecuador will also continue to strengthen partnerships with International Labor Organization and United Nations Development Program to maximize opportunities for refugees' socioeconomic integration.

HIAS Ecuador will focus on strengthening partnerships with local organizations and regional NGO networks and fostering program participants' leadership to deepen and sustain impact. HIAS Ecuador will also strengthen agreements and coordination mechanisms with refugee and migrant-led organizations and support networks. HIAS Ecuador will continue to partner with local organizations on case referrals as well as program design and advocacy and sustainability strategies. HIAS Ecuador also coordinates with civil society organizations through community networks and neighborhood committees. HIAS is one of the founding members of the Ecuadorian network of civil society on masculinities, *Red Ecuatoriana de Masculindades*, a platform to coordinate efforts to prevent GBV, promote gender equality, and carry out joint efforts for transformative community interventions. HIAS Ecuador will also respond to the demands for local NGOs and civil society organizations for technical assistance in the areas of GBV prevention and response, livelihoods, and MHPSS.

## Operational Support for Programs

As HIAS' programs expand to meet new global needs, HIAS remains committed to delivering the highest quality of services to those it seeks to support and empower. To enable country teams to succeed and thrive, HIAS will invest new operational resources in our programs, processes, and people.

At the start of 2022, HIAS Ecuador had 430 employees, including permanent and temporary staff and 12 interns, who work in 17 offices nationwide, located in the cities that welcome the largest number of refugees, including at the northern and southern borders. The leadership team is composed of the country director and department leads as well as technical coordinators. Seventy-one percent of HIAS Ecuador staff are women. Each HIAS Ecuador staff member abides by HIAS' Code of Conduct and other policies and procedures in line with global best practices. All staff members have completed trainings on **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**. These trainings are updated and repeated regularly to ensure both prevention and response to any reported incidents of SEA. HIAS applies a gender lens when analyzing, planning, and making decisions across all its operations, to ensure the safety, security, and wellbeing of the entire organization's staff.

HIAS invests in the skills and capacity of staff worldwide, supporting a wide range of local, national, regional, and international trainings for staff. HIAS ensures that international staff have diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) training. HIAS Ecuador's DEIJ approach is woven throughout operations at all levels. HIAS Ecuador recognizes that fostering safe, egalitarian, and respectful spaces for diversity including for persons with disabilities is critical to achieving organizational objectives. Going forward, HIAS Ecuador will be mapping its staff training and capacity building needs against programmatic objectives. HIAS Ecuador hopes to pursue new trainings for staff on social innovation to inform current and future programming.



HIAS led a session of the Entrepreneurship School with a Gender Lens to promote social integration and social cohesion in Duran, a community that hosts a large number of refugees. **Photo:** HIAS Ecuador

To promote **staff wellbeing**, HIAS has a global contract with the Konterra Group, which provides support both for work-related and personal challenges. HIAS Ecuador will continue to prioritize the wellbeing and development of staff across the organization, including by amplifying ongoing efforts like flexible Fridays which allow for more limited work hours two Fridays a month, team care and integration days, and access to the Coursera online learning platform for technical staff. The goal of these efforts is to enhance program outcomes as well as improve staff satisfaction, retention, and wellbeing across the country team.

HIAS is also committed to developing an effective, sustainable **safety and security** risk management system that is in line with our values and mission and organizational duty of care. HIAS Ecuador will continue to emphasize preventive security strategies and early detection of risk. HIAS Ecuador will continue to strengthen existing tools and policies such as the acceptance strategy and continually update the overall Ecuador safety and security management plan. HIAS Ecuador's security focal point and the regional and headquarters-based Safety and Security Department work together with the Country Director and program teams to ensure that the measures in place enable programming while cultivating organization-wide compliance. HIAS Ecuador will continue to monitor the security climate in all high-risk locations and respond accordingly to changes in the security climate in areas where HIAS has operations and programming. For all new offices a security assessment will be carried out to identify potential gaps and take measures to address them.

Globally, HIAS is rolling out a **Digital Transformation Strategy** to ensure that beneficiaries' personal information is digitally secured and protected. The strategy will also create one universal source of information and collaboration; ensure all organizational knowledge is standardized, digitized, organized, and discoverable; ensure data around inputs, outcomes, and impact is readily accessible; help employees collaborate on gathering and building resources on this information platform; and easily share and leverage data from partners and affiliates. HIAS will be providing annual refresher training to all country offices on IT tools and procedures. HIAS Ecuador will also continue to build on technical support initiatives at the country level including the establishment of Ecuador's IT Help Desk.

With support from headquarters (including the regional office), HIAS Ecuador will also continue to review and strengthen procedures and tools related to data and reporting as well as finance and compliance, in line with donor requirements and international standards. HIAS Ecuador will work with headquarters to establish an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The ERP will improve alignment of operations, finance, programs, and human resources, allowing for more efficient and cost-effective country operations.

## Donor and Development Strategy

HIAS is committed to growing and diversifying its donor base in each country of operation. With support from the LAC regional office and headquarters, HIAS Ecuador is developing a resource mobilization strategy to sustain, increase, and further diversify funding sources, building on its long history of innovative, comprehensive, and sustainable programming to advance refugee protection and integration as well as host community wellbeing. HIAS Ecuador gratefully acknowledges support from the U.S. State Department/PRM, USAID, the

European Union (EU), UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, WFP, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and Airbnb.

HIAS Ecuador plans to strengthen and scale evidence-based programming by focusing on targeted research initiatives and continuing to share lessons learned within both humanitarian and development communities of practice. Specific research initiatives will allow HIAS Ecuador to secure additional resources to scale successful interventions. In Guayaquil and Tulcán, HIAS Ecuador is working through USAID's Health, Evaluation and Applied Research Development (HEARD) project, which seeks to adapt, implement, and evaluate an integrated psychosocial and protection program to address the prioritized needs of forcibly displaced women in Ecuador. HIAS Ecuador also looks forward to sharing progress and impact through the U.S. State Department/PRM-funded regional GBV program and hopes other donors will issue multi-country and cross-border awards to better address the scale of the GBV crisis and other protection threats in the region.

Humanitarian funding in the region may decline in the aftermath of COVID-19, with competing needs for resources across several different ongoing emergencies. HIAS Ecuador will continue to meet the urgent needs of refugees and asylum seekers while also promoting sustainability through economic integration and livelihoods by partnering with both humanitarian and development donors.

HIAS Ecuador will strengthen partnerships, including with UN Women, building on successful new programs integrating economic inclusion with GBV prevention and response. HIAS Ecuador will also seek new resources to continue scaling economic inclusion work focused on youth and other at-risk refugees and asylum seekers and will be prepared to respond to new needs across the country as they emerge. Moving forward, HIAS Ecuador will also develop new partnerships with the private sector to support economic inclusion programming, leveraging participation in corporate social responsibility platforms such as Global Compact Ecuador and CERES Ecuador (the Ecuadorian Consortium for Social Responsibility). HIAS Ecuador also plans to explore targeted resources aligned with environmental sustainability and the impact of climate change.

## Communications, Policy, and Advocacy

HIAS Ecuador's advocacy targets decision-makers at all levels to advance protection and rights for refugees and asylum seekers in Ecuador. The aim is to comprehensively address protection gaps and implement long-term change through policy, funding, and services. Current advocacy priorities include regularization of status for refugees and asylum seekers, access to legal protection, and socioeconomic inclusion. HIAS Ecuador works in coordination with key partners including peer organizations, civil society, and public institutions to raise awareness on the importance of providing refugees access to legal orientation and documentation to enable local integration. HIAS Ecuador also works closely with the private sector to promote labor market inclusion of refugees and other vulnerable populations with a gender lens. In addition, HIAS Ecuador seeks to address xenophobia and discrimination against refugees through targeted initiatives and a cross-cutting approach across all



programs to promote social cohesion with host communities and show the importance and advantages brought by integration.

HIAS Ecuador leverages its active participation in local and regional networks serving refugees and displaced people to advance these advocacy objectives. HIAS Ecuador's participation in the local and national GTRM (the Refugee and Migrant Working Groups) provides critical information to decisionmakers on key challenges faced by refugees and how best to allocate limited resources. HIAS Ecuador is also a member of CERES (the Ecuadorian Consortium for Social Responsibility) and Global Compact Ecuador, and leverages these forums to press the private sector and other key actors on corporate social responsibility and alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

HIAS Ecuador is developing a communications strategy in support of programmatic, advocacy, and resource mobilization objectives. Building on an external assessment, HIAS Ecuador will take new measures to maximize the reach and impact of current social media platforms for further impact. HIAS Ecuador will build the team's capacity to appropriately gather testimonies, stories, and photographs to advance these strategic advocacy objectives, in partnership with program participants. HIAS Ecuador will review and strengthen printed communication materials and information disseminated through other media to ensure program participants have accurate information on their rights and available services including for cases of GBV. To ensure the integrity of services, HIAS also provides clear information to participants on fraud prevention. Regionally, HIAS will work to ensure that people traveling across Latin America are aware of HIAS services and locations and other available resources across different countries through digital and other information tools.