



### HIAS IN ECUADOR

**Founded:** 2003

**Staff Size:** 430

**Country Director:** Maricela Parra

**Office Locations:** Ambato, Cuenca, El Coca, Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, Huaquillas, Ibarra, Lago Agrio, Manta, Machala, Quito, San Lorenzo, Santo Domingo, Tulcán

Ecuador is currently hosting approximately 71,000 refugees from Venezuela, Colombia, and other countries in the region and across the world. The country received 19,168 new asylum seekers in 2019, of whom 14,155 were Venezuelans and 4,628 Colombians. Since 2016, some 1.9 million Venezuelans have arrived in Ecuador looking for new opportunities; approximately 451,000 stayed in the country and 1.5 million continued their journey to Peru and other countries.



### HIAS PROGRAMS AND FOCUS

HIAS protects and supports refugees to build new lives and reunite with family members in safety and freedom. In Ecuador, HIAS works hand-in-hand with government institutions, partner agencies, and the private sector to promote social and economic inclusion and the development of sustainable livelihoods through community-based psychosocial support and humanitarian assistance. HIAS' strategy in Ecuador focuses on a case management approach that provides families with personalized and comprehensive assistance.

### Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (CB-MHPSS)

HIAS Ecuador's mental health programs focus on promoting well-being with an emphasis on GBV prevention and response and integration activities. HIAS provides psychosocial support services including individual mental health counseling, support groups, psychiatric referrals, and psychological first aid. HIAS' MHPSS programs train key community members to recognize acute emotional distress in children and adults as a result of crisis, and how to respond with empathy and respect. HIAS Ecuador's staff train community leaders, public health officials, and partner organizations to mainstream a psychosocial approach in all basic service areas. HIAS works with communities to facilitate and promote the integration of refugees into host communities based on interculturality, empowerment, and a refugee rights approach. In order to help refugee and host communities cope with the psychosocial effects of the pandemic, HIAS provides essential mental health support through phone calls and online platforms.

## Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Risk Reduction, Prevention, And Response

Women, girls, and LGBTQ individuals are disproportionately affected by forced displacement. HIAS' GBV services are driven by the needs and the voices of survivors, and our GBV programming helps forcibly displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ individuals access human rights to pursue their potential, free from violence and gender-related oppression. Psychological first aid and services related to child protection are also provided for survivors with minor children. These programs seek to create a better environment of well-being, safety, and protection for GBV survivors and those at risk. HIAS prioritizes survivors' leadership when designing and implementing activities, and in Ecuador, HIAS provides case management, psychosocial services, support groups, livelihoods support, assistance with basic needs, and refers survivors to health and legal protection spaces that enable them to recover, heal, and thrive. Through risk reduction activities, HIAS Ecuador decreases the threats to women and girls and LGBTQ refugees that arise from unsafe living environments, unstable economic situations, or isolation. In addition, HIAS implements programs that support transformative change, including programs for men and boys to unlearn norms and behaviors that contribute to or condone violence. HIAS also carries out GBV prevention activities, promotion of gender rights and equality in communities, local, and national advocacy spaces, with companies and private sector entities.



## Legal Protection

Without legal 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 Ecuador works in close collaboration with the government, UNHCR, legal assistance providers, and other stakeholders to empower, educate, and support refugees as they seek to access rights and secure protection.



## Economic Inclusion

Access to dignified, sustainable, and safe livelihoods are at the core of HIAS' economic inclusion interventions. Our methodology enables refugees, vulnerable migrants, and host communities to find opportunities to enhance self-reliance, increase resilience, regain dignity, and to build independent and meaningful futures. HIAS Ecuador promotes the development of sustainable livelihoods by providing entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for beneficiaries and develops training processes for learning

and developing new abilities and skills. Through the Graduation Model Approach (GMA), HIAS Ecuador helps alleviate extreme poverty within 18 months, supporting participants to become food secure, enjoy stable and diversified incomes, increase their assets, better integrate into their communities, and have a plan for the future. HIAS' 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' agro-business program promotes social cohesion among refugee and host community families through the development of income-generating agricultural, livestock, and agro-industrial activities. HIAS also works closely with the private sector on higher-wage employment opportunities, empowering women in particular to become more economically independent, and develops greater opportunities for families.

## Child Protection

With the support of UNICEF and OIM, HIAS implements protection programs for refugee children and teenagers. We promote a comprehensive approach aligned to international child protection standards while considering the specific needs of children on the move. Ecuador's offices work with families with children at risk and unaccompanied and separated children and adolescents, providing them with CBI support and promoting the access to the Ecuadorian protection system as well as access to education and health programs. HIAS leads the implementation of Child Friendly Spaces where all activities are intended to foster children's sensory, psychomotor, and cognitive development.



## HIAS in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

HIAS advocates for the protection of refugees, other forcibly displaced populations, and local host communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. As part of a comprehensive regional response to meet the urgent needs of these populations, including the millions of displaced Venezuelans, HIAS participates in several regional coordination platforms and partnerships which focus on protection, food security, GBV, and Cash and Voucher Assistance, including:

**REDLAC** (IASC Regional Work Group Risk, Emergencies and Disasters)

**UNHCR/IOM** Regional Platform for the Venezuela Situation Response (**R4V**)

**Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM)** in Colombia

**Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM)** in Ecuador and Peru

HIAS currently has programs in nine countries in LAC (Aruba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela) and partners with a wide range of government agencies, UN entities (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, UNVFVT), the private sector (Airbnb, TATA Consultancy Services, and Manpower), and other NGOs and consortia, including Jesuit Refugee Service, Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International, and Girls not Brides.

## CONTACT

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