

Fighting Hunger Worldwide



# Annual Report Ecuador 2015



**World Food Programme**



## World Food Programme

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## Foreword



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2015, places people at the core of sustainable development and has set ending poverty and eradicating hunger as two of its primary goals. The second Sustainable Development Goal aims to achieve food security with improved nutrition for all people and promotes the implementation of sustainable agriculture models.

In the National Plan for Good Living, the Government of Ecuador established the eradication of undernutrition in children younger than two years old as a priority. The United Nations World Food Programme is proud to join the efforts of the Ecuadorian Government to achieve this goal.

After more than five decades of working in Latin America and collaborating with national, regional, and local governments, WFP has become an experienced partner and has helped to strengthen capacities of national, local and community institutions in food security. To improve food and nutrition security, WFP works with partner organizations to introduce a variety of locally produced foods, including fruit, vegetables and proteins, into family diets. Technical dialogues with partners has helped to facilitate collaboration among various institutions and has contributed to improving policies and social safety nets.

WFP promotes capacity development through South-South cooperation with the goal of overcoming the challenges of malnutrition. The organization also works with mobile populations, specifically with victims of

the Colombian armed conflict seeking refuge in Ecuador and with Ecuadorian host communities.

WFP implements nutrition-sensitive actions in five provinces that link food assistance with local agricultural production and nutrition trainings, enabling families to make informed decisions when they buy and prepare food. In addition to improving their nutrition, this intervention has helped to reduce tensions and foster peaceful coexistences between Colombian and Ecuadorian communities.

WFP also works in school feeding, given that schools are one of the best points of entry into the community. In these programmes WFP works at the community level with teachers, parents (many of whom are smallholder farmers) and community leaders. After analysing smallholder farmers' capacities in a particular town, associations with women members or leaders are invited to provide fresh products that complement school feeding projects. This supports both the local economy and women. The Ministry of Education selects the schools that participate in this programme. WFP and local governments co-finance the cost of food and strengthen the capacities of farmers, students and families.

Learning and innovation are our goals, and we achieve them with our partners through developing capacities together.

Kyunghan Park  
WFP Representative in Ecuador

# 2015: The year in review



1. Improved working relationships among government institutions, local governments, ministries and United Nations agencies in the field have enabled agencies and government institutions to work together on a variety of projects, such as the 1,000 days initiative, to address the challenges of malnutrition. Additionally, projects that involve several agencies allow for optimum use of resources.

2. In addition to promoting food and nutrition security, WFP has successfully established a comprehensive assistance model that includes smallholder farmer associations, particularly those that value the participation of women.

3. To provide assistance, WFP uses cash-based transfers in the form of electronic cards that are used to purchase nutritious and healthy products at partnering sales points. WFP officials monitor the effect of these transfers on family diets and study the results to understand what models work best in particular contexts.

4. Educating trainers to teach families about nutrition through engaging, interactive activities leads to positive changes in eating habits.

5. Analyses carried out with the Government enable WFP to generate input on how to effectively address the challenges of malnutrition.

6. With a new focus on protection in daily life, WFP staff and partners develop and implement activities with processes that reduce risks and contribute to the security, dignity and integrity of WFP's project participants.

7. Working together with UN Women has produced innovative initiatives that promote women's empowerment.

8. Climate change variables were incorporated into land management plans, while communities put into practice and take ownership of adaptation measures.

9. The Initial Needs Assessment Manual (EVIN) that was developed with the Secretariat for Risk Management is being used throughout the country.



## Working together to overcome malnutrition

Two billion people throughout the world suffer from micronutrient deficiencies; 159 million children suffer from chronic malnutrition; and 1.9 billion adults are either overweight or obese. These problems have an impact on cognitive development because they limit people's social, educational, work-related, and economic opportunities. It is time to prioritize social investment in cost-effective and quality programmes to reach the greatest number of people with the lowest cost in the shortest amount of time.

Latin American countries, including Ecuador, work to overcome the challenges of malnutrition, including the "triple burden" of populations who are undernourished, overweight and/or obese, and micronutrient deficient. Nutrition-related problems transcend social and economic barriers, and the task of overcoming malnutrition is therefore beyond the means of a single actor; it requires collaboration among communities, the private sector and government institutions at all levels. Nutrition at all stages of life must become

a central aspect of regulatory frameworks, public policies, institutions and work plans.

To overcome malnutrition together, the Government of Ecuador works with WFP and other agencies of the United Nations in the "1,000 days" pilot project in the province of Imbabura. This is an integrated effort that facilitates access to nutritious, healthy, and locally-produced foods thanks to WFP's work with smallholder farmer associations.

The first 1,000 days of life, from conception to two years of age, is a period when children quickly develop their physical and cognitive abilities and establish vital neurological connections that impact the rest of their lives.

1,000 Days is also the name of an international initiative that focuses on promoting rapid progress to address malnutrition by prioritizing prevention. Actions focus on providing care to mothers beginning during pregnancy and to their children in the first years of their lives.



## Analysing best practices to improve nutrition

One of the ways to improve nutrition is by diversifying diets. For this reason, WFP developed a food assistance project with the Decentralized Autonomous Provincial Governments of Carchi, Chimborazo and Santa Elena. The project targeted households with children between 6 and 36 months who live in extreme poverty and suffer from malnutrition. This project, called "Strengthening Local Capacities in Food and Nutrition Security (CLOSAN)," resulted in an experimental study.

The study divided households with similar socioeconomic characteristics into four different treatment groups. The first treatment group only received a transfer in the form of a redeemable food voucher, and the second received the voucher with the condition of participating in monthly nutrition trainings. The third group received water filters and deworming interventions in addition to the redeemable food voucher conditioned to participation in the training. The fourth group was the control group and served as a point of comparison with the other intervention groups. Members of this group did not receive any type of assistance during the study period. The food given to participants was produced locally by smallholder farmer associations.

The study collected and analysed indicators regarding the diversity of foods consumed in the household, nutritional knowledge, changes in the income of smallholder farmers (especially women) and decision-making in the household.

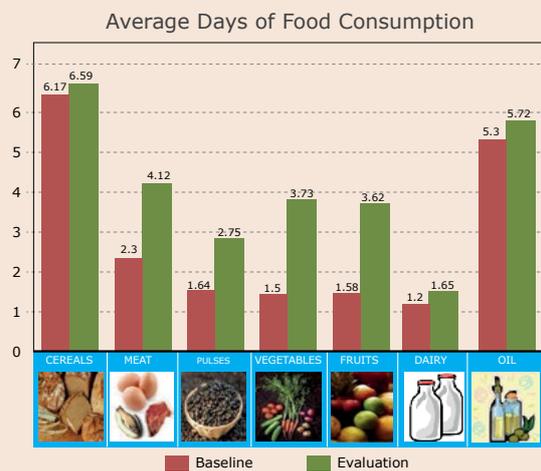
The most important results of the study included:

- A positive impact on dietary diversity was found in the first three treatment groups. However, the differences were not statistically significant when this factor was compared among groups;
- The nutrition training sessions had a positive impact on improving families' nutritional status, while there was no additional impact on families who also received water filters and deworming interventions; and
- The use of the transfer is the most cost-effective intervention to diversify diets.

During the study period, there was an increase in the number of members in smallholder farmer associations that work with WFP, and there was an increase in the number of women in leadership roles. Additionally, members' household incomes also increased.

## Results guide our actions

WFP monitors and evaluates the results of its operations on a regular basis. The System for Monitoring and Reviewing Transfers (SMART) enables the monitoring of families' food consumption patterns. The following graph shows that, after receiving training and assistance, families who participate in WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) favour nutritious and healthy foods in their purchases. The data show that households went from consuming foods from four food groups to consuming foods from more than six food groups.



Sources: PRRO Evaluation December 2015

*After seven months of using WFP transfers, families eat products from more food groups per week.*

On the left, the numbers one to seven represent the days of the week; the coloured columns measure the average number of days that participants consume foods from each one of the main groups. The colours compare the consumption of Colombian families when they first arrive with their consumption after seven months of using WFP's cash-based transfers.

The graph also shows a significant improvement in iron, protein and vitamin A consumption levels.

## School: A place to learn about nutrition



In the Amazonian province of Sucumbíos, WFP provides lunches to schools selected by the Ministry of Education. Every day, two thousand children in southern Cascales, Eno, and Shushfindi areas with a high prevalence of chronic child malnutrition, receive lunches in addition to school breakfasts provided by the Ecuadorian Government.

WFP, together with its local partner Sucumbíos Solidario (an institution of the provincial government), began implementing a programme with a local purchase model. The model enables families to sell products from their gardens at market prices without having to pay for transportation. The programme is in charge of taking the products to schools. Parents participate in trainings that involve live cooking demonstrations. They also receive education materials on nutrition and local food recipes. These initiatives enable them to improve the diet of their families.

Families receive a voucher equivalent to the value of the products they provided to the school during the month. The voucher can be exchanged for food at WFP's partnering sales points. As a result, the cycle of good eating is maintained in the school and in the home.

In communities where the programme operates, staff members from WFP's Sucumbíos field office have observed an increase in motivation and economic activity resulting from the sale of local products.

Sucumbíos Solidario supports new families in planting vegetables and setting up their own gardens at home. These families also receive support from the Ministry of Agriculture through the program "I Prefer", which promotes the consumption of local products, especially vegetables.

In its trainings, WFP explains the following to participating parents:

- the positive impact of good eating habits on children's academic performance;
- how good nutrition contributes to their children's health and well-being; and
- the role of lunch in preventing children from dropping out.

Children also participate in training sessions that their parents receive. They have shown interest in learning about plant care, the origin of foods and their nutritious properties. Children have demonstrated that they are good transmitters of knowledge, and through their enthusiasm, their knowledge bears fruit in each one of the families. This is how capacities are built from children to adults.



## Nutrition lessons for families

WFP works to educate the people it serves in the fields of health and nutrition at each stage of life. In order to reach more people, the training model works like a waterfall: the technical staff at WFP's partner institutions receive knowledge, and they in turn transmit this knowledge to families.

After analysing how to make trainings more interactive, WFP introduced nutrition-related games, group activities, theatre, and nutritious recipe cooking sessions that involve participants. Today, key messages on healthy eating are shared in participatory sessions that use these resources.

Families appreciate WFP's education materials and are also provided with colourful and nutritious recipes. Their illustrations bring local foods to life by using animation characters dressed to represent different Ecuadorian cultures. Characters such as Madam Broccoli and the Corn Kid are also used as puppets in trainings to communicate useful health and nutrition tips to children and adults. Training participants receive collectible placemats for the family dining room table.

Nutrition and health advice is regularly given in monthly trainings to WFP voucher users. Additionally, other points of contact with participants (interviews, supermarkets, sales points, transfer distributions and home visits) are utilized to reinforce the trainings.

Through the implementation of proven training methodologies, WFP has sparked families' interest in nutrition-related messages. By improving their eating habits, children grow up healthier and the entire families' opportunities improve.

***The father is not only "the provider," but an important part of a family unit in which understanding and harmony is possible; sons who wash dishes or cook are not questioned by their fathers.***

## Good eating habits as a family responsibility

*In households and schools, the kitchen, a space traditionally occupied by women, is increasingly being shared by men and women as both partners take responsibility for raising their children and providing them with healthy foods to eat at school.*

*Armando, President of the Mushuk Kawsai School Parent Committee, proudly comments on how he now also prepares food at home after having done so at school. "Now I also cook and prepare food for my family."*

*When working with indigenous communities, WFP emphasizes respect for their customs and traditions. However, undernutrition statistics indicate that the consumption of vegetables, which contain vital nutrients, vitamins, and minerals, must improve. The promotion of healthy eating habits in family diets is not only the responsibility of the mother, but of both parents.*

*WFP and its partners promote the importance of sharing domestic chores and enabling children to learn from their parents' actions. In addition to fostering women's empowerment, WFP emphasizes men's responsibilities as well, such as performing domestic tasks and taking an active role in their children's lives.*



# Malnutrition: A challenge we face together

## Several South-South experiences

In order to scale up programmes that combat malnutrition it is essential to study initiatives that have worked well for institutions, organizations and communities in other regional countries. Results indicate that the most effective programmes address multiple causes of malnutrition.

In an effort to exchange experiences at the South-South level, several cases were presented at the international seminar "Challenges to overcoming malnutrition," which brought together representatives of government organizations, academia, and the private sector in Ecuador and other countries in the region. The seminar was led by the Coordinating Ministry of Social Development and WFP with the support of the Latin American School for Social Sciences (FLACSO) and DSM.

All the cases presented are replicable experiences with common characteristics:

- Joint cross-sector collaboration with international cooperation and the private sector;
- a strong community component;
- a standard budget;
- the use of fortified products; and
- the constant monitoring of actions through effective data collection systems.



## The multiple causes of malnutrition

"At the regional level, malnutrition calls for a reflection on the strategies that we are utilizing in each one of our countries to face these problems. It is an issue that also affects future generations, especially in developing countries, where a nutrition transition is taking place. We find ourselves faced with two problems: on the one hand there is undernutrition, and on the other hand we are starting to deal with overweight and obesity. These problems coexist in societies and affect the population regardless of their socioeconomic condition. A single individual can even suffer from both simultaneously.

...The multiple causes [of malnutrition] require actions involving not only states, but... the commitment of communities, families, individuals and also of academia, the private sector, international organizations, regional governmental organizations, and others. The main goals are not only present in the National Plan for Good Living, but they are also clear goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The goals of ending extreme poverty and eradicating hunger are also related to the problems caused by malnutrition.

...Therefore, today more than ever, the linking of national policies with international policies, and collaboration within the international community, especially at the regional level, is necessary. Ecuador is no stranger to this reality. Therefore, the reduction of malnutrition is a priority of the Citizens' Revolution Government, and definitively eradicating chronic malnutrition is the country's greatest challenge. We are committed to ensuring that our children reach their full potential and to comprehensive development in general."

Cecilia Vaca,  
Ex-Coordinating Minister of Social  
Development

***The greatest challenge of the  
country: eradicating chronic  
malnutrition.***

## Learning through best practices

In recent years, a new working philosophy has guided WFP's strategy in Ecuador to achieve food and nutrition security: learning by doing. Following this philosophy and the guidelines of the Government of Ecuador in its search for effective solutions and strengthening capacities, WFP discovered that it has an important role in developing capacities and transforming itself into a learning office.

With the objective of determining what works best, WFP and its partners have created implementation models that are modified to meet the local realities of Ecuadorians and Colombian refugees at risk of food insecurity. During the projects' implementation phase, flexibility is key, as it enables staff to understand what works in each context and to adapt and develop innovative solutions.

For example, in the sparsely populated Amazon rainforest, staff in the Sucumbíos office adapted the school feeding model to the region's geographic realities. As there are no smallholder farmer associations available to provide fresh and nutritious foods to schools, WFP works directly with families. After WFP proved that this model works, other institutions have put this into practice as well.

Institutions save time and effort by replicating proven models. As stated by WFP's Knowledge Management Advisory Network, WFP's ability to respond in a timely, effective, and efficient manner is greatly influenced by its ability to capture, analyse, and learn from the knowledge and information at its disposal.

Since WFP's goal is to become an organization that learns by doing in order to be more effective in its work, experience exchange workshops are organized every year to document and share best practices and lessons learned from projects.

Staff members from the central office and field offices, partners, and donors visit successful programmes and observe the positive impact of WFP's innovative food and nutrition security activities. This experience helps staff and partners identify potential

bottlenecks and improve implementation processes.

WFP shares publications of best practices online with its partners and offices in other countries and also replicates successful initiatives in the region.

Lastly, rigorous impact studies and evaluations are implemented together with recognized research institutions, which further promotes learning. The resulting publications guide WFP strategy and public policy and offer valuable data to the Government.

By using a learning-centred approach that shares and documents knowledge, WFP is one step closer towards the goal of ending hunger and malnutrition.



## Building capacities to integrate protection

According to WFP's institutional policy, "integrating protection" means to design and implement activities in favour of food and nutrition security in a way that does not increase risks and instead contributes to the security, dignity and integrity of the people WFP serves.

Achieving this goal is not an easy task as WFP staff and partners in the field do not always have a thorough understanding of the concept of protection. In other cases, they integrate the concept into activities without proper reflection.

Before beginning a project or when integrating new partners and staff, it is important to build capacities among all actors involved in food assistance activities: government and non-government partners and the various work units within WFP.

Based on the training given at the regional level, the WFP office in Ecuador developed a training module geared towards actors participating in food assistance activities. The module contains:

- the international legal framework (human rights, international humanitarian law, guiding principles on internal displacement, refugee rights);
- humanitarian principles;
- information on sexual exploitation and abuse such as gender-based violence;
- protection and management;
- participation of and accountability to the people WFP serves; and
- protection in food assistance activities.

The content enables staff and partners to learn how to analyse protection risks throughout the operation and confront potential threats. It also enables them to identify activities that promote the integration of protection principles into the food assistance framework. There is still a strong focus on the situation of victims affected by the Colombian conflict who are an important part of the population that WFP serves in Ecuador, as they are especially vulnerable.

Once trained and equipped with a new outlook on protection in their daily activities, WFP staff and partners developed and implemented an annual action plan specific to protection.

The results of this process are several improvements in WFP activities:

- feedback mechanisms for participants in assistance programs (telephone line, suggestion boxes, focal groups, etc.);
- reference mechanisms in cases where victims are affected by violence or are in need of international protection;
- an improvement in the conditions of transfer distribution;
- food assistance support to shelters that host victims of violence; and
- integration of protection principles into operational processes and projects focused on the rights of the Colombian and Ecuadorian populations.

WFP's focus on protection helps put human rights standards and principles at the centre of its food assistance in Ecuador. In close coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WFP works in favour of the population fleeing from conflicts and the populations that host them to uphold their fundamental human rights.



## Working towards gender equality

### “Empowerment” means acquiring power and independence

Lucía (fictitious name to protect the interviewee’s identity) lives in a rural area of Esmeraldas Province, and she has received WFP’s transfer for several months. The first time she received it was unforgettable, and she recounts the importance she felt when her husband arrived home that day.

She had told her husband what she heard about the help that they give to people seeking refuge in Ecuador, but he did not believe her and thought that it was just a way to make a registry of how many Colombians there were in Esmeraldas. He did not let her travel to the city to find out. He said, “You will not go anywhere. You are going to say things that you shouldn’t say or that you don’t know, and they will reject you.” As days passed she kept insisting, and he refused to let her go, even though he had no work and they needed assistance. *Jama* (local term for food) was scarce.

One day her husband went on a fishing trip for four days. Instead of waiting at home to see if he returned with something, Lucía left for the city. With the help of a neighbour, she and her four children made it to the highway in a motorcycle taxi. From there, she looked for the cheapest way to travel as she did not have enough money, and with the support of charitable people, she found transportation to the city. In the city, she was a little lost at first but then figured it out. She arrived at WFP’s office, where she signed in and was interviewed. She received the transfer that she could use to buy food in a local store that same day.

“I went happily with my children to my house,” Lucía says. “And with food, which was most important!” When my husband arrived and saw that my children had something to eat, he started to cry, and even more so when I told him how I managed to get there.” My transfers are almost used up, but he always comes with me and helps me find the ‘most nutritious food for the family’, as the WFP lady says.”

***“My husband says, ‘My woman is the boss when it comes to food!’”***

### How we do it

Working with a gender equity focus means working for men, women, girls and boys and promoting equality. When gender is introduced into plans and projects, it creates awareness about the issue, and in time, social and cultural changes promote rights and opportunities that benefit all people.

The participation of both men and women in dignified activities acts as a pillar for promoting gender equality. A more just and humane world is achieved when men, women, girls and boys have equal opportunities in education, health, food access, jobs and well-being.

Guided by the WFP 2015– 2020 Global Gender Policy, WFP’s office in Ecuador works to promote equity and women’s empowerment in all its initiatives. In Ecuador, women have assumed the role of caring and cooking for all of the household members. However, women and girls are at the greatest risk of experiencing food insecurity because they do not have their own income and are more likely to be abused. Refugees in Ecuador suffer from



the aftermath of violence from which they flee.

In this context, WFP has developed modules in its nutrition training processes that promote women's empowerment and incorporate gender sensitivity workshops. Entrepreneurship training sessions implemented by partners help women participants generate income. In its work with smallholder farmer associations, WFP searches for associations that are led by women or have a greater representation of female members. Additionally, WFP coordinates its work with shelters that host women who have been victims of abuse. At the shelters, WFP provides them with food assistance during their temporary stay to help them recover.

WFP works together on this initiative with the Ecuadorian Government, UN Women, local governments, HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), RET (Refugee Education Trust), Fundación Tarabita and others. These organizations raise awareness among their staff on gender issues in order to provide better assistance in a timely manner that takes into account the needs and priorities of women, girls, men and boys who participate in WFP projects.

### Ending the abuse

Violence against women affects both their own food security and that of their children. Hope (fictitious name) is 27 years old and has lived in Ecuador for more than 10 years. When Hope was 17, she left her home in southern Colombia and lived in several

places before arriving at a shelter in Tulcán. At the shelter she lives with her three children who are four, six and eight years old, and she will be able to stay there until she establishes herself.

Her husband had problems with alcohol and abused her. Hope finally decided to leave the house with her children because he also started to hit the children. The need to stop enduring the punches and insults was what motivated her to leave. She says, "I decided to leave him, and I came without knowing that this shelter existed, but thanks to God I arrived here and they took me in. I have food and housing, which is all that I need for my children and for me."

When Hope was with her husband, all of the household income was spent on alcohol, and nothing was left to buy food. While the shelter helps her to recover and achieve economic independence, she and her children receive food assistance from WFP.

Emotional trauma and the stigma of violence tend to limit a person's capacity to work, earn income, and take care of children. In many households, power stays in the hands of men who control all of the money and spending. Cristian Guamán, WFP field monitor in Sucumbíos, says, "By helping survivors of gender-based violence, we can break the cycle of violence and pave the way for a healthier and safer life."

He cites the example of Hilda (fictitious name) who escaped the Colombian conflict and sought asylum and new opportunities



in Ecuador. Instead, she met a man who forced her into prostitution. During the five years that they were together, he took all of her earnings and beat her if she refused to work.

One day he beat Hilda so badly that she lost consciousness. For her, this was a decisive moment: "This time I realized that my partner could kill me. I asked myself, 'What will my children do if I die?' This made me see life from a different perspective." A neighbour offered her shelter and advised Hilda to visit WFP and the Women's Federation of Sucumbíos, which offers support to survivors of gender-based violence.

The food and training she received from WFP were important to her. Hilda is almost fully recovered and has opened a small grocery shop with her brother. "The assistance that I received helped me to discover and value myself as a person and to keep on fighting to achieve new goals. Most importantly, I can now live in peace, without fearing violence."

### **Lessons from our partners: Interview with Nidya Pesantez – UN Women**

*"Gender is a branch of the social sciences that enables one to have knowledge of and understand the power relations between women and men and how they affect the exercising of human rights and development in general. Using a gender-based approach means analysing reality from this perspective and making decisions based on the results of this analysis.*

*Analysing situations using a gender-based approach shows us a map of how power relations have been structured between women and men and how they uphold gaps in the access, use, and control of goods, services, benefits and opportunities that ensure their development and the full exercise of human rights.*

*By identifying this power structure and defining the gaps, making appropriate decisions to help reduce them is possible. The consequences of these actions are the fuller exercise of rights and benefits for development processes. The gender-based approach is a method that enforces and guarantees rights.*

*UN Women has supported the process to incorporate a gender-based approach*



*into FORECCSA, a national climate change adaptation programme with an emphasis on food security. The programme is led by the Ministry of Environment with the participation of the Ministry of Agriculture, local governments and WFP. This joint effort was made possible by the political will of the institutions involved. With regards to its technical assistance, UN Women has implemented activities such as raising awareness on gender issues and providing trainings on fundamental gender issues.*

*Working with WFP has been a positive experience for UN Women. In fact, the experience can be considered a good practice that can be replicated in other countries with other agencies and programmes:*

- steps have been taken to develop and apply a strategy;*
- the first results have been obtained; and*
- the state (Ministry) counterpart has requested that the strategy be scaled-up in other programmes to confront the effects of climate change.*

*We have also developed proposals together to mobilize resources in order to fulfil our mandates. By implementing these proposals, we want to generate new evidence to apply in other countries. Our joint efforts have produced innovative initiatives."*

## Climate and food security

In cities, families buy their food at the market, but in the countryside food comes from family gardens, which tends to be a source of household income. Agricultural and fishing activities are sensitive to the climate, and Ecuador is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its geographical location and rugged topography.

In the FORECCSA project, the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture and WFP work with communities to help them adapt to

climate change. In the community of San Luis Ichisí, which is located on the slopes of the Cayambe Volcano, a group of 150 families have invested 30,000 hours to construct a reservoir which will allow them to mitigate the effects of drought and irregular rains.

Many farmers in drought-vulnerable areas are also benefiting from climate change adaptation measures that focus on food security.



### Learning to live with the climate in San Luis de Ichisí

On this experience, Rafael Cacuango, who is the community leader of San Luis de Ichisí, states, "The construction of the reservoir is a dream that we considered impossible and was made possible thanks to the work of the Government of Pichincha and the FORECCSA Project. We can now better adapt to climate change and efficiently use the water on our plots to produce healthy food and eat better. And why not also have products to sell to improve our families' income?"

He adds that women in the area have worked to commercialize the products, which has improved their families' economic situation. "This activity is great because now we are autonomous. It is good that this type of work is carried out, and it has the advantage of not only benefitting the San Luis de Ichisí community but also several parishes in Cayambe and Pedro Moncayo."

According to the President of the Parish Board in La Esperanza, Ivan Toapanta, the impact of a drought in the community is felt most strongly from June to September.

"Three years ago the drought was so bad that it destroyed crops and discouraged residents. FORECCSA has made building the reservoir possible, which was a 'sleeping giant' that was prioritized in the Land Use and Development Plan. It has changed parish life because having water allows planting and community work to resume and prevents people from working at flower companies, where there is a lot of contamination."

Ivan has a positive opinion of FORECCSA's training sessions on the impacts of climate change. But the most important result has been people's feelings. Several residents are moved to tears to see the reservoir, and they say things like: "While before we could not have crops or animals, now we can grow vegetables!" "I can sell what is leftover to buy products like salt, which cannot be produced." "Now we can save because we grow what we bought before." For Ivan, this initiative has played a key role in community life because "it has enabled us to come together and move this important project forward."



## Climate and women: “There is no one to call the rain anymore”

In rural communities of Ecuador, women have been traditionally responsible for passing down culture and customs from generation to generation. Rosa lives in the province of Pichincha and participates in the FORECCSA project, which focuses on enabling women to share within their

communities. They share their knowledge, traditions and their technical opinions on changes in the climate and how to adapt to them. Adaptation is important for the continued production of plants that enable families to eat well. Rosa talks about her customs and experiences with the climate.



*“The climate is changing, and we are adapting so we can eat better”*

*“One day I paid for six hours of water for irrigation and watered my garden where I had planted a little bit of corn. I went to bed happy because I could water my little plants... And to my surprise, when I woke up it had rained so hard during the night! My plants were damaged...everyone made fun of me. I lost my money, I lost my corn... I said to myself, ‘This climate is crazy; if my mother was alive she would not believe what has happened to me.’*

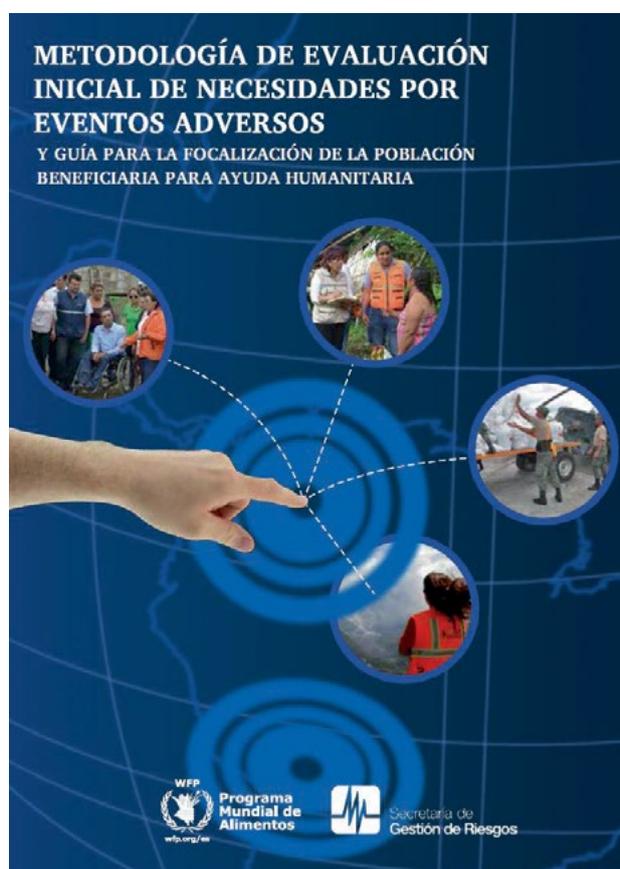
*When I was a little girl, the first thing I learned was to plant. Now this doesn’t happen, there isn’t a way to plant, hope is gone, and the plants die. The drought also dries up our lives. We are at fault: we cut the trees, and now there is no one to call the rain anymore. We destroy the high plains grasslands, and the soil is sad. People have no conscience, they don’t care, and they litter and burn everything.*

*We need trainings, guides that show us how to improve, be precise and learn. With FORECCSA we are conscious of the need to take care of our resources, and that the water has to be cared for. Now we see green plots; we can plant again and know what is going on with the climate. We know that we should adapt, change and improve.*

*Young people see the change and commit themselves to community work to take care of the water. The authorities should be the first to know the consequences of climate change on our planet and help us... In order to make ideas a reality, they should form working groups and undertake projects to take care of our land and reforest it. I would say that they take care of the only nature that we have: our watersheds. I would ask that they plant [trees] and fine those that litter and burn.”*

**Rosa María Cacuango**

## Together we take care of food and nutrition in emergencies



The Secretariat for Risk Management (SGR) and WFP proposed a joint objective in 2015: Strengthening the initial assessment in an emergency for a better humanitarian response. To achieve this goal, a new tool called the Initial Needs Assessment and Guide for Targeting Food Assistance (EVIN) was created.

Both entities worked on a project to strengthen the capacities of institutions within Ecuador's National Decentralized Risk Management System. The project trained 521 technical staff from 98 national and local institutions on several topics such as EVIN, the Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) and the Humanitarian Assistance Logistics Chain.

One of the main activities was developing training material for facilitators and technical staff. The resulting materials were used to train 22 people, and 3,500 EVIN manuals were distributed for use by institutions within the National Decentralized Risk Management System. These manuals have helped broaden the discussion of emergency preparedness and response at the national level.

When an emergency occurs, the technical staff immediately use EVIN and EFSA to learn more about families who have lost their livelihoods and require support. Assistance is mobilized in the affected area in accordance with the steps of the Humanitarian Assistance Logistics Chain.

In order to be better prepared, the families fill out their Family Emergency Plan with details regarding their family members, individual responsibilities, possible threats, evacuation routes and other key information.

### Working together with the Government

For Felipe Bazán, General Undersecretary of the SGR, partner activities developed together with WFP "are effective, coordinated and implemented in accordance with the country's needs and, above all, with an aim to benefit vulnerable populations who are most susceptible to adverse events."

According to the Undersecretary, implementing the initial needs and food security assessments in the affected population effectively and quickly and streamlining humanitarian assistance chain processes enable various institutions "to respond in both a technical and humane way to assist residents who need immediate support."

In his opinion, with the support of WFP, "The decentralized autonomous governments' capacities have been strengthened in these essential issues, as these institutions have the primary responsibility for emergency preparedness and response to adverse events in their territory, as is set forth in the Constitution of Ecuador.

***Decentralized autonomous governments' capacities have been strengthened to prepare and respond to emergencies.***

## More services at the Humanitarian Assistance Centre

In Lago Agrio, Sucumbíos province, an innovative idea became a reality: WFP's office in Sucumbíos transformed its training space into a centre where families can learn about nutrition, obtain transfers and receive assistance for other needs. Thanks to the coordinated efforts with UNHCR, HIAS, RET, Asylum Access, Jesuit Refugee Service, Scalabrinian Mission and the development units of local governments, all these institutions were able to come together to offer their services at a single centre.



The Humanitarian Assistance Centre operates at a site owned by the Provincial Government of Sucumbíos. Visitors to the centre obtain their monthly WFP transfer and receive nutrition training to improve their eating habits. WFP partners are present at the centre on a weekly rotational basis and offer the following types of services:

- psychological assistance;
- protection;
- paperwork orientation;
- orientation about labour issues;
- information on how to include their children in the Ecuadorian education system; and
- how to access health services if they require them.

As part of WFP's protection policy, an area of the centre is reserved for children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. In the Children's Corner they can participate in recreational activities under the supervision of psychologists from HIAS.

### How it began:

In the past when WFP staff interacted with families for the first time, it was common to hear questions about protection, the visa process, small businesses, psychological care, schooling, assistance to establish themselves, etc. In such cases, WFP provided references, telephone numbers and addresses of other institutions.

However, newly-arrived people in search of refuge do not have the economic resources to buy a phone or take a taxi. For this reason, many were not able to arrive at the addresses provided by WFP to address their problems.

The search for better ways to help families integrate into their new communities, find work, and access services led to the idea of establishing a comprehensive centre that would involve diverse actors, including local and national governments.

Each month, the centre provides assistance to 750 families, and new organizations are added to sustain the initiative. Feedback from focus groups and individual interviews used to monitor WFP activities provides evidence of participants' satisfaction with the centre's services.

These activities lead to better services, reduced tensions between Colombians and Ecuadorians and a greater integration of the refugee population, which is a priority for both the Government of Ecuador and WFP.

***Each month, the centre assists 750 families and new organizations are added to sustain the initiative.***

# WFP's presence in Ecuador



*The World Food Programme is grateful for the contributions of the United States Agency for International Development, the European Commission Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid Office, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation through the Sustainable Development Goals Fund, the Government of Japan through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, McKnight Foundation and the private sector.*