

# BEYOND SHELTER

Accommodation, Infrastructure, and Humanitarian Response  
in Ecuador 2023–2024



**UNHCR  
ACNUR**  
La Agencia de la ONU  
para los Refugiados

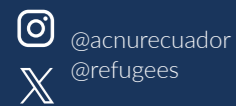


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This document provides a visual and descriptive overview of progress in infrastructure and humanitarian response in shelter and protection in Ecuador (2023–2024). It highlights how the strategic use of these interventions has improved access to services and safe spaces for people forced to flee and host communities. It does not replace final reports or serve as an evaluation, but rather aims to showcase the joint efforts of UNHCR and its partners in the country.

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works with a clear purpose: to protect and provide dignified shelter and infrastructure solutions for forcibly displaced people and host communities. In an increasingly challenging global context, access to safe spaces has become essential to ensure stability, integration, and well-being for those who have been forced to flee, as well as for the host communities.

In 2023 and 2024, Ecuador has seen a significant rise in displacement, driven by economic hardship, violence, and social instability. Migration dynamics involving Venezuelans, Colombians, and Ecuadorians have evolved, creating a constant flow of vulnerable people in need of protection and access to basic services.

In response, shelter and infrastructure projects have played a central role in our humanitarian efforts. Thanks to the dedicated UNHCR Ecuador team, a direct and effective strategy has been implemented—marking, for the first time since 2021 and at an unprecedented scale, interventions in cities such as San Lorenzo, Esmeraldas, Atacames, Tulcán, Nueva Loja, Ibarra, Quito, Santo Domingo, Guayaquil, Manta, Portoviejo, Tosagua, Cuenca, Machala, and Huaquillas.

These actions have strengthened local protection systems, improved operational efficiency, and supported social integration, creating safer and more sustainable conditions for both displaced populations and the communities that welcome them.

This document aims to highlight the tangible impact of these interventions, share lessons learned, and reinforce collaboration with donors, partners, and communities. It is also a testament to UNHCR’s humanitarian commitment—and an invitation to continue building safe, sustainable, and humane shelter and infrastructure solutions together.



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## SHELTER SECTOR CONTEXT 2023–2024

Over the past two years, Ecuador has faced a socioeconomic crisis that has severely affected access to housing, especially for refugees and migrants. According to the 2022 Census<sup>1</sup>, the national population reached 16.9 million, increasing the demand for housing and deepening the shortage of affordable places to live. This has made it even more difficult for refugees to integrate, as they already face additional barriers in accessing safe and dignified shelter.

The economic context—marked by a weakened labor market and rising cost of living—has been especially challenging. The Joint Needs Assessments (JNA) of 2023<sup>2</sup> and 2024<sup>3</sup> reveal that 45% of refugee and migrant families are unable to cover rental costs on their own, often resorting to informal solutions or living in overcrowded conditions. For instance, in cities like Tulcán and Huaquillas, over 60% of surveyed households live in housing that does not meet minimum habitability standards, further increasing their vulnerability.

<sup>1</sup>National Institute of Statistics and Census. (2024). *National Presentation: Second Release*. Retrieved from [https://www.censoecuador.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Presentacion\\_Nacional\\_2da\\_entrega.pdf](https://www.censoecuador.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Presentacion_Nacional_2da_entrega.pdf)



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### Key Challenges in Access to Housing

**Housing Shortage and Overcrowding:** The lack of adequate housing forces many refugee and migrant families to live in unsafe or overcrowded conditions. According to the 2024 JNA, 25% of surveyed households do not have regular access to safe drinking water, and a large percentage lack proper sanitation.

**Barriers to Accessing Rental Housing:** Lack of identification documents, discrimination, and the informality of the rental market make it difficult for refugees and migrants to secure housing. The 2023 JNA revealed that 35% of interviewed families had been evicted at least once in the past year.

**Insecurity and Violence:** The worsening security situation in Ecuador has increased risks for forcibly displaced people. According to the 2024 JNA, 42% of respondents reported experiencing violence or discrimination in their communities, affecting their well-being and stability.

**Pressure on Temporary Shelter:** Due to the lack of sustainable housing alternatives, many families turn to temporary shelters in precarious conditions. The 2024 JNA reports that in several cities, these facilities have reached maximum capacity—highlighting the urgent need to expand and improve them to ensure dignified and safe lodging.

### Responses and Actions Implemented

**Multipurpose Cash Assistance:** To address barriers to accessing rental housing, UNHCR has implemented a comprehensive strategy through its multipurpose cash assistance program. This support helps refugee and migrant families cover part of their monthly basic needs, including rent. According to the 2023 JNA, this assistance has been key to preventing evictions and promoting housing stability in Ecuador.

**Infrastructure Projects:** UNHCR and its partners have carried out interventions in shelters, community spaces, and social protection services in areas with operational presence. These efforts have enabled thousands of families to access safe spaces while also strengthening social cohesion through integration activities.

**Temporary Shelter:** In response to the growing demand for temporary accommodation, UNHCR collaborates with strategic partners to provide shelter services in key cities. This includes the rehabilitation and expansion of shelters, ensuring protection and dignity standards. Temporary shelter is also provided in hotels for critical cases, while collective shelters receive infrastructure improvements, basic supplies, technical assistance, and capacity-building support for local managers.



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<sup>2</sup>Refugee and Migrant Working Group. (2023). *Joint Needs Assessment – July 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/gtrm-ecuador-evaluacion-conjunta-necesidades-julio-2023>

<sup>3</sup>Refugee and Migrant Working Group. (2024). *Joint Needs Assessment 2024*. Retrieved from <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/evaluacion-conjunta-de-necesidades-2024>



**Technical Regulation on Social Leasing with Purchase Option<sup>4</sup>:** In 2023, the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI), with technical support from UNHCR and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), developed an innovative regulation introducing social leasing with a purchase option. This mechanism allows low-income families to rent a home with the possibility of purchasing it in the future—marking a significant step toward the inclusion of people forced to flee in the country’s housing policy.

**National Plans and International Cooperation Initiatives:** In 2024, the IDB approved technical cooperation to strengthen the management of the Human Mobility Center, enhancing services and protection for refugees and migrants. In partnership with the Municipality of Quito and UNHCR, a comprehensive management model was developed to deliver sustainable and efficient responses. UNHCR will contribute key infrastructure improvements, scheduled for 2025, to ensure dignified conditions for the facility’s operation and the well-being of its users.

Despite these advances, challenges remain—including the need for sustainable funding, inclusive housing policies, and stronger local responses. The National Human Mobility Plan includes mechanisms to facilitate access to credit and strengthen legal and financial counseling for refugees and migrants, though its implementation is still underway.

Ecuador’s socioeconomic and humanitarian situation has worsened the shelter crisis for forcibly displaced people. UNHCR has prioritized support to temporary collective shelters, ensuring dignified spaces for rest, meals, and protection. It has also promoted social service projects focused on health, integration, and protection for survivors of gender-based violence and children—addressing the needs of these groups holistically.

This includes people living on the streets, who require an urgent and coordinated response. Only through a comprehensive and sustainable approach can access to safe shelter, dignified housing, and adequate protection services be guaranteed for all the people we work for through our mandate .

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Urban Development and Housing. (2023). Agreement No. MIDUVI-MIDUVI-2023-0023-A. Retrieved from <https://www.habitatyvivienda.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MIDUVI-MIDUVI-2023-0023-A.pdf>

# SHELTER AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY 2023–2024

To address the growing challenges of the operational environment, UNHCR has adopted an integrated strategy for shelter and infrastructure, structured around four key pillars:

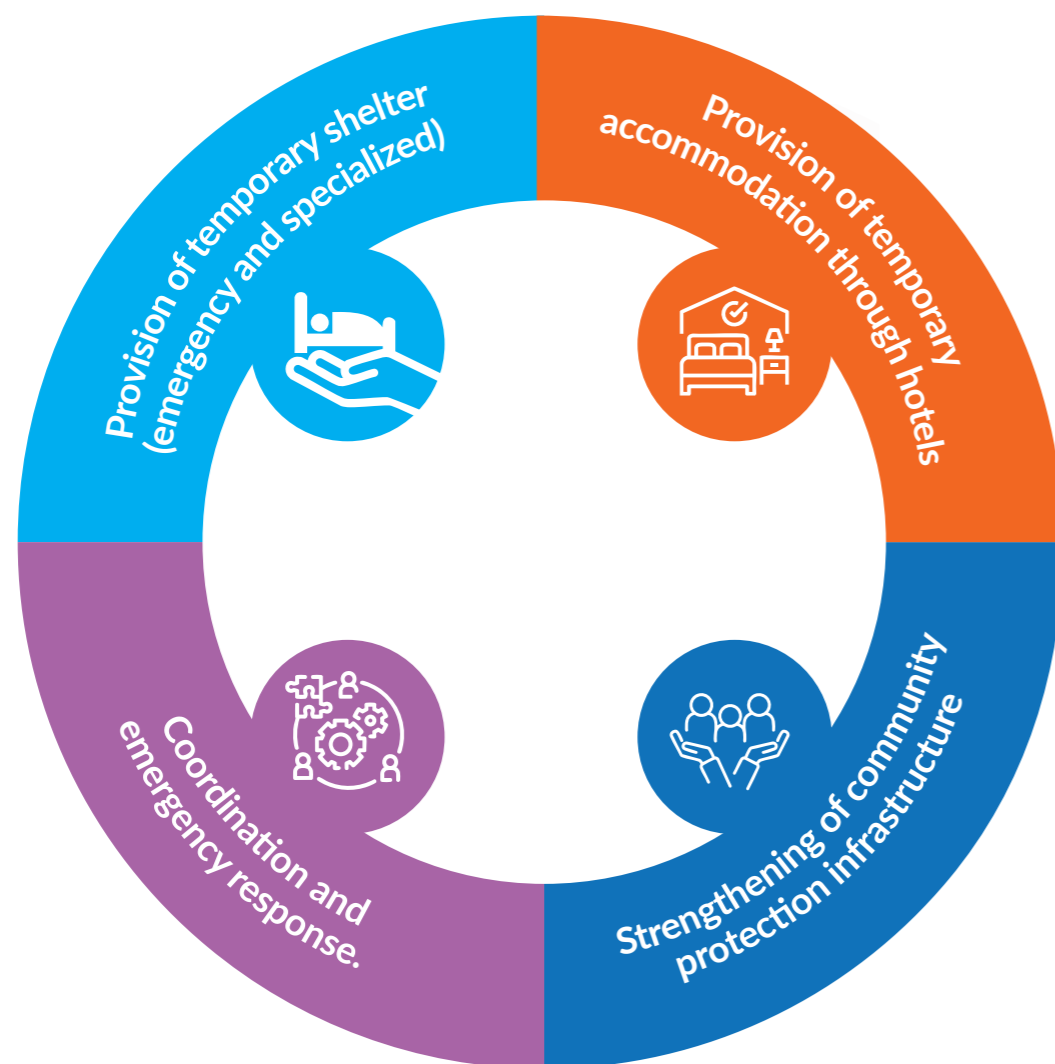
- 1) Provision of temporary shelter (emergency and specialized)**
- 2) Provision of temporary shelter through hotels**
- 3) Strengthening of community protection infrastructure**
- 4) Emergency response and coordination**

Each of these interventions is implemented with a sustainability-focused approach, aligning with global efforts on climate change mitigation, community-based protection, and humanitarian coordination in multi-risk contexts. Through this strategy, UNHCR aims to ensure dignified and effective solutions for forcibly displaced persons and the communities that host them.



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## Lines of Action 2023–2024 Shelter, Infrastructure, and Humanitarian Response



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### Provision of Emergency and Specialized Temporary Shelter

Ensuring access to safe and dignified temporary shelter for displaced people has been a core priority for UNHCR. Through a network of collective shelters and reception centers in various cities across the country, key actions have been implemented to strengthen these spaces and enhance their response capacity.

Interventions have included direct funding for both emergency and specialized temporary shelters through partnership agreements. Emergency shelters provide short-term accommodation, meals, and safety to people who are newly arrived or in transit. Specialized shelters cater to individuals with specific protection needs, such as survivors of gender-based violence, unaccompanied children, and others with heightened vulnerability.

In parallel, efforts have been made to improve infrastructure and equipment to ensure proper living conditions. These have been accompanied by capacity building and coordination support through trainings, technical assistance, and the ongoing guidance of UNHCR's shelter and protection specialists.

### Partners

UNHCR has worked hand in hand with local and international organizations to strengthen the network of collective shelters and ensure their ongoing operability. Among the implementing partners and shelters providing accommodation services are:

**1. ADRA**

Name: CAT 8 de Septiembre (Emergency Shelter)

Location: Huaquillas, El Oro

Temporary accommodation service, food, psychosocial support, migration counseling, assistance for unaccompanied children, health services, access to information.

**2. Asociación Solidaridad y Acción**

Name: ASA Houses (Specialized accommodation for unaccompanied children)

Location: Quito, Pichincha

Temporary accommodation service, food, psychosocial support, education, training, and livelihood integration.

**3. AVSI (2023) and HIAS (2024)**

Name: Posada San Francisco (Emergency Shelter)

Location: Cuenca, Azuay

Temporary accommodation service, food, migration counseling, access to information.

**4. Fundación Ecuatoriana Equidad**

Name: Equidad Shelter (Specialized accommodation for LGBTIQ+ community)

Location: Quito, Pichincha

Temporary accommodation service, food, psychosocial support, access to information.

**5. Fundación Tarabita**

Name: Kawsarina Huasi Shelter (Emergency Shelter)

Location: Nueva Loja, Sucumbros

Temporary accommodation service, food, psychosocial support, migration counseling, access to information..

**6. Hogar de Cristo a through JRS**

Name: Un Techo para el Camino (Emergency Shelter)

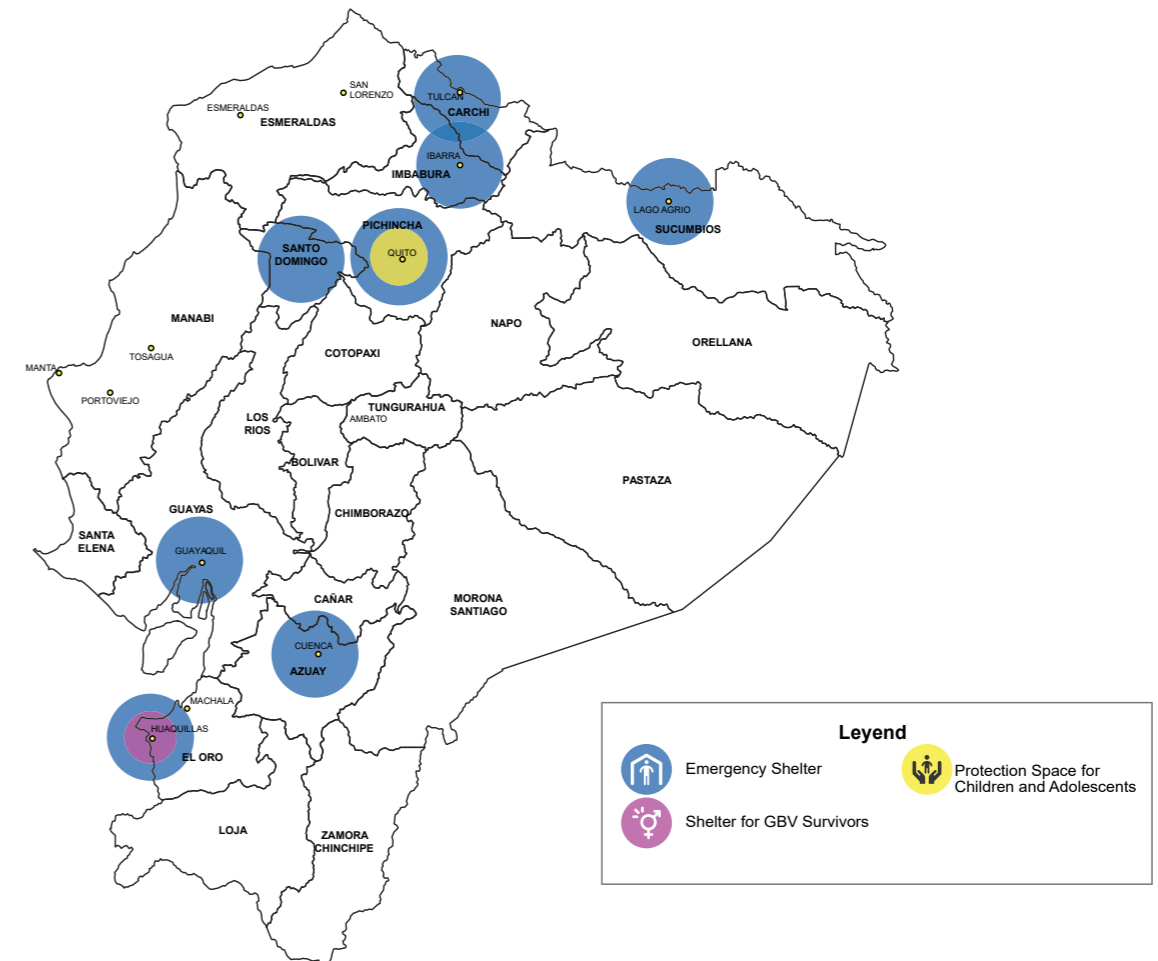
Location: Guayaquil, Guayas

Temporary accommodation service, food, access to information.

**7. Misión Scalabriniana**

Name: Casa de Acogida Cristo Peregrino

**Collective Shelters – Partners 2023–2024**



Source: UNHCR

(Emergency Shelter)

Location: Ibarra, Imbabura

Temporary accommodation service, food, psychosocial support, migration counseling, health services, access to information.

**8. Misión Scalabriniana**

Name: Casa de Acogida San Juan Bautista Scalabrini (Emergency Shelter)

Location: Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas

Temporary accommodation service, food, psychosocial support, migration counseling, health services, access to information.

**9. Movimiento de Mujeres del Oro**

Name: CAI Rosa Vivar (Specialized accommodation for GBV survivors)

Location: Machala, El Oro

Temporary accommodation service, food, psychosocial support, migration counseling, health services, access to information.

**10. Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)**

Name: Hogar de la Madre (La Argelia) (Emergency Shelter)

Location: Quito, Pichincha

Temporary accommodation service, accommodation to facilitate resettlement interviews, food, psychosocial support, migration counseling, access to information.

Through strategic partnerships, UNHCR has significantly strengthened the capacity of temporary and specialized shelter spaces across Ecuador, ensuring that displaced individuals have access to safe and dignified environments while progressing toward more stable housing solutions.

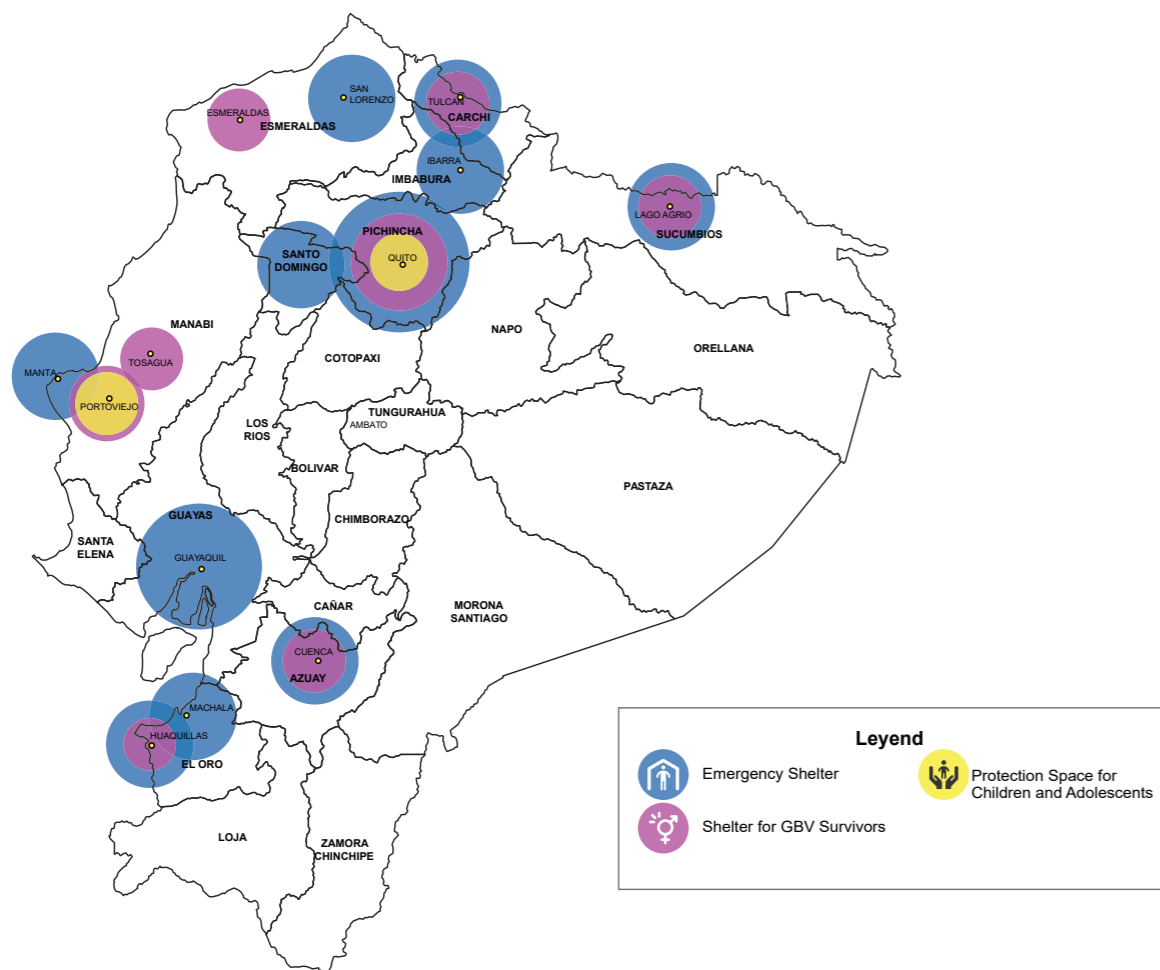
As part of this strategy, a comprehensive process of rehabilitation and equipment upgrades was carried out across several spaces within the country's expanded network of collective shelters. In parallel, management systems were strengthened through targeted training and technical assistance for operators and administrators—promoting effective, protection-based, and dignity-centered care.

A dedicated training program on shelter management was developed, integrating protection, human rights, and safety approaches to ensure shelter teams are equipped with the tools needed for appropriate and efficient administration.

To ensure sustainability, UNHCR collaborated with local governments, GADs, and community



### Collective shelters upgraded/intervened 2023 – 2024



Source: UNHCR

organizations to develop shelter management protocols, aligning operations with international standards and enhancing operational efficiency. Cooperation agreements were also signed with municipalities and key actors, facilitating the allocation of public resources for the operation and maintenance of several upgraded facilities.

In terms of infrastructure, improvements included sustainable solutions such as rainwater harvesting systems, energy-efficient water heaters, solar panels for emergency power, and the use of eco-friendly materials. These enhancements not only optimize shelter operations but also reduce environmental impact and strengthen resilience to natural disasters and climate-related crises.

#### Strengthening of the National Shelter Network

UNHCR has promoted spaces for dialogue and coordination among humanitarian actors and government entities to establish common guidelines for the management of temporary shelters, strengthening collaboration between municipalities, ministries, and partners. As a result, infrastructure and equipment conditions have been significantly improved in multiple collective shelters nationwide, including:

#### Emergency Shelters

- Buen Samaritano Shelter (Quito)
- Virgen de la Merced de Cáritas Shelter (Machala)
- JUBASCA Shelter (Manta)
- Kawsarina Huasi Shelter (Nueva Loja)
- RESA Shelter (Guayaquil)
- Cristo Peregrino Shelter (Ibarra)
- Juan Bautista Scalabrini Shelter (Santo Domingo)
- Casa del Hermano Shelter (Quito)
- CMAIT Shelter (Tulcán)

#### Specialized shelter for Unaccompanied Children

- Oasis Shelter (Guayaquil)
- La Madriguera House of the Santa Martha Foundation (Portoviejo)
- ASA Houses (Quito)
- Hogar de Belén (Portoviejo)

- Cristo de la Calle Foundation (Ibarra)
- Hacienda Panas Foundation (Cuenca)

**Temporary Accommodation Spaces**

- San Juan de Dios Shelter (Quito)
- ATI Belmonte (Quito)
- “Una posada para continuar la vida” Shelter (San Lorenzo)

**Specialized shelter for GBV survivors**

- “Nuestra Señora de la Paz” Shelter (Quito)
- “Casa Amiga” Shelter (Nueva Loja)
- “Casa de la Mujer” Shelter (Quito)
- “Manos Unidas Tejiendo Progreso” Shelter (Tulcán)
- Las Gilces House of the Santa Martha Foundation (Portoviejo)
- “Casa Matilde” Shelter (Quito)
- Tosagua House of the Santa Martha Foundation (Tosagua)

- Phase III Casa de la Mujer (Manta)
- “Hogar de la Madre y el Niño del Instituto de Misioneras de María Corredentora” Shelter (Cuenca)

**Specialized shelter**

- House of Diversities (Quito)

These efforts have helped strengthen the response capacity of Ecuador’s collective shelter system, ensuring that each facility meets the necessary standards to host families who are in vulnerable situation. The consolidation of this temporary shelter network has been essential in guaranteeing protection and dignity, offering immediate solutions while more stable housing options are identified and arranged.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, UNHCR has strengthened the capacities of shelter managers in all supported facilities over the past two years through specialized training and workshops focused on protection-oriented and safety-conscious shelter management.

This process has not only improved physical conditions but also ensured the efficient and sustainable management of shelter spaces—making certain that displaced individuals receive safe and dignified care. Details of these capacity-building



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efforts are provided in the Training and Technical Assistance section.

### Provision of Temporary Accommodation through Hotels

As part of its strategy to expand shelter responses, UNHCR, in partnership with HIAS, has incorporated the provision of temporary accommodation in hotels and other rented facilities. This approach complements existing shelter solutions by ensuring safe spaces for individuals with urgent protection needs, including survivors of gender-based violence and children and adolescents.

The inclusion of hotels as an alternative accommodation option has enabled assistance to individuals and families requiring immediate support, especially during times when collective shelters reach full capacity. This model not only offers a safe and private environment, but also ensures access to specialized services such as psychosocial counseling, medical care, and legal assistance—strengthening the overall protection approach.

Through this initiative, UNHCR and HIAS have established a flexible support network, tailored to the individual needs of the most vulnerable populations. Hotel-based shelter has become a key mechanism within the broader shelter strategy, ensuring that those facing heightened risks have immediate access to safe, dignified spaces while

longer-term solutions are available.

### Community Protection Infrastructure

Committed to integration and equitable access to essential services, UNHCR has strengthened community and service spaces in neighborhoods with a high presence of people forced to flee. These infrastructures not only facilitate access to healthcare, education, sports, legal assistance, registration, and psychosocial support, but also serve as community hubs that foster support networks, promote social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and the exercise of rights.

UNHCR's projects are developed with an integrated approach, responding to multiple needs and prioritizing interventions across the following key areas:

**Community-Based Protection Spaces** have been created to support service provision and socioeconomic integration of refugees and host communities. Through training, support networks, and opportunities for participation, these projects foster a sense of belonging and social cohesion.

**Sustainability and Climate Action Initiatives** such as community gardens and sustainable construction reduce environmental impact and promote integration. In Quito, refugee women lead planting and community organization efforts, creating shared spaces



es that raise awareness about sustainability. Additionally, solar panels have been installed in UNHCR offices, community centers, and shelters nationwide, ensuring operational continuity during crises like the 2024 blackouts, when power cuts lasted up to 14 hours a day. This investment strengthens humanitarian response capacity and promotes the use of renewable energy.

**Child Protection and Education:** UNHCR has rehabilitated school infrastructure and created safe environments for children, including psychosocial support programs for children and adolescents in vulnerable situations.

**Community Kitchens** In coordination with local governments (GADs), UNHCR supports access to nutritious food for vulnerable populations. Beyond assistance, these spaces encourage solidarity, social connection, and dignified access to services.

**Health:** UNHCR has upgraded health centers in areas with high inflows of people on the move, providing proper infrastructure and specialized medical equipment—including clinical furniture, emergency care areas, and well-equipped consultation rooms—to ensure dignified, locally adapted medical care.

**Legal and Protection Services:** Safe spaces have been established to provide legal assistance, support with registration, asylum applications, and resettlement processes, facilitating access to rights and migration regularization.

These interventions have improved infrastructure in community centers, schools, health centers, childcare spaces, and legal support offices, benefiting both refugees and host communities. Upgrades include rehabilitating facilities, providing essential equipment, and optimizing spaces to deliver inclusive, high-quality services.

In addition, community protection plans have been implemented to ensure the appropriate use of these spaces and promote local leadership. These efforts include awareness-raising activities, rights-based training, and protection mechanisms—further strengthening community protection and resilience.

#### Community Centers

- Santa Rita Community House (Quito)
- CDC 26 de Febrero (Esmeraldas)
- CDC Abdón Calderón (Manta)
- CDC Delfi (Guayaquil)
- CDC El Palmar (Manta)
- CDC Mujeres de Lucha
- CDC Nia Khali (Guayaquil)
- CDC San Mateo (Manta)

- CDC San Pedro (Portoviejo)
- Épera Commiunity Center (Eloy Alfaro)
- CDC Unión y Progreso (LaChala) (Guayaquil)
- Safe Space “Cuidarte” (Nueva Loja)
- Sports and Children’s Play Area in Santa Martha Neighborhood (Santo Domingo)
- Sports Facilities (Huaquillas)
- Federation of Neighborhoods (Huaquillas)
- Foundation Sin Límites (Guayaquil)
- San Lorenzo Library (San Lorenzo)
- El Chical Innovation Project (Carchi)
- Maloca de los Panas Project (Nueva Loja)

**Child Care Center**

- Estrellita del Futuro Center (Guayaquil)
- Estrellita del Lucero Center (Guayaquil)

**Educational Center**

- School Bolivariana (Guayaquil)
- School Jorge Enrique Adoum (Guayaquil)
- School Luis Alfonso Calvachi (Carchi)

**Health Centers**

- Health Center Augusto Egas (Santo Domingo)
- Health Center Huachi Chico (Ambato)

**Community Kitchen**

- Community kitchen Jesucristo Redentor (Carchi)

**Legal and Protection Service Spaces**

- Rights Protection Council of Bolívar (Carchi)
- SMO office (Guayaquil)
- SMO office (Manta)





- SMO office (Quito)
- Violeta Center Offices (Manta)
- Public Defender's Offices (Cuenca)
- Public Defender's Offices (Loja)
- UAPI-DPIN Offices (Esmeraldas)
- Field Office FOPI (Quito)
- Field Office (Nueva Loja)
- Field Office (Huaquillas)
- Field Office SOGU (Guayaquil)
- Field Office SOIB (Ibarra)
- Field Office FUTU (Carchi)
- UAPI-DPIN Interview Rooms (Ibarra)

**Public Spaces**

- Don Bosco Park in Julio Andrade (Carchi)
- Community Alarm Systems in Huaquillas (Huaquillas)
- Isla Trinitaria Linear Park (Guayaquil)

**Humanitarian Service Spaces**

- Solidarity Boutique (Nueva Loja)
- Inter-Agency Office – GAD San Gabriel (San Gabriel)
- Comprehensive Support Space (Huaquillas)
- Ecuadorian Red Cross (Huaquillas)
- Ecuadorian Red Cross (Atacames)

**Emergency Response and Coordination**

In a context of growing insecurity and humanitarian crisis, UNHCR has strengthened emergency coordination and response through strategic partnerships with national and local authorities, international organizations, NGOs, and civil society groups. These efforts have enhanced response capacity in critical situations and improved immediate assistance protocols for affected communities.

The core objective of this strategy is to deliver effective humanitarian assistance in response to the challenges of the current context, as well as emergencies and risks related to natural or climate-related disasters. To achieve this, UNHCR has promoted several key actions:



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### Training and Technical Assistance

Close collaboration has been established with partners and local government entities, including the Secretariat for Risk Management, to strengthen emergency response capacities. Through specialized trainings on shelter management and emergency shelter operations, along with continuous technical support and guidance, more efficient and structured contingency plans have been developed.

These trainings have significantly contributed to the reinforcement of the national shelter network, enhancing its operational and management capacities. A specific emergency-focused approach has also been integrated to ensure that shelters and key actors are prepared to respond quickly and in a coordinated manner during humanitarian crises.

Training sessions have targeted shelter managers, UNHCR staff, and focal points from various UN agencies and civil society organizations in Ecuador. The goal has been to ensure effective and coordinated responses in critical situations. This effort has improved inter-agency coordination, optimizing emergency responses and ensuring that people on the move receive timely and appropriate assistance during times of crisis.

### Participation in National Humanitarian Coordination

UNHCR plays a key role within the GTRM<sup>5</sup> and

<sup>5</sup>The R4V Platform (Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants) is an inter-agency coordination mechanism established in several countries across Latin America and the Caribbean to respond to the situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela..

<sup>6</sup>Shelter Sector, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Sector.

the Humanitarian Country Team, leading the Protection sector and co-leading the Shelter/CCCM<sup>6</sup> sector. Its involvement strengthens coordination among various partner agencies, ensuring a well-organized and needs-based response for affected populations.

Thanks to this inter-agency cooperation, operational coordination, resource allocation, and the implementation of response strategies have been significantly improved—particularly in emergency contexts such as floods and fires that have impacted the country in recent years.

**Provision of Humanitarian Supplies and Direct Assistance**

As part of its emergency response, UNHCR has provided essential humanitarian supplies, including hygiene kits and basic relief items. This assistance has been crucial in ensuring the care and protection of people affected by emergency situations.

Through these actions, UNHCR has established immediate reception spaces in strategic locations across the country, ensuring a coordinated response to unexpected events. The combination of preparedness, inter-agency cooperation, and strengthened local capacities has generated a tangible and positive impact on humanitarian response efforts—contributing to community resilience and ensuring dignified assistance for those who need it most.



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## PROJECTS THAT STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the operation implemented a series of strategic projects that were fundamental in strengthening operational capacity across the territory. These interventions not only had a significant impact through the development of key infrastructure but were also the result of a robust institutional coordination and management process—ensuring their long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

Each project marked a milestone in the humanitarian response, addressing critical needs in shelter, protection, access to basic services, and community strengthening, benefiting both people on the move and host communities. These initiatives also underscored the importance of working in partnership with key stakeholders—from local governments and public institutions to UN agencies, civil society organizations, and community members—enabling comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

The impact of these efforts has been tangible not only through the improvement of essential infrastructure, but also in the creation of safe and dignified spaces that enhance community resilience and strengthen coordination with municipal and govern-



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ment bodies. Each intervention was designed with a humanitarian response approach that integrates a development perspective, and adapted to the specific context of each location—ensuring that actions addressed both immediate needs and contributed to the delivery of long-term services within the cities where they were implemented.

What follows is a presentation of the most representative projects from 2023 and 2024, reflecting the operation's continued commitment to delivering efficient, sustainable, and high-impact solutions for people forced to flee and the hosting communities.





# SHELTER PROJECTS

## Kawsarina Huasi Shelter - Nueva Loja -

Kawsarina Huasi Shelter, whose name in Kichwa reflects the challenges of starting a new life, is a safe first reception space for refugees fleeing violence and conflict—primarily from Colombia. Located in the border city of Nueva Loja, this shelter plays a critical role in UNHCR’s humanitarian response, offering protection and temporary accommodation to people forcibly displaced since 2013. With a capacity for 50 people, the shelter provides essential services in one of the highest-refugee-flow areas in the country.

As part of the strategy to strengthen temporary accommodation spaces, significant infrastructure investment was made in 2024 to improve services and ensure safe and dignified conditions for its users. Among the most important interventions, a roof was installed over the laundry area, creating a proper outdoor washing space and enhancing the shelter’s functionality. The outer perimeter wall was reinforced, improving protection and visibility to ensure greater safety for both the residents and the shelter’s staff.

To improve admission protocols, a new first interview area was created at the entrance—ensuring a structured, safe, and appropriate intake process for those arriving at the shelter.

In response to the widespread blackouts that affected Ecuador in 2024, repairing the shelter’s power generator—damaged by repeated outages—became a top priority. To provide a more sustainable emergency solution, a solar emergency power system was also installed, supplying clean

and renewable energy. This system enhances the shelter’s autonomy and ensures continuous operation of its security system, surveillance cameras, and essential electrical infrastructure—key features in a city experiencing high levels of violence.

Additionally, under UNHCR’s improvement and contingency plan, the shelter was equipped with emergency lamps and a professional first aid kit, reinforcing its ability to respond in critical situations.

With these improvements, Kawsarina Huasi strengthens its role as an essential protection space for refugees on Ecuador’s northern border. Investments in infrastructure, security, and sustainable energy not only ensure safer and more efficient shelter services but also reflect a deep commitment to providing dignified, resilient, and sustainable solutions for first reception settings.





## San Juan de Dios Shelter - Quito -

The San Juan de Dios Shelter, located in the city of Quito, is one of the main temporary accommodation centers in the Ecuadorian capital. Each year, it provides shelter and support to over 50,000 people, offering not only a safe place to sleep, but also essential services such as food, medical care, and humanitarian assistance. Two-thirds of its residents are people forced to flee, primarily from Colombia and Venezuela, making it a key point of reference for those arriving in the city in search of shelter.

Since 2023, the shelter has embarked on a comprehensive process to strengthen its management model, with the goal of improving service quality. As part of this initiative, a master plan for infrastructure improvement was developed, including maintenance, facility rehabilitation, and the implementation of safety measures to ensure a more suitable environment for its residents. UNHCR supported this transformation by carrying out key infrastructure upgrades, such as roof replacement, the renovation of the social services area, and other essential internal repairs needed to maintain the shelter's functionality.

One of the most innovative components of this process was the creation of a community garden within the shelter, implemented by UNHCR in partnership with the Health Gardens Group. Over the course of a year, this project involved shelter residents in training and garden maintenance—transforming one of the interior courtyards into a productive and healing space.

Beyond its impact on food security, the garden became a space for emotional support and community building, with particularly positive effects on the mental health of participants. The initiative encouraged the active participation of women and children, who found in the garden a space for integration, family bonding, and recreation.

Today, this garden is much more than a planting area—it is a symbol of care and ownership. It continues to be maintained by the residents and shelter staff, standing as a powerful example of how infrastructure improvements, community engagement, and psychosocial support can transform the experience of those temporarily living in a shelter.





## RESA Shelter - Guayaquil -

In the heart of Guayaquil, in the Batallón del Suburbio neighborhood, the RESA Temporary Shelter has become an essential refuge for people experiencing homelessness and extreme vulnerability. Managed by the Curia of Guayaquil since 2001, this shelter has played a key role in providing accommodation and support for refugees and migrants, becoming a reference point for UNHCR, its partners, and other local humanitarian actors, such as the Integrated Citizens Center at Guayaquil’s bus terminal.

With a capacity to host 60 people, RESA offers more than just shelter—it facilitates access to essential services and humanitarian assistance, ensuring that each person receives the support needed to progress in their path to integration. Its impact has grown thanks to the support of the Municipal Public Company of Guayaquil, which, since 2024, has contributed human resources and helped strengthen coordination with other institutions.

In 2021, UNHCR, through COOPI, implemented the first phase of infrastructure and equipment improvements. Between 2023 and 2024, a second phase of direct intervention was carried out—bringing about a significant transformation focused on enhancing both the shelter’s infrastructure and management capacity. This effort improved the physical conditions of the shelter, optimizing its functionality and creating a safer, more dignified, and efficient environment for those who find refuge in RESA.

More than a shelter, RESA serves as a key connector within Guayaquil’s protection network, where case identification and referral are carried out with a comprehensive, rights-based approach. Its role in the city’s humanitarian ecosystem positions it as a model of reception, where humanitarian care goes beyond housing to include legal orientation, case management, and connection to local support networks.

This strengthening has allowed RESA to continue standing out as a reference point in Guayaquil, showing that interinstitutional collaboration and strategic investment in infrastructure can transform the way humanitarian responses are delivered—ensuring both protection and dignified temporary accommodation in urban contexts.





© RESA

## Juan Bautista Scalabrini Shelter - Santo Domingo -

The Juan Bautista Scalabrini Shelter, located in Santo Domingo, is the only shelter for refugees and migrants in both the city and the province. Managed by the Scalabrinian Mission in partnership with UNHCR, it provides essential services such as temporary accommodation, nutritious meals, psychosocial support, and case referrals.

At the end of 2024, the shelter underwent a significant transformation, relocating to a new, more accessible location within the city. This change improved access for those in need and marked a major step forward in the shelter's ability to serve vulnerable populations.

As part of this transition, the Scalabrinian Mission led a full remodeling process to ensure compliance with proper standards. The kitchen, dining area, administrative office, and dormitories were all rehabilitated, optimizing operations and significantly enhancing the quality of care provided.

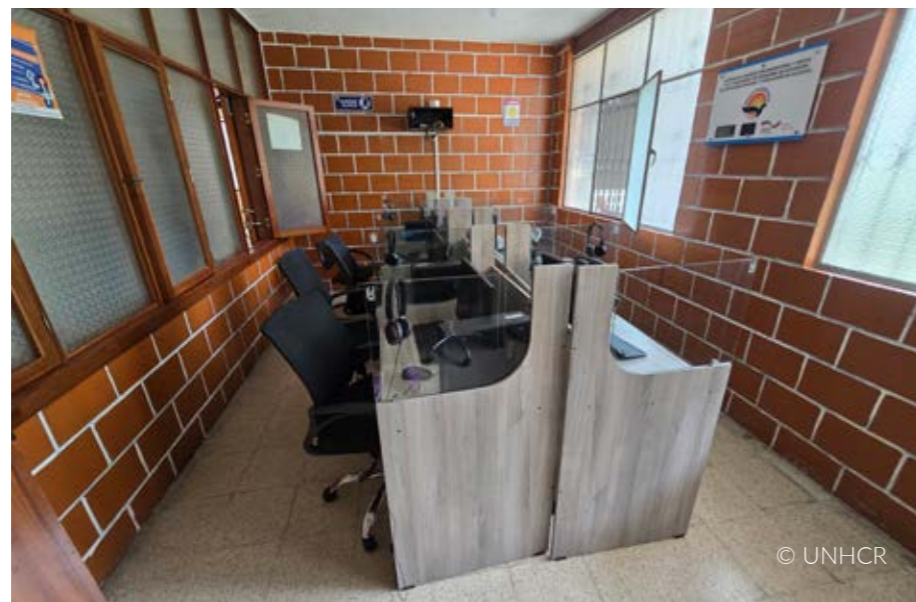
To support these upgrades, UNHCR provided technical assistance and infrastructure support, ensuring that the new space was fully equipped and functional. A dormitory was adapted for persons with disabilities, the upper floor accommodation area was improved, and security was reinforced through the installation of surveillance cameras and enhanced access points. A recreational space for children was also created to ensure their right to play.

In addition, the shelter's electrical and plumbing systems were modernized, roofing was re-

placed, and the facility was equipped with new kitchen supplies and fully furnished sleeping quarters, creating a safe and dignified environment for all residents.

The support provided has been crucial in ensuring that the Juan Bautista Scalabrini Shelter now offers safe, functional, and dignified accommodations—strengthening its capacity to provide comprehensive protection and care for the families. Thanks to these improvements, the shelter continues to play a vital role in Santo Domingo, serving as a safe and humanitarian space for those seeking refuge, rest and protection.





## Casa del Hermano - Quito -

In the heart of Quito, within the 24 de Mayo Boulevard, Casa del Hermano has become an essential refuge for people forced to flee—providing food and temporary shelter. As part of the accommodation network of the Patronato San José of the Municipality of Quito, it is the only shelter in the city specifically designed to serve this population.

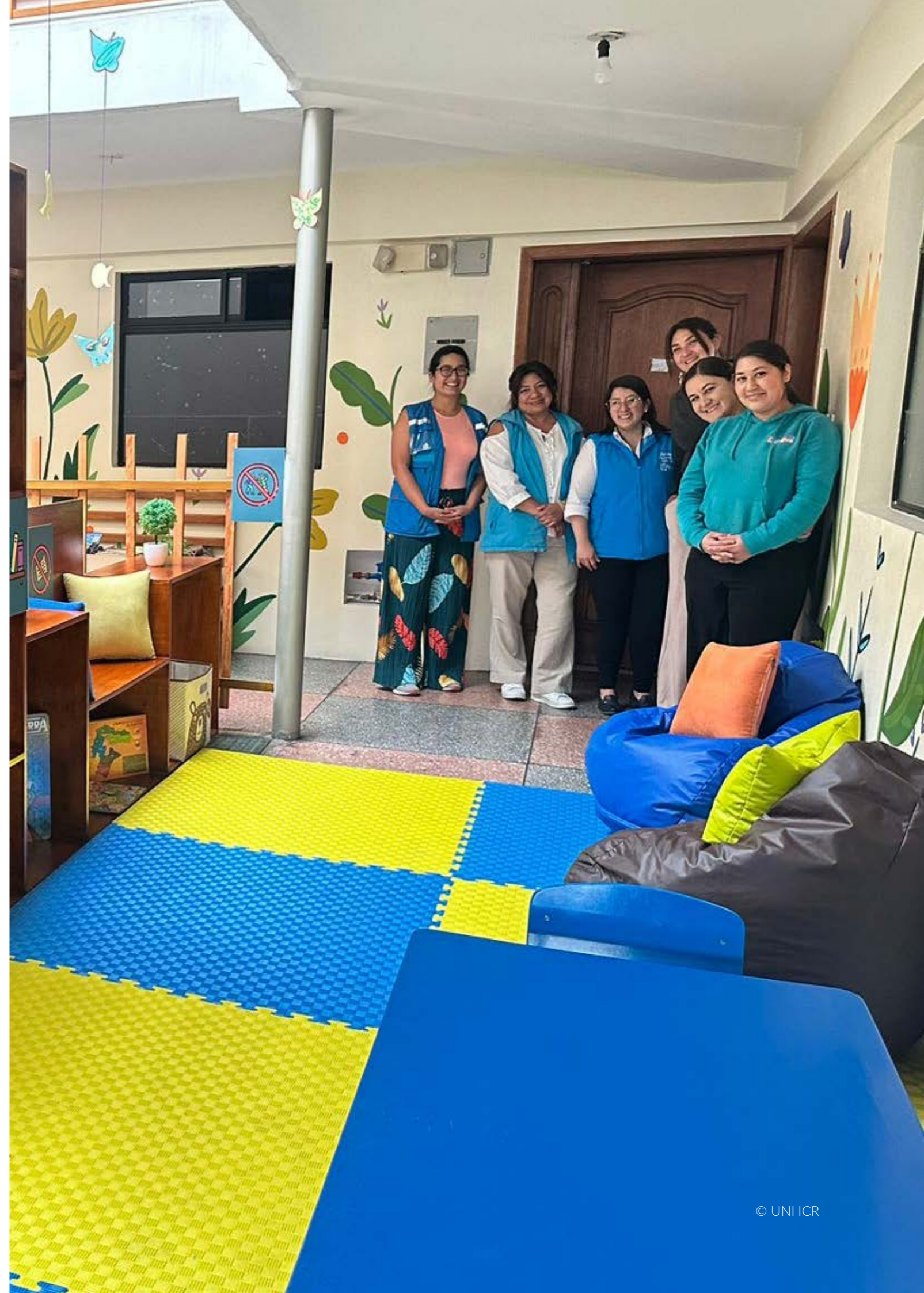
UNHCR's support has been instrumental in transforming the space, strengthening the management of temporary accommodation through technical assistance and training for the shelter's team. In 2023, a comprehensive maintenance process was carried out, including the renovation of sanitary facilities, the optimization of the hydro-sanitary system, and the repair of roof and wall leaks caused by moisture and water damage.

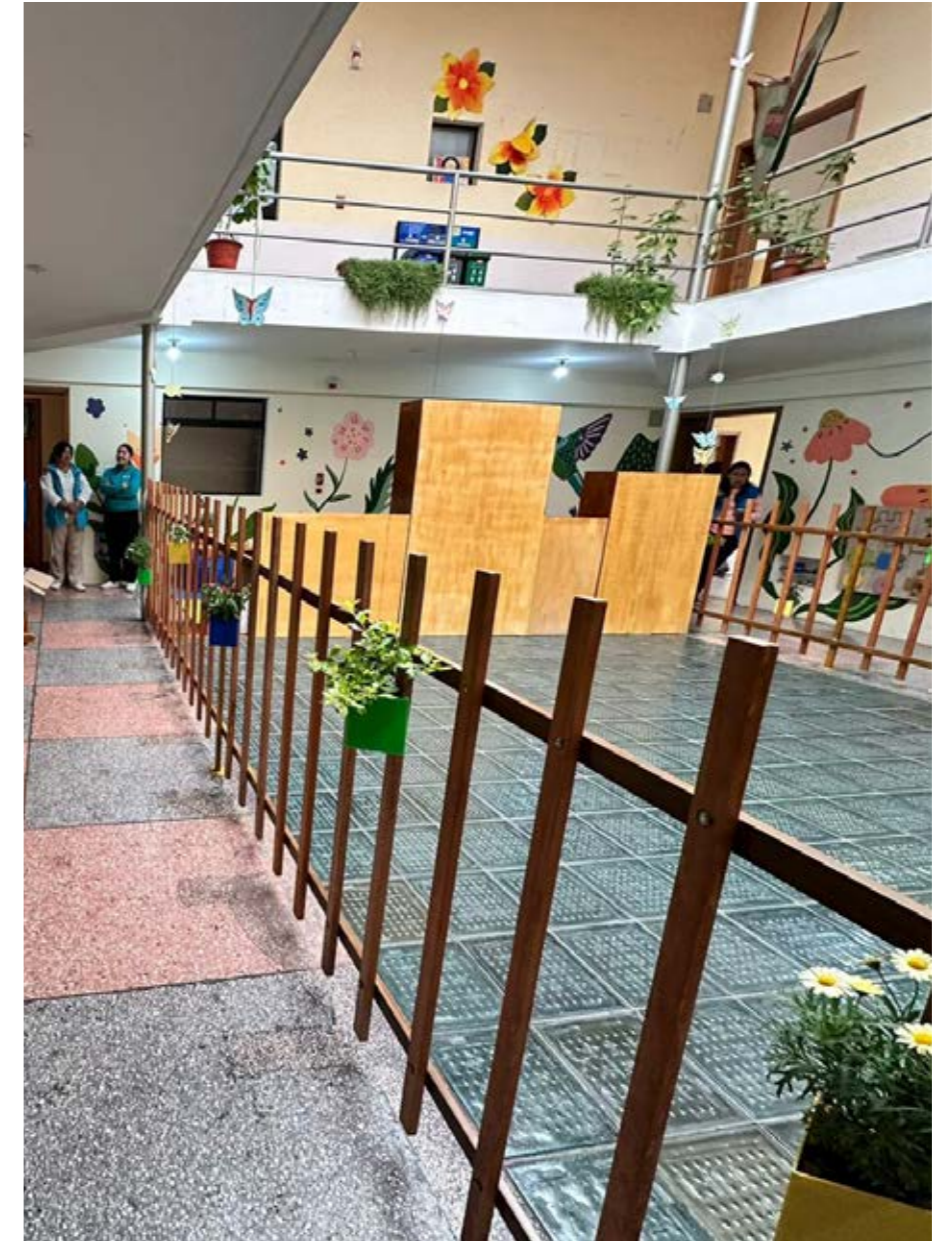
Additionally, gutters and downspouts were cleaned and repaired to prevent further deterioration from water accumulation. To improve the functionality of the space, waste separation bins, a washer-dryer tower, and informational materials on protection services were provided.

In 2024, a second phase of improvements deepened the intervention, focusing on the repair of a translucent intermediate floor that had deteriorated and posed a risk to residents—especially children, who used it as a recreational area. Recognizing the need for a safe and welcoming space to promote integration and family well-being, a play area was designed and equipped with furniture and children's games, creating a more

inclusive and nurturing environment. The entire shelter was repainted, and a mural was added to the walls, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility among residents.

This transformation process has not only improved the infrastructure and safety of the shelter, but has also strengthened collaboration with other institutions and agencies, ensuring broader and more sustainable impact. Thanks to this collective effort, Casa del Hermano has been consolidated as a cornerstone of Quito's protection network—offering a place of rest, dignity, and support to those arriving in the city in search of safety and new opportunities.





## Virgen de la Merced Shelter - Machala -

In the city of Machala, the Virgen de la Merced Shelter, run by Cáritas, has become a vital pillar for assisting forcibly displaced people. As the only temporary accommodation facility in the city, its location near Ecuador's southern border—one of the country's main migration routes—makes it an essential shelter for those seeking protection and support during their journey.

Faced with increasing demand for accommodation services and Cáritas' commitment to strengthening its management model, the improvement of this shelter became a top priority. With technical support from UNHCR and various cooperating agencies, the space was transformed into a safer, more functional, and sustainable environment for its residents.

The renovations significantly upgraded the living conditions. The kitchen was fully renovated, with new ceramic flooring and countertops, an extractor hood, and a modern copper gas piping system connected to an external manifold—greatly improving both safety and efficiency.

To enhance residents' comfort, a new ventilation system was installed, including odor extractors in bathrooms and air recirculation in sleeping areas. Air conditioning units were added to the pantry and the children's play area, ensuring a more comfortable environment.

The shelter's safety was also improved through the installation of smoke detectors in all rooms, strategically placed safety grilles, and informative

signage to guide residents. The playground area underwent a complete renovation, featuring fiber cement walls with acoustic insulation, aluminum windows and doors, and a blackboard-painted surface to encourage both recreational and educational activities for children.

Additionally, the electrical system was upgraded with new lighting points and a metal ventilation fan in the kitchen. The water purification system was also reinstalled to ensure access to clean drinking water. The shelter was further equipped with storage shelving, safety locks, and fire extinguishers, reinforcing its functionality and safety.

Thanks to these interventions, the Virgen de la Merced Shelter has greatly enhanced its response capacity, becoming a key hub in the humanitarian protection network along Ecuador's southern border. Through inter-agency collaboration, this space has become more than a temporary refuge—it is a dignified place where people forced to flee can find relief and rest on their journey.





## La Madriguera House of the Santa Martha Foundation - Portoviejo -

In the city of Portoviejo, La Madriguera stands as a joint effort by the Manabí Provincial Government, Santa Martha Foundation, and UNHCR, aimed at providing a safe and appropriate space for the protection and shelter of children who have survived violence in the province. This project responds to an urgent need, offering a temporary solution that ensures care, safety, and support for vulnerable children.

The success of this initiative has been made possible by the dedicated work of Santa Martha Foundation, which has long led child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) survivor care in the area, as well as the commitment of the Manabí Provincial Government, which has provided technical support and ensured the hiring of key personnel for the space's management and sustainability.

UNHCR has played a key role in the transformation of La Madriguera, providing technical support for interior redesign, infrastructure rehabilitation, and legal guidance to ensure that the shelter meets established standards for child protection and accommodation. Additionally, work was done to strengthen the center's management model, ensuring that it functions not only as a temporary shelter but also with a strong protection-focused approach.

Infrastructure improvements included the redesign of interior spaces to align with the management model and define the shelter's maximum capacity. Both internal and external upgrades were

made to ensure safe, functional facilities—including the installation of beds, play areas, the renovation of sanitary facilities, and the inclusion of an accessible restroom for people with disabilities.

Thermal comfort in the sleeping areas was also enhanced, improving the overall habitability of the space. As part of a comprehensive rehabilitation, the floors were maintained and replaced, electrical circuits were modernized, and the building's façade was renovated—revitalizing the space and ensuring its functionality and sustainability.

La Madriguera has become a safe and dignified refuge for children who have survived violence, representing a milestone in child protection efforts in Portoviejo. UNHCR acknowledges and deeply values the leadership of Santa Martha Foundation and the commitment of the Manabí Provincial Government—essential partners in making this project a reality. More than just a building, Casa La Madriguera is a place of hope and recovery for children in situations of risk.





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## Hogar de Belén Shelter - Portoviejo -

Casa Hogar de Belén, with over 25 years of experience, is a key institution in the protection of vulnerable children and adolescents in the province of Manabí. Located just a few meters from the Manabí N4 – El Rodeo Deprivation of Liberty Center, it was originally established as a shelter for the children of incarcerated individuals without family support. Over time, its mission expanded to include other minors in need of institutional care.

Currently, the foundation operates as a mission of the Archdiocese of Portoviejo, following a mixed model that combines its autonomy as a social service organization with a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), which supports its technical team.

In recent years, Casa Hogar de Belén has seen a rise in the number of children and adolescents who are recognized as refugees and migrants, who now represent about 10% of its residents, many with urgent protection needs.

Since 2024, UNHCR has worked closely with Casa Hogar de Belén, providing support in case management and strengthening both the technical capacities of the team and the infrastructure of the shelter. As part of this effort, improvements were made to the facility and essential items were provided—such as bedroom furnishings and children’s supplies—resulting in a significant enhancement of the home’s quality and functionality.

The shelter had not undergone maintenance in years and faced serious structural issues, including damaged ceilings, extreme humidity in walls and roofs, deteriorated doors and closets, and restrooms in inadequate conditions for everyday use. With UNHCR’s support, these critical areas were rehabilitated, ensuring a safe, dignified, and suitable environment for the children’s well-being.

UNHCR is now working with Casa Hogar de Belén and other institutions to establish the Provincial Network of Shelters in Manabí—a key initiative aimed at strengthening child protection services in the province and improving coordination among care centers.

This intervention has not only improved the shelter’s infrastructure but has also had a direct and positive impact on the quality of life of the children and adolescents, providing them with a safer, more functional space where they can thrive and grow in dignity.





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## Phase III Casa de la Mujer - Manta -

The Casa de la Mujer de Manta is a flagship project of the Manta Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD), created to provide comprehensive support to women at risk of gender-based violence. This center not only responds to an urgent need in the city but also sets a precedent in inter-agency cooperation, bringing together key UN agencies—including IOM, WFP, and UNHCR—in a strategic alliance to establish a space for protection, integration, and development.

Built on a plot of 2,614.15 m<sup>2</sup>, the center was designed to foster healthy community relationships and offer a safe environment for women's protection, integration, and well-being. Casa de la Mujer functions as a hub for community engagement, offering activities focused on GBV prevention, empowerment, and rights promotion. In addition to temporary shelter, the center supports women's socioeconomic integration and psychosocial accompaniment, encouraging their development in both social and productive spheres.

The project was developed in several construction phases, supported by different agencies. UNHCR led Phase III, which included the construction of the dining area with sanitary facilities, as well as accommodation blocks 2, 4, and 5. Thanks to the collective efforts of all cooperating agencies, the Casa de la Mujer has become a local reference point—providing essential services to the community and laying the foundation for long-term sustainability.

UNHCR's support extended beyond construction and oversight of Phase III. It also included key technical assistance in the design of the center's management model, ensuring that services offered were comprehensive, efficient, and tailored to the real needs of the women it serves. This process strengthened the center's organizational structure and ensured effective, sustainable service delivery.

Construction of the Casa de la Mujer began at the end of 2022 and the center was inaugurated in the first quarter of 2023. Later, in 2024, UNHCR continued to support the initiative through technical assistance and the donation of two Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), which were installed in outdoor areas to facilitate open-air training and workshops.

This project represents a milestone in inter-institutional cooperation, showing the powerful impact that can be achieved when multiple actors work together to protect the rights of women and their children. The Casa de la Mujer de Manta not only addresses an urgent need in the city but has also established a replicable model of comprehensive care and long-term sustainability—ensuring that women in vulnerable situations have access to a safe space where they can rebuild their lives and seize new opportunities.





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## Hogar de la Madre y el Niño de las Hermanas Corredentoras - Cuenca -

In the province of Azuay, gender-based violence remains a serious concern. Between January and August 2024 alone, over 1,150 emergency calls were made reporting violence against women—878 of them in Cuenca. Additionally, 8 out of 10 women have experienced some form of violence, surpassing the national average. These figures highlight the urgent need to strengthen safe spaces that provide protection and opportunities for recovery for women at risk and their children.

The Hogar de la Madre y el Niño, managed by the Instituto de Misioneras de María Corredentora, is one such space—where safety, care, and dignity become the foundation for a new beginning. Located in a four-story, 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> building within the Corredentoras Sisters' community, the shelter has been a vital refuge for women survivors of violence and their children.

To ensure adequate conditions of protection and accommodation, UNHCR provided technical assistance—strengthening the shelter's management model and linking it with other specialized spaces such as Casa María Amor, helping to consolidate a key support network in the city.

The intervention transformed both the infrastructure and management approach of the shelter. One of the most important changes was the reconfiguration of rooms, reducing the capacity from 45 to 25 people to offer more personalized support and a safer environment. The sanitary facilities and the entire hydrosanitary system—neglected for years—were completely renovated to

ensure functional and safe installations.

The kitchen and pantry were also remodeled, improving food service conditions and enabling the addition of a second auxiliary kitchen used by residents for culinary entrepreneurship, helping them generate their own income. Outdoor play areas were created for children, recognizing their right to a safe space for learning and growth.

Other key improvements included a full roof replacement, safety reinforcements on the fourth floor, window and lock replacements, and the implementation of a proper waste management system. To ensure accessibility and inclusiveness, a bathroom and bedroom were built for people with reduced mobility.

The shelter also features a workshop area on the top floor, where volunteers deliver training and provide psychosocial support, contributing to the emotional recovery of residents.

Thanks to these transformations, the Hogar de la Madre y el Niño has become much more than a shelter—it is a space of dignity and new opportunities, where women can rebuild their lives—free from violence.





# COMMUNITY CENTERS



# CDC El Palmar - Manta -



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What began in 2021 as a 15-foot container donated by UNHCR—with the goal of transforming it into a community center to strengthen social cohesion in the El Palmar neighborhood—has evolved into a successful model of community development and sustainability. Thanks to the support and coordination of the Manta Municipal Government (GAD), which assigned staff to activate the space, the El Palmar Community Development Center (CDC) was consolidated as a key meeting point, extending its impact to neighboring communities.

The success of the initial phase led to a second phase of the project in 2024, which included a major expansion of the center: a second adjacent classroom and an intermediate roof were built, allowing for a wider variety of community activities and optimal use of both indoor and outdoor areas.

Beyond the physical expansion, this phase introduced a sustainability approach aligned with UNHCR’s commitment to reducing the environmental impact of its interventions. The new infrastructure was built using bamboo, equipped with solar-powered outdoor lighting, and integrated with plant elements that enhance the surroundings and reinforce its identity as a community space.

The CDC El Palmar’s potential as a hub for innovation and sustainability was key to its selection for the third phase of the project under UNHCR’s “Ecosystem Guardians” program. In this stage,

emergency solar panels were installed, providing autonomous energy to the center and establishing it as a reference in sustainable infrastructure. However, the impact went beyond the technology itself: 25 refugees were trained in the installation and maintenance of solar systems, creating a new generation of certified technicians ready to meet the growing demand for renewable energy in Ecuador.

In addition to its role as a community center, CDC El Palmar was conceived as a strategic point for emergency response. Thanks to its independent energy system, the center can operate autonomously in critical situations, serving as an operations hub, distribution point, or priority services site. Its proximity to sports fields also makes it an ideal location for activating humanitarian responses during crises.

From its beginnings, CDC El Palmar has shown that community protection infrastructure can transform realities. What started as a modest gathering space has become an innovative, resilient, and sustainable model of community development—a concrete example of the positive impact that well-designed and well-executed initiatives can have in urban settings.



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# CDC Abdón Calderón - Manta -



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The Abdón Calderón Community Development Center (CDC), located in Manta, is part of a network of community spaces promoted by the Manta Municipal Government to foster civic participation, the inclusion of priority groups, and the development of soft skills. Through activities that encourage integration and cultural exchange, the CDC strengthens ties between host communities and refugee and migrant populations.

In 2022, following a participatory assessment led by UNHCR, AVSI, and the Manta City Hall, the Abdón Calderón neighborhood was identified as having a high concentration of forcibly displaced families. Based on these findings, projects were launched to support regularization processes, rebuild the social fabric, and provide life skills training—offering development opportunities to the local population.

The first phase of the CDC's construction began in 2023, and by 2024, the second and final stage was completed—resulting in a modern, accessible, and functional community center. The infrastructure was developed with a sustainable approach, using bamboo as the primary material due to its strength, low environmental impact, and compatibility with the natural surroundings. This initiative reflects UNHCR's commitment to sustainable solutions aligned with climate action and the use of local resources.

The CDC features an outdoor common area with children's playground equipment, a multipurpose classroom for workshops and training sessions, and a storage room. Its sustainable design promotes natural ventilation and thermal regulation, improving

comfort while reducing energy consumption.

Beyond its innovative infrastructure, the CDC has actively fostered community participation and become a vital space for social cohesion. Coordination with agencies and organizations has enabled the activation of workshops, community events, and educational activities—strengthening the sense of belonging and peaceful coexistence. This is especially valuable in a context of high insecurity, where access to a safe and welcoming space serves as a strategic tool for violence prevention.

Today, the CDC Abdón Calderón is a key meeting point that facilitates access to services and opportunities, promoting inclusion and community resilience. It stands as a clear example of the positive impact that inter-agency interventions can have when they prioritize sustainability, well-being, and social cohesion.



# CDC San Mateo - Manta -



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The San Mateo Community Development Center (CDC), located in Manta, stands as a milestone in the community strengthening strategy led by UNHCR, AVSI, and the Manta Municipal Government (GAD). In 2023, participatory assessments revealed a high presence of refugees and migrants in this area, prompting the implementation of an intervention methodology similar to the one used at the CDC Abdón Calderón. The initiative focused on reinforcing community support and protection networks, offering workshops, spaces for peaceful coexistence, and access to essential services such as documentation, healthcare, and employment.

This project is part of the Inclusive Cities, Solidarity Communities initiative—a collaboration between UNHCR, IOM, and UN-Habitat aimed at promoting inclusive urban development in Latin America. Its activation has been strengthened by multi-stakeholder support, energizing neighborhoods through sustainable urban planning and the socio-economic integration of people on the move.

The CDC San Mateo was built on two levels, maximizing space and promoting the sustainable use of resources. The first floor houses workshop rooms, an administrative area, and sanitary facilities, while the second floor includes a meeting area and a community garden, encouraging self-sufficiency and environmental education.

vironmental impact.

Beyond its infrastructure, the CDC San Mateo has boosted community participation and become a strategic space for social cohesion in a neighborhood with high levels of insecurity. It has promoted inter-agency coordination, enabling various organizations and institutions to deliver their community programs within this space. Thanks to this collaborative effort, CDC San Mateo has become a local benchmark for strengthening integration and resilience among host communities and refugee and migrant populations.

This project represents not only progress in access to services and opportunities for people forced to flee but also demonstrates how the combination of sustainable infrastructure, urban planning, and community engagement can transform neighborhoods and build safer, more inclusive environments.





In the province of Esmeraldas, the Épera Sipidara Community has preserved its identity and traditions for generations, despite facing challenges linked to human mobility and climate change. As part of efforts to strengthen its cultural and welcoming spaces, the reconstruction of the Épera Ceremonial House was carried out—a project aimed at restoring a vital space for social organization, the preservation of ancestral practices, and the protection of its members.

Since 2008, UNHCR has worked closely with the Épera community in Esmeraldas, where host communities, refugees, and displaced populations from Colombia coexist. In addition to its ceremonial and cultural function, the Ceremonial House also serves as temporary accommodation for newly arrived families from Colombia and Panama. During flood seasons—a recurring threat due to its proximity to the river—the house also functions as an emergency shelter.

The project was supported by the Innovation Fund for Climate Change, with technical support from UNHCR and implementation by CAEMBA, alongside active participation from the community. The rehabilitation included structural maintenance and the construction of a new roof, covering an area of approximately 484 m<sup>2</sup>. The process validated ancestral construction practices while honoring the worldview and traditions of the Indigenous community.

Beyond the physical infrastructure, the project promoted technical and practical training in bam-

boo silviculture, teaching sustainable construction techniques using locally grown bamboo. This not only empowers the community to self-build homes and communal structures but also creates income-generating opportunities and contributes to climate change mitigation.

The impact of the project goes far beyond rebuilding the Ceremonial House. Today, it serves as a vibrant hub for more than 250 Indigenous families, hosting educational activities in partnership with the Amawtay Wasi University, artisan initiatives led by women, and health service days coordinated with the Ministry of Public Health. The community also collaborates with partners like FEPP, which supports agricultural production, and Fundación Altrópico, which works on water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions.

The reconstruction of the Épera Ceremonial House reaffirms the commitment to sustainability and community resilience—blending ancestral knowledge with sustainable construction practices and ensuring that the Épera people not only preserve their cultural identity but also have a safe and functional space for protection and development.



# San Lorenzo Library – San Lorenzo –



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Located in the heart of San Lorenzo, Esmeraldas province, the Municipal Library is a key community space that promotes education, skills development, and access to technology. Covering an area of 150 m<sup>2</sup>, this center primarily benefits youth and adolescents, offering support with schoolwork, training workshops in agribusiness, entrepreneurship, and digital skills, while also serving as an essential gathering point for the local community.

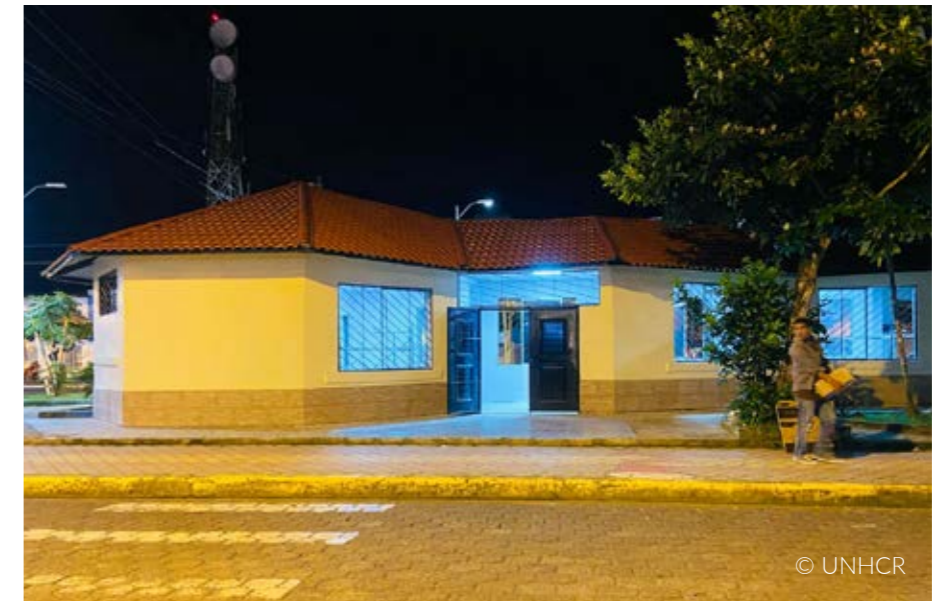
Despite its importance, the library faced serious infrastructure and equipment deficiencies that limited its ability to meet growing demand. The roof and ceiling were deteriorated, with parts at risk of collapse, posing safety hazards for users. The restrooms lacked doors and were in poor condition, and the absence of adequate furniture and functioning computers severely restricted access to digital tools. Additionally, insecurity in the area had led to theft incidents, affecting the facility's daily operations.

In response, a remodeling and maintenance project was launched to improve the library's infrastructure and optimize its use—turning it into a safe, functional, and modern environment. This intervention not only enhanced access to education and technology but also reinforced the library's role as a community hub.

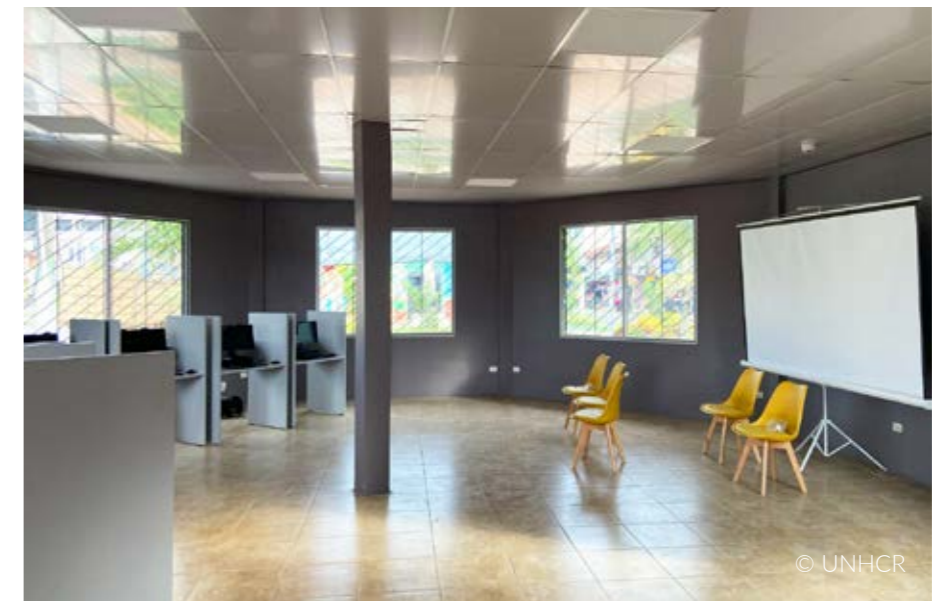
A key aspect of the initiative was its link with the UNHCR field office in Esmeraldas, which identified the library as a strategic location for the registration and assistance of refugees—fa-

cilitating their access to protection programs and digital support. With improved infrastructure and new furniture and computers, the library is now equipped to offer digital literacy programs and expand services to the broader community, helping bridge the digital divide and lack of free internet access in the city.

This intervention also strengthened collaboration with the local Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD), consolidating a joint effort to address the challenges faced in San Lorenzo—a border area with high levels of social and economic complexity. Thanks to this initiative, the San Lorenzo Library has been transformed into an inclusive and functional space that will continue to positively impact the lives of hundreds of people—promoting access to information, education, and community integration.



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# 26 de Febrero Community Center – Esmeraldas –



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In the city of Esmeraldas, the 26 de Febrero Community Center has become a strategic space for community protection, promoting social cohesion and providing a safe, neutral environment amid rising insecurity. This center has become a key reference point for the neighborhood’s community networks—bringing together women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other organized groups who find in this space a supportive environment for their development and integration.

Since its construction in 2020, the community center has undergone several improvements with the support of UNHCR and its partner FEPP. In 2021, painting and general maintenance were carried out, and in 2023, the entrance was adapted to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities and reduced mobility—making it the first inclusive space of its kind at the community level in Esmeraldas.

In 2024, UNHCR continued its support by implementing key upgrades to enhance the space’s functionality and security. An inclusive bathroom was installed, adapted for use by parents with infants, wheelchair users, and others with limited mobility. Additional improvements included installing windows with protective grilles to enhance safety and acoustics, ceiling fans to improve air circulation, and a reinforced metal door to increase security.

Beyond infrastructure, UNHCR collaborated with the neighborhood board to design a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for managing the space—ensuring its appropriate use, sustainability, and continued role as a key hub for community protection

and risk mitigation.

The 26 de Febrero Community Center is not only a local gathering point but has also become a vital part of Esmeraldas’ community services network. Civil society organizations, NGOs, and government entities such as MIES use the space to run essential programs, including early childhood stimulation for children. It also serves as the headquarters for two women’s community networks, a cultural network involving 60 refugee and host community children and adolescents, and a youth network focused on climate change mitigation.

Thanks to its strategic location and the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, the 26 de Febrero Community Center has become a true hub for community protection and integration—strengthening the social fabric and ensuring a safe, inclusive, and accessible environment for all who use it.



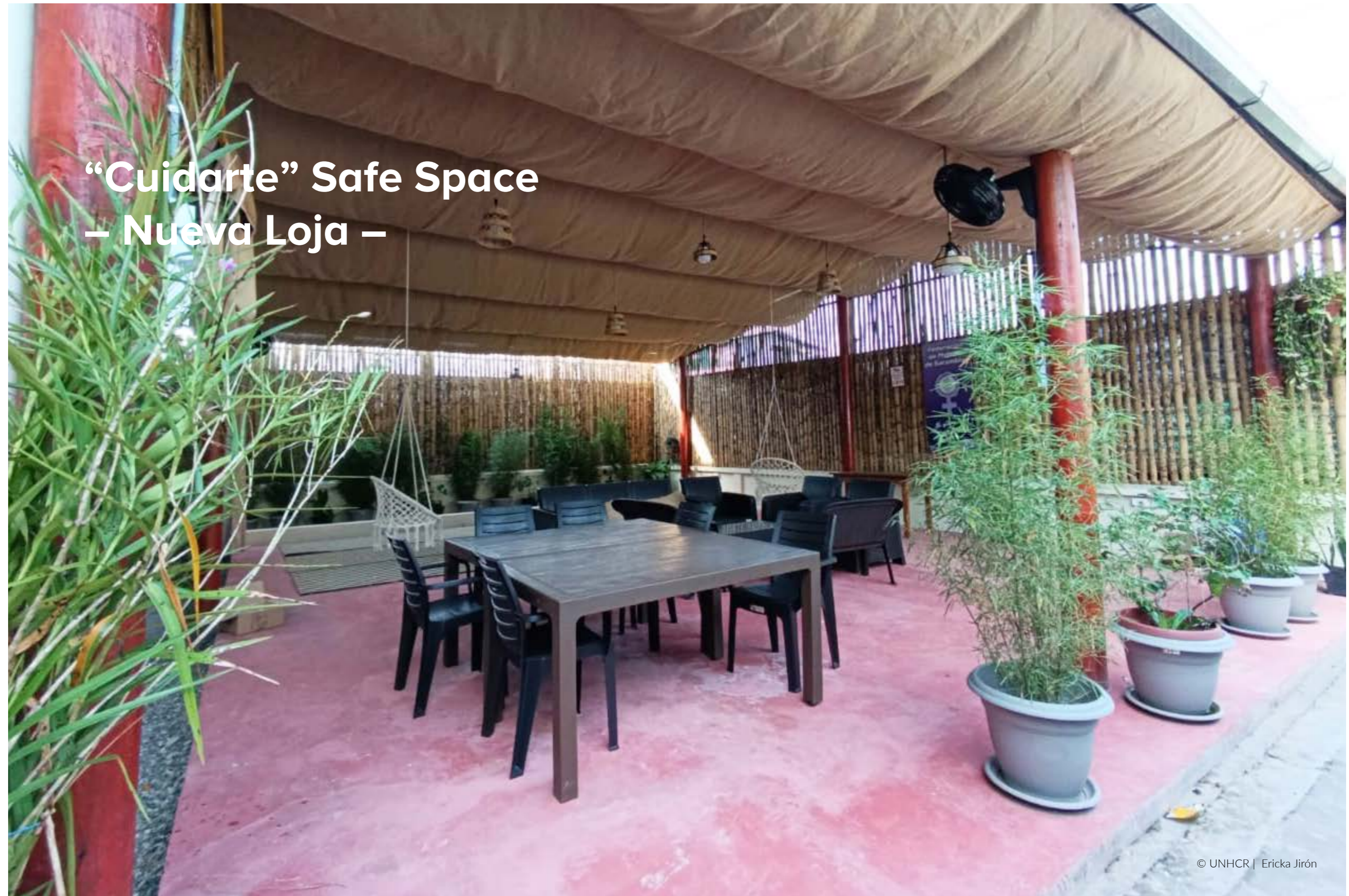
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“Cuidarte” Safe Space  
– Nueva Loja –

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In Nueva Loja, Sucumbíos, the “Cuidarte” Safe Space is an initiative of the Centro Puerta Violeta (CPV) of the Federación de Mujeres de Sucumbíos (FMS), created to provide a safe environment, access to information, and emotional support for women from the community and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

As part of efforts to strengthen protection networks along Ecuador’s northern border, this initiative is linked to Casa Manos Unidas Tejiendo Progreso in Tulcán, promoting the creation of interconnected support spaces for women in vulnerable situations—reinforcing access to comprehensive protection throughout the region. Located within the CPV, the space has been remodeled and adapted to offer privacy, safety, and comfort, allowing users to receive specialized information and participate in workshops, forums, and support networks—enhancing their well-being and autonomy.

Since 2010, UNHCR and FMS have worked together to prevent and respond to GBV, ensuring comprehensive care for refugee women, asylum seekers, and women from host communities. This initiative went beyond creating the space—it also involved equipping it with appropriate furniture and launching key activities such as protection pathway workshops, psychological counseling, legal training, human rights awareness sessions, and community events like barter fairs.

The space is integrated with Casa Amiga and other protection, health, and legal services, facil-

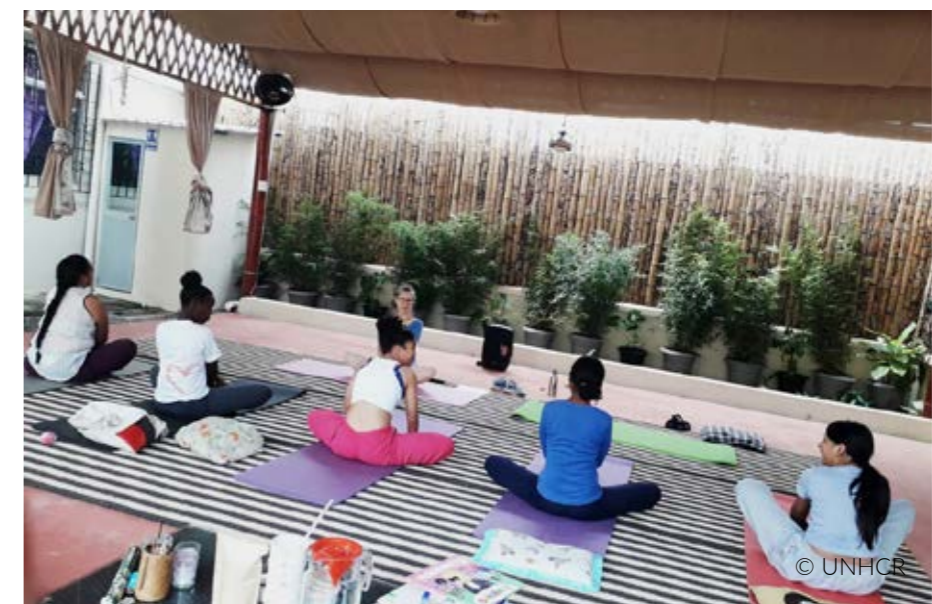
itating referrals to specialized programs. It also contributes to violence prevention along the border, promoting education on rights, sexual and reproductive health, and emotional well-being, ensuring that women can access vital information for their protection and integration.

The infrastructure intervention prioritized expanding the covered area, improving ventilation and thermal comfort using locally sourced materials. A secure enclosure was built with a living fence, the floors were upgraded with cement and roll coverings, and signage and furniture were installed to create a welcoming and functional environment.

The “Cuidarte” Safe Space is more than just infrastructure—it is a hub for healing and transformation, a space where women can rebuild their lives in an environment grounded in dignity, support, and resilience.



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# Interventions in La Chala – Guayaquil –



© UNHCR | Andrea Ortega

In the neighborhood of La Chala, the Unión y Progreso Community Center has become a cornerstone for education and social integration. Over the past three years, UNHCR has worked to strengthen this space, focusing on preventing school dropout and ensuring that children and adolescents remain in the education system with the necessary support.

In addition, the center has launched training programs for women, promoting their economic independence through courses in beauty, baking, pastry making, and cooking. These initiatives have helped many women build skills to start small businesses and improve their quality of life.

Over time, Unión y Progreso has expanded its impact beyond the local level, becoming a key reference for community integration. It has fostered partnerships with international cooperation agencies, the municipal government, and the provincial authority to broaden its services and reach.

Infrastructure improvements and equipment upgrades, led by UNHCR and its partners, have been essential to the center's transformation. Between 2022 and 2024, the center underwent a full renovation, addressing critical structural issues: the electrical system was modernized, the water and sanitation systems were upgraded, the roof was repaired, and new furniture and technology were provided—creating a safer, more functional, and sustainable environment.

As part of this strategy, a partnership was es-

tablished with the Escuela Bolivariana, a key actor in the local protection network. Under this alliance, a new library was built and equipped following the Ministry of Education's management model, offering a safe and enriching space for learning.

The library not only enhances access to education but has also become a space for inclusion and social transformation, tackling issues such as xenophobia, inclusive education, and a culture of peace. Thanks to these efforts, La Chala has strengthened its community fabric, promoting peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity, and equal opportunities for all.

Both the community center and the school were supported through UNHCR's "We Breathe Inclusion" methodology, which promotes awareness and integration strategies in educational settings. This process demonstrates how education, empowerment, and the recovery of community spaces can be powerful tools for integration and resilience—positioning Unión y Progreso as a model of intervention that truly transforms lives.





# Innovation Project — El Chical —

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On the border between Ecuador and Colombia, the rural parish of El Chical faces unique challenges. Located in a remote area, it has been historically affected by the Colombian armed conflict, the presence of irregular groups, and limited state presence. Its diverse population—composed of mestizo, Awá Indigenous people, Ecuadorians, and refugees from Colombia and Venezuela—makes social integration and protection an urgent necessity. However, gender-based violence, child recruitment, and landslides caused by frequent rains continue to threaten its stability.

Since 2017, UNHCR and FUDELA have been working in El Chical through a protection by presence strategy, strengthening community networks using sports and education as tools for social cohesion. In 2023, this work evolved through the Innovation Project—an initiative that combined the construction of resilient, sustainable spaces with community training and emergency response.

The intervention included two key infrastructures: a pavilion in the central park and a multi-use community classroom. The pavilion became a safe gathering space for children and adolescents, promoting recreation and social integration. The classroom serves multiple purposes—it is used for educational activities, community meetings, and, in emergencies, as a community dining area. Together, the structures total 80 m<sup>2</sup> and were built with bamboo, promoting sustainable materials and encouraging a local green economy.

One of the project’s major achievements was shifting local perceptions of bamboo. Previously seen as a disposable material, it is now recognized by the community as a strong, affordable, and eco-friendly construction option. Thanks to technical training workshops, local residents developed new skills already being applied in other initiatives—such as the construction of kiosks at the community stadium—further boosting the local economy and autonomy.

The impact of this project goes beyond the physical infrastructure: it stands as a replicable model of community development based on knowledge, ownership, and a community’s ability to shape its own future.



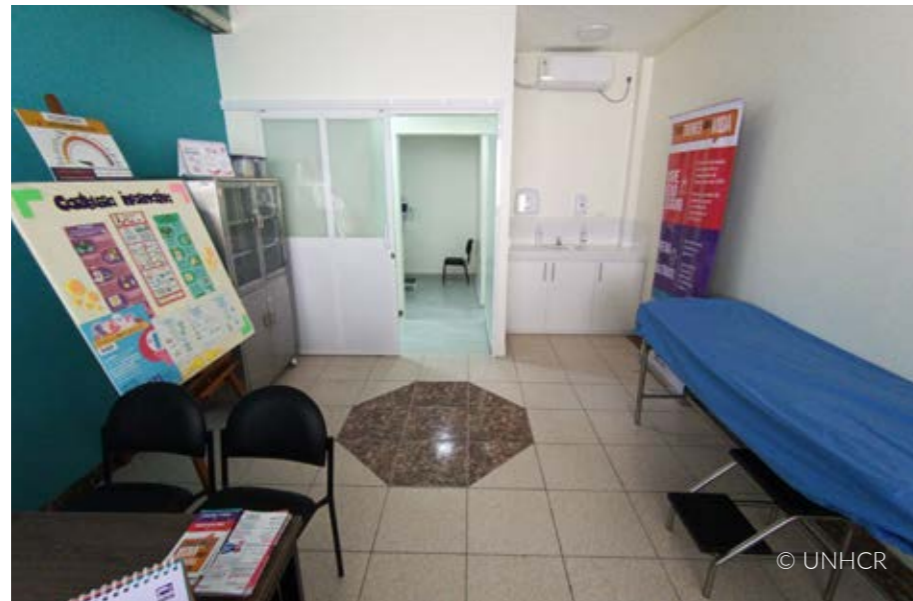
# HEALTH CENTERS



# Augusto Egas Health Center – Santo Domingo –



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The Augusto Egas Health Center in Santo Domingo, classified as a Type C facility, provides primary care, obstetrics, pediatrics, rehabilitation, and 24/7 emergency services. As one of the city’s main access points to healthcare, its operation is vital. However, after years of limited maintenance, the facility faced serious structural and operational deficiencies that were affecting service quality.

In response, a comprehensive rehabilitation was carried out, focusing on critical areas such as emergency, pediatrics, and vaccination services. The intervention doubled the emergency care capacity from 4 to 8 beds, increasing annual coverage from 5,000 to 10,000 people. To achieve this, the emergency area was functionally redesigned to optimize space and enhance medical attention.

One of the most significant improvements was the modernization of the electrical system through the installation of a 150 KVA transformer. This upgrade enabled energy independence, protection of medical equipment, and readiness for future radiology services—a high-priority need for the community.

Thermal comfort in the emergency area was improved with proper air conditioning and ventilation, and accessible restrooms were added in compliance with disability regulations. The hydro-sanitary system was also rehabilitated to prevent failures during the rainy season, alongside general enhancements such as ceiling installations, specialized painting, and comprehensive maintenance.

The project also included the donation of essential medical equipment and furnishings—stretchers, desks, privacy screens, computers, and specialized devices—strengthening both emergency and pediatric services.

To address the need for specialized care for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), a first-response consultation room was set up, fully aligned with national standards. This made the center the first in Santo Domingo to offer a dedicated space for such cases—marking a critical step forward in protecting vulnerable populations.

Additionally, training workshops were delivered to healthcare staff on international protection, enhancing their ability to provide inclusive, dignified, and non-discriminatory care.

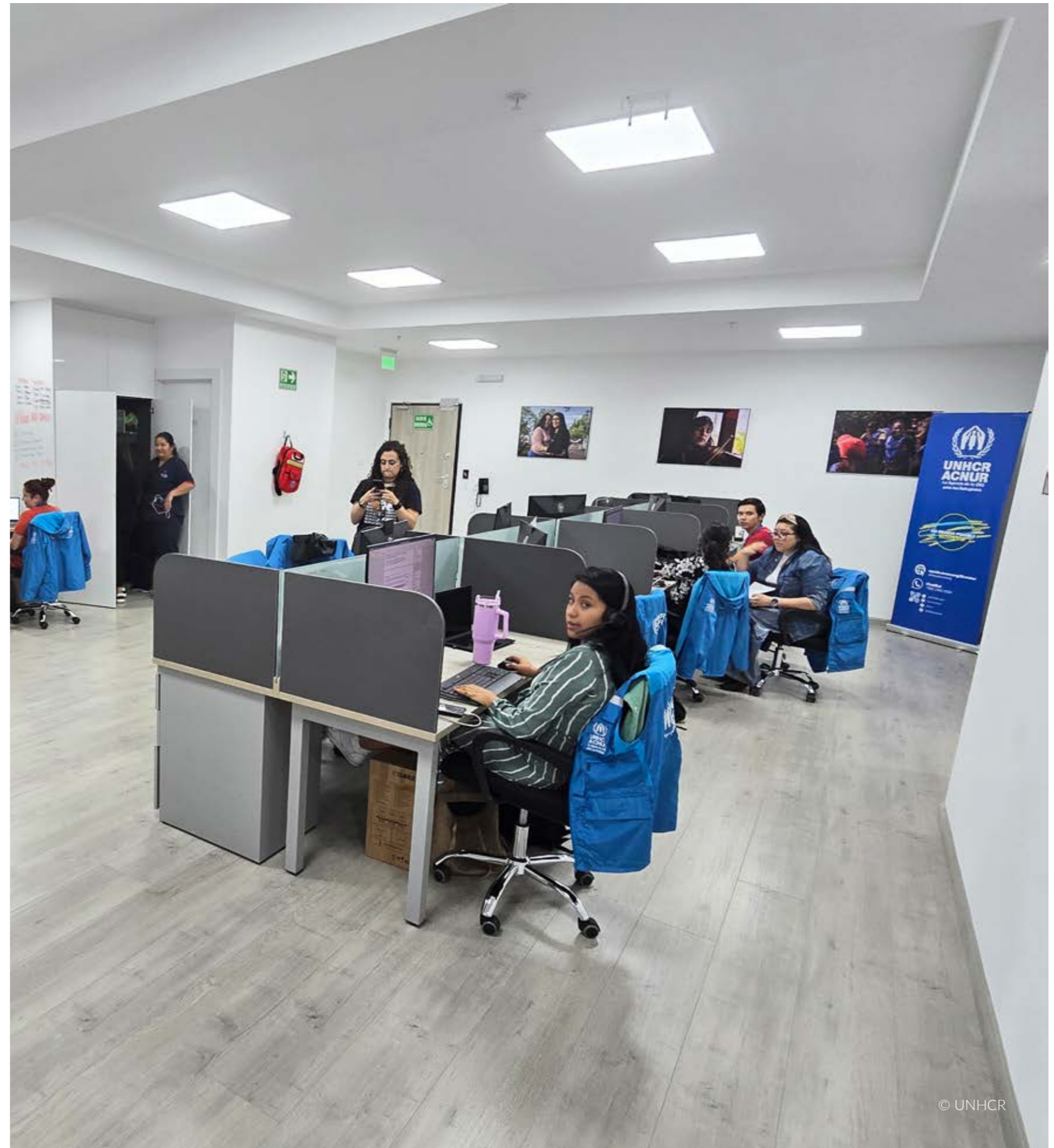
The intervention, carried out across 400 m<sup>2</sup>, had an immediate impact from day one. The combination of upgraded infrastructure, modern equipment, expanded services, and trained personnel has significantly strengthened the center’s capacity to deliver safe, efficient, and high-quality care to thousands of people.

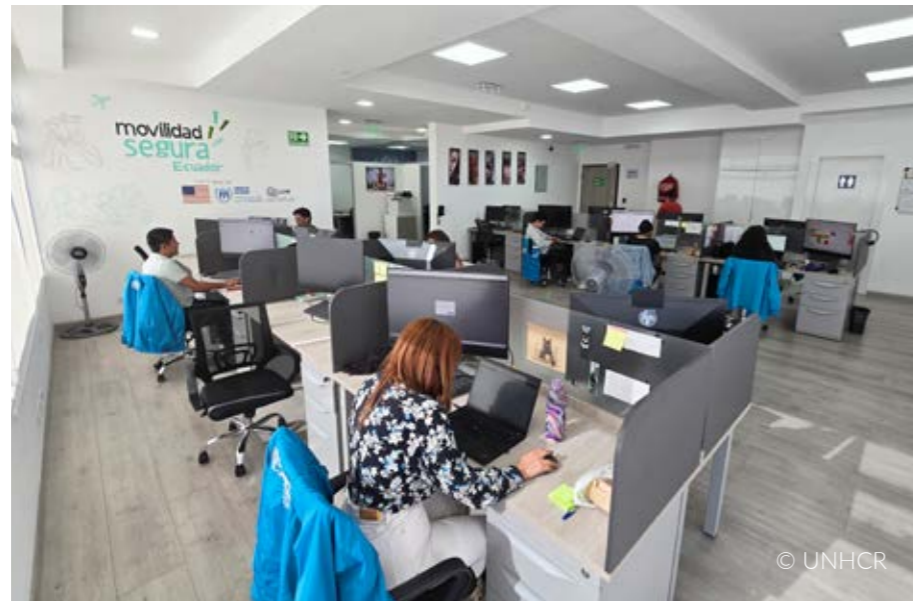
# LEGAL SUPPORT AND PROTECTION PROJECTS



# Safe Mobility Offices

- Quito –
- Manta –
- Guayaquil –





In 2023, Ecuador became a key player in the Safe Mobility Offices (SMOs) program—an innovative initiative designed to offer legal migration pathways for individuals from Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua. This program allowed people from these nationalities to apply online through a dedicated portal, where their eligibility and protection needs were assessed for expedited resettlement processing. The initiative contributed significantly to reducing the risks associated with dangerous migration routes, such as crossing the Darién Gap or the Mexico border.

To implement the program, three strategically located offices were established in Quito, Manta, and Guayaquil—cities with a high concentration of people on the move. The launch of the Safe Mobility Offices not only enabled a rapid and effective rollout of the program but also involved a significant investment in infrastructure and equipment, ensuring that each facility met standards for safety, protection, and operational efficiency.

The design and construction of these offices followed specific criteria for security and confidentiality, ensuring that interviews and case assessments were conducted in appropriate and private environments. This infrastructure allowed staff to maximize efficiency in processing applications, reduce response times, and ensure that individuals received clear information and safe access to resettlement procedures.

Although the program is no longer active, its impact was significant—not only in terms of pro-

viding an effective protection response, but also in strengthening operational capacity. In just three months, the offices in Quito, Manta, and Guayaquil were designed, built, and made fully operational, demonstrating the operation’s ability to execute complex infrastructure projects within tight timeframes. This experience set a key precedent in the implementation of humanitarian infrastructure projects, consolidating an agile and efficient model that can be replicated in future initiatives.

Beyond the program itself, the Safe Mobility Offices became a landmark example of how infrastructure and humanitarian response can come together to deliver concrete solutions in contexts of human mobility. The investment in these spaces not only facilitated safe migration processes but also enhanced the capacity of institutions and agencies involved to manage high-impact projects with quality, safety, and protection standards.

## Improvement of the Emergency Energy System in UNHCR Field Offices





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As part of UNHCR’s Strategic Framework for Climate Action and in alignment with the efforts of the United Nations System in Ecuador, our operation is committed to reducing its environmental footprint and lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This commitment goes beyond integrating solar energy solutions—it also includes optimizing procurement processes, prioritizing sustainable materials, and collaborating with suppliers that align with these principles. Through framework agreements that streamline logistics and reduce operational costs, UNHCR is enhancing its humanitarian response capacity with an environmentally responsible approach.

One of the most significant milestones of this strategy has been the implementation of emergency solar backup systems in UNHCR’s field offices nationwide. This initiative was born out of lessons learned during the extended power outages in Ecuador in 2024, when the country experienced blackouts of up to 14 hours per day due to one of the worst droughts in its history. The lack of a reliable backup power system to sustain operations during long interruptions exposed the urgent need to strengthen emergency preparedness and ensure the continuity of humanitarian functions

In response, UNHCR made a substantial investment in solar energy solutions, installing emergency solar panel systems in its offices in Quito, Ibarra, Nueva Loja, Huaquillas, and Guayaquil. These backup systems ensure that, even during prolonged outages, critical functions can

continue operating with clean, stable, and renewable energy.

Beyond enhancing emergency response capacity, this initiative also contributes to carbon emissions reduction and advances UNHCR’s commitment to sustainability and climate resilience. The integration of solar energy and environmentally responsible practices into our offices not only optimizes operational efficiency but also sets a precedent for sustainable humanitarian operations in Ecuador.

Following the successful implementation of these backup systems in the first five offices, UNHCR plans to expand the initiative nationwide, ensuring that all its locations are equipped with renewable energy solutions. This dual approach—combining climate strategies with emergency preparedness—strengthens UNHCR’s commitment to delivering humanitarian assistance efficiently and responsibly, even in the face of energy crises.

# PROJECTS IN PUBLIC SPACES AND SERVICES



# Community Alarm System – Huaquillas –



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In Huaquillas—a border city marked by high levels of insecurity—the Community Alarm System emerged as an innovative response to the lack of effective emergency alert and response mechanisms. The communities of El Bosque, Martha Bucaram, Manuel Aguirre, and Unión Lojana were selected following a participatory process in which residents identified the need to strengthen local safety.

The project not only improved emergency response capacity but also fostered social cohesion and coordination with local authorities. Building on previous experiences, a safer and more efficient system was developed. The old physical alarms were ineffective and put users at risk. The new WiFi-connected system allows for anonymous activation through a mobile app, enabling rapid and secure alerts.

The process began with a safety diagnosis in eight neighborhoods, confirming widespread concern about insecurity. Within the GTRM framework and with technical support, a community safety plan was developed, which included installing alarm systems and reactivating community spaces to enhance neighborhood organization and ensure the project's sustainability.

The system includes three high-powered sirens with a range of up to 10 blocks. When activated via the app, the alarm emits a loud signal and sends notifications to emergency contacts. Additionally, a GSM device automatically calls or sends messages to the Community Police, local

outposts, the commissioner's office, and community leaders, enabling immediate response.

Technology was paired with community training, and WhatsApp groups were established for real-time incident reporting. While challenges remain regarding police response, the alarm activation has led to immediate community mobilization and improved the overall sense of safety.

The project's success lies in community ownership. From the outset, neighborhood leadership and local management of the system were strengthened, with UNHCR serving as a technical and training facilitator. To reduce risks, work was coordinated with the UGR and SGR, and community promoters were trained in emergency management with the support of the Red Cross, Fire Department, and National Police.

Although implementation in Manuel Aguirre was suspended for security reasons, the system remains operational in the other communities, reinforcing neighborhood organization and the sense of protection. Beyond the technology itself, this project proves that security is built through participation, collective commitment, and strong community leadership.

# Park in Barrio Don Bosco – Tulcán –





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The children’s park in Barrio Don Bosco, located in the rural parish of Julio Andrade, Tulcán canton, Carchi province, is the only recreational and gathering space for approximately 315 children, adolescents, and adults in the area. However, prior to the intervention, the park had a poor layout and underutilized its potential, limiting its functionality for the community.

In response, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Parish GAD of Julio Andrade, the community of Barrio Don Bosco, FUDELA, and the UNHCR field office in Tulcán, launched a comprehensive redesign project to optimize the park’s layout. This included relocating and refurbishing existing play equipment and incorporating new urban and sports furniture, transforming the space into a safer, more inclusive, and functional area for community recreation.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the project was community participation. Residents were not only involved in reviewing the design proposal but also actively engaged in communal workdays (mingas), highlighting the power of collaboration in reclaiming public space. The Parish GAD also contributed by investing in the resurfacing of the sports court, helping reduce overall costs and enhancing the project’s impact.

Beyond the physical improvements, this initiative became a model of institutional and community coordination, promoting peaceful coexistence and strengthening bonds between host communi-

ties and refugee and migrant populations.

Thanks to this renewed space, various activities have been carried out—fostering positive use of free time, hosting community fairs and bartering events, and creating opportunities for integration and learning. The park has also become a hub for environmental education and community engagement, establishing itself as a symbol of cooperation and social cohesion in Ecuador’s northern border region.

# Public Space and Community Center Improvements in Isla Trinitaria – Guayaquil –





In the heart of Isla Trinitaria—a neighborhood historically marked by social vulnerability—a project was born to improve public space and strengthen the community fabric. It transformed an old dock into a vibrant gathering point where art, sports, and body expression have become tools for integration and community development.

The initiative was led by the HILARTE Community Association, which identified the need to reclaim the dock as a way to strengthen neighborhood organization and encourage youth, children, and adolescents to participate through creative and recreational activities. This project not only revitalized the physical space through infrastructure improvements but also consolidated a broad network of collaboration. Over 40 grassroots organizations—united under the Isla Bonita Association—joined efforts with the University of the Arts and humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR, CDH, and AVSI, all of which have been working in the area for over three years with a focus on community art and social inclusion.

The project received a grant in 2024, which enabled the implementation of several activities that brought new life to the dock. Community art and mural painting transformed the space into a symbol of identity and belonging. Dance workshops were also held for youth and children, providing a safe environment where creativity serves as a means of empowerment and expression.

The impact of the space goes beyond individual activities—it has become a meeting point for

diverse community initiatives. DELFI has promoted community sports through kayaking, encouraging the appreciation of natural surroundings and using water as a resource for social integration. RENOVA, a refugee- and migrant-led initiative, has focused on recycling and sustainability, raising environmental awareness and creating economic opportunities within the community.

Meanwhile, HILARTE, with support from UNHCR and CDH, has strengthened youth leadership through the creation of leadership schools, youth leader networks, and empowerment circles—consolidating a model for providing youth-centered community services.

This project is a powerful example of how reclaiming public space can go beyond physical transformation to become a driver of social change, inclusion, and community resilience. More than a one-time intervention, it has laid the groundwork for the community to take ownership of the space, manage it sustainably, and continue generating long-term impact.

With its revitalized dock, Isla Trinitaria has become a beacon of art, community, and resilience—proving that urban and social transformation go hand in hand when the community takes the lead in shaping its own future.

# Solidarity Boutique of Sucumbíos - Nueva Loja -



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In the city of Nueva Loja, the Boutique Solidaria de Sucumbíos has become a model of solidarity and community support, providing assistance to families on the move and vulnerable host communities—especially those in rural areas. This initiative, promoted in collaboration with Sucumbíos Solidario, the social arm of the Sucumbíos Provincial Government, has led to the creation of a collection and distribution center for clothing, toys, and hygiene items, ensuring these resources reach those who need them most.

Although it is a small-scale project, its impact is significant. It not only provides direct aid to hundreds of people but also stands as a successful example of institutional management and cooperation. The boutique was made possible by repurposing and rehabilitating a container donated by UNHCR that was no longer in use. Through coordinated efforts, the container was relocated to the outdoor facilities of Sucumbíos Solidario, becoming a key site for the free distribution of clothing and essential items, given the high number of people who visit the institution daily.

The interventions included interior refurbishments and painting, as well as replacing the external vinyl, ensuring that the space is functional, accessible, and welcoming for visitors. This project also stands out as an excellent example of mutual cooperation, with refurbishment costs shared between the Provincial Government and UNHCR—demonstrating both institutions' commitment to strengthening humanitarian assistance in the province.

The Boutique Solidaria de Sucumbíos serves not only as a collection and distribution center, but also promotes a culture of recycling, resource reuse, and solidarity, becoming a sustainable initiative with high social impact. Its success reaffirms the importance of strategic partnerships in implementing simple, innovative, and accessible solutions that improve the quality of life in communities.

# TRAININGS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



Over the past two years, UNHCR has led a broad capacity-building process in the management of shelters and service provision spaces for people on the move. Through these efforts, specialized tools have been provided for shelter management with a protection and safety focus, aligned with both international and local standards.

In 2024, in response to recurring emergencies in the country, priority was given to Emergency Shelter Management training, in coordination with the Secretariat for Risk Management. This initiative strengthened the response capacity of local and provincial governments (GADs), as well as United Nations System (UNS) organizations involved in humanitarian assistance.

As a result, 691 people have been trained over two years, reinforcing operational capacity nationwide. Additionally, 55 technical assistance missions were carried out, focusing on site identification, infrastructure implementation, and compliance with quality standards—ensuring each intervention provides dignified and safe conditions for the affected populations.

Participating organizations in the trainings included HIAS, ADRA, NRC, IOM, COOPI, Cáritas Social Pastoral, Ecuadorian Red Cross, Alas de Colibrí, WFP, Kimirina, JRS, Fundación Mujer & Mujer, CDH, CARE, Comedor San Vicente de Paul, AVSI, Albergue San Juan de Dios, MMO, Fundación Lunita Lunera, FEPP, CISP, Fundación Casa de Acogida María Amor, Plan International,

Fundación Jubasca, Fundación Tarabita, Albergue Oasis en el Desierto, ASA, Quimera, Scalabrinian Mission, Fundación Akuacuna, Tulcán Municipality Social Welfare Institution, Fundación Equidad, Casa Matilde, Fundación Scarlet, Fundación Nuestros Jóvenes, Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Patronato Municipal San José, along with staff from local and provincial GADs in areas where UNHCR has an operational presence.

Thanks to this inter-institutional coordination, the country now has a more effective, coordinated shelter management system, aligned with humanitarian protection and assistance principles—ensuring stronger emergency responses and improved access to safe and dignified spaces for people on the move and host communities.





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## KEY FIGURES

The impact of the shelter and community protection strategy is reflected in the tangible results achieved between 2023 and 2024. Through infrastructure improvements, technical assistance, rights-based service provision, and the distribution of essential items, an effective and sustainable humanitarian response has been consolidated, benefiting thousands of people on the move and host communities in Ecuador.

Over these two years, the capacity to respond with temporary shelter increased significantly. In 2023, 13,913 people accessed these services, and in 2024, 13,736 people did, including 15,815 with access to water and sanitation. A total of 30 shelter spaces were improved—rising from 9 in 2023 to 21 in 2024—and 51 community protection infrastructures were upgraded, up from 18 to 33.

Support for women survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) was a top priority: 124 women accessed safe shelter in 2023, and 202 in 2024, thanks to the expansion of specialized spaces and a more robust response.

The provision of essential goods also played a key role. A total of 35,559 hygiene kits were distributed in 2023 and 11,920 in 2024. Additionally, 9,821 people accessed food services in 2023, and 9,982 in 2024, through community kitchens supported by UNHCR.

A total of \$1,984,897.77 was invested in infrastructure and equipment: \$1,385,809.97 in the rehabilitation and improvement of spaces, and






\$599,087.80 in equipment provision, enhancing the quality and safety of services delivered.







Field presence was essential: 691 people were trained in shelter management, and 55 technical assistance missions were carried out across the country—ensuring protection and quality standards in every intervention.

More than just numbers, these results represent a collective effort to provide safety, stability, and hope to those who have been forced to flee their homes. Infrastructure upgrades, capacity-building, and humanitarian assistance have laid the foundation for a more efficient and dignified response.

Thanks to this combination of services, infrastructure, technical assistance, and training, we have achieved:

## KEY RESULTS 2023-2024

	2023	2024
 People assisted with temporary shelter	13.913	13.736
 People assisted through community kitchens	9.821	9.982
 Shelters intervened	9	21
 Community protection facilities intervened	18	33
 GBV Survivors Assisted with temporary shelter	124	202

	2023	2024
 Hygiene Kits distributed	35.559	11.920
 Amount Invested in Infrastructure	\$ 465,042.50	\$ 920,767.47
 Amount invested in equipment	\$ 116,290.61	\$ 482,797.19
 Number of people trained in shelter management	410	281
 Missions carried out for Technical Assistance	25	30
 Technical Assessments Conducted	27	55



## FINAL REMARKS

Throughout 2023 and 2024, UNHCR has strengthened a comprehensive response to the shelter, protection, and humanitarian assistance needs of displaced people in Ecuador. Through infrastructure projects, temporary shelter solutions, and inter-agency coordination, response capacities have been enhanced in an increasingly complex context—bringing a positive impact to thousands through safe, dignified, and appropriate spaces for protection and well-being.

Investments in temporary shelter have made it possible to provide immediate refuge to those facing extreme vulnerability. The rehabilitation and equipping of shelters, along with the training of shelter managers and operators, have improved their management and long-term sustainability. Additionally, the expansion of community infrastructure has improved access to essential services, strengthened host communities, and promoted social integration.

These achievements highlight the strategic use of infrastructure as a key tool in humanitarian assistance. Coordination with humanitarian actors, local governments, and national institutions has been essential to ensuring the sustainability of these interventions.

A major milestone has been the implementation of the technical regulation on social leasing with a purchase option, developed in collaboration with MIDUVI and the IDB—an important step toward including refugees and migrants in public housing policy. This effort has been comple-

mented by multipurpose cash assistance, which has helped prevent evictions and provided direct support to thousands of families.

Despite these advances, access to dignified housing remains a critical challenge. The lack of sustainable financing, the need for inclusive housing policies, and the limited availability of temporary shelter remain urgent priorities. Continued commitment from donors, governments, and partner organizations is essential to move toward structural and sustainable solutions.

This document not only highlights the impact achieved but also shares lessons learned and ongoing challenges. Inter-agency collaboration, innovation in housing solutions, and the strengthening of community networks will be key to addressing future challenges and continuing to provide safe and sustainable spaces.

UNHCR remains firmly committed to the protection of refugees. The experience gained demonstrates that joint efforts and strategic planning are essential to achieving lasting change. We reiterate our call to strengthen cooperation and investment in shelter solutions that ensure a more dignified and secure future for all displaced people in Ecuador and across the region.

“Becoming a refugee is not a choice. No one chooses to be a refugee. But we can choose how we respond.”  
– Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The achievements in shelter and infrastructure in 2023 and 2024 were made possible thanks to the commitment and collaboration of our partners, NGOs, and local governments. Their expertise and responsiveness have been essential in providing safe and dignified solutions to thousands of refugees, migrants, and host communities across Ecuador.

We extend our deep gratitude to the donors, institutions, and service providers whose support made these interventions possible. Their contributions have been key in building a network of shelter and community protection spaces, strengthening community resilience, inter-agency coordination, and social integration.

We especially acknowledge the local governments for facilitating access to key infrastructure, promoting inclusive policies, and supporting the implementation of shelter solutions. We also thank our partner organizations, whose work on the field has driven every project forward.

This collective effort demonstrates that cooperation and solidarity are essential to achieving lasting impact. Every enhanced space and every improved collective shelter is a reflection of the commitment of a network dedicated to dignity and the well-being of the people we work for. Let's continue building A Possible World together—reaffirming our commitment to protection and peaceful coexistence in our communities.





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2025