

## UNHCR Ecuador

### Lago Agrio Field Office Factsheet

October 2021



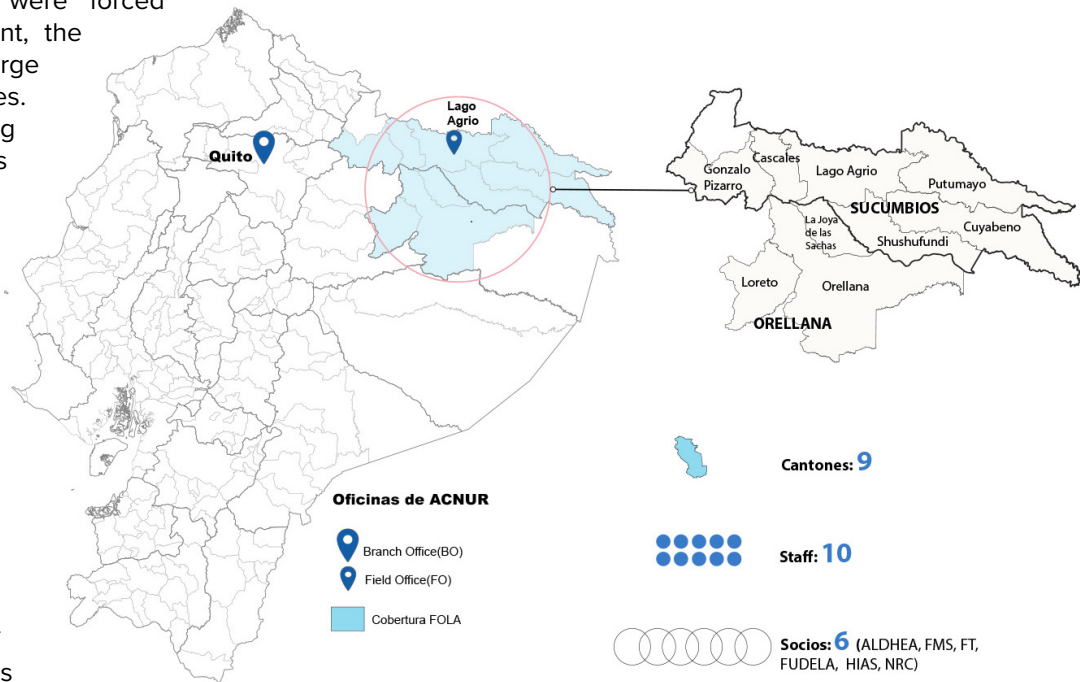
## Operational context

Located in the province of Sucumbíos, which borders the Colombian department of Putumayo, the Lago Agrio Field Office started its operations in 2000. From this office, UNHCR covers another Amazonian province: Orellana.

Initially, this office opened to respond to the large influx of Colombian nationals who were forced to flee their country. At present, the area continues to receive a large flow of Colombian refugees. Additionally, the worsening scenario in Venezuela has caused numerous individuals entering Ecuadorian territory through unofficial entry points as the land border crossings remain closed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The use of these irregular crossing points present protection risks to Persons of Concern.

The province of Sucumbíos, marked by the impact of the Colombian situation, oil exploitation, environmental degradation, the absence of various governmental institutions

and a reduced socioeconomic development, adds numerous challenges for the integration of refugees and migrants. In order to promote local integration and access to livelihoods, UNHCR works closely with local authorities (GADs) and includes host communities as beneficiaries of its projects.



## Key figures:

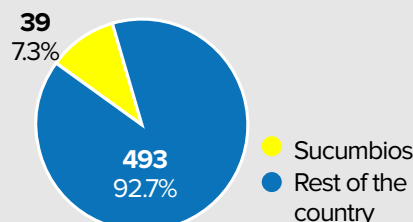
### Recognized refugees in Sucumbíos and Orellana:

**10,321** Colombians  
**48** Venezuelans

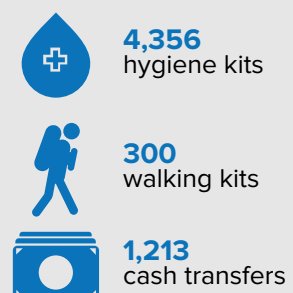
### PoC registered by UNHCR or HIAS:

**3,973** Colombians  
**8,353** Venezuelans

Between January and September 2021, **532** asylum applications of Venezuelans and Colombians were admitted for processing in Ecuador, of which **7.3 percent** (39 cases) were in Sucumbíos province.



In 2021, UNHCR and its partners in Sucumbíos and Orellana have delivered:



## Work with partners

UNHCR in Lago Agrio develops protection programs and durable solutions directly and through its six implementing partners Fundación Tarabita (FT), Fundación Mujeres de Sucumbíos (FMS), FUDELA, HIAS, NRC y ALDHEA. It also provides technical and capacity-building support to the Ombudsman's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Directorate of International Protection and Cantonal Boards for the Protection of Rights. Each activity has been adapted to the context of the pandemic to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to the UNHCR team, partners, beneficiaries, and host communities.

### Key activities



#### Protection

- Case management/provision of protection information and guidance on access to asylum, migration alternatives, access to services, humanitarian assistance programs and referral to specialized services.
- Conducting registration interviews and performing biometric enrolment of people of concern. UNHCR Lago Agrio and HIAS Lago Agrio were the first two offices in which the BIMS pilot plan was implemented and, proving to be successful, the model was later replicated nationwide.
- Continuous border and community protection monitoring, as well as identification of profiles with protection needs. Raising early alerts through monthly meetings with mirror office in Mocoa-Colombia (FOMO).
- Strengthening of local protection systems for the population with specific needs. Prevention and response to survivors of gender-based violence, and provision of a comprehensive response for unaccompanied/separated children and adolescents and LGBTI+ population.
- Strengthening capacities and relationships with local authorities (GADs) by providing technological equipment to facilitate access to the international protection and education systems.
- Capacity-building and technical support for legal advice and representation of refugees and asylum-seekers through the Ombudsman's Office, the Public Defender's Office and the Cantonal Systems for the Protection of Rights (SCPD).
- Promote local integration and fight against xenophobia with partners and public institutions through community-based projects where the host community is involved.



#### Livelihoods

- Implementation of livelihood and socioeconomic inclusion projects with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) targeting vulnerable people in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, including youth: 96 refugee and Ecuadorian families have been supported through the Pilot Project in coordination with HIAS and MIES and 200 families have participated in the graduation model since 2016.
- Inclusion of 45 refugee and host community families from the town of Shushufindi in the HIAS, MIES and UNHCR Family Accompaniment Project; of which, 35 families are in human mobility, while the remaining 10 are Ecuadorian from the Shuar community of Yamanunka.
- Coordination with partners, local development actors, academia, NGOs, Governments, the private sector and civil society to promote the economic inclusion of PoC through training processes, technical assistance, regularization of entrepreneurship and linkage to commercial networks.
- Interventions with financial institutions to raise awareness and facilitate access to savings and loan mechanisms for PoC.



#### Social Inclusion

- Strengthening of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign through communication with communities, logistic efforts, and cooperation with Ministry of Public Health.
- Fight against discrimination through the application of the "We breath inclusion" methodology in schools in the province of Sucumbios.
- Facilitate access to connectivity through the donation of computers to public and educational institutions to ensure access to online procedures and access/permanence to education.



#### Coordination

- Co-leader with IOM in the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM).
- Permanent presence and support in coordination spaces involving governmental institutions such as the Comité de Operaciones Emergentes (COE) of Sucumbíos