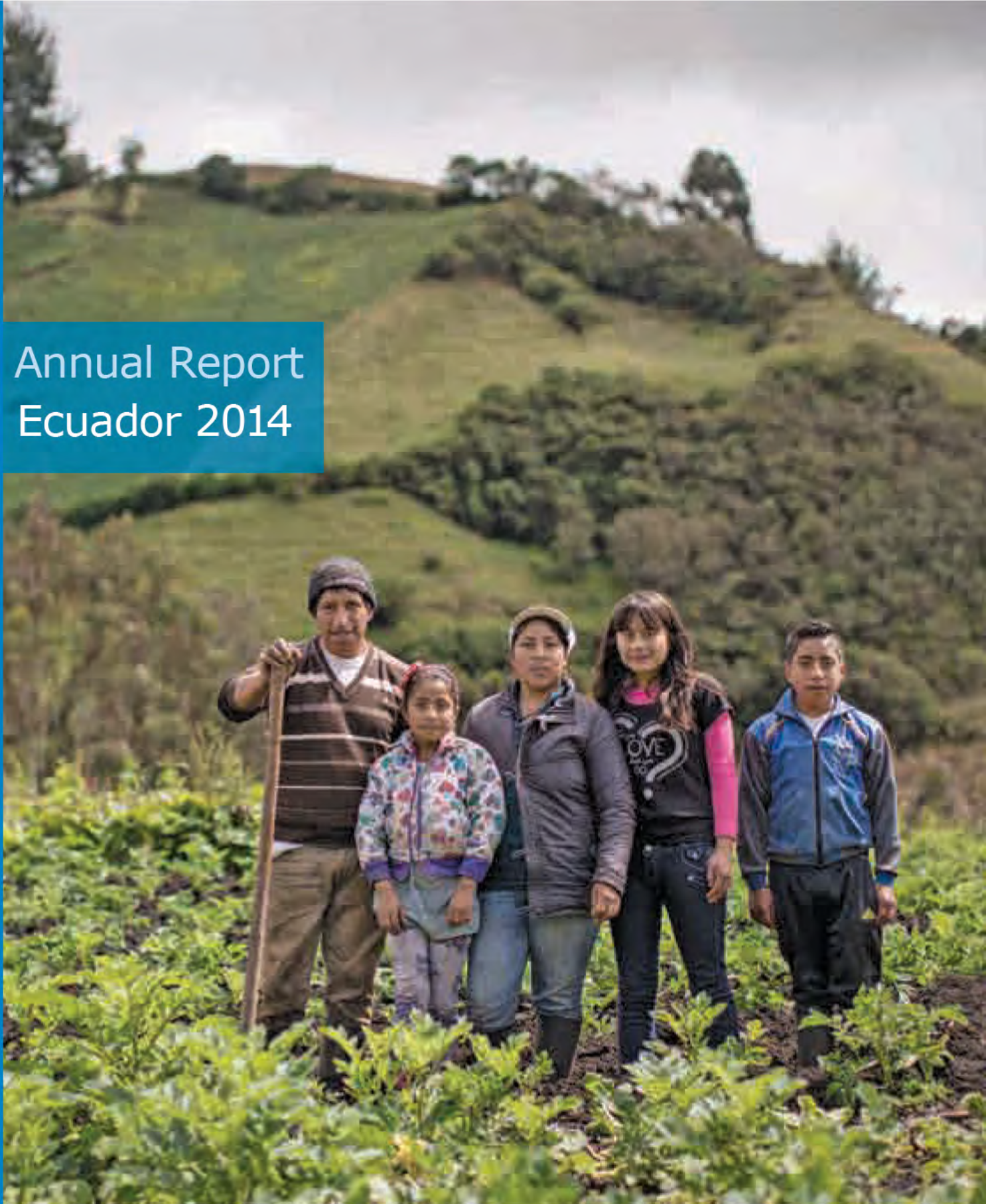


Annual Report Ecuador 2014



World Food Programme

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Foreword

This annual report attempts to showcase the World Food Programme's (WFP) achievements in 2014 through the testimonies of participants in WFP's activities in Ecuador. During 2011-2014, WFP changed its operating strategy in Ecuador from a food donation model that included three types of dry foods (rice, lentils, oil) to a voucher-based food assistance programme that allows participants to purchase fresh products from eight different nutritious food groups, including fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy products. WFP seeks to show the impact of this new model on people's lives.

Whilst the main role of the World Food Programme in Ecuador is to improve the food security of Colombian refugees, WFP's projects have significantly strengthened small farmer associations by increasing the income-generating opportunities available to them. Now these associations are able to provide a variety of fresh products to shops where refugees buy food using WFP vouchers. Although at the beginning of the voucher transition process, we worked primarily with large supermarkets, in 2014 concrete changes were made to replace them with small produce shops located close to participants' homes.

During this transition to the use of food vouchers, we developed relationships not only with our projects' direct participants, but also with small-scale women farmers and shop owners. Their words, accompanied by short explanations of their stories, describe the impact of our assistance on the lives of our participants.

We thank our partners and donors that have allowed us to continue our work in Ecuador, always in support of the Government's priorities, to:

- Diversify diets to improve nutrition
- Provide opportunities for and strengthen small farmer associations
- Empower women so that they play a stronger role in their homes and communities
- Ensure sustainability by strengthening capacities at all levels: people, communities, and institutions.

We have learned from the people we work for: their hard work, creativity and dignity are visible in these pages. It is now our turn to share what we have learned.



Kyungnan Park
WFP Representative in Ecuador



2014: The year in review

- 1. Joint projects with other UN agencies facilitate our efforts to assist the Colombian refugee population and vulnerable Ecuadorian communities in the northern border region and work in synergy. In these and in all activities, WFP seeks to support the Ecuadorian Government's priorities, coordinating with national institutions, and helps build capacities with people and communities in all projects.*
- 2. Humanitarian assistance on the northern border includes protection activities, given that members of the target population, especially women, have in many cases been victims of violence and continue to live in vulnerable situations. Activities promote understanding the value of diversity, gender equality, and social integration.*
- 3. WFP has developed nutrition-sensitive initiatives in Ecuador. The effectiveness of these activities is validated through studies. One such study in Carchi, Chimborazo, and Santa Elena compares different assistance models in order to share best practices with local governments and provide insight to inform decision-making processes.*
- 4. In 2014, approximately 85 percent of WFP's food assistance was provided via vouchers in the form of a card with a bar code. These vouchers allow families to choose what foods to buy from a list of nutritious products.*
- 5. Thanks to project participants' suggestions, small produce shops were selected to progressively replace large supermarkets as sales points for voucher-users. These shops offer competitive prices and fresh, quality products. They have become important partners, sharing key messages to promote healthy eating habits.*
- 6. WFP Ecuador's innovative monitoring system was developed and implemented in 2014. At new sales points, SMART (WFP Ecuador's **S**ystem for **M**onitoring **A**nd **R**eviewing **T**ransfers) is installed to manage vouchers. This system allows staff to carry out targeting processes, record food purchases, and analyse participants' food preferences and consumption patterns over time.*
- 7. Small farmer associations, many of which are led by or formed by women farmers, provide fresh foods for humanitarian assistance programmes and have been able to join new markets. They receive training from WFP and partners on subjects such as food security, environmentally-friendly production practices, and requirements for participating in formal markets.*
- 8. Seed recovery, organic compost, water source protection, and reservoir construction benefited communities and families participating in the climate change adaptation project focused on food security and women's empowerment. Families also learned about climate risks and adaptation strategies. The project is implemented in partnership with local governments and ministries.*
- 9. WFP works with the Secretariat of Risk Management to strengthen the capacities of the National Decentralized Risk Management System, particularly in the fields of food and nutrition security and logistics.*

Participants put nutritional knowledge into practice

I want my son to learn to eat healthy foods

"Where we lived before, there were armed groups. We couldn't live in the same place as them. We made the decision together...because I have a six-year-old son, and it wasn't good to have him in that environment.

This help that WFP has given us has served us well because it's a very good way of eating...because up until now we haven't had work, and the food has helped us survive...There are many families that are displaced from one place or another and that come here, so I believe that it is a very good programme.

The products we buy last us a month...There are foods that are very healthy; so I would like my son to learn to eat them, how to vary what he eats...fruits, vegetables, cereals that aren't just flour and fats, nor cold cuts. The most important foods are dairy products, vegetables, fruits, chicken, eggs, more than anything else."

Refugee mother, northern border region



Vouchers achieve results

The most important actors in improving eating habits are family members. Once newly-arrived Colombian families are interviewed, staff evaluates their vulnerability prior to receiving WFP's voucher. In order to receive and recharge the voucher each month, participants must attend nutrition trainings. This assistance is provided for up to twelve months.

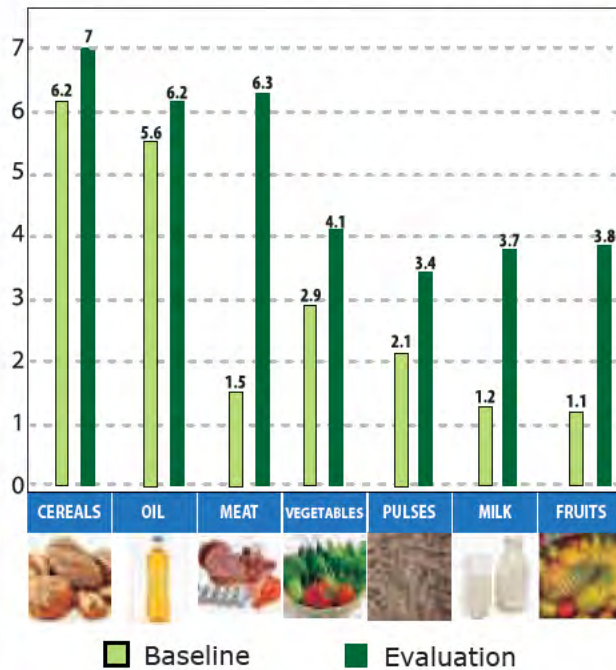
Trainings are essential in guiding participants' eating habits. When families learn about the most nutritious foods and how to best combine them, they gain knowledge that will help them to make better purchases in the future. This knowledge will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

WFP's food voucher is not only conditioned to participation in trainings, but also to the purchase of nutritious products. The voucher improves families' food consumption habits and promotes a healthy and varied diet.

Families that seek refuge in Ecuador often consume a diet based on carbohydrates, fats, sugars, and some legumes. WFP's baseline indicates that 72 percent of recently-arrived families are in need of food assistance. The results of an evaluation carried out in December 2014 shows that, after receiving twelve months of food assistance and nutrition trainings, 98 percent of families improved their diets, which include meats, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables.

The following graph shows that, after receiving training and assistance, WFP project participants favour nutritious and healthy foods. On the left, the numbers one to seven represent the days of the week; the coloured columns measure the average number of days that participants consume foods from each one of the main groups. The two colours compare the consumption of Colombian families when they first arrive with their consumption after one year of assistance.

Improvements in Dietary Diversity



Source: December 2014 evaluation, refugee assistance project

After twelve months of assistance with vouchers, families eat products from more food groups per week.

Data gathered by SMART (System for Monitoring and Reviewing Transfers), which records the purchases participants make at different points of sale, was used in this evaluation. Families' food consumption and dietary diversity scores are calculated with this information. Reports allow staff to measure the impact of WFP assistance and to make timely and informed decisions to adjust project activities.

WFP project participants attend training sessions and learn about which products are nutritious and how to prepare them. Learning about products and their nutritional value helps participants make healthy choices for their families when using their voucher.



Teaming up with local stores

They come here, like we did

Doña Hortensia came to Shushufindi from the town of Machachi, near Ecuador's capital. Her shop provides work for a nephew, a cousin, and two women who have learned to operate SMART. She describes her experiences with people using WFP vouchers.

"...Provide them with all the legumes, dry grains, and staple foods. There are many people that are thankful. They [Colombian refugees] are very grateful. I serve them with goodwill, with all the affection I have for customers.

It's a positive help for people with low incomes. There are people who sometimes have enough for the day, but don't have anything for tomorrow. There are many people like that. They come here from different places, like us who have also come here.

This year people are buying more vegetables, grains. The talks they [WFP] give them are excellent...for nutritious things, especially quinoa, soy, barley. We provide them with chicken, potatoes, carrots, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, melon, grapes, strawberries, papaya, pineapple, blackberries, lemons, peas, corn, fava beans, turnips, chard, spinach, green beans, onions, tree tomatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, artichoke, bananas. They like morocho corn...they buy a lot of the little red beans, Colombians really like them.

For me, it has been a very good experience. They are grateful; [through WFP] they have food. There are some older people who are truly very grateful. There are a lot of people. We are in a crisis, and the people are thankful. And they have food to eat."

Doña Hortensia, produce shop owner
Shushufindi



Fresh products close to home

When WFP in Ecuador began to use the voucher as an assistance modality in 2011, it also started to work with local supermarkets. As the transition to voucher-use moved forward, WFP received feedback from participants. They suggested that fresher and less expensive products could be found at small shops, and they wanted to use their voucher to buy foods from these stores. In 2013 and 2014, WFP analysed various produce shops and stores using a series of criteria, such as the shop's proximity to participants' homes, the availability of fresh, nutritious foods produced by small farmer associations, and the shop's openness to working with small-scale farmers, as well as prices, product quality, and service. The stores and produce shops that met these requirements gradually became service providers in WFP's projects.

Once a shop is selected, WFP trains its staff on how to handle vouchers and educates them on the realities newly-arrived asylum seekers face. In WFP's experience, this knowledge is a critical factor in ensuring that the participants are always well-treated at sales points.

In addition, shops must meet WFP's minimum technical requirements. SMART records purchases made with WFP vouchers and verifies that participants' purchases are on the list of authorized products. Once participants visit a sales point, WFP asks for their opinion regarding the shop's service. This is an important step to make sure that they receive good customer service.

With the voucher system, everyone wins. Shop owners receive new clients and increase their

incomes. Small-scale farmers who provide fresh products to stores also benefit from the demand generated by participants in WFP's assistance programmes. In addition, being able to shop with an electronic voucher gives participants the opportunity to choose which foods to buy from a list of authorized products, allowing them to put the knowledge they gained in the training sessions into practice.

"For them it was a change [to go from a supermarket to a small shop]. WFP is trying to motivate them to eat a healthy, natural diet, and we believe that we are achieving it. They have to adapt, because they can't buy candies and fats here. We have a list of products from the nutritional chart: cereals, legumes, fruits, chicken, meats. That is a balanced diet for them. There are many children, and it's important to know how to look after their eating habits."

Sandra Alvarado – La Huerta shop



Requirements for working with WFP

To work with WFP, a produce shop or store should meet the following requirements:

- A diverse array of fresh and nutritious products available to customers
- Competitive market prices
- Proximity to participants' homes
- Openness to working with small-scale farmers as suppliers
- Conditions needed to operate the SMART system (computer, internet, barcode scanner)
- Willingness to serve the community
- Responsible and positive attitude

Buying locally

Now we are equal

"Before, we sold our products to middlemen at whatever price they decided on. We didn't have the words or the right to say "our product costs this much: it cost us a great deal of effort to produce it." Now the difference is that we decide on the cost, giving value to clean, organic products.

We have worked a lot in food security and sovereignty...Before we only ate grains and vegetables; now that we have received training, we eat a balanced diet.

We generally meet on Sundays at the distribution centre. All the producers come to this centre to leave the products they were able to harvest...First they produce for their own consumption. Then they sell the surplus.

...I'm a woman and I'm the president [of the association]. The role of women has been emphasized in our association. We work more as a family. Both women and men contribute in the same way. No one is worth more or worth less: we are equal.

In the past, men left for the big cities, for the capital to work in construction or in whatever they could to support their family's survival, but it wasn't enough. Now, it is easier for us to stay together as a family thanks to the financial stability provided by these opportunities.

Our incomes have changed a great deal. We no longer migrate to cities to be employed by our patrons, as they were called before. We are also contributing as women in the home, in our children's studies. And we are also with them much more - our husbands, our children. We have grown closer as a family."

Blanca Gualsaquí, President
Asociación Maquipurashpa Kawsay, Otavalo



New opportunities for producers

In 2011, WFP began to change the way it operates in Ecuador. In the past, WFP bought food or received food donations from other countries, which were delivered directly to vulnerable people. A 2011 study conducted in Ecuador's northern border region determined that food vouchers conditioned to the purchase of nutritious foods achieved the best results in diversifying diets and improving consumption when compared with cash assistance and food rations. This study, and the priority given by the Government of Ecuador to small economic actors, convinced WFP to change the assistance model. Vouchers have since been used to provide food assistance, and WFP has scaled up work with small farmer associations and local stores. The objective of this change was to diversify diets, improve nutrition, and empower families to make better choices regarding their eating habits.

To stimulate local economies, WFP and partners decided to identify small farmer associations that could provide products for WFP's food assistance programmes. Associations that fulfilled WFP priorities, such as being women-led or women-majority groups, joined the programme.

WFP's transition from dry rations to locally-grown fresh foods moved forward through its work with small-scale farmers. By partnering with these associations, WFP assists producers in increasing and diversifying their harvests. They also minimize transportation, storage, and distribution costs and achieve greater bargaining power by working together. With WFP's local purchase model, small-scale farmers have gained new access to markets, and thus have more stable incomes.

Promoting women's participation in agriculture has improved family farming and increased

household earnings. By generating their own income, women contribute to their families' financial stability and play a greater role in decision-making.

WFP's local purchase model motivates farmers to produce more, improves local economies, and strengthens family and community integration. Local purchases allow WFP to use its resources to serve more people, while at the same time positively impacting the lives of small-scale farmers.

In 2014, WFP had the privilege of working with 29 small farmer associations, comprised of 1,058 women and 872 men. One of them, Asociación Tierra del Sol, brings together 107 women and 10 men in Pimampiro, Imbabura. Members sell their products to WFP and partners and are connected with local markets and social protection programmes run by local governments.

Alexandra Bejarano, the association's founder, explains that, "WFP has been the strength, the arm stretched out to support us, especially women."



Working together for women

The support has been vital

"Among the institutions that give us assistance, WFP supports us with food vouchers. We learned about the process for getting food. They have come here to give classes: on how to prepare foods in a better way, incorporate nutritious products, things like that. It has been very useful.

We work with women who have experienced domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence. But we also support their sons, their daughters that come to our Casa Amiga, because their lives are at risk due to the violence perpetrated mainly by the men in the family. The profile of the women we work with: few financial resources, the great majority have not finished their studies, they do not have a formal source of income, many work in the informal sector, selling food, working as street vendors...

They are women who have borne the weight, the responsibility of caring for their families. They have essentially done it alone; despite having their partner or father of their children at their side, they have been abandoned for a long period of time, an emotional abandonment, and they have also been victims and survivors of violence. Women in the countryside, in urban areas too, Ecuadorians, Colombians, Colombian refugees, and women from other countries.

What we see in practice is that when women come here, everything in their life is complicated...and the children feel it too, and this influences their own development.

WFP's support has been vital. It's good that they don't focus solely on supporting the refugee population, which is their main objective; they also support vulnerable Ecuadorian populations."

Amparo Peñaherrera, Manager
Casa Amiga, Lago Agrio



Food and training help facilitate recovery

In Ecuador, six out of every 10 women have experienced some form of gender-based violence. The social problem of violence against women crosses all sectors of Ecuadorian society and is present in all social classes, in rural and urban areas, and in different provinces and ethnicities.

In the northern border region, WFP supports shelters that host women and their children who have been victims of violence by providing them with food assistance. WFP works with two shelters: *Casa Amiga*, which is managed by the Women's Federation of Sucumbíos in the city of Lago Agrio, and *Casa de Acogida* run by the Municipal Government in Tulcán.

Together both centres assist about 100 people a month, giving them shelter and providing them with counselling, psychosocial and legal support, along with other services, so that they can build a better future, free of violence. WFP's food assistance provides women and their children with fruits, vegetables, and other healthy and nutritious products. This assistance is a grain of sand that complements the contributions of other institutions involved in this work.

In Ecuador, a joint study conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and WFP measured the impact of different food assistance modalities on intimate partner violence. According to the study, transfers appeared to improve women's capacity to make decisions about food consumption and household nutrition, which in turn improved women's self-perception as heads of their households.



Creating household harmony

In Ecuador, women spend on average four times more hours on unpaid work than men. They dedicate most of their time to domestic activities, including food preparation. In training sessions, WFP promotes the value of domestic work and the fair sharing of household tasks by showing a video and holding a debate.

The three-minute video takes viewers into the Cevallos family's home, where all family members do household chores in a tension-free atmosphere. The debate invites participants to reflect on their own situation and to come up with possible changes they could make to create a harmonious environment within their homes.



Living together in diversity

Ecuador is a country rich in diversity, with numerous indigenous nations, Afro-descendants, *montubios*, mestizos, and foreign nationals from different countries, with many Colombians in need of international protection. Although the traditions, histories, languages, and cultures of Ecuador's diverse communities should be respected and valued, prejudices and stereotypes continue to exist in many places.

Behaviours such as discrimination and racism are derived from negative representations and images. In view of the difficult situation many WFP participants live in, as well as the need to promote a culture of respect that benefits everyone, WFP promotes acceptance of Ecuador's diversity in its training spaces with partners and participants under the slogan, "Diversity gives flavour to your life."

"It doesn't matter your skin colour or your religion, where you come from or your condition. Rights are awesome, they're the same for all."

Messages on diversity and rights



<p>TODOS VIVIMOS EN EL MISMO MUNDO Y LO COMPARTIMOS SEGUNDO A SEGUNDO</p> <p>JUNTAS APRENDEMOS JUNTO JUGAMOS TODOS NOS QUEREMOS Y NOS RESPETAMOS</p>	<p>TODOS MUY ATENTOS ES LA OPORTUNIDAD DE ADMIRAR, CONTENTOS LA DIVERSIDAD</p> <p>DISTINTA Y DIVERSA ME GUSTA LA GENTE AMISTOSA, ABIERTA AMABLE Y PACIENTE.</p>	<p>HAGAMOS UN PACTO CON INTELIGENCIA NO USEMOS LA VIOLENCIA TENGAMOS BUEN TRATO</p> <p>PIÉNHALO UN SEGUNDO. LOS NIÑOS Y NIÑAS VEMOS QUE LAS NIÑAS DESTRUYEN EL MUNDO</p> <p>PREFERIMOS JUGAR, APRENDER, CONVIVIR, DISFRUTAR, COMPARTIR, Y EL MUNDO TRANSFORMAR.</p>	<p>UN PAÍS, UN NOMBRE, UNA FAMILIA, UN TECHO, SALUD, ALIMENTACIÓN, JUEGO Y EDUCACIÓN, SIN OLVIDAR LA PARTICIPACIÓN</p> <p>NO IMPORTA TU PIEL O TU RELIGIÓN NI DE DONDE VIENES O TU CONDICIÓN</p> <p>LOS DERECHOS SON GENIALES, PUES SON PARA TODOS IGUALES.</p>	<p>LAS NIÑAS Y LOS NIÑOS AUNQUE ESTAMOS HECHOS UN POCO DISTINTOS EN CUANTO A DERECHOS SOMOS IGUALITOS</p> <p>APRENDER, SENTIR JUGAR Y COMPARTIR, IGUAL DE CAPACES INTELIGENTES Y AUDACES</p>
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Adapting to climate change

The communities of the Jubones river basin in southern Ecuador are among the most affected by climate change. For this reason, the region is part of a national and local project to promote adaptation to the effects of climate change. The Ministry of the Environment leads the project, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture, and Fisheries, the Public Consortium of the Jubones River Basin, and WFP. In order for communities to understand the significance of climate change and to prevent its most severe consequences,

an awareness campaign was carried out in 2014.

The campaign was designed to create a space for community dialogue where river basin residents could learn about and discuss the impacts of climate change on food security. One of the main elements of the campaign was its focus on women who, in addition to passing down traditional knowledge in agriculture and food, are often responsible for taking action on water issues, planting, and farm and community management.

The campaign included three components: radio announcements, workshops to promote dialogue, and educational communication materials. Project partners created six radio announcements with testimonies from river basin residents in which they shared their experiences of climate change and food security in daily life. The result was a narrative that left questions, feelings, and ideas in the minds of the audience. The campaign reached almost 20,000 people throughout the Jubones river basin.

In 39 parishes, a knowledge dialogue process on climate variability was held with the participation of local communities through workshops organized by the decentralized autonomous governments and through presentations in schools for students in their last year of high school. Men and women, both adolescents and adults, reflected on the changes that the climate has caused in agriculture and in eating habits in their communities. Infographics, informative brochures, bracelets, and other materials were used to remind people of what they discussed and to encourage them to put knowledge into practice in each community.



"We were used to chemicals before, [we used] chemical fertilizers to be able to farm, to build up the soil. But today we have realized that this is damaging our bodies. We are returning to the old ways, farming with the compost that we make."

Participant, Jubones river basin

Working together for effective emergency response

Ecuador is susceptible to various types of threats and emergencies. One of the factors that affect family and community resilience is the time that institutions take to provide relief and assistance in emergency situations. To effectively react, institutions strive to standardize tools and response operations.

The Secretariat of Risk Management (SGR) leads the National Decentralized Risk Management System. With expertise in food and logistical assistance, WFP supports SGR in strengthening emergency preparedness strategies. Together they have built a series of tools for emergency responders that facilitate operations. These tools improve the quality of service provided to affected families.

In visiting communities that have been affected by an event, the Initial Needs Evaluation (EVIN), a new methodology created by the SGR and WFP, allows actors to analyse the food security of affected families and the

impact of the event on their livelihoods. EVIN has officially become a part of Ecuador's national risk management toolbox, and its use in emergency situations was initiated by the SGR in 2014. Technical staff from the SGR and from other National Decentralized Risk Management System institutions have been trained. Staff will continue to receive training throughout 2015.

The joint creation of the Humanitarian Assistance Logistics Chain demonstrates the coordinated effort by national institutions working in emergency preparedness and response. Established in 2014, the chain brings together procedures used to streamline humanitarian assistance activities. This instrument helps to standardize the knowledge of the National System's staff regarding inter-institutional logistics and the humanitarian assistance that takes place before, during, and after an emergency.



"In the experiences we shared and during the practical exercises we did in the workshop, I realized how complex it is to coordinate with technical staff from several first-responder institutions. We need to be sure our roles complement each other when an emergency strikes: who is in charge of what, what resources are needed and, above all, how to carry out activities under a unified framework. At first getting organized seemed to be a great challenge, but together we made it happen."

Alex Quito, SGR facilitator

Family meal

Five countries, three continents, one universal custom: sharing a meal with family. In 2014, photographer Chris Terry went in search of the ingredients of the family meal in Ecuador, Chad, Jordan, Niger, and Myanmar. The families photographed by Terry receive assistance from the World Food Programme thanks to support from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO).

As part of the project "Family Meal," the photographer visited five families in Ecuador's northern border region. These families described their daily lives, favourite dishes, and as one Colombian mother calls it, the "sacred moment" of mealtime, when everyone comes together as a family.



Read more about "The Family Meal-What Brings Us Together?" at: <http://familymeal.eu/index-en.html>

Ecuador provinces with WFP presence



World Food Programme

