Terms of Reference

Internship

Protection Unit CO

UNHCR Ecuador

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is offering a full-time internship with the **Community-based Protection Area** under the Protection Unit at **UNHCR Ecuador**.

Established in December 1950, UNHCR is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for asylum seekers, refugees, returnees, internally displaced communities and stateless people. Every year, millions of men, women and children are forced to flee their homes to escape conflict and persecution. UNHCR currently operates in over 130 countries, using its long expertise to protect and care for millions.

**Title**: Community-based Protection Intern

**Internship Location**: Quito

**Division/Section/Service:** Protection Unit – CBP area

**Duration (length of internship)**: 6 months

**Contract** **Type**: Internship (Full time)

**Closing** **date for application**:

**Start** **date**: July 2025

Organizational context

Since 2000, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has worked in Ecuador to protect and assist one of the largest populations of recognized refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean. Ecuador is a destination, transit and origin country for persons in need of international protection, with more than 70,000 recognized refugees (mainly Colombians) and an ongoing influx of refugees and migrants; in particular, for Venezuelan nationals who continue to suffer persecution and the consequences of the Humanitarian crisis in their country. About 450,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants are estimated to be residing in Ecuador, with less than a third of them holding a legal status.

UNHCR’s operation in Ecuador is fundamentally driven to deliver protection and solutions to a variety of people forced to flee and stateless people in partnership and close collaboration with national authorities as well as non-governmental organizations and communities. Particular attention and specific multi-faceted protection and assistance is often provided within short timeframes and at times little resources in demanding operational environment.

In the last years, the increasing security setting in several locations in the Ecuadorian territory has had a significant impact on the economy, affecting refugees, migrants, and locals alike and mining the socio-economic inclusion strategy. This downturn deepened human rights gaps which will adversely affect refugees and migrants, the vast majority of whom work in the informal sector, lack a social safety net and cannot cover their basic needs, such as rent and food and are prone to discriminatory attitudes. Since 2023 the acceleration of the violence and conflict in several parts of the country, due to increased criminal activities, has caused that for the first time, incidents of internal displacement and spontaneous relocation of nationals and others have been registered. An increased number of nationals have also been reported to exit the country as compared to previous years.

The intern position at UNHCR offers a unique opportunity to contribute to the vital mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees while gaining invaluable hands-on experience in the field of Community-Based Protection. The intern will be part of the Protection Unit and this role provides direct support to the main CBP activities in the country office related to: community-based protection interventions, AGD, Accountability, Localization, Prevention of and Response to Gender-based Violence, and Child Protection, allowing to develop practical skills and deepen understanding of humanitarian and protection principles. Additionally, the intern will engage in close coordination with partners, and stakeholders, fostering collaboration on community engagement initiatives for people in forced displacement. This internship is an excellent platform to enhance professional expertise, build meaningful connections, and make a tangible impact in the lives of refugees, migrants and host communities, all while advancing his/her career in the humanitarian sector.

The position

The Community-Based Protection Intern is a member of the Protection Team in the Country Office and normally reports to the Associate Community-Based Protection Officer. S/he supports the implementation of protection standards and provides advice on community-based protection and gender mainstreaming to the Protection Unit. The incumbent support a coordinated approach in the implementation of UNHCR’s rights-based, gender equality and community-based engagement with all persons of concern (PoC) and contributes to the achievement of UNHCR’s commitments to accountability to affected people.

S/he maintains close working relationships and supports Protection and Community-Based Protection staff in the field and partners, who act as the critical interface between UNHCR and communities of concern, enabling them to provide the AGD-sensitive analysis of community risks and capacities that form the essential foundations of national and regional programmes, enhancing protection and achieving solutions through people centred, community-based and gender responsive approaches.

Duties and responsibilities

Under the strategic guidance of the Community Based-Protection Unit, will be responsible for:

* Through relationships with PoC and network of partners, stay abreast of political, social, economic and cultural developments that have an impact on the protection environment and provide advice to the protection team. Understand the perspectives, capacities, needs and resources of the PoC and advise the protection team, accordingly, highlighting the specific protection needs of women and men, children, youth and older persons, persons with disabilities, marginalized groups.
* Support implementing and operational partners as well as displaced and local communities to develop community-owned activities to address, where applicable, the social, educational, psycho-social, cultural, health, organisational and livelihood concerns as well as Child Protection and prevention and response to Gender-based Violence.
* Assist in working with host communities to involve national civil society groups in improving the protection of PoC.
* Assist in the analysis that identifies the capacities of communities of concern and risks they face.
* Support participatory assessments and ongoing consultation with PoC.
* Support communities in establishing representation and coordination structures.
* Ensure community understanding of UNHCR's commitment to deliver on accountability and quality assurance in its response.
* Collect data for monitoring of programmes and budgets from an AGD perspective and Gender mainstreaming.
* Draft and type routine correspondence, documents and reports and maintain up-to-date filing systems.
* Act as an interpreter in exchange of routine information, contribute to related liaison activities and respond directly to routine queries.
* Assist in the enforcement of participatory AGD sensitive analysis as an essential basis for all of UNHCR’s work.
* Identify and recommend which individuals or groups to prioritize for counselling and field visits based on agreed criteria.
* Enforce compliance of implementing partners with global protection policies and standards of professional integrity in the delivery of protection services.
* Perform other related duties as required.

Minimum qualifications required.

In order to be considered for an internship, candidates must meet the following eligibility criteria:

* Be either a recent graduate (having completed their studies within two years of applying) or a current student in a graduate/undergraduate school programme from a university or higher education facility accredited by [IAU/UNESCO](https://whed.net/home.php)[[1]](#footnote-2); and
* Have completed at least two years of undergraduate studies in a field relevant or of interest to the work of UNHCR[[2]](#footnote-3).
* Candidates with previous UNHCR Internship experience must not have exceeded the

maximum total cumulative full-time internship duration of eight (8) months.

**NOTE:** An individual who bears the relationship of parent, child or sibling or step-parent, step-child or step-sibling to a current UNHCR staff member or affiliate is not eligible for an internship.

[[3]](#footnote-4)Desirable qualifications and skills

* International Development, Cultural Studies, Human Rights, Gender, Gender Equality, International Social Work, Social Science, Political Science, Anthropology, International Law or other relevant field.
* Relevant professional experience, including in the areas of Gender equality, community-based protection, community services, social work, and human rights.
* Proven communication skills, both oral and written. Excellent drafting, formulation, reporting skills.
* Demonstrated knowledge of community communication and engagement approaches. Understanding of and demonstrated competencies in forced displacement and protection, particularly GBV prevention and response, child protection, education, gender equality, and the application of the Age, Gender, and Diversity Policy.
* Experience working in the UN or other international development organizations.
* Accuracy and professionalism in document production and editing;
* Solid overall computer literacy, including proficiency in various Microsoft Office applications (Excel, Word, among others), email, and internet; familiarity with database management; and office technology equipment;
* Have affinity with or interest in International Protection, Asylum, Durable Solutions, Gender-based violence, volunteerism as a mechanism for durable development, and the UN system.
* English is mandatory, Spanish is desirable.

Conditions

It is a full-time role with working hours starting from 08h30 am to 17h30 pm, Monday to Friday (8 hours per week). The successful candidate will be assigned to support the team in ***Community-based Protection area, Protection Unit, in Quito (CO).***

Internships normally last two to six months with the possibility of extension up to eight months for full-time internships and twelve months for part-time internships.

How to apply

The selected candidate will receive a link to the UNHCR recruitment portal to create a profile.

Obligations

Aquiring and renewing current visas, residence permits including all associated costs, obtaining medical certification and compliance with taxation requirements (if applicable), are the responsibility of the intern.

The selected candidate will need to provide UNHCR with a proof of funding from the sponsoring institution (if applicable), health insurance coverage applicable to the assigned internship location and a certificate of good health from a qualified medical practitioner certifying their fitness for work, as well as travel. In the event the candidate is not able to produce the required certificate, they will not be admitted to the Internship Programme.

**Allowance and Travel:** The Sponsoring Institution shall provide non-reimbursable financial support in the form of a stipend/scholarship/allowance/etc. for the period of internship with UNHCR. Travel expenses to and from the internship location shall be the responsibility of the respective sponsoring institution. UNHCR is not responsible for any renumeration for the intern during the internship period.

If you are a person with a disability and you expect you may face challenges during the recruitment process, you can indicate it in your application form.

There are options to select any health conditions you may have and outline any necessary adjustments related to disabilities during the recruitment phases. Providing this information is optional. It will be treated as strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of finding out how to better assist you during the recruitment process.

Adjustments for candidates with disabilities will be provided as best as possible and as needed upon request.

All candidates will be assessed based on meeting the requirements for each vacancy in relation to experience, skills, and education.

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UNHCR does not charge a fee at any stage of its recruitment process (application, interview, meeting, travelling, processing, or training).

We welcome applications from candidates with a refugee or stateless background.

The UNHCR workforce consists of many diverse nationalities, cultures, languages, and opinions. UNHCR seeks to sustain and strengthen this diversity to ensure equal opportunities as well as an inclusive working environment for its entire workforce. Applications are encouraged from all qualified candidates without distinction on grounds of race, colour, sex, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

1. In the education section of the application, please make sure that your school is selected from the list of accredited higher education institutions when creating a profile in UNHCR Recruitment Portal - Workday. To do this, click on the magnifying glass next to Select School, then select Contains next to Description, type in the name of the school, click Look up and finally click on the result. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For internships, completed university degree is not a requirement [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)