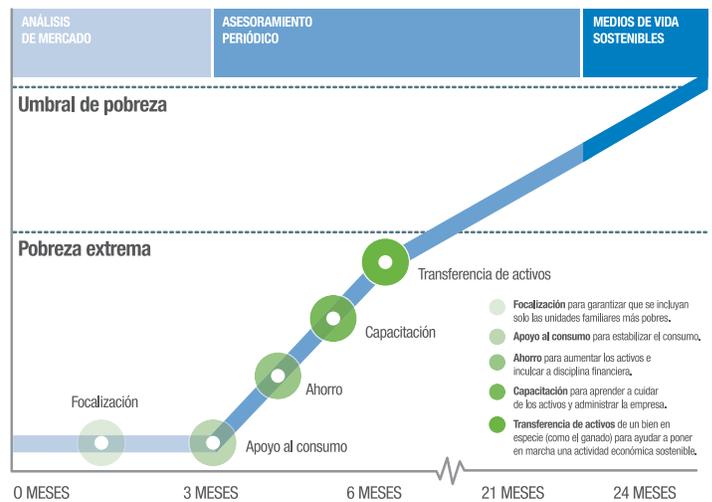


What is Graduation Model?

The **Graduation Model** is a project that aims to support the most vulnerable people to overcome poverty permanently.

Applying a combination of interventions related to social assistance, livelihoods support and microfinance, the model promotes the dignity and self-reliance of participants.

In order to find solutions to the barriers that prevent refugees to become self-reliant worldwide, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is implementing three pilot projects (Costa Rica, Egypt and Ecuador) of the so-called “Graduation Model”, which has already been successfully applied in many different contexts.

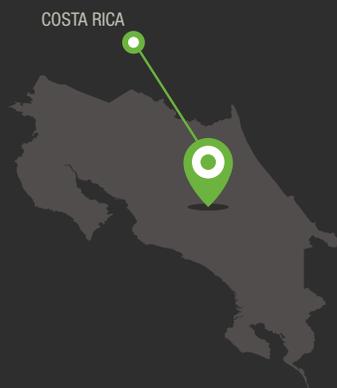


The objective of the project is that people who successfully complete the Graduation Model are self-reliant as a result of having obtained a decent job, support networks in their communities and their self-esteem strengthened.

Why is the GRADUATION MODEL implemented in Costa Rica?

Costa Rica is the country with the second largest refugee population in Latin America. Legally, the country offers all the conditions required promoting the integration of refugees, however access to employment opportunities remains the biggest obstacle for welfare and protection of the population.

Despite having valuable previous work experiences and an important level of education, it is not an easy task for refugees to



find permanent livelihoods in the country. Among other reasons, this problem is due to the lack of information about their rights and documentation, in addition to discrimination and difficulties in accessing educational opportunities.

Given the above, the implementation of the Graduation Model is strategic as it will support the full integration of refugees and will contribute to the development of Costa Rica.

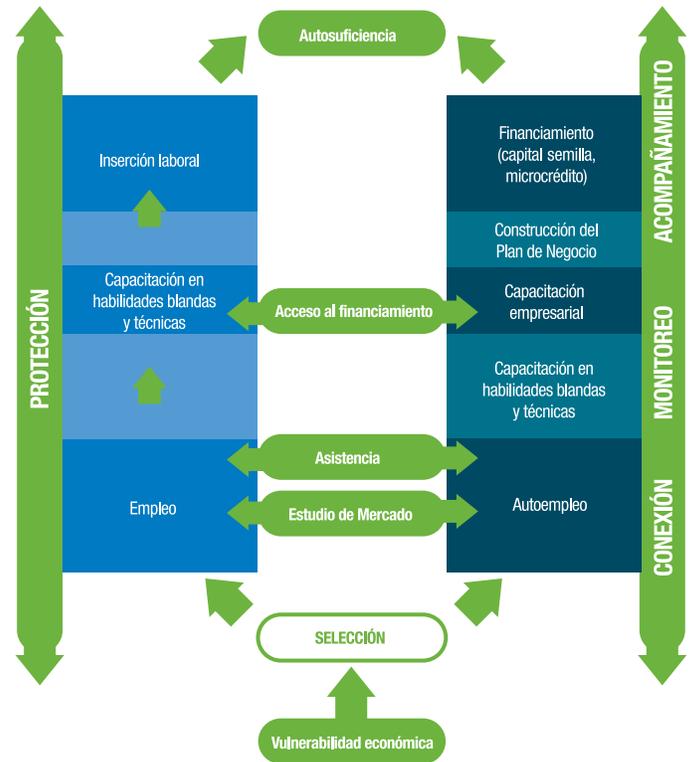
¿How will the GRADUATION MODEL be implemented in Costa Rica?

In Costa Rica, the Graduation Model will start with a Market Assessment which will be jointly carried out with the International Labour Organization (ILO). The assessment will spot the most relevant productive sectors for the participants as well as their training needs.

According to the market's current demand and the skills and interests of participants, a comprehensive coaching will be offered, either to: employment or self-employment.

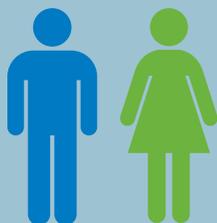
Either way, partners of the Graduation Model will offer financial assistance to the participants during the initial phases, guidance and continuous support, technical training and employability skills, financial education and support to achieve a successful job placement or establishing their own business.

MODELO DE GRADUACIÓN COSTA RICA



Who will benefit from the GRADUATION MODEL?

A total of 250 participants are expected for the first year of implementation, including people who currently are or were refugees and/or asylum-seekers. Also a group of 50 vulnerable Costa Ricans will participate.



What organizations are working in the GRADUATION MODEL?

The UNHCR office in Costa Rica is working in the design of the project with the support of the Livelihoods Unit at Headquarters in Geneva, experts from the BRAC University, and the International NGO Trickle Up.

The project will be carried out in partnership with a variety of local NGOs, civil society, academia and the public and private sectors.

The GRADUATION MODEL moves on in its implementation



On July 7th, the first inter institutional coordination meeting of the Graduation Model took place in San José. Participants included representatives from UNHCR's partners ACAI, RET, APRODE and Casa de Derechos. Fundación Manpower, Search, ILO; as well as representatives of public institutions such as the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC) and the Migration Board were also present.

During the meeting the main elements of the Graduation Model were presented as well as its importance of having it implemented in Costa Rica. With this first encounter, a relationship with different UNHCR partners was established, and the office moved on with the identification and management of new potential partners. Moreover, it set the grounds for an inter institutional work that enables the Graduation Model to meet its objectives in the country.



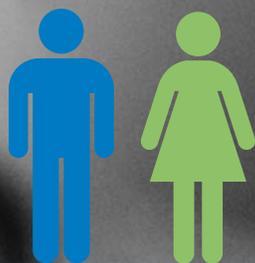
UNHCR Representative in Costa Rica:

"There will be a more integral approach to the situation of refugees and a closer and personalized support from UNHCR and its partners"

Roberto Mignone, UNHCR Representative in Costa Rica, explains some of the goals expected from the application of the Graduation Model in Costa Rica:

What is the importance of the Graduation Model for Costa Rica?

This is a pilot project that UNHCR is implementing in Costa Rica along with Egypt and Ecuador. It is important because it complements and strengthens the existing support programs addressed to refugees and asylum seekers, like for example the initiative "Living the Integration".



However, in the case of the Graduation Model, the beneficiaries include vulnerable refugees, asylum seekers and Costa Ricans (as host community), with the aim of supporting them to be more competitive in the labour market, to find a job or to set up a microbusiness and become self-sufficient.

There will also be a comprehensive analysis for each situation in a close and personalized support from UNHCR and its partners.

What are the differences between this model and other models in terms of overcoming poverty and self-reliance?

This model focuses on refugees with vulnerabilities and additional obstacles (eg documentation, validation of academic qualifications, access to banking and financial services, discrimination, lack of supporting family networks) in comparison to other people in poverty.

Therefore, the Graduation Model promotes the socio-economic integration through self-reliance, but also aims at supporting the legal integration, supporting refugees in the process of obtaining their permanent residence and / or naturalization.

What is the impact or benefit expected from this project?

Once the participants are graduated, we hope that they will be fully integrated into Costa Rican society and contribute to the country's development.

They will also be self-reliant so UNHCR can redirect resources to even more vulnerable people, either here or elsewhere. Furthermore, the involvement of local partners, government, civil society, private companies and academia, that support UNHCR in this challenge, will have more experience in working with refugees in the future.

Since it is a pilot project, its success will pave the way for UNHCR to expand this program in more than 120 countries where it works with tens of millions of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, internally displaced and stateless.

More information:



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