

COVID-19 in Ecuador is exacerbating an already simmering economic crisis. 50% of children are currently living in poverty and 6 in 10 families do not have access to the internet. Additionally, there has been a 25 percent reduction in investments to the country. For many families and children, the preoccupation is on obtaining something to eat rather than continuing their education. On top of all this, the national government has not been quick to respond to the crisis. It was initially believed the crisis would be much shorter, but realization came as the months dragged on. These factors contribute to the situation in Ecuador being very complex that requires high levels of coordination and the ability to adapt to and support the needs of the MoE with speed and efficiency. In light of the situation, the Ecuador CO has had considerable success in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ecuador CO response has three major components: supporting education continuity, PSS, and a robust monitoring strategy.

## 1. Education Continuity

The CO has partnered with 26 locally owned radio stations to implement a program entitled *Radio Revistas*. Unlike other responses, the program does not develop content. It uses already produced content and plays them for 30 minutes to one hour per day. Additionally, the host of the radio show is trained to relay messages on the importance of education to listeners and encourages them to call in with any questions or comments. In this way, the specific needs of the communities they work in were addressed.

## 2. Psychosocial Support

The CO has also been conducting PSS-related activities. Radio hosts for the *Radio Revistas* program are also trained on PSS and given information to disseminate to their listeners. In this way, individuals can receive some psychological help if they are having difficulty coping with the stress of COVID-19 and being confined to their homes. Teachers are also being trained in PSS principles so that they can follow-up with their students to ensure they are managing and keeping their stress at healthy levels. Teachers are also being trained on identifying instances of abuse and rights violations in the home to ensure children are safe. If a teacher deems a student in danger, further action can be taken.

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## 3. Monitoring Strategy

The final success the CO has had has been with the implementation of their monitoring strategy. An assessment was conducted and concluded that WhatsApp was used by many people in the country. With this information, the MoE was able to tailor their response to begin pushing content out to people using that platform.

The *Radio Revistas* program also presents an example of the CO's monitoring strategy success. Because people are encouraged to call, the CO can quickly ascertain the needs of individuals living in the region where the program is broadcasted. This allows them to make quick adaptations to programs and increase the effectiveness of their programs. Lastly, the CO carried out a diagnostic of WASH conditions in schools. This is of critical importance since without proper WASH facilities, conditions will not be sanitary enough to allow children to return safely. Based on this assessment, construction and rehabilitation of WASH facilities can take place ensuring a sanitized environment for children when they return to school.