



Marlon (12) doing homework with his father and sister, in a rural area of Sucumbios, Ecuador.
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UNICEF Ecuador

COVID-19
SitRep #7
Focus on Mental Health

unicef 
for every child

Highlights

This Situation Report highlights key actions UNICEF Ecuador is implementing to **support mental health and socio-emotional wellbeing of children, adolescents, caretakers and teachers during the pandemic**. To date, the interventions have reached:

- **26,584 girls and 24,699 boys** who received psycho-emotional support and participated in recreational activities online both at home as well as through UNICEF supported virtual Child Friendly Spaces. To achieve this, UNICEF trained teachers to better support the education of children and adolescents during the lockdown.
- **4,985 women and 3,052 men**, who are parents, caregivers or teachers, participated in focus groups to receive socioemotional support and mechanisms for them to cope and manage stress. This provides them with tools to continue supporting students remotely and work towards violence prevention mechanisms in their households.
- **916 social health workers and community tracers** were trained to implement health community surveillance strategies, which includes identification of cases and referral to health centers. Trained social workers also provide emotional support to families with children when a member of the family is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- **Posts shared on social media**. UNICEF Ecuador has focused on delivering recommendations to caregivers on how to better deal with stress and anxiety, how to implement activities for them to do with children at home, healthy eating and exercising habits or how to talk to children on the loss of a family member or friend reached over **two million people** on Facebook and Instagram. Also, UNICEF developed seven short stories dealing with issues such as prevention of contagion, taking care of loved ones and deal with stressful situations. These stories have been posted in the UNICEF website and downloaded by 18.653 UNICEF supporters.

Mobility Restrictions

The “traffic light” system continues to be implemented by the Government to identify restrictive measures for each Municipality.

To date, 206 municipalities have moved from red to yellow light and 13 municipalities to green light. 2 municipalities remain in red light.

On September 13th Ecuador will end the national state of exception and the restrictions such as the curfew will end, due to a rulling by the Constitutional court, which reminds government of the exceptional nature of such measures, and indicating that there are some other mechanisms within the national legislation that allow national authorities to continue with preventing measures.

Situation in Numbers

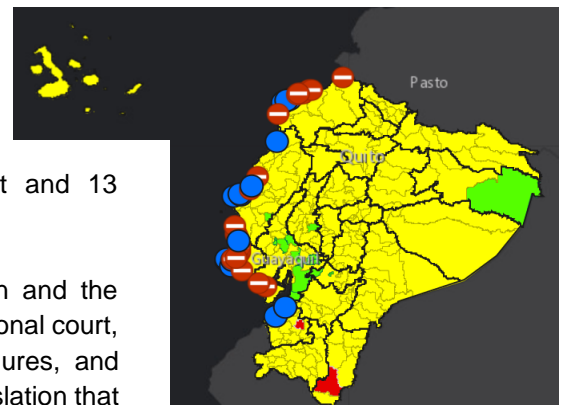
As of August 31:



Currently **113,767**
Laboratory-confirmed
COVID-19 cases
(National Infographic, MoH)



6,556 COVID-19 deaths
plus **3,741** probable deaths
from COVID-19
(National Infographic, MoH)



Summary Analysis of Mental Health actions across sectors

Physical distancing, but social closeness

Since the beginning of the lockdown, UNICEF Ecuador has used social media to disseminate important messages for parents, caretakers, essential public personnel and children and adolescents to **deal with stress and anxiety**, while also delivering recommendations on keeping the mind and body healthy at home.

UNICEF also broadcasted messages on social networks about preparing children to receive and understand news about loved ones who have become ill or passed away, while supporting the Ministry of Health to prepare and produce a short story on how to deal with the loss of a family member.

UNICEF understands that, during these difficult times, children were not able to go out and play with their friends, go to school or visit their loved ones. For this reason, and due to the increased use of screens and online tools, UNICEF also focused on suggesting a **healthy use of social media** and take advantage of the technology to **keep in touch with family and friends**, while delivering tips on how to **prevent children from being harassed or put in danger** through Internet. At the same time, UNICEF provides messages and tips about the importance to **ensure time away from the internet and spend quality time with the family** reading, painting, playing and doing physical activity, which help to strengthen the bond between parents and children.

UNICEF Ecuador also used the **U-Report** tool to ask adolescents and young people how they felt during the lockdown and what kind of recommendations would be useful for them. In addition, as part of the editorial strategy developed by our U-Report partner GKCity, a report called [The Suspended Future](#) was published in which young people share their testimonies on how they have managed their emotions during the pandemic and receive feedback from mental health professionals. Finally, "[Recommendations to take care of your mental health in times of pandemic](#)" was published on the **U-Report** Ecuador website. This text also includes recommendations and tips for adolescents and young people.

These messages on social media, reached over 2 million people since March, showing great engagement from the public. Through U-Report, posts reached **281,000 people** and **158,000 engagement actions** with comments or likes.



In the month of August, 12 posts on social media addressed mental health and activities for emotional containment or stress management (6 on Facebook, 6 on Instagram), generating an average reach of **28,199 people**.

UNICEF Ecuador has also published a collection of stories to support children in dealing with the consequences of the pandemic. These stories are designed to help them and their families understand how to manage emotions and to face the changes and challenges brought about by the pandemic. The stories were downloaded by 18.653 people on UNICEF website.

They were also emailed directly to those who signed up and are also available for download from the UNICEF website. **Little Bubble Monkey Learns How to Fight COVID-19** helps children understand what the virus is and how they can prevent the spread. **Moni Stays at Home** explains why confinement is necessary to take care of everyone's health during the pandemic. **Pee-Pee Little Monkey** is a story about how love and patience is the best way to overcome the fears and nervousness that make Little Monkey wet the bed. **Chatty Little Monkey** encourages children to talk about their fears with their family and friends. **The Song of the Moon**



talks about why children may feel afraid and have difficulties sleeping during times of crisis and change. **Happy Little Monkey** explains that the fear which arises in difficult times can be overcome. **When did you grow up so fast?** It's another story developed for caregivers, that looks at parenting in COVID-19 times.

Community-based mechanisms for epidemiologic surveillance and socioemotional support

Ecuador CO continues implementing its **community-based health surveillance** strategy in Guayas, Pichincha and Imbabura, reaching over 40.000 people and with the support of over 60 community leaders and 164 health care professionals. In Imbabura, over 75 community leaders have received training on how to use tools to trace contacts and possible cases of COVID-19 and refer women and children to health services. They have also been trained in socio emotional support strategies for families and community when COVID-19 cases are confirmed.

In Guayas, health brigades have taken place with the support of community health workers. These brigades support the provision of essential health services and psycho emotional support to children under five years of age. As part of the health community-based surveillance strategy, the CO has also been strengthening risk communication activities through training of over 1800 community health workers at national level.

Moreover, Ecuador CO continues supporting the **strengthening of essential maternal and child health services** in the context of COVID-19 through two massive webinars on the guidelines for the attention of the mother and the newborn in the context of COVID-19; these webinars have reached over 8.000 health care professionals.

As part of the programmatic efforts to ensure continuity of ECD in the COVID-19 response, over 21 educational TV programmes aimed at caretakers of children under 2 years old were launched, in alliance with the Ministry of Education, and included in its distance learning strategy. The TV programmes address issues related to positive parenting and tips to caretakers on how to support the early development of their children.

Socioemotional support to teachers, parents and children to continue distance learning

UNICEF Ecuador supports teachers and parents so that distance learning can continue for all children and adolescents, especially in the most remote areas where internet connection is not available. Since March, **7,141 teachers and caregivers** received psycho emotional support. Additionally, UNICEF provided a training for teachers to strengthen their abilities to deliver psycho emotional support to parents and students, reaching indirectly, through this work, **49,234 children and adolescents**. Teachers play a crucial role in this pandemic, not only for providing materials and academic support to students, but also for maintaining constant contact with children and help them emotionally to overcome the anxiety and stress caused by the confinement and their frustration of not being able to meet their friends at school and play.

To improve connectivity and contact with their students, UNICEF donated **899 tablets** and **4,335 connectivity plans** to teachers and caregivers, through the Ministry of Education and other UNICEF implementing partners, reaching an estimated of **70,000 students** in total.

Parent-care groups and prevention of violence

Through the **Child Protection Programme**, UNICEF provides psycho-social support to caregivers, including parents and other caregivers, such as social workers and service providers of different Government institutions working within the child protection system. Through the implementing partners Pontific Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE by its Spanish acronym) and Idea Dignidad, UNICEF developed safe parenting support groups, which aim at increasing self-consciousness on the importance of preventing violence against children in confinement due to COVID-19, as well as how to deal with anxiety and stress and how to develop safe spaces at home to talk to their children. These activities also provide recommendations of how to play, talk and treat children in this context. With the PUCE, UNICEF also developed a **Parenting Guide**, to support parents implementing good practices and care with their children.

To support the socio-emotional wellbeing of **adolescents currently in detention centers**, UNICEF is also providing emotional discharge activities with the social workers of the centers and is donating recreation materials and technology equipment to support the education of adolescents. These activities are key as these adolescents could not receive visits of families during the lockdown and emotional support was crucial for their wellbeing.

Activities of the **Child Friendly Spaces** were adapted to online tools and continued to provide socio-emotional support and recreational activities to **uprooted children** and host communities, also strengthening social cohesion.

Since March 2020, the child protection programme has reached **688 adults and 2,409 children and adolescents with socioemotional support and mental health mechanisms**.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF is leading the WASH and Education clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, within the United Nations Country Humanitarian Team. These coordination efforts directly support the National Government in the emergency response plan by identifying the most pressing needs and gaps while advocating for keeping children healthy, reaching every child with water, sanitation and hygiene, ensuring that every child keeps learning, protecting children from violence and supporting families to cover their needs and care for children. UNICEF is also actively participating in the Health, Logistics and Protection clusters.

UNICEF, together with UNESCO, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, is part of a **Technical Advisory Committee** set up by the Minister of Education to advise her on continuity plans for education, that include the development of a strategy to ensure connectivity plans to deliver educational programmes to all children, providing WASH in schools and, eventually, orderly return to schools.

The work of UNICEF contributes to support outbreak control of COVID-19 and to mitigate collateral impacts of the pandemic, including of the risks associated with the current economic crisis, that might affect the continuity of essential social services for children, women and vulnerable populations. Through its interventions, UNICEF also aims to address the protection issues that are related to prolonged confinement of children due to COVID-19 preventing measures, and to deal with mental health of children, adolescents and youth and their care providers, especially for the most vulnerable.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

UNICEF Ecuador is part of the Global HAC, which comprises the funding asks for all UNICEF COs. **Ecuador appeal amounts to USD \$15,115,650**. Part of this amount is destined to cash transfers for extreme vulnerable Venezuelan families who are not eligible for the various cash transfer schemes provided to Ecuadorian nationals.

Up to now, UNICEF has received a grant of USD \$250,000 from **UK DFID** for the COVID-19 response, which was used to acquire PPE supplies. In addition, USD \$190,000.00 from UK DFID funds were received to provide social protection measures to most vulnerable families. An additional USD \$100,000 were received from NYHQ (**EMOPS CERF RR**), and a grant of USD \$41,666 from **UNAIDS UBRAF**, which have been assigned to the Health programme. Additionally, USD \$350,000 has been received from **United Nations Foundation (UNF)** as part of the Solidarity Fund, for health activities. The Education programme received USD 514,000 from the **Education Cannot Wait (ECW)** Programme and additional USD \$70,000 from **Thematic Funds for Education** to support Ministry of Education emergency contingency plan.

Regarding support of WASH services in health centers and schools, \$665,000 USD were received as part of an **ECHO** top-up for the Resilient Communities project that is already under implementation in Ecuador. Additionally, UNICEF Ecuador has received USD \$1.7M was received from **USAID/OFDA** for a combined WASH and Protection initiatives. Also, from the USA Government, **BPRM** supported with USD \$1.8 million to integrate the COVID-19 response with the Venezuelan migration crisis, as well as an additional \$120,370 USD, which will be used to deliver CBI to Venezuelan families to provide them with WASH essential supplies. UNICEF Ecuador has also received USD \$81,768 USD **Thematic Funds for WASH**. Additional 600,000 USD PRM funds were received, that were used to buy hygiene kits for children under 3 years old, for they care.

UNICEF CO is also allocating USD \$279,000 of its regular programme to support Venezuelan families living in Ecuador to acquire hygiene items through collaborative measures with WFP.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

Since March 2020, UNICEF has published press releases and articles regarding UNICEF's response to the COVID-19:

1. Breastfeeding needs to continue, there is no evidence that COVID-19 is pass through breastmilk: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/la-lactancia-debe-continuar-no-hay-evidencia-de-que-el-covid-19-se-transmita-en>
2. UNICEF delivers life-saving supplies to the Government of Ecuador to support the emergency response: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/unicef-entrega-suministros-vitales-al-gobierno-de-ecuador-para-apoyar-la>
3. Education must continue during the health emergency, UNICEF and UNESCO says: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/la-educaci%C3%B3n-debe-continuar-durante-la-emergencia-sanitaria-afirman-unesco-y>
4. The Health Emergency threatens children and adolescents' learning: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/la-emergencia-sanitaria-supone-un-desaf%C3%ADo-para-el-aprendizaje-de-los-ni%C3%B1os>
5. COVID-19: How to ensure continues learning of children without internet access: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/covid-19-c%C3%B3mo-asegurar-el-aprendizaje-de-los-ni%C3%B1os-sin-acceso-internet>
6. How to guarantee children rights during COVID-19: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/c%C3%B3mo-garantizar-los-derechos-de-los-ni%C3%B1os-en-el-contexto-del-covid-19>
7. Photo Essay: supplies donation, key point in the response to COVID-19 Emergency: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/fotos-donaci%C3%B3n-de-suministros-punto-clave-en-la-respuesta-la-emergencia-por-covid-19>
8. Stories to talk about COVID-19 with children: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/cuentos-infantiles-para-hablar-de-covid-19-con-los-ni%C3%B1os>
9. Could mothers continue breastfeeding during COVID-19?: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/%C2%BFpueden-las-madres-dar-de-lactar-sus-beb%C3%A9s-en-tiempos-de-covid-19>
10. We must prevent the pandemic from COVID-19 from becoming a health crisis for children, says UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/hay-que-evitar-que-la-pandemia-por-el-covid-19-se-convierta-en-una-crisis-de>
11. More UNICEF support arrives to Ecuador: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/covid-19-m%C3%A1s-ayuda-de-unicef-llega-ecuador>
12. Educational television programming kicks off: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/comunicados-prensa/arranca-programaci%C3%B3n-educativa-en-televisi%C3%B3n>
13. How children imagine the world after the pandemic: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/los-ni%C3%B1os-cuentan-c%C3%B3mo-reimaginan-el-mundo-despu%C3%A9s-de-la-pandemia-por-covid-19>
14. How parents can build a protective environment at home: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/%C2%BFc%C3%B3mo-hacer-que-los-hogares-sean-espacios-seguros-para-los-ni%C3%B1os-y-ni%C3%B1as-durante-la>
15. WASH intervention in 15 neighborhoods of Esmeraldas, where UNICEF delivers safe water to 3,000 families: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/historias/unicef-distribuye-agua-en-los-hogares-de-los-ni%C3%B1os-m%C3%A1s-vulnerables-en-esmeraldas>

UNICEF has also developed a series of videos:

1. COVID-19: launching of "A-prender la Tele", educational programs on TV for children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4igFbJ8p4M&feature=youtu.be>
2. Can mothers breastfeed during COVID-19 emergency? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuJgQQ3xyso>
3. UNICEF's humanitarian help to Ecuador: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7_LZi7UvXs
4. Education during emergency is not the same as distance learning: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wvRMr3tpBA>
5. What can we do to ensure learning continuation if children do not have access to internet? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOSICwdwl9o>
6. More than 1 million supplies for health professionals!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjtRZMJyKm0>
7. Karla Kanora, our GWA, reads the story "El Monito Burbuja aprende a combatir al coronavirus": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-f2RwOia5k>
8. Boys and girls need you in this TVC pandemic (15sec): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IETIHf0RniU>

Next SitRep: 30 September 2020

UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office: www.unicef.org/lac

UNICEF Ecuador Office: <https://www.unicef.org/ecuador/>

UNICEF LAC Facebook: www.facebook.com/uniceflac

UNICEF Global Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/covid-2019.html>

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