

# Ecuador Accelerator Lab In Action: Our Journey So Far

October 2019-July 2020





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Accelerator Lab network is part of UNDP's broader efforts to expand the way the organization invests, thinks about and delivers development. The Accelerator Lab is helping UNDP and partners close the gap between the current practices of international development and an accelerated pace of change through new service lines in development.

During the 10 months the Accelerator Lab has been operative in Ecuador, the team has established a portfolio of work in labor informality, waste management, deforestation and urban resilience. Through the public manifestations in October and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the Lab has adapted its portfolio to the local emergent context, deriving valuable learnings in the process. This report summarizes the key actions and results obtained by the Accelerator Lab in these months as well as the next steps looking forward.

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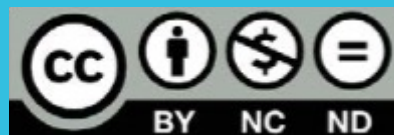
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## THE LAB'S COVID-19 RESPONSE



**Local seamstress capacity-building to recover from the crisis: Cash for Training**



**The Citizen Collaboratory: a new model of citizen-to-citizen collaboration**





# Deforestation and Livestock in the Amazon region



## Why is this important?



Ecuador has only 2% of the Amazon rainforest, however, the **Amazon** represents about **half** of the national **territory**.



In the Ecuadorian Amazon, **99%** of **deforestation** is due to **agricultural** practices and **64.9%** of it is explained by grassland for **livestock**.



The **Amazon rainforest** has a **two-fold role** in **climate change** by releasing 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in the presence of deforestation and by absorbing one-third of the CO<sub>2</sub> released from burning fossil fuels.



## Our partners



**giz**

MINISTERIO DE  
AGRICULTURA Y GANADERÍA

MINISTERIO DEL  
AMBIENTE Y AGUA

**PROAmazonía**  
Programa Integral Amazónico de  
Conservación de Bosques y Producción Sostenible



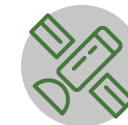
## Our approach



**Ecuador's Accelerator Lab** was **selected** to be part of the worldwide **Data Powered Positive Deviance** (DPPD) initiative led **by the GIZ Datalab** to know how data can speed up sustainable development.



The method uses **large quantities of data** to understand the underlying factors of **positive outliers** with favorable outcomes.



We use **open source satellite imagery** and **public data** to identify positive deviant livestock farms (low deforestation rate & increasing or constant returns to scale) for future **policy design based on local evidence**.





## Our work

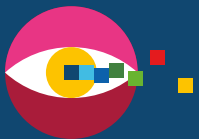


**2 territorial units of analysis** were selected to compare results between the northern and southern regions of the Amazon, which have gone through different colonization and deforestation processes.



So far, we know that farmers that have got training on livestock or a family member that holds a degree in agriculture or any related field seem to have more sustainable practices. The Lab will continue researching for other factors.

- These findings will not only have implications for Ecuador's livestock policies but also for other countries with the Amazon rainforest.



## Next steps

- Once farmers are identified we will understand the **underlying factors** and behaviors of their sustainable practices (by collecting field information) to generate evidence based on local solutions.
- The findings of the research will give us insights on the methodology's potential to expand the analysis to other regions in the Amazon or to analyze deforestation related to other agricultural practices. This initiative could be a reference for the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture at the national level and even in the region among other Amazonian countries.





# Fostering recycling & the livelihoods of waste pickers



## Why is this important?



**3.000 waste pickers** and **3.000 intermediaries** in the waste management chain in Quito. This high number of intermediaries means the **average income** of a waste picker is **\$218**, well **below** the **minimum wage** of **\$400/month**.



**70% of waste pickers are women >50 years old**, working in nocturnal schedules with precarious working conditions to sustain their families.



## Our partners



We partnered with ReciVeci: a local civil society initiative that works closely with citizens and waste pickers in Quito to promote recycling.



## Our approach



Experimentation and Behavioral Insights



## Our work



**Portfolio of experiments** using **behavioral insights** to **test** which **incentives** drive citizens to recycle more.



**Module within a recycling app, ReciVar,** where users can send **WhatsApp messages** to learn **which materials can be recycled**.



Due to **COVID-19**, waste pickers have been **unable to collect recyclables for more than 70 days**, severely limiting their income.

- The Lab supported a pilot **collection scheme** in **4 neighborhoods**: Monteserrín, La Floresta, Tumbaco and Cumbayá.

**recycling in households = greater impact on waste pickers' livelihoods**





## Results



**83%** baseline survey respondents **reported contributing to the environment as their main incentive to recycle**

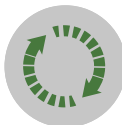
- Yet, **pre-test shows social incentive** of contributing towards waste pickers' livelihoods is **stronger** than environmental incentive.



**> 100 citizen consultations via WhatsApp** to learn how to recycle. This suggests **citizens might recycle more if they know how to** and a need for user-friendly information.



**37%** survey respondents are **willing to pay** for a **recyclable collection service** and **45% might be willing to pay**.



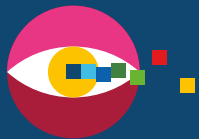
**6.235 kg recyclable materials collected** in 4 neighborhoods in 2 days = more than what the entire Association of Waste Pickers (RENAREC) collect in a full week of work throughout the entire city.



Increase from **2.000 to 4.882** app users (+ **144% increase**)



**January-April:** users reported average of **51 deliveries of recyclables** to waste pickers.  
**May-June: monthly reported average was 450 deliveries (+ 700% increase)!**



## Next steps

- **Pilot recyclable collection scheme to test citizen's willingness to pay** for this service. If citizen's willingness to pay is sustained in the pilot scheme, it could **inform the Municipality's decision-making** related to solid waste collection schemes in Quito.
- Results from this learning cycle will be shared with relevant stakeholders to **evaluate** the possibility of **scaling** at the **citizen or local government level**. For instance, the **interest of citizens** to learn more about what can be recycled is a relevant finding for community and local government communication campaigns.





# DreamLab: Building neighborhoods with youngsters



## Why is this important?



The project is a UNDP and UNICEF joint innovation grant winner.



Approximately **3.2 million Venezuelans** are currently seeking a **durable solution** in **Latin-American countries**, facing **discrimination** and other **barriers**.



To deal with this complex scenario, **UNDP and UNICEF** are working together in Ecuador to develop and implement **DREAMLab**, a **local integration strategy** based on **urban resilience** at the country level.



## Our partners



## Our approach



The Accelerator Lab leads the participatory methodology committee and applies solutions mapping and crowdsourced social cartography.



## Our work



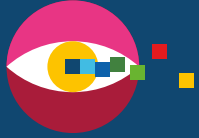
**Problem definition** and issue mapping in **three urban sectors in Quito** with the highest COVID-19 prevalence: Chillogallo, Calderón and Tumbaco.



**Jane's Walk Methodology** designed and adaptation of **social cartography** to map **local solutions**.







## Next steps

In the next months, as we engage local actors and institutions, the following action lines will be worked on:

- Promote the development of soft skills for life and technical competencies in adolescents and young people
- Accompany the development and implementation of macro-projects
- Guarantee the sustainability of initiatives.
- Create a diverse network of adolescents and young people who lead initiatives that generate positive changes.
- Scale up to the Northern Border





# Local seamstress capacity-building to recover from the crisis: Cash for Training



## Why is this important?



Ecuador is the second hardest hit economy by COVID-19 in Latin America, according to a special report released by ECLAC on 21st April.



**Personal protection equipment (PPE)** is required in a **timely manner**.



**Local production is sustainable** by reducing transport and distribution costs, supporting local economies and providers, and thus, contributes to **families' livelihoods**.



**Locally produced PPE** must comply with **quality assurance standards** to ensure protection.



## Our partners



## Our approach



Solutions co-creation and cooperativism



## Our work



Baseline of the **socio-economic situation** of 28 **families** was done.



**Modules, tutorials** and **open license PPE patterns** were designed.



**Families** were **organized into micro-networks** by proximity to **support each other**.



**Technical specifications** were gathered from the **Ministry of Health requirements** and **PAHO guidelines**.



**Theoretical** and **practical training** was held and permanent support provided.



## Results



**28 seamstress families** were trained in PPE

- **9 hours course**
- **Creative commons license** patterns created and distributed
- Live tutorials



Families received entrepreneurship assessment, **quality control**.



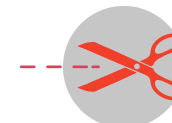
**779 overalls, masks, boot covers, caps** were manufactured and **donated** to Hospitals and the Ministry of Agriculture.



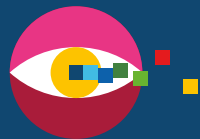
**3 technical approvals** from health units (INSPI, IESS Hospital in Machala, Ministry of Agriculture)



**1 technical specifications sheet** with QR code that links to the manufacturer.



**1 Association created** (Asociación Textilera Sin Fronteras)



## Next steps

- Growing the network to new neighborhoods and provinces with potential new partners (FUDELA and Fundación Sembrar)
- Self-managed savings group initiative as a strategy for financial inclusion
- Mapping clients to create market opportunities.





# The Citizen Collaboratory: a new model of citizen-to-citizen collaboration



## Why is this important?



The **COVID-19 pandemic** has **increased the vulnerability** of multiple groups in Ecuador at an **unprecedented rate**. Citizens and communities have **emergent needs** ranging from food kits to face masks that surpass institutional capacity.



## Our partners



We've joined forces with Fundación San Francisco Global, an NGO working on open government, to launch the *Citizen Collaboratory* platform: [www.colaboratoriociudadano.org](http://www.colaboratoriociudadano.org)



## Our approach



Crowdsourcing, crowdfunding, crowdsolving



## Our work



**9 organizations** have joined the initiative: IMPAQTO, Medialab CIESPAL, Fundación Voluntar, Diálogo Diverso, TECHO, Grupo FARO, Cámara de Economía Popular y Solidaria de Pichincha, Social Entrepreneur Corps and Radio Visión.



**Georeferenced** needs and collaborations on an **interactive map** to facilitate interactions based on proximity.





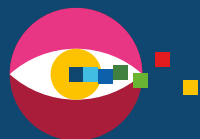
**3.300 visits** to the platform



**Suppliers module** included where **SMEs** can register their products to users.



Linked with **UNDP's** ***En Marcha Digital*** **guidelines** to support **digitization** processes in **small businesses**.



### Next steps

- **Crowdfunding module** for social impact campaigns is launching soon!
- **Pilot campaign** with **ProAmazonía** and a **local association in Napo** to raise funds to produce **ashangas, Amazon food kits**, to be donated to vulnerable families, thus directly benefiting producers and recipients





## Our Frontier Challenge: Labor Informality



### Why is this important?



**7/10 young people** are in the **informal sector** and have **no access** to the **social security system**.



**14.4% of formal employment will be destroyed due to the crisis**, leaving 11 million people without an adequate job (108.263 are young formal workers).



**Only 20%** of the population has **access** to the **social security system** and the number of **beneficiaries** has **decreased by 270.000** between mid March and June 2020.



### Our partners



- **UNWomen, ILO & UNDP** as part of a [Joint SDG Social Protection Fund](#) Project that aims at **expanding social protection to young informal workers..**
- Municipalities in **4 cities**: Quito, Guayaquil, Loja & Machala
- Ministries of Labor, Social Security and Social Inclusion



### Our work



- 1. Understanding barriers to formal work faced by young informal workers**
  - **Qualitative research** with over **50 young informal workers** in the cities of Quito and Guayaquil.
  - The **workshops** conducted collected information with **three methods**
    - General **characterization**
    - Collective **issue mapping**
    - **Focus groups** by gender



## Results



There are **gender differences in commuting distances for work purposes** that show women work from home or near home while continuing with housework activities.



**Young men and women feel** they have been **over trained**, yet feel **education content is not adapted to** their needs.



We learned **young women and men** sometimes **choose to stay in the informal sector** rather than working with an employer due to **low wages, long hours and commuting** time required.



We discovered **women are vulnerable to sexual exploitation with misleading job advertisements** and internet use for job search and through **e-commerce** platforms.



Read more on our findings [here](#).

## 2. Solutions mapping alternative social security schemes for atypical workers



The **Statute of the entertainment intermittent workers in France** proposes **social protection** under a **calculation system** adapted to **intermittent employment and long hours**, given their work characteristics.



**Mutual aid societies** may be testable solutions **complementary** but not substitute to **State Social Protection**.



**Agricultural or climate change insurance** allows to recuperate investment and keep afloat families that lose crops due to climate change events.



### 3. Co-creating solutions for Digital Risks in electronic work or economic activities

From our workshops we learned **young women are exposed to sexual exploitation risks and/or fraud clients** either when looking for jobs or doing e-commerce, due to **misleading advertisements or unsafe users**.



**Online workshop** with women from Quito, Guayaquil, Loja and Machala to identify **digital security challenges** when job searching and through electronic commerce.



**Digital Security MOOC** designed to strengthen digital security capabilities



Working on **browser extension prototype** to guide users and increase their **digital security capacities**.

### 4. Characterizing youth informal workers: online survey



**Survey** conducted in **four cities**: Quito, Loja, Guayaquil and Machala.



**Sample size: 300 observations per city**



Collecting data from young informal workers is challenging, thus **creative and complementary strategies** were deployed: local partners, social media, UNICEF-s [U Report](#) chatbot, text messages.







## Survey Results



**80%** young informal workers surveyed **lost** their **job** during the **pandemic**.



**50% unemployed** young informal workers **look for a job** in a **different productive sector** than the one they have been working in



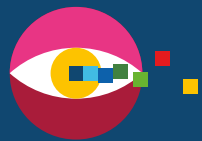
**50%** young informal workers surveyed **work for businesses** in professional services earning **> USD 400**



**70%** young informal workers surveyed are **interested in getting social security**, thus a better suited scheme should be developed.



**31%** young informal workers are interested in getting **training** and **50%** of them are currently studying (formal education + training).



## Next steps

- **Test browser extension prototype** as a tool to **enhance digital security** in job advertisements and e-commerce platform
- **Channel learnings** from workshops and survey to **design a pilot scheme** that responds to **young informal worker's needs**



# READ MORE ABOUT OUR WORK

