



accelerator
labs



UNDP ECUADOR'S ACCELERATOR LAB WORK

August 2020 – December 2021

Co-building the
Accelerator Labs as
a joint venture with:



UNDP
Core
Partners

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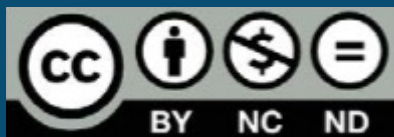
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Executive summary:

UNDP is a strategic partner and articulator that supports Ecuadorian society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with the goal of accelerate a transformative shift towards inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and resilient societies that promote the well-being of all people and the planet. From an inclusive social, economic, and environmental perspective, we contribute to solving complex development challenges through technical assistance, our knowledge networks, project management, innovative proposals, and the mobilization of resources.

Ecuador's Acceleration Lab as part of UNDP's global learning network whose main objective is to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), addresses development problems with a multidimensional perspective and from their complexity, seeks to build solutions through collective intelligence, generating learning in an agile way, to contribute to decision-making and evidence-based policy design.

In 2021, UNDP Acceleration Lab's work contributed to achieve the global goals over the next decade by mobilizing intelligence of all kinds to better understand complex problems, broaden the range of effective solutions, and running pilots to test the effectiveness of new ideas. Our work goes from building collaboratively a map of the ecosystem with ventures from the solidarity economy to generating a new management model to ensure that young informal workers' data remains a public good for policy generation.

Given that associative ventures are a true alternative for a fairer socio-economic recovery, the AccLab aimed to understand the characteristics of the solidarity economy ecosystem in Ecuador, by collaboratively mapping the ventures, understanding, and systematizing learnings about challenges, opportunities, and barriers to association and innovation. We helped strengthen workers abilities and network's sustainability with a "training of trainers" program which can now be accelerated.

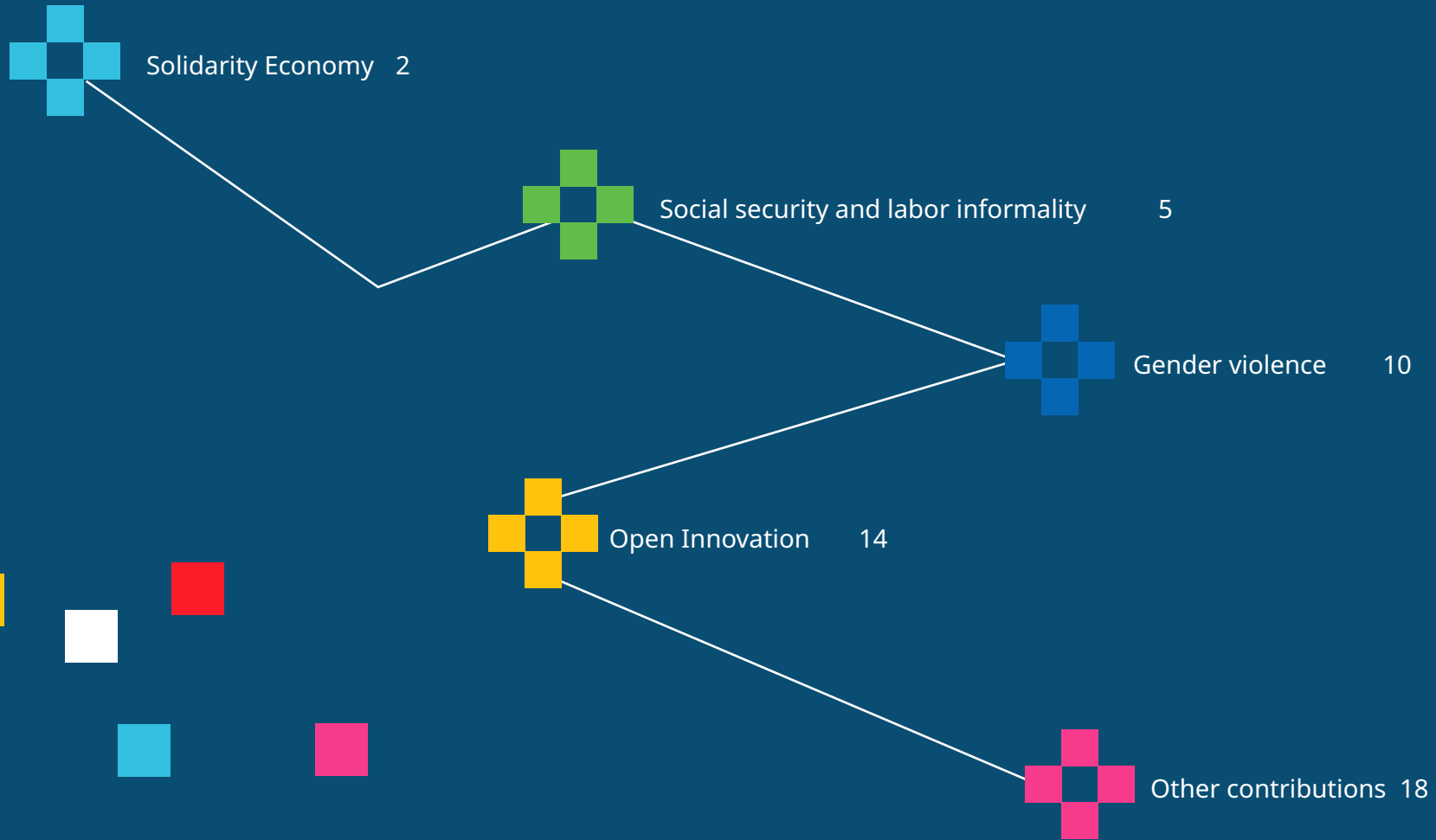
Labor informality in Ecuador has increased in recent years. Prior to the pandemic, seven out of ten young informal workers in Ecuador did not have access to the social security system; after COVID-19 the situation has become even more complex. The Accelerator Lab made diverse efforts to contribute with new sources of information and digital solutions to generate data on young informal workers for policy making, from a School of Data for youth organizations to generating new solutions to collect, manage and share data from this group under open data standards.



Gender Based Violence and femicides are increasing in Ecuador, with underreported data that does not capture the extent of the problem, and where a slow and inefficient judicial system leaves families and communities in search of justice. Ecuador's AccLab, in collaboration with local civil society networks and within the framework of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, adapted mapping methods to create routes of memory, injustice, and community response against femicides, as a first step in a reparation process, while strengthening survivor networks.

As part of our strategy to promote open innovation as a mechanism to connect actors to collectively find innovative solutions for multidimensional problems, we created a digital lab, and implemented challenges through open calls. These innovation challenges have allowed more than two hundred people to learn about youth labor informality, plastic pollution and bycatch fishing, child chronic malnutrition, and climate change.

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Solidarity Economy

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Why does it matter?

The cooperative movement in Ecuador has existed since the end of the 19th century, so why map the solidarity economy ecosystem as an innovative alternative? Cooperates represent a real and encouraging alternative for a fairer and more sustainable economic recovery. With this premise, and to understand the characteristics of the so called solidarity economy ecosystem in Ecuador, we have created a [collaborative map](#) with associative and cooperative entrepreneurship in the formal and informal sector.



Our partners:

Government:

Instituto Nacional de
Economía Popular y
Solidaria



Ministerio de
Agricultura y Ganadería



Private Sector:

Fundación
Museos
de la Ciudad

Academia:



INSTITUTO SUPERIOR
TECNOLÓGICO DE LA
ECONOMÍA SOCIAL,
POPULAR Y SOLIDARIA

Civil society organizations:



Cooperatives and Associations



Our work & results:

Solidarity Economy Ecosystem

- 151 Associative enterprises from the alternative solidarity economy registered on a digital map, an ecosystem that comprises 6,543 members.
- To help these initiatives become more visible and reach wider publics, social media socialization reached 345,277 views.
- To learn about the challenges, opportunities, barriers to association and innovations, among other topics, 5 virtual dialogues with 45 cooperatives and associations were held.
- To address the lack of access of small family and community farmers to public purchases, we participate in multi-actor roundtables to offer technical assistance to Ministry of Agriculture and SERCOP.



Costuranza: a self-managed and solid seamstress network

- We worked towards the network's sustainability with a "trainer of trainers" program to strengthen their abilities.
- Seamstresses own and manage a facemask [vending machine](#) placed in Museo de la Ciudad and manufactured by students from Escuela Politécnica Nacional.
- Costuranza have been awarded contracts in several UN and UNDP procurement processes , and they have achieved other networks, supporters, and donors.
- The process and learnings were systematized in a "[Memoir](#)", which is a result of a collective reflection about the creation of this community entrepreneurship that was born during the pandemic.

Related reading: [First blog](#)

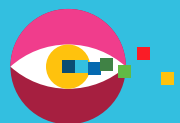


Reflections & Learnings:

Associative ventures represent a true alternative for a fairer socio-economic recovery. Not only do they generate livelihoods for their members, but the community offers containment, fluid knowledge, care, and protection, which are part of the sustainability of life.

In conversation with some enterprises, we have learned that they create alternative forms of social protection in the absence of social coverage: from common funds to face moments of lack of contracts, seed credits, contributions to funeral expenses of partners or relatives, food baskets and medical care in charge of a family professional for the members.

Some enterprises also make a significant contribution to the environment either because of their low-impact production method, or because they oversee community management of an entire conservation area.



Next steps:

Now that we have a closer idea of how the Solidarity Economy Ecosystem works and interacts, it will serve to create networks and jointly reflect on solutions to challenges this sector faces. We are currently working on an MOU with IEPS to expand the map to their associations and participate in technical roundtables with the Ministry of Agriculture to identify bottlenecks and solutions so family and community agriculture producers can access public procurement calls. For 2022, this is the arena in which we will be experimenting and prototyping.

Social security and labor informality

8 TRABAJO DECENTE Y CRECIMIENTO ECONÓMICO



1 FIN DE LA POBREZA





Why does it matter?

Before the pandemic hit seven out of ten young informal workers did not have access to the social security system and due to COVID-19 labor informality has exponentially increased along with unemployment, making the situation even more complex. Decent work is fundamental to ensure income and wellbeing in the life cycle of a person and future generations. Also, considering the new forms of work it is mandatory that policies in social security can best respond to changes in the labor market to guarantee labor rights for all sorts of workers. For instance, platform workers are classified as own-account workers for legal, tax and social protection purposes, even though the nature of some work performed may not be fundamentally different from traditional activities performed within an employment relationship. Consequently, platform workers get excluded from rights, benefits, and protections available to employees.



Our partners:

UN system:



Government:

Ministerio del Trabajo



República del Ecuador

Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos INEC



República del Ecuador

Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social



República del Ecuador

Registro Civil, Identificación y Cedulación



República del Ecuador



Private sector:

South-African start-up Nautilus

Civil society organizations:

datalat.org



Our work & results:

Generating new sources of information

- At the beginning of the pandemic (April 2020), the Accelerator Lab carried out an online survey to measure the effects on young informal workers' labor conditions and socioeconomic situation. This data was gathered with an open data lens and was made available for the public in various formats to facilitate the use of the results.

For further information: <https://informalidadjuvenil.org/desde-otras-fuentes/>

Expanding skills within the community in the use of data

- We implemented an online **Data School** to promote the learning of new skills on data management and analysis to generate insights on key topics related to youth informal work by processing quantitative databases. 23 youth organizations received scholarships and researched several topics related to: entrepreneurship, care work, precarity, among others.

For further information: <https://informalidadjuvenil.org/>

Related readings: [first blog](#), [second blog](#)

Influencing young informal workers' behavior towards social security

- In December 2020, we ran an experiment, to trigger young independent workers' interest to voluntarily join the social security system. We designed e-mails and text messages notifications based on behavioral science to remove cognitive biases about social security services and aid decision making during the affiliation process. The results of the experiment show that the problem lies in the limited economic possibilities of young informal workers to save and lack of future financial plans. Given the fact that the messages had no impact, the Lab is trying a different approach by educating young workers and policy makers on future planning, labor rights and social security through gamifications strategies.



Generating an alternative mechanism for national registers

- We are developing a digital platform to improve the employment situation of young people with informal jobs and at the same time collecting their data in a safe and ethical way to generate a national register of young informal workers for evidence-based policy purposes. We co-created with them the functionalities of the platform through an Innovation Challenge, and we keep using a user-centered-design lens to incorporate users' feedback along the process. The platform will be managed by a group of actors from the public sector (e.g. Ministry of Labor), academia and civil society to ensure an open and ethical use of the data.

Related readings: [first blog](#), [second blog](#)

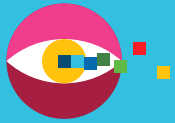


Reflections & Learnings:

One of the main problems to find effective solutions and generating targeted policies for youth informal work is the lack of public, updated and consolidated data about this sector. Thus, efforts to assure accessible and sustainable databases are essential.

Although Ecuador has taken a major step towards open data through its Constitution and Open Government Partnership, there are still obstacles for public institutions to be able to share data among them and publicly, while safeguarding individual's privacy. Moreover, along with open data must come an educational strategy to incentivize diverse, effective, and ethical use of data to empower communities.

Also, our approaches with diverse groups and associations of informal workers emphasized that although workers find the possibility of voluntarily joining the social security system of interest, their greatest concern is the preservation and expansion of labor rights, including universal social security.



Next steps:

We are developing a digital and board game about informality, to raise awareness about the problem and its roots among actors that use the game (for instance: young informal workers, employers, policy makers). Taking advantage of the didactic possibilities of gamification, the game includes, in the narrative and gameplay, information on individual and collective labor rights, social security services, educational opportunities, among others. The game will allow us to trace and assess each player's decision-making process while facing real-life work situations. All the data collected could be used to inform policy makers about workers' preferences in terms of social security.

We will be testing an alternative management model for the national register of young informal workers to ensure that data remains a public good. We are looking into a public-private partnership involving collaboration between government, academia, and civil society organizations. Also, to promote the platform we will be designing a well-rounded communication strategy based on word-of-mouth messages, social media, and outreach of influencers.



Gender violence

10 REDUCCIÓN DE LAS
DESIGUALDADES





Why does it matter?

Historically, Gender Based Violence and femicides are high and continuously increasing in Ecuador, with underreported data that does not capture the extent of the problem as well as a slow and inefficient judicial system. In 2020, according to official data, the number of women victims of intentional homicide was 164, of which 78 were classified as femicides, the highest number since 2017. As for the justice system, only 37% of cases have been prosecuted since 2014. The rest of the causes are still under investigation, others have been shelved, criminal action prescribed, the defendants were dismissed or declared innocent. This leaves families and communities in search of justice on their own. Grieving and mourning also needs justice.



Our partners:

UN system:



Civil society organizations:



Government:

Secretaría de Derechos Humanos





Our work & results:

The Spotlight Initiative in the Latin American and Caribbean region focuses on eliminating femicide and in the case of Ecuador, UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP take part in this joint UN program. One of the pillars of this project is aimed at improving the quality of data on different forms of violence against women and girls, which is led by UNDP. In this framework, Ecuador's Accelerator Lab, understanding that qualitative information is also data, proposed to adapt the methodological tool "Other Maps", to create routes of memory, injustice, and community response, together with organizations and families, in the cities of Cuenca, Portoviejo and Lago Agrio.

Honor the memory of victims while (re)claiming justice.

- We traced 8 routes in the memory of victims, which included observation in situ, reminiscent narratives as well as experiences of injustice and community response.

Reactivate local response networks

- This intervention was possible with the support of local civil society networks who had the opportunity to reactivate their response, especially for vulnerable cases of families living in extreme poverty. Meetings and dialogues held allowed local organizations to do follow-up of cases and mobilize humanitarian aid.

Strengthen families' network

- In the city of Cuenca, after having the opportunity to meet with other families and share their experiences, they organized and leveraged an association of families.

See more: <https://www.otrosmapas.org/flores-en-el-aire>

<https://www.facebook.com/IniciativaSpotlight/videos/323648266027457/>

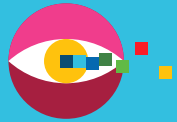
Related reading: <https://www.ec.undp.org/content/ecuador/es/home/blog/2022/flores-en-el-aire--rutas-de-memoria---in-justicia-y-respuesta-co.html>



Reflections & Learnings:

We created 8 routes which, besides honoring the memory of victims, have brought the following learnings:

- Family-centered repair. A repair policy should not standardize compensation measures; instead, each family must determine the symbolic and material actions that contribute to restoration. These cartographies were, for many families, a first step of symbolic reparation, in the sense of having felt heard, visited and supported.
- The network of family survivors, REDFAVIVE, was strengthened thanks to the opportunity of meeting other relatives with losses, dialoguing and connecting. This makes us reflect about our role in creating conditions for community organization, with people at the forefront.



Next steps

We hope to turn this tool and its stories into an awareness-raising tool aimed at different audiences, from officials to communicators. We will aim at local organizations appropriate it and accompany other families to carry out their memory maps, walking together and going through the memory and demands for justice and reparation together. It is a tool that not only strengthens the information about the case, but also activates networks and offers families a space to amplify their memories and demands.

We will be running a behavioral experiment in schools' playground to create a change in the dynamics of gender roles and use of space among children while playing. We are aiming to generate an inclusive and open school in terms of gender identities.





Open Innovation

9 INDUSTRIA, INNOVACIÓN E INFRAESTRUCTURA



16 PAZ, JUSTICIA E INSTITUCIONES SÓLIDAS



17 ALIANZAS PARA LOGRAR LOS OBJETIVOS





Why does it matter?

COVID-19 pandemic reminds us that development issues are complex and deeply interrelated. To solve them it is key to rely on collaborative approaches and unlock the power of collective intelligence. Collective intelligence is founded upon the principle that an enhanced capacity to solve problems is created when people work together through the mobilization of a wider range of data, ideas, and insights. As part of our strategy to promote open innovation as a mechanism to connect actors to collectively find new solutions for multidimensional problems, we created a digital: [Thinkia-lab](#).



Our partners:

Academia:



(Technology, Science and Society Lab of the Faculty of Social Science in Latin America)

Government:



Civil society organizations:



Private sector:



Future Design



Our work & results:

We have implemented 4 Innovation Challenges through open calls. These innovation challenges have allowed more than 200 people to learn about youth labor informality, plastic pollution and bycatch fishing, child chronic malnutrition, and climate change. Also, participants have acquired new skills by engaging with innovative methodologies like Design Thinking, System Thinking and Behavioral Science, among others.

Mitigating child chronic malnutrition

- We launched an [Innovation Challenge](#) along with Vital Dialogues inviting citizens and organizations to generate a communication campaign to change the behavior of caregivers of children with chronic malnutrition. The campaigns needed to address all the dimensions of the issue: breastfeeding, best practices of water and sanitation, and medical check-ups. We ended up with a winning campaign that will be launched in 2022.

Gathering climate change country's results

- Along with the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, to generate one of the chapters of the "Fourth National Communication on Climate Change" we launched an [Innovation Challenge](#) to identify barriers, needs and opportunities. For the first time in the construction of this national document an open call scheme was used to involve actors from the academia and civil society.

Taking care of oceans and life below water

- Our third [Innovation Challenge](#) was done with Mingas for the Ocean and Design Future, we extended a public invitation to young social entrepreneurs to develop an environmental venture to solve two ocean issues: plastic pollution and bycatch fishing. As a result, the two best ideas for each issue are currently pitching their idea for investors.

Related readings: [blog](#)



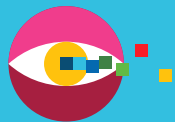
Reflections & Learnings:

Innovation Challenges organizers tend to think that citizen participation takes place organically and does not require a rigorous and well-structured process and methodology to trigger participation and keep up interest. Most of the time, it is assumed that active participation leads automatically to ownership of the process and empowerment. Citizen empowerment requires a long-term process of co-creation, not just participation.

Public counterparts should change first the legal frame and structure of their institutions to have more flexible and adaptive project lifecycle, regarding especially planning and evaluation and monitoring phases, to truly include citizen participation as a core component of their work.

Innovation Challenges organizers tend to overuse digital citizen participation without including alternative mechanisms for people without internet connection or digital literacy. Also, there is a lack of prioritization to support grassroots innovations.

The real power of innovation challenge is to create awareness about an issue and provide participants with innovative mechanisms to think about possible solutions outside the box.



Next steps:

To strengthen the Open Government Agenda 2018 – 2021 we are collaborating with the Presidency of the Republic to implement one out of ten commitments to establish the First Citizen Innovation Laboratory. Thinkia-lab's know how, learned lessons, technology, and management model will serve as the foundation on which to build the Citizen Innovation Lab.

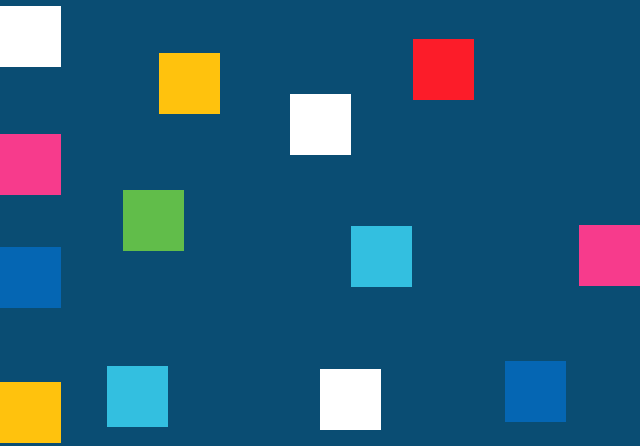


Other contributions

Evidence generation

3 mixed method studies to inform public policy about: a) mobility during COVID-19 lockdown b) barriers to receive monetary cash transfers due to the pandemic (blog) c) and data power positive deviance study in livestock and deforestation.

Related readings for the Data Power Positive Deviance Study in Livestock and Deforestation, [blog](#), [handbook](#).



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