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SUPPORTING CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND EDUCATION SYSTEM RESILIENCY IN LATIN AMERICA

Final Technical Report
By Dante Castillo-Canales
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Executive summary

This final technical report shows the results and findings of three specific projects that investigate various dimensions of the educational system that are associated with the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had in the provision of quality and equitable education. The overall objective is to study critical factors in the educational system that can support continuous learning and education system resiliency in several countries in Latin America and the global south. Concretely, the first subproject conducted attempts to identify and improve the capacity of educational systems in the Global South to deliver quality and equitable education at distance. This is done by characterizing the level of preparedness countries have for providing distance Learning. This project is called **Distance Learning Readiness Index for the Global South**. It is conducted in 12 countries, in three regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

Relevant to improve continuous learning in scenarios of remote education is the role that teachers can play in maintaining pedagogical interactions with their students and schools. The pandemic has made evident the need to study how teachers can access quickly and efficiently to training process to gain new knowledge and skills to cope with school closures and other crises like this. Professional training mediated by technologies become a key element of educational systems, particularly, the need to study how teachers are supported when access to online training. Based on idea, a second research project seeks to pilot and test models of teacher support under processes of online and distance training. This project is called **Laboratory of Innovative Teacher Training Models in Ecuador**. It is conducted in partnership with the Universidad San Francisco de Quito and The Ministry of Education of Ecuador.

Finally, a third project puts the focus on school leaders insofar as they are a critical actor in moving learning forward. The objective of this pilot is to improve school resiliency by testing and adapting an improvement science (IS) approach that strengthens school leadership. This project is called **Strengthening School Leadership Towards Improving Pre-primary School Principals Collaboration: An Improvement Science Approach.** It is conducted in Chile with fifteen pre-primary school principals together with an Educational Local Service (SLEP) and SUMMA in the metropolitan region of the country**.**

Each of the three projects offer valuable findings to share with policymakers and other stakeholders to improve continuous learning and education system resiliency to deliver quality and equitable education. The report is organized in three main sections: (I) a section on Project Management and Implementation, which includes the main research questions and objectives of the projects (II). A section dedicated to outputs and outcomes with a list of several news, reports, videos, etc. that were developed to disseminate the project, produce and mobilese knowledge. Finally, (III) some recommendations for stakeholders and policymakers.

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Section 1: Project implementation and management

Background

Several diagnoses about the current COVID-19 crisis have highlighted that students at home are facing several issues to continue their distance learning process. These issues are basically related, on the one hand, to the institutional fragility of educational systems to offer adequate, rapid, and meaningful response to transition from face-to-face teaching to distance learning and, on the other hand, to the lack of resources, infrastructure (connectivity, devices), skills and competences (teachers and students) to work and study in contexts of remote teaching and learning.

In SUMMA we are running three collaborative projects:

1. **Developing a National Distance Learning Preparedness Index.** This research seeks to inform and improve the capacity of educational systems in the Global South to deliver quality and equitable education at distance through the creation of a **Distance Learning Preparedness Index**. Generating a new National Distance Learning Preparedness Index becomes essential for the discussion on real and equitable access to distance learning. It is not only relevant for this emergency, but also for the education of the future.

   The Index attempts to identify key indicators and variables related to distance education during the pandemic and beyond. This Index, which will be based on a sample of 15 countries across the global south, must safeguard that the results it produces guarantee accuracy, comprehensiveness, consistency and comparability between countries and years. Thus, this project seeks to improve the capacity of school systems in the global south to deliver quality education at distance throughout the crisis by creating a distance learning preparedness Index that helps to inform policy and practice about the institutional strengths and weaknesses to deliver distance teaching and learning.

   The main research question is how and to **what extent national educational systems are well prepared to provide distance learning activities across the Global South contexts**? In more specific terms, the project seeks identify the national educational capacity at the level of technological infrastructure (school/household equipment); skills and competences to teach and learn at distance; resources and pedagogical tools to provide distance learning and most importantly identify the level of inequalities associated with access to distance learning opportunities.

2. **Developing a Laboratory of Innovative Teacher Training Models in Ecuador.** Based on the work we have done on Teacher Professional Development at scale, this project seeks to improve the capacities that ministers of education in the region have to provide effective models of teacher training mediated by technologies. The objective is piloting and testing models of Teacher Professional Development for distance teaching.

The use of online system to train teachers is a common practice in Ecuador. A relevant experience was the update of the national curriculum in 2016. In a period of two years, the ministry trained more than 180 thousand teachers as part of the implementation of the new curriculum. To support teachers in change, the Undersecretary for Educational Foundations, together with the National Directorate for Continuous Training, developed the online training strategy to train teachers through the virtual training platform "Mecapacito", developed for this purpose. This experience has advanced the possibility to train teachers to respond quickly to the demands of going from face-to-face activities to remote teaching and learning.

In the context of the effects produced by the pandemic in Ecuador, there is a need to understand and explore different mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of online teaching training. These mechanisms can be drawn from successful experiences of teacher professional development identified by the TPD@scale Coalition for the Global South.

The main research question is how and to what extent new mechanisms for teacher training can improve the effectiveness of online teacher training in Ecuador. In more specific terms, it is important to know how proven principles of teacher training be adapted and tested in Ecuador. It also seeks to identify for whom and to what extent specific mechanisms such as online mentoring, intensity of the course, peer tutoring or the curricular content, etc. are related to differing level of efficacy in teacher training programs.

3. **Strengthening School Leadership for Resiliency in Chile:** This project is part of a larger initiative conducted by some of the partners of the TPD@scale coalition "Strengthening School Leadership Towards Improving School Resiliency: An Improvement Science Approach" which will work with school leaders in marginalized contexts to build their capacity to use data to develop and test solutions to problems of practice in a blended (online/ offline) improvement science approach. The project is being implemented in Philippines, Kenya, Ghana and Chile.

The main research question is how and to what extent can an improvement science approach improve the resilient agency of school leaders, teachers, and students in different Global South contexts. In this context, the project seeks to contribute to deepen understanding of how an improvement science approach can strengthen instructional school leadership towards school resiliency in a range of Global South contexts; the capacity of school leaders for data-driven decision-making and to inform education policy and practice on strengthening instructional school leadership and building school resiliency using the improvement science approach.

In the case of Chile, during the last 2 years, the educational system in Chile has started to change significantly. Until 2018, Chile had a very decentralized model where municipalities (local level) used to take most of the decisions for schools under their control. In that year, a new system was created to introduce a new entity to management of the public system; "Local Services of Public Education" – SLEP (in Spanish), which is a decentralized organization responsible for the administration of schools in a specific territory that comprise several municipalities and it is autonomous in its decision-making. This structural change will require new capacities for school leaders and teachers to face emerging challenges.

Main activities and implementation

The Index project developed a series of research activities to compute the Index for the selected countries. These activities were oriented to ensure strategic collaboration, creating Board to enhance the incidence of the Distance Learning Readiness Index; Identify the data and sources to be analysed and finally the country selection process. Tall this process implied to conduct:

1. Perform the country selection process and collection of secondary data and primary data.
2. Identify and define the main dimensions and indicators of the index.
3. Contact and collaborate with Ministries of Education and relevant organizations within the national educational system.
4. Create an International Board to validate the project.
5. Produce the analysis and validation of the results.

The Laboratory of Teacher Training in Ecuador was divided into two main stages: In the first one, a course was developed to train different "types of accompaniments" for two types of courses: one disciplinary and one of general skills. This stage involved a total of 28 teachers divided into 4 groups: 2 disciplinary courses with higher and lower levels of accompaniment; and 2 general skills courses with higher and lower levels of accompaniment.

In the second stage, 20 tutors prepared in the first stage went on to accompany one course each according to the type of course they received, disciplinary or general skills. In this case, there are 20 experimental groups of 25 teachers each (10 from each type of course, 10 with more accompaniment and 10 with less accompaniment. The main activities were:

1. Participate in regular meetings with the technical staff of the Ministry of Education (Teacher Professional Development), the researchers from the USFQ and, the technical counterpart of SUMMA.
2. Prepare two quality online teacher development courses suitable for teachers of the public system in Ecuador, one on a disciplinary topic and one on a general skill.
3. Implement "accompanied/tutored" courses to estimate the benefits for teachers taking online courses. From this, determine whether the type of online course topic requires a higher or lower level of coaching to be effective.
4. Write research report.
5. Prepare article for refereed journal.

The School Leadership project was oriented to pilot an Improvement Science Approach in Chile based on the NIC structure. In this sense, two improvement cycle period were carried out: 1) the exploration and testing phase (August 2021 to January 2022) where the principals' voices were raised, indicating the desire to get to know each other better, learn about the centres' contexts, and create specific standard protocols to address different issues. The second improvement cycle reinforces the previous experience of collaborative work between the fifteen centre's principals, to which new pillars were added to build essential capacities to support the creation of a Learning Community, as requested by the SLEP team. We can summarise the main activities and data generation of this projects as follows:

1. Regular meetings between the three parties involved in this project: SLEP; School Principals and SUMMA team.

2. Principals and SLEP supporting professional interviews to collect information on the institutional, personal, organisational, and professional conditions in which the SLEP-GM principals exercise their role.
3. Online and face-to-face workshops to introduce the project participants and share leadership experiences that involve mobilising improvements and learning in the educational community.
4. Final interviews with principals to know principals' awareness and viewpoint about the experience lived in the last period of the project.
5. Meeting to share the findings and learnings of the project with the participants involved.
6. Preparation a book to systematise the experience.

Safeguarding ethical considerations

All projects safeguarded ethical criteria in their work and research processes; school principals, teachers, ministry officials, technical staff, among others were informed of the security and confidentiality of the data used, providing informed consents, and knowing the benefits of the research. The results have been shared with them as a form of feedback of the research process.

Research questions, objectives, and methodology

As it is stated in the previous section, SUMMA conducted three collaborative projects in the global south: The National Distance Learning Preparedness Index, the Laboratory of Innovative Teacher Training Models in Ecuador, and the School Leadership project in Chile. Each of them attempted to answer different research questions based on the nature and objectives of each research wihc are described below.

The methodology drew on a set of diverse approaches depending on the projects. The Index drew on extensive quantitative data from various sources to compute the index; the laboratory in Ecuador drew on a mixed method approach to collect data from the participants and, finally, the School Leadership project put in place a more qualitative strategy to understand the dynamics of collaboration in a networked communities for improvement. These methods evolved during the project in response to needed adaptations, capabilities, contextual enablers, and constraints.

National Distance Learning Preparedness Index

The Index seeks to contribute to the decision-making process of governments, donors, and system´s actors to guarantee the right of education under the pandemic scenario in the Global South. Specifically, it aims at:
1. Generating information about the strengths and weaknesses of educational systems.
2. Highlighting the best policies and practices of systems prepared to ensure distance learning.
3. Identifying which countries represent a priority to strengthen improvement efforts, and
4. Incorporating a long-term vision for the Global South that promotes inclusive distance learning for all.

The Index collects evidence to identify how prepared countries are, in terms of capacities and infrastructure, to provide distance education, not only online, but also analogue, considering the particularities of each context. It aims to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are national educational systems in the Global South prepared to provide distance learning at Primary level?
2. Which are their main strengths and weaknesses?
3. To what extent are teachers and students supported for distance learning?
4. Which aspects require special attention and adaptation to ensure distance learning for all?

To answer these research questions, we identified the necessary conditions that the educational systems require to adjust to distance and face-to-face education; provided an integral and macro scope of the educational systems and how they faced the pandemic beyond ICT readiness; collected and systematically reviewed curriculums, orientations, and adjustments, as well as compiled available but spread data for the Global South countries.

Laboratory of Innovative Teacher Training Models in Ecuador

The overall objective of this project was to deepen the understanding of policies and practices for equitable and quality teacher training activities in Ecuador, carried out during the period 2021-2022. This project aimed to identify effective models of tutoring and mentoring for online teacher training models in the Ecuadorian public education system. Based on this general objective:

1. How do Ecuadorian teachers perceive the processes of accompaniment in online teacher training courses?
2. What are the factors that activate teacher motivation, knowledge transfer and teacher self-efficacy before and after taking an online course?
3. What kind of coaching is most beneficial for teachers taking online courses?
4. To what extent does the subject of the online course require a higher or lower level of coaching to be effective?

Based on the above research questions, the objectives of the project are as follows:

1. To study two quality online teacher training courses suitable for public teachers in Ecuador, one on a disciplinary subject and one on a general skills subject.
2. To assess teacher motivation, elements of knowledge transfer and teacher self-efficacy before and after taking an online course.
3. To determine which type of coaching is most beneficial for teachers taking online courses.
4. To examine whether the type of online course topic requires a higher or lower level of coaching to be effective.

This study follows a two-condition plus two-stage, quasi-experimental mixed model. This is complemented with a qualitative element of observations. The first stage studies the effectiveness of the course for tutors and the second stage studies the effectiveness of the course for teachers. It is important to note that the teachers who participate in the research will be public teachers in the Sierra cycle of General Basic Secondary Education and voluntary enrolments were handled.

School Leadership for Resiliency in Chile

The project aim has been to strengthening collaboration to improve leadership among local school principals. This goal underpinned the research question and sub-questions as follows: How can an Improvement Science approach strengthen the collaborative capacity of the SLEP's pre-primary principals?

1. How is an Improvement Science approach relevant to contribute to coping with the needs of pre-primary education centres?
2. How does using the short-cycle methodology by pre-primary principals contribute to strengthening collaboration among them?
3. How does building a Network Improvement Community (NIC) with pre-primary leaders contribute to strengthening community identity?
4. What professional learning is observed in pre-primary leaders who engage in the improvement science approach?
5. Under what conditions, enablers, and constraints do these IS strategies effectively build collaborative capacity in pre-primary leaders?

Based on the previous research questions identified, the objectives for this study are as follows seeks to strengthen the collaborative capacity of the SLEP's pre-primary school principals through the adaptation and implementation of an improvement science approach. Being the specific objectives:

1. Identify the relevant aspects of the improvement science approach that contribute to addressing the early childhood education principals' needs.
2. Characterise how using the short-cycles approach helps foster collaboration among pre-primary leaders.
3. Analyse aspects contributing to strengthening the pre-primary leaders' community identity by building a NIC.
4. Determine pre-primary principals' professional learning when engaging with the IS approach.
5. Explore contextual enablers and barriers for implementing an effective IS approach with pre-primary leaders to develop collaboration.

This study applied a type of action research in which the participants' roles were researchers of their own practice, and at the same time, they were a group under observation. Hence, a qualitative case study approach was selected as the most appropriate method that allows for an in-depth examination of participants' experiences following the PDSA improvement methodology. The data collected comprised mainly semi-structured interviews that were recorded in video and audio and materials produced by participants during several workshops. Thematic analysis was conducted using Atlas-Ti to find the most relevant topics across the data collected.

Section 2: Project outputs and outcomes

The COVID-19 pandemic led us to a worldwide new scenario, where schools remained closed for many months during 2020 and 2021. **The Distance Learning Readiness Index for the Global South** aimed to evidence how 12 countries from the Global South adjusted and innovated to guarantee the right to education for all in these unfavourable circumstances. Based on an integral perspective, we considered four different dimensions: each country´s structural technological conditions (Infrastructure for Technology, Communication and Digital Literacy), the provision of teachers´ training to ensure they had the proper skills and strategies to teach remotely, the existence of measures to promote students and teachers´ socio-emotional wellbeing in a context of uncertainty, and the adjustments of the learning-teaching process to respond to the crises.

The preliminary results evidenced that the 12 analysed countries are differently prepared to provide distance education for primary level students. While Bangladesh has not met the minimal conditions to guarantee remote learning, Ghana and Honduras are in an emergent level. Brazil, Jordan, Philippines and Egypt are in a developing level, while Kenya, Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay are the most prepared to provide remote education. Nonetheless, most countries require immediate investments in their technological structural conditions to ensure remote education. Only Brazil, Egypt, Uruguay and Chile are prepared to provide online distance education. Moreover, most countries require to invest in teachers training since, despite efforts, Bangladesh, Honduras, Brazil, Jordan and Egypt are still behind: teachers do not necessarily have the minimal training to adjust to remote education.

The analysis of each dimension clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses of each country. While Bangladesh requires more investment in technological infrastructure and adjusting the teaching-learning process (making it more flexible, incorporating more materials for diverse students, among others), Honduras is more prepared providing welfare programs for students, and Ghana is least prepared in this area. Brazil and Jordan require urgent investments in teachers training, while Philippines requires more investments in the technological structural conditions. Among the countries that reached a consolidating level, there is still space for improvement. For instance, while Kenya requires more investment and flexibility in the Distance Teaching Learning process and in their National Technological Infrastructure, Chile requires more investment in teachers training. Finally, Uruguay requires more investment in teachers training while Ecuador requires to invest on its technological infrastructure. The diversity of situations allows for each country to learn from experiences of others in a similar structural situation, which reached further in a specific dimension.

Finally, the results also evidenced that despite the efforts, teachers require more training and socio-emotional support, while students require more diverse materials and strategies. Inclusive strategies are relegated to specific groups of students and require immediate action to ensure the right to education for all.

In the case of the **Laboratory of Innovative Teacher Training Models in Ecuador** there is a positive evaluation that provide valuable data regarding the implementation of new PD models in a specific context, as in this case, in Ecuador. In this project the evidence shows, in the first stage, that the most effective way to communicate with course participants was through whatsapp messages and groups. This facilitated communication between trainers and participants especially during the first stage. It is also concluded that providing constant feedback to participants and including additional

resources and activities that encourage the development of higher cognitive skills, directly influences the motivation of participants and therefore their performance in the course.

Similarly, it was observed that both job satisfaction and emotional intelligence were factors that directly influenced the perception of teacher self-efficacy. That is, the more satisfied participants were with their work environment and the more emotional intelligence skills they had, the higher their perceived self-efficacy. In addition, both constant feedback and the openness of the work environments for participants to apply what they learned in the courses were key elements for the transfer of learning.

Regarding the second stage, it is concluded that the preparation of the instructors with mentoring support was more effective in the socioemotional skills courses, while the instructors who were prepared with coaching support had better results in the social science teaching courses. This shows that the type of coaching the instructors received in the first stage did influence their performance in the second stage.

Finally, in the case of the **School Leadership for Resiliency in Chile,** the new public education system has brought changes that generated new challenges to school principals. At the same time, it directly impacted educational management practices, due to transition marked by a pandemic that goes through old logic that persists over time and current organisational forms. This context calls for an improvement network to create the possibilities that can lead their participants to collaborate in a context marked by uncertainty, change, or transformation of their relationship.

The NIC, as an improvement strategy, requires a starting point for ignite new forms of collaboration. Specifically, for this project, participations and collaboration did not occur naturally, which is a challenge to build a base to collaborate and work as a NIC. Collaboration is not only desirable when it is thought about pre-primary school expectations, but some specificity is also required, like at what levels it is desirable, who is involved, and to what degree should the principal need to be involved in collaborating within his/her educational centre with her colleagues.

SUMMA fulfilled the role of mediator and researcher, looking at how professional learning can be produced in and among pre-primary leaders and supporting professionals through an exercise that sought to cultivate the bases to collaborate professionally in the aspects that were considered pertinent. Through the project's journey, emergent dynamic of adaptation and flexibility were built and promoted.

Main Project Outputs

Project	Output	Objective	Date	Link
Index	Webpage	Dissemination	Through the project	https://www.summaedu.org/iniciativas-destacadas/proyecto/proyecto-index/
School Leadership	Webpage	Dissemination	Through the project	https://www.summaedu.org/iniciativas-destacadas/proyecto/red-avanzando-juntas/
School Leadership	International Webpage	Dissemination	Through the project	https://tpdatscalecoalition.org/strengthening-school-leadership/
School Leadership	Project presentation to the principals	Dissemination	1 October 2021	https://www.summaedu.org/se-realizo-el-primer-encuentro-de-directoras-de-jardines-infantiles-del-slep-gabriela-mistral-chile-para-el-fortalecimiento-del-liderazgo/
School Leadership	Agreement between SUMMA and SLEP Gabriela Mistral	Dissemination	29 October 2021	https://www.summaedu.org/summa-contribuye-al-fortalecimiento-de-la-educacion-publica-y-firma-acuerdo-con-slep-gabriela-mistral/
School Leadership	Face to Face Workshop	Dissemination	17 January 2022	https://www.summaedu.org/tercer-encuentro-con-directoras-de-jardines-infantiles-del-slep-gabriela-mistral/
School Leadership	Face to Face workshop	Dissemination	12 May 2022	https://www.summaedu.org/summa-realizo-taller-de-trabajo-con-directoras-de-jardines-infantiles-del-slep-gabriela-mistral/
School Leadership	Final project workshop	Dissemination	25 June 2022	https://www.summaedu.org/summa-y-slep-gabriela-mistral-realizaron-ultimo-taller-del-ciclo-de-trabajo-colaborativo-del-proyecto-avanzando-juntas/
School Leadership	Video of the main activities and stakeholder engagement	Dissemination	Through the project	https://www.summaedu.org/recursos/proyecto-red-avanzando-juntas-slep-gabriela-mistral/

School Leadership	Technical Report of the sub project	Knowledge production	November 2022	https://www.summaedu.org/recursos/strengthening-school-leadership-towards-improving-pre-primary-school-principals-collaboration-an-improvement-science-approach/
School Leadership	CIES Presentation (Comparative Education International Society)	Knowledge sharing	2022 April	"Strengthening Collaboration among Chilean Early Childhood School Leaders: Piloting an Improvement Science Approach in a Local Public Education Service (SLEP)" https://tinyurl.com/yy8hhvfy
School Leadership	CIES Presentation (Comparative Education International Society)	Knowledge sharing	2023	"Leading alone? A journey to implement a Networked Improvement Community with Chilean pre-primary school leaders" https://tinyurl.com/24ycmmer
Training Models in Ecuador	Agreement between SUMMA and MINEDU Ecuador and USFQ	Dissemination	15 April 2021	https://www.summaedu.org/summa-ministerio-de-educacion-de-ecuador-y-universidad-san-francisco-de-quito-firman-convenio-de-cooperacion-y-lanzan-laboratorio-para-el-desarrollo-profesional-docente/
Training Models in Ecuador	Agreement between SUMMA and MINEDU Ecuador and USFQ	Dissemination	15 April 2021	https://educacion.gob.ec/el-ministerio-de-educacion-firmo-un-convenio-de-cooperacion-con-la-universidad-san-francisco-de-quito-y-summa/
Training Models in Ecuador	Interview with Minister of Education Monserrat Creamer	Dissemination	15 July 2021	https://www.summaedu.org/ciclo-educacion-en-primera-persona-entrevista-a-la-ex-ministra-de-ecuador-monserrat-creamer/
Training Models in Ecuador	Video of the main activities and stakeholder engagement	Dissemination	Through the project	https://www.summaedu.org/recursos/laboratorio-de-innovacion-para-la-formacion-y-desarrollo-profesional-docente/
Training Models in Ecuador	Technical Report of the sub project	Knowledge production	November 2022	https://www.summaedu.org/recursos/acompanamiento-docente-en-procesos-de-formacion-profesional-en-linea-

				resultados-de-experiencias-de-formacion-y-apoyo-a-tutores-y-docentes-ecuatorianos/
Training Models in Ecuador	USFQ Team visit SUMMA in Santiago	Knowledge Sharing	29 August 2022	https://www.summaedu.org/delegacion-de-la-universidad-san-francisco-de-quito-y-equipo-de-summa-se-reunen-en-chile-para-analizar-los-avances-del-laboratorio-de-desarrollo-profesional-docente-en-linea/
Training Models in Ecuador	Academic paper	Knowledge production	Forthcoming	Ramia, N., Diaz, K, Salcedo, M.G., Merino, I., Castellanos, I., Cueva, L. (in press, 2023). Innovations in Online Teacher Professional Development in Latin America, in SDGs in the Americas and Caribbean Region. Springer Nature.

Main Project Outcomes

There are different outcomes related to this project. The **Index** initiative has not had a clear pathway in terms of outcomes yet. The sphere of influence of this project seeks to impact the work of government officials and other stakeholders to think seriously about the system conditions to ensure adequate levels of readiness to move, in education, from a scenario of face to face activates to one of remote education. This pending achievement is mainly explained by the nature of the project; it is essentially a research project that works on a more abstract and global level; in this sense, the piloting Index attempts to orient education systems to take decisions for being prepared to provide remote education in crisis-like situations such as the COVID-19.

In the case of the **Laboratory of Innovative Teacher Training Models in Ecuador** there are positive outcomes to mention:
1. **A change in the disposition of government officials** to pilot, implement and test new professional development models using collaboration and peers support as part of the teacher training design. In words of the researchers, they said, "we think the ministry have gained a different perspective on the requirements and standards of instructional design of virtual courses […] they became aware of the need to include accompaniment in teacher training, which was the main topic of the project.
2. **A change in the voices considered in the design of the courses**. The researchers comment a particular case: "When we did the initial document on the historical and current state of teacher training in Ecuador, we concluded that teachers had never been consulted about their preferences and needs. Then we propose to do an initial survey, prior to the courses, and the Ministry immediately set up a whole process of interviews and surveys of teachers about their professional development needs, a process without precedent in the country.
3. **A new component to consider in the design and delivery of TPD courses**: The responsible of the project in the Ministry has taken up a new position. From this new role, she comments that the project has had a great deal of influence. In her experience, this project represents the first time that online teacher training was framed as a pilot experience. It is a novel and interesting exercise that contributes to the regular work of the ministry. It is also a project that came at a time when the Ministry was thinking about how to improve teacher training process in the plan being implemented in Ecuador. Incher words "the project helped to rethink the modalities of training within the Ministry's work plan: virtual, hybrid or face-to-face, depending on the situation of the teachers and how the accompaniment component is incorporated into the process".
4. In the case of the University, **they recognize a whole learning process working with the ministry and the public sector**: "Working with the public sector in education is always a learning experience. It is also a specific reality for private institutions like de USFQ. We learned how to work and got to know more closely the reality of teachers in the public system and in different parts of our country. We did understand that this work has its specific challenges but also its lessons in terms of the expertise and dedication of these teachers in poor working conditions and connectivity that are not the best possible". Researchers algo highlight that this project also made them aware of the importance of including different accompaniment strategies when we they offer initial teacher training and online teacher professional development. This is an important outcome not only for the ministry, but also for the process that the university does for initial teacher training.
5. **Strengthening collaboration between the academia and the ministry**. There has been a close relationship between the ministry and the University (especially from IDEA Institute

for teacher training). This has been a big change for the faculty of education, there was not such a relationship in the past. As a result of this collaboration, a chapter was written about the theme of the project, which has been accepted by the editors and will be published soon: *Ramia, N., Diaz, K, Salcedo, M.G., Merino, I., Castellanos, I., Cueva, L. (in press, 2023). Innovations in Online Teacher Professional Development in Latin America, in SDGs in the Americas and Caribbean Region. Springer Nature*.

6. **Bridging the fields of research and policy making**. For SUMMA, this project has allowed to identify better ways of intermediation between the academia and the ministry. An ongoing tension is what is the optimal level of autonomy and accompaniment of the process, as a third party, we provide to that relationship. As SUMMA team, we have tried to favor greater articulation between local actors in Ecuador by contributing in some key areas: a) offering a regional perspective about the relevance of the project; how the findings and learnings of this project can contribute to other experiences in the region; b) making evidence of other relevant experiences available to local teams (for example, the case of the TPD coalition and its knowledge products) and c) favoring dialogue around the question and importance of this type of research for development and the targets of the SDG 2030 agenda.

In the case of the **School Leadership for Resiliency in Chile,** there has been different outcomes depending on the partners involved in this project. From the perspectives of the school principals who are the main actor of this initiative:

1. **There is a transformation in the sense of territorial belonging**. The project helped to open a path of change in the perception and sense of belonging by moving from a communal or municipal logic to a new territorial identity determined by the level of management of the SLEP in the three districts it manages. This change is perceived as a concrete opportunity to deepen practices of collaboration in extended groups with diverse backgrounds. In the opinion of the principals "there is a recognition of the value of collaboration when, for example, in emergency situations, you get peace of mind when knowing that there are other head teachers to lean on and ask for help**".**

2. **A new group identity**. The project facilitated the identification of similarities and differences between the realities of the schools led by the participating principals. In this sense, the methodology implemented allowed progress to be made in the construction of a group identity around the challenges of early education. From an identity centred on the space of kindergartens and nursery schools, there is evidence of a shift towards a plural and expanded notion of membership. Symbolic membership is changing as we move towards more in-depth professional dialogues where personal stories or professional learning experiences are shared.

3. **The value of collaboration.** Substantial progress was made in recognizing the effects of collaboration in its different facets and levels. As seen, collaboration requires emphasis and systematization of practices that give meaning and materiality to the common purpose. The slogan "*Moving Forward Together*", for example, explicitly embodies an intention that this group becomes to mobilizes and stimulates community members to achieve this common purpose. The value of promoting goals that translate into actions, which today exist in isolation, into a collective logic of exchanging knowledge, experiences, and professional resources has been recognized.

From the perspective of the Local Education Service (SLEP) there is a change in the way in which they organize the work with the school principals. The project shows the relevance of generating spaces for reflection and professional dialogue, where head teachers, together with SLEP support professionals, can define common challenges and viable ways to address them. At the same time, the development of new skills and collaborative work dynamics linked to the network improvement community and the sense of responsibility with the peer group can be observed. All of this facilitates the development of leadership skills and joint professional learning. These dynamics started during the project, but they require to be consolidated and institutionalized in the years to come. The bases for doing that have been built.

For SUMMA**, a new area of research emerged; school leadership and the networked improvement community (IS-NIC) approach.** A major learning process for SUMMA has been to identify the NIC model as a space for collaborative work. The various activities implemented, between the three parties, began to give life to a learning and transformational experiences for all the teams taking part in the local project. A change of perception developed in the SUMMA team was produced by a close relationship with local actors and specially with school principals. After a year of intense work, there is a better understanding of the challenges that the educational public system in Chile is facing. *Moving Forward Together* has triggered a movement not only for the school principals, but also for the SUMMA teams to search for new projects that allow to achieve sustainability in these type of dynamics with local actors.

Section 3: Recommendations for stakeholders and policymakers

The Index project sought to contribute to the decision-making process of different actors in the education system to guarantee the right of education under the pandemic scenario in the Global South. Based on the preliminary results, some recommendations emerge:

1. Take a global and articulated view and response to the problem. Responses to a problem generated by a global crisis cannot depend on the individual means or efforts of each country. This is why a plan or strategy involving a way out that considers international and inter-regional collaboration is required. In this sense, it is suggested that interconnected work be carried out in each region, in which outstanding measures can be replicated in other countries with similar social and economic contexts.

2. For countries that have a basic view of the concept of educational well-being, it is suggested that more specific programmes be incorporated or that institutions be created to encourage discussion of mental health and socio-emotional problems in children. To achieve that, it is also proposed to carry out interconnected and collaborative work between public institutions that have an interest in and are decisive for the fulfilment of the objectives of distance education programmes, such as the Ministries of Health and Social Security.

3. In order to guarantee the right to education of children and adolescents, taking measures to guarantee their well-being is essential, but public policies developed in the area of educational well-being should balance efforts to also ensure the well-being of teachers and parents/caregivers, not only as actors who mediate for the well-being of students, but also as subjects whose own well-being is an important goal to achieve because the healthy sustainability of an educational system depends on it, especially at a distance. This means to strengthen interdisciplinary work with psychologists, social workers, special educators, and speech therapists in countries where the main burden of home education falls on teachers and families.

4. To ensure that the education system continues to function in countries affected by a global pandemic crisis, it is essential to develop educational welfare policies that do not discriminate between public and private regulations, because such discrimination leads to damage that has an impact both on the welfare of teachers and students and, ultimately, on guarantees of the human right to education.

5. Finally, an inclusive approach in the measures developed within education programmes and policies is essential from an intersectional perspective, as it ensures equitable treatment for all children and adolescents who make up the student body. However, it is important that this view of inclusion also sensitively addresses the group of parents/caregivers and teachers, as subjects that make up the education system and whose group can be just as diverse as the students.

The **School Leadership for Resiliency in Chile** allows to make several recommendations based on the outputs it achieved, such as to contributing to produce new knowledge which has been shared in different academic instances, such as the Comparative and International Conference Society 2021 conference with the paper presentation. Also, the Latin American Meeting on Education EIDE XVI in November 2022 presented the work "Collaborative practices from an improvement science approach: Avanzado Juntas' case". Similarly, next year it will be presented at the CIES conference the paper presentation "Leading alone: A Journey to Implement a Networked Improvement

Community with Chilean Pre-Primary Leaders". Other dissemination activities to be materialized are a final event with the SLEP and stakeholders to share and socialise this project results (March 2023), a brief report to give the SLEP and other stakeholders a printed material (Spanish) as well an online version (Spanish and English). The recommendations this project has produced are the following:

1. To promote better and quality collaboration it is necessary to generate the basis of a NIC agreeing on the network principles: Installing a NIC, requires a favorable ground that refers to the foundations, or virtuous circle, which builds environments of trust and professional relationships, strengthening the capacities to carry out tasks collaboratively, share information, promote good communication, and generate knowledge or undertake projects together under agreed purposes.

2. Related to that, *strengthen the design of a planned network collaboration* strategy where all parties participate with ideas, proposals, and commitments. The latter is a crucial point for principals since they will have time within their agenda and visualise beyond the immediacy of a meeting but with a consecutive/iterative improvement cycle perspective.

3. The role that *accompaniment* can play in these spaces is crucial. As there is no previous history of working together, building the NIC guidelines, in which the roles and responsibilities are raised, facilitates the emergence of this space. For instance, principals repeatedly insist that they need a mobilising agent seen from the training point of view. However, although external agents can play a role as a facilitator, it is necessary to define the conceptual borders of this professional space. The accompaniment in the initial stage of the NIC can be seen as a type of scaffolding, that once with more significant maturation, the NIC could operate in a self-regulated manner.

4. When beginning a NIC, *collaboration cannot be taken for granted*; it requires it to be constructed according to the characteristics of the group and their purposes to shape the NIC. In this way, the improvement cycles become specific exercises that allow testing not only a solution to a problem but also, in the process, the group gets to know each other, and their members' personal and professional features emerge, which can contribute to shaping the NIC.

5. All these points call for the idea of *modelling in practice the identity of the NIC*. If the intrinsic purpose of collaborating for a common and greater good that benefits all its members and, therefore, their educational communities are added to the people characteristics who make up the NIC, then it permits to generate identity, both the accumulation of the collective experiences as well as for what it is possible to do, allowing to project the NIC.