Ecuador

Ecuador will undertake its 2nd Voluntary National Review in July 2020. With a focus this year on development accelerators and transformative action, it is a key moment to consider activities and tools which can unlock progress, for all, across the board.

Access to information – understood as the physical possibility and right for all to seek and find information, and the skills to use it – can make just such a contribution. This access can help at all levels. It supports individuals to take better decisions about how to farm, where to look for work or how to look after their own and their families' health. It gives governments the possibility to define better policies. It allows researchers to understand the world around us, establish new insights and innovate. Libraries are a key part of the infrastructure for ensuring that this is the case.

But where does Ecuador stand today as concerns its libraries and access to information? This data sheet provides background based on data from the Development and Access to Information report produced by IFLA in partnership with the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington, as well as IFLA's own Library Map of the World.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- *Ecuador has a reasonably high number of school libraries, but low numbers of public, community and academic libraries relative to its population. This risks reducing possibilities for lifelong-learning, research and innovation.*
- *Among the pillars of access to information, Ecuador scores at or above regional and global averages on equality and skills. However, it lags behind others when it comes to connectivity and a number of aspects of rights. As such, a key conclusion is that more can be done in the country to help people get online affordably, for example through a more developed library system, as well as to pass the laws needed to protect political and civic rights.*

LIBRARIES IN ECUADOR

On available data, Ecuador has a relatively low number of public, community and academic libraries per person, at around 0.2 of each per 100 000 citizens. This compares to a global average of almost 7 public and community libraries

per 100 000 people and 1.32 academic libraries. Figures are not available for the number of staff in these libraries. Given the positive relationship between the strength of the public and academic library fields, and positive outcomes around equality, inclusion and research, this is a clear area for improvement, especially in order to support learning throughout life.

On the other hand, Ecuador does have a high number of school libraries, however, at almost 1300, which will help children expand their reading and support literacy skills. Over half of school libraries, and all academic libraries have internet connections, which improves their ability to support learning. This represents an important potential for the country.

DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN ECUADOR

The Development and Access to Information report draws on a range of indicators highlighting where countries stand on four key pillars of access to information: connectivity, equality, skills and rights. For meaningful access to information to be a reality for all, performance needs to be strong across all of these categories.

On **connectivity**, Ecuador performs around the global and regional averages on 3G network coverage, numbers of fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 people, and household computer access, but below both global and regional averages on household internet access and numbers of broadband subscriptions. Internet use also falls short of the average for Latin America and the Caribbean, but is higher than for the world as a whole.

Concerning **equality**, Ecuador performs better, with lower numbers of young people not in employment, education or training, and a lower poverty rate than the global or regional averages. While gender equality is average, there is only a 0.5 point gap in male and female internet access.

On **skills**, Ecuador is average for the LAC region on the skills pillar of the ICT Development index, and on literacy. As for **rights**, while Ecuador scores above both global and regional averages for freedom of discussion, it is below average for the region on civil and political liberties, indicating that more work is needed to ensure that people can make full use of information.

In order to improve its overall performance on access to information, Ecuador could usefully focus on improving connectivity and internet use – for example

through enhancing possibilities to connect in libraries, as well as making improvements to ensure everyone has the right to create and use information.
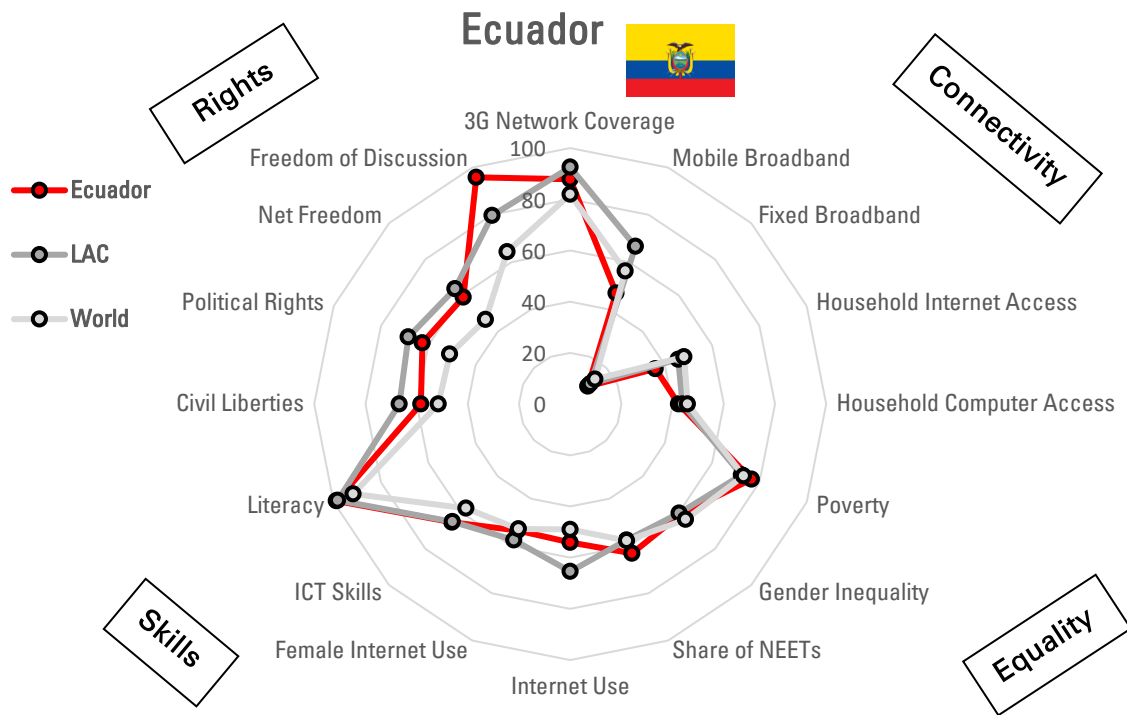

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TABLE OF DATA

See below for explanations. * = or latest available year. To note, averages are calculated on the basis of available data.

PILLAR	INDICATOR	ECUADOR	Year	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	Year	WORLD	Year
CONNECTIVITY	3G Network Coverage	87.80%	2016	92.52%	2016	81.92%	2016
	Mobile Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	46.93	2016	66.64	2016	56.22	2016
	Fixed Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	9.79	2016	11.21	2016	13.71	2016
	Household Internet Access	36.03%	2016	45.67%	2016	48.16%	2016
	Household Computer Access	42.35%	2016	43.88%	2016	45.88%	2016
EQUALITY	Poverty (Share of pop'n below national poverty line)	23.30%	2014	27.58%	2015*	26.69%	2015*
	Gender Inequality (0 = More equal, 1 = Less equal)	0.39	2015	0.40	2015	0.36*	2015*
	Share of NEETs	18.44%	2016	21.23%	2015*	21.12%	2015*
	Internet Use	54.06%	2016	65.40%	2016*	49%	2016*
	Female Internet Use	53.50%	2016	57.48%	2016*	52.79%	2016*
SKILLS	ICT Skills	6.53	2017	6.50	2017	5.76	2017
	Literacy	98.83	2015	98.28	2015	91.75	2015
RIGHTS	Civil Liberties (0 = least free, 60 = most free)	35.00	2018	40.04	2018	30.9	2018
	Political Rights (0 = least free, 40 = most free)	25.00	2018	27.38	2018	20.37	2018
	Net Freedom (0 = most free, 100 = least free)	41.00	2016	36.36	2016	53.29	2016
	Freedom of Discussion	0.96	2016	0.80	2016	0.64	2016

EXPLANATION OF INDICATORS

3G Network Coverage: this provides a measure of whether one part of the basic infrastructure for connectivity exists, although in itself is not enough to guarantee access (users need a device and a relevant subscription to be able to get online). Source: ITU

Mobile Broadband (Mobile Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how many people can use mobile internet, opening up many – if not all – of the possibilities that internet access brings. One person may have more than one subscription. Source: ITU

Fixed Broadband (Fixed Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how widespread home or business internet access is. Fixed access is often associated with the possibility to connect computers to make more advanced uses of the internet. Source: ITU

Household Internet Access (Share of Households with Internet Access): access to the internet at home allows for access to information at any time without having to go outside, but may be controlled by some members of the family. Source: ITU

Household Computer Access (Share of Households with a Computer): this focuses on access to computers. This is crucial for people to be able to carry out more advanced activities on the internet that might be impossible on a phone, such as writing resumes or analysing data. Source: ITU

Poverty: this indicator measures the number of people living below the national poverty line, which varies from country to country. It is a measure of economic inequality in a country. The indicator is inversed in the chart (i.e. the share of people not under the poverty line). Source: World Bank

Gender Inequality: this is calculated using the Gender Inequality Index. This index uses a basket of indicators in different areas of social development including: reproductive health, proportion of women in parliament, relative shares of men and women with at least some secondary education, and labour market participation in order to provide a broad idea of the extent of gender inequality in a country. The indicator runs from 0 (most equal) to 1 (least equal) and is inversed and adapted in the chart above. Source: UNDP

Share of NEETS (People aged 15-24 Not in Education, Employment or Training): this measures the share of young people cut off from education or the job market. Being 'NEET' can bring long-term scarring effects, and so reducing numbers is a key priority. The indicator is inversed and adapted in the chart (i.e. the share of young people who are not NEET). Source: ILO.

Internet Use (Share of People Using the Internet): looking beyond household access data (which will be affected by the structure of households in general), this gives a figure for the number of people using the internet. Source: ITU

Female Internet Use: this measure, in conjunction with the share of the overall population using the internet, allows us to understand to what extent there is a gender digital divide. Source: ITU

ICT Skills: there are relatively few global metrics of ICT skills, with those that exist only focusing on certain regions. The Skills Sub-Index of the ICT Development Index created by the ITU aims to work in this direction using levels of secondary and tertiary education enrolment, plus mean years of schooling, as proxies. Source: ITU

Literacy: this measures literacy among 15-24 year olds – i.e. people who have finished formal education. While there are online resources available for people with low literacy, being able to read, type, and understand information remains a fundamental skill. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Civil Liberties: this provides an indication of the degree to which citizens of a country enjoy fundamental civic rights, including freedom of expression and association, as well as the strength of the rule of law, based on expert judgements. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 60 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Political Rights: this provides a measure of the rights people have to participate in the political process, including fair and free elections, political pluralism, and the functioning of government in general. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 40 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Net Freedom: this metric assesses the level of restrictions on rights online by both public and private actors. It draws on assessments of obstacles to access (legal, economic and practical), limits on content, and violations of rights. Scores run from 100 (least free) to 0 (most free) and so are inverted in the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Freedom of Discussion: this indicator looks at whether people are able to hold private discussions without fear of repercussions either from the authorities or society in general due to cultural restrictions or norms. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 1 (most free), and so are adapted to fit int the graphic above. Source: V-Dem dataset codebook.