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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

UNESCO office in Quito
Communication and Information Sector
(Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela)

Report on the Application of Media Development Indicators in Ecuador

The application of UNESCO's Media Development Indicators (MDI) in Ecuador, funded by the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), aims at assessing the status of media development in the country.

The project is being implemented by UNESCO's Quito Office in collaboration with the International Centre for the Advanced Study of Communication in Latin America (CIESPAL), along with the support of The Universo Foundation, which belongs to the most circulated newspaper in Ecuador, *El Universo*.

The project in Ecuador aims to apply the five categories of UNESCO's MDIs, which were endorsed by the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC at its 26th session (26-28 March 2008). The application of the MDI methodology began in September 2009 and will measure the level of development of all communication sectors, from the legal framework to the existing communication and information infrastructure.

CIESPAL designated Guillermo Navarro, an expert in communication studies, to design a methodology based on qualitative and quantitative research in five categories.

Methodology

The first two categories of indicators (1. A system of regulation conducive to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity of the media; and 2. Plurality and diversity of media, a level economic playing field and transparency of ownership) will be analyzed through direct research, based on the review of national laws, international standards, freedom of expression reports from credible agencies, media concentration analysis, legal cases and jurisprudence concerning freedom of expression, media annual reports and special reports about frequency allocations.

The international standards that will serve as a reference include declarations from the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), annual reports of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, recommendations of the UN and OAS Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Expression, UNESCO declarations and guidelines, among others.

The issues covered by these two categories will be analyzed through a review of existing laws and by comparing the national legal framework with international standards. Since a new communications law is to be adopted in March 2010, the study will not be concluded until the new law text is known and can be formally studied. It should be noted that, during the drafting period of the new law, the

use of UNESCO’s MDIs has been very instrumental and has assisted experts working in this field in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the articles being proposed by the parliamentary communications commission.

The study will also consider how national laws are being enforced or hampered, thus identifying if Ecuadorian legislation guarantees freedom of expression in practice.

Categories 3 (Media as a platform for democratic discourse), 4 (Professional capacity building and supporting institutions that underpins freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity) and 5 (Infrastructural capacity is sufficient to support independent and pluralistic media) will be analyzed both through direct research and interviews.

The direct research will also be based on existing media monitoring studies, surveys, reviews and other studies concerning all the areas covered by the categories.

Additionally, there will be a series of interviews based on a question bank and national polling that will include target groups such as journalists, media directors from private, public and community sectors, unions, civil society organizations, government sectors and universities. The interviews will include a total of 407 questions for 11 different target groups.

Furthermore, a representative poll will be conducted at the national level to find out the general public’s opinion about different issues, such as their trust and confidence in media, freedom of speech and access to information. CIESPAL contracted the services of a polling firm, Market, which selected a representative sample of 1,060 people at the national level.

Target Groups and Number of Questions

Target Groups	Number of sample group	Number of Questions
National Poll	1060	24
Media Owners Associations	5	4
Labor Unions	4	3
Journalists	68	84
Editorialists	14	4
Official Reporters	20	3
Universities	13	49
Associations of Journalists	10	28
Community Media	8	27
Private Media	17	23
Public Media	5	6

Civil Society Organizations	8	21
Government institutions	4	9
Public and Private Media	25	122
Total	176	407

Consultative Committee and Validating Seminars

The UNESCO office in Quito organized three important events in collaboration with CIESPAL and The Universo Foundation in Guayaquil.

UNESCO hosted the first event in November, 2009. Nine communication experts were identified and invited to be part of a Consultative Committee for the application of the MDIs. They gathered for a preliminary workshop to analyze the first methodology proposal. This exercise yielded valuable results to improve the quality of the question bank and documents used in the research.



The experts represented different sectors such as: Secretary of Communication's Office, Union of Journalists, Public TV, Ecuadorian Newspaper Association (media owners), a media monitoring civil society organization (Fundamedios), three universities and a civil society organization representing the community broadcasting movement (Radialistas).

In January 2010, UNESCO organized two public seminars in Quito and Guayaquil, in collaboration with CIESPAL and The Universo Foundation respectively, in order to validate the methodology with larger groups. The workshops brought together a large group of representatives of the Ecuadorian communication sector: private, public and community media, university professors and students, lawyers, civil society organizations, journalists, trade unions and concerned citizens.

Andrew Puddephatt, coordinator of the International Experts Group that defined the MDIs at the international level, participated in the events and presented the objectives of the instruments to the Ecuadorian public.

In addition, Guillermo Navarro, the MDI leading researcher at the national level, explained the methodology for the application of the MDIs in the



Ecuadorian context. Both experts answered questions from the public and provided lengthy explanations on the objectives of the exercise.



Furthermore, the seminars aimed at collecting inputs from participants on the final methodology proposed for the implementation of this toolbox in Ecuador. The workshops consisted of plenary sessions and five simultaneous working groups, each of which focused on one of the five MDI categories. The feedback provided by the participants was very rich and exposed the need to clearly define concepts and adapt the language of the indicators (based on a translation of the English instrument) to the national context and local language. Participants

were also very active in proposing verification sources for the different levels of information and provided advice on how to avoid using misleading data.



The events raised significant interests and attention from all sectors, but particularly from the media. Several newspapers, TV channels and radio stations such as Ecuavisa, El Comercio, Hoy, La Hora, Radio Quito interviewed the experts and organizers and reported on the event.

Implementation phase

The inputs collected during these seminars and workshops have already been incorporated into the final methodology. The application of the MDIs in Ecuador is therefore underway. Once a preliminary report is available, it will be presented to the members of the Consultative Committee. Additionally, UNESCO will also invite a group of international experts to review and comment on the report.

Communication of results

It is expected that a final report on the status of media development in Ecuador will be published before summer 2010.