



## FINAL PROJECT REVIEW REPORT

2025

### The United Nations Development Programme

#### Ecuador

#### Intercultural and Gender Sensitive Dialogue and Conflict Prevention in Ecuador.

**Award ID:** 1044041

**Project Duration:** 12 months (April, 1st 2023 – April, 1st 2024).

**Extension(s):** 18 months (January, 5<sup>th</sup> 2024 – December, 31<sup>st</sup> 2025).

**Implementing Partner:** UNDP Ecuador

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#### *Brief project description (possibly from Project Document):*

The main objective of the project is to strengthen national and local capacities for intercultural and gender sensitive dialogue and conflict prevention/resolution in Ecuador. To achieve this goal, the project aims to produce two outcomes. The first seeks to enhance the capacities of the Catholic University, local leaderships and local public officials for conflict resolution and social dialogue monitoring, with an intercultural and gender-based approach. The second will promote the development of basic networks of facilitators and women leaders who support intercultural and gender-aware consensus processes, as well as local participatory development planning.

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## **ACRONYMS**

DPE	Defensoría del Pueblo del Ecuador (Ombudsman Office of Ecuador).
GAD	Gobiernos Autónomos Descentralizados (Decentralized Autonomous Governments)
MEF	Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas (Economy and Finance Ministry)
PUCE	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador)
UCE	Universidad Central del Ecuador (Central University of Ecuador).
UPS	Universidad Politécnica Salesiana (Salesian Polytechnic University).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Ecuador has experienced recurring peaks of social conflict escalation, as seen in 2019, 2022, and most recently in 2025. This situation highlights the need to strengthen the capacities of institutional actors and citizens to prevent and manage social conflicts through dialogue and consensus-building. Within this context, the project 'Intercultural and Gender-Sensitive Dialogue and Conflict Prevention in Ecuador' demonstrated high relevance and alignment with the results framework, supported by the strategic vision and operational flexibility of the Government of Canada and UNDP, which adapted this intervention to a volatile institutional environment.

Refocusing the project from a national intervention to prioritized territories, where a high Indigenous population lives, enabled the intercultural and gender approaches to materialize effectively. The project's first major contribution was positioning conflict dynamics and interculturality within the local agendas of the central Sierra region. This included opening spaces for discussion and providing academic foundations to support these dialogues. Additionally, the project facilitated participatory processes to develop public management tools that integrated interculturality, conflict prevention, gender, and rights-based approaches.

The project delivered concrete contributions to public officials, social organizations, local leaders, and citizens by enhancing their knowledge and equipping them with tools to design preventive solutions in intercultural settings. It also established the basis for training processes through the implementation agreement with the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE), a key partner for achieving positive results. Moreover, the project promoted public management and service delivery with intercultural, gender, and human rights perspectives from local governments. Finally, it strengthened the capacities of local civil society leaders, contributing to the creation of conditions to strengthen local networks that promote social cohesion, peacebuilding, and intercultural dialogue.

The breakdown of national dialogue channels posed the greatest challenge to this initiative. This crisis led to the amendment signed in January 2024, which required redesigning approaches, activities, partnerships, and logistical conditions not initially foreseen. UNDP's operational structure and local relationships made it possible to reorient the project and work closely with decentralized autonomous governments (GADs) and other key actors in the prioritized area. Territorial implementation required high operational flexibility and adjustments to monitoring and evaluation criteria, with a strong field presence due to local capacity gaps, limited internet access, and challenging mobility conditions.

This report presents a brief context of the project and then continues with a summarized presentation of the results. It then evaluates the intervention through several cross-cutting elements, reviews lessons learned, challenges, resource use, and issue management. It later outlines the main conclusions and next steps, and concludes with an overview of financial execution.

## I. CONTEXT

The project addressed the limited national capacities for dialogue as a mechanism to resolve social conflicts. This lack of capacity became evident during peaks of violence observed in the national uprisings of October 2019, June 2022, and most recently October 2025. These nationwide strikes produced immediate negative effects—deaths, injuries, economic losses, and weakened social cohesion—yet they stem from deeper structural causes linked to historical discrimination and racism against Indigenous peoples.

The implementation period of this project was marked by significant institutional instability in Ecuador. The most critical moment occurred when the National Assembly was dissolved, and early presidential and legislative elections were called. In this time, up to three different national development plans were in force during the project's execution.

Conflict prevention and intercultural dialogue have therefore become priorities for the national government in recent years. The current National Development Plan (NDP 2025–2029) reflects this, with Objective 2 emphasizing access to culture, the promotion of artistic production, intercultural dialogue, and the preservation of cultural heritage as means to strengthen democratic coexistence and respect for diversity.

Regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2022–2026), the project aligned with Strategic Priority 4: Rule of law, strong institutions, and social cohesion. The initiative directly contributed to several outputs under this priority, including improved public management with an intercultural approach (Output 4.1), strengthened participation mechanisms for dialogue and peaceful conflict management (Output 4.3), enhanced capacities for preventing and addressing gender-based violence (Output 4.6), and reduced discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and social violence against Indigenous peoples (Output 4.7).

The Country Programme Document (CPD) defines Result 4 as focused on social cohesion, gender equality, and improved public management. Specifically, CPD Product 4.2 establishes support for national and local institutions to reduce threats to human security while promoting social cohesion and conflict prevention.

The original project design had a national scope. However, following the amendment approved in January 2024, the intervention shifted to the central Sierra region. This territorial adjustment also required changes in institutional partnerships: the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE) remained a key actor, while local governments in the central Sierra became strategic partners. Additionally, some civil society organizations were included. After the amendment, the project sought to connect Indigenous communities, public officials, and women's organizations through an integrated territorial approach.

## II. PROJECT RESULTS SUMMARY

**Intermediate Outcome 1:** Enhanced capacities of the Catholic University, local leaderships, and local public officials for conflict resolution and social dialogue monitoring, with an intercultural and gender-based approach.

This component was originally designed to "strengthen dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms, which should be maintained and strengthened as key instruments for conflict resolution and for the purpose of managing and preventing the possible emergence of new protests and social violence." However, it was adjusted after the January 2024 amendment to prioritize work with territorial actors, maintaining the Catholic University as a strategic partner and expanding the emphasis towards community leaders and local officials. This reorientation allowed the capacities developed to respond more directly to the dynamics of conflict in the prioritized territories, strengthening the relevance and effectiveness of the component within the framework of project results.

Intermediate Outcome 1 was structured into two immediate outcomes:

Immediate Outcome 1.1.– Improved operative capacities and knowledge of the Catholic University's team to design and implement a program of training and knowledge sharing on intercultural and gender-sensitive dialogue and conflict prevention.

The following activities were carried out under this immediate outcome:

The activities carried out under this intermediate result show a high level of compliance with the results framework, by directly contributing to the strengthening of technical, academic and territorial capacities for conflict resolution and the monitoring of social dialogue with an intercultural and gender approach. Firstly, the technical management and territorial coordination capacities of the Centre for Knowledge Transfer and Social Innovation (Cetcis) were strengthened through the recruitment of two profiles of UNV specialists (less than six months) and a UNV senior specialist (for 12 months), which made it possible to improve operational articulation and accompaniment in the territory. In the academic field, 40 participants — including professors of interculturality and conflict, humanities students, and technical staff from PUCE — participated in an introductory course on conceptual approaches and tools of interculturality and conflict prevention, strengthening the knowledge base required in the results framework. In addition, two research studies were developed in partnership with PUCE: one (1) study on the socioeconomic conditions of the population in the central region of the Sierra of Ecuador; One (1) study on democratic institutional frameworks in Ecuador and their relationship with indigenous peoples. These outputs provided key evidence to guide social dialogue and contextualise conflict dynamics, consolidating the progress envisaged in this intermediate outcome.

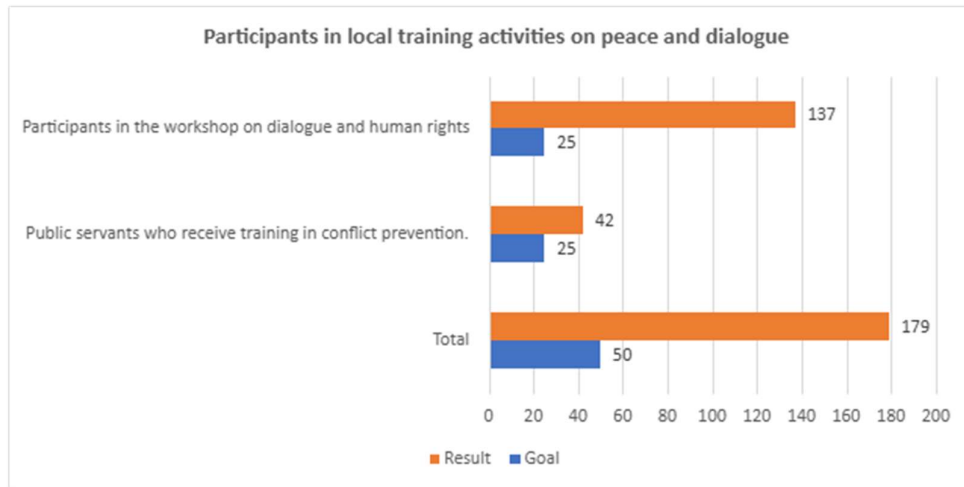
Immediate Outcome 1.2.– A program of training and knowledge sharing on intercultural and gender-sensitive dialogue and conflict prevention is designed and implemented.

The following activities were conducted under this immediate outcome:

A total of 137 people, including social leaders and members of civil society organizations, strengthened their knowledge of human rights and citizen participation through the Citizen Laboratories model, an intervention fully aligned with the project's results framework, aimed at developing capacities for social dialogue with an intercultural and gender approach. This training offer, implemented by PUCE, was structured in four modules – gender and care, collective rights and leadership, rights of nature and the right to the city – and also had the participation of eight (8) social organizations, expanding the territorial and sectoral scope foreseen in the intermediate result. The project also strengthened the capacities of approximately one hundred public officials in peacebuilding and interculturality through two complementary training modalities. With the support of PUCE, two diploma programs were

developed – one national and the other focused on the Central Sierra – which culminated in 31 certified participants, contributing directly to the result of designing a training and knowledge exchange program on intercultural dialogue with a gender perspective present in the results framework. In addition, UNDP conducted introductory workshops on interculturality and conflict prevention in five (5) local governments in the central region of the Sierra, with the participation of 78 officials, strengthening local capacity to manage social dialogue and prevent conflicts from an intercultural perspective and with a gender perspective.

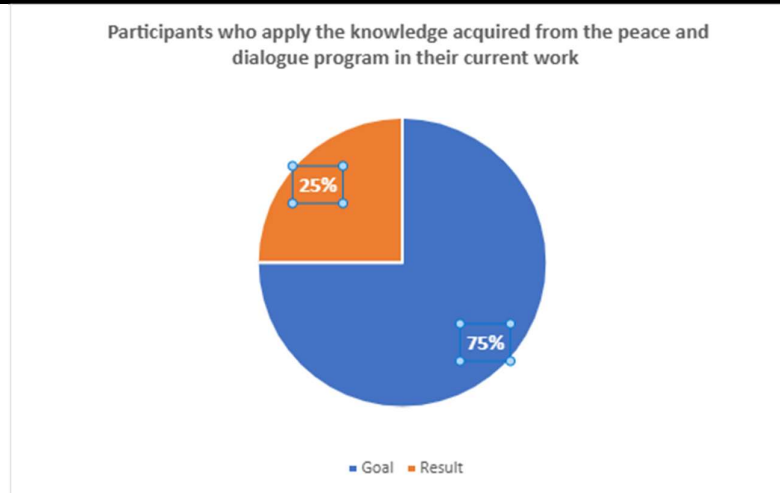
The following chart summarizes the local training activities implemented by the project to strengthen capacities in peace and dialogue:



Finally, UNDP produced five (5) knowledge products aimed at strengthening decision-making and management processes within various public institutions:

- One (1) mapping of local conflict dynamics in the central Sierra region, which informed the workshops on interculturality and conflict prevention with local governments (GADs).
- One (1) actor analysis related to gasoline subsidy policy, developed with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF).
- One (1) study on actors and conflict scenarios associated with diesel subsidy policy, also developed with the MEF.
- A management model for preventing human rights violations in contexts of social and socio-environmental conflict, developed with the Ombudsman’s Office (DPE).
- One (1) forum on democracy and security in Ecuador, organized in collaboration with PUCE, UCE, and UPS.

These activities were designed using a rights-based approach and focused on developing capacities in conflict prevention and interculturality. The indicator for Intermediate Outcome 1 shows that at least one in every four trained public officials considers the knowledge acquired to be useful for performing their duties. The target was 30% of trained participants, and 25% was achieved. This figure represents 83% of the original target, as shown in the chart below:



The immediate outcomes 1 and 2 achieved 100% or more of their original targets. Notably, the number of participants trained in peacebuilding and interculturality was more than three times the proposed target, reaching 179 participants compared to the estimated 50. This change is related to the adjustments required when refocusing the intervention toward the central Sierra and to the modification of the counterparts' profiles. All activities were completed within the planned timeline, and participation was prioritized for public officials, Indigenous peoples, youth, women, and other groups—both in training spaces and in data collection for studies and analyses. Budget execution for Intermediate Outcome 1 amounted to USD 296,736.70, representing 98% of the planned budget and 41% of the project's total approved amount.

The implementation of Intermediate Outcome 1 faced several barriers. The first was the limited prioritization of interculturality and conflict-prevention issues within local authorities' agendas. This is common among local governments in the central Sierra region due to a lack of information or a limited understanding of their role as local authorities. Additional challenges included weak management capacities within local governments; poor internet access and digital illiteracy, which constrained participation in online training sessions; and administrative changes and workload pressures within PUCE, which complicated the progress of some activities, although without significantly affecting the results.

Progress achieved under Intermediate Outcome 1 is positive. At least three (3) key factors contributed to this advancement. First, the project's reorientation toward the central Sierra territories after national-level dialogue channels became blocked. Second, PUCE's role as an implementing partner, which enabled the project to leverage its academic expertise and strengthen a training offer grounded in solid academic foundations and a clear rights-based approach. Third, UNDP's adaptive coordination, which aligned effectively with the local priorities of the five partner local governments in the central Sierra, while also responding to strategic topics with national partners, such as the MEF and the DPE.

**Intermediate Outcome 2:** A network of facilitators and women leaders created to promote and sustain intercultural and gender-aware consensus processes, as well as local participatory development planning

The project document defines this result as an intervention aimed at promoting intercultural interaction between different social groups—especially those in vulnerable situations—and generating proposals that address the barriers faced by women and other minority groups in their civic and political participation. In line with this approach to the results framework, the amendment approved in January 2024 reoriented the intervention towards the central region of the Sierra, prioritizing actions aimed at strengthening the leadership of women, youth, indigenous peoples and other local actors, as well as

training facilitators capable of promoting peace networks with intercultural and gender approaches. This territorial reorientation made it possible to maintain the strategic coherence of the result, ensure the relevance of the activities in the face of local dynamics of conflict and advance in the fulfillment of the planned changes in capacities and community articulation.

Intermediate Outcome 2 was structured into two immediate outcomes:

Immediate Outcome 2.1 – Promoted local actors’ capacities in conflict and facilitation theory, methodologies, strategic communication, and negotiation with intercultural and gender approaches for the creation of a network of facilitators

To achieve this result, a professional training program for educators was implemented in partnership with PUCE, achieving the certification of 32 professionals — 60% women and 12 from priority territories in the central highlands and Andean Chocó — in education for peace. These participants, teachers in peri-urban and rural areas, completed a 400-hour training program, which directly contributed to the capacity-building foreseen in the outcome and generated a solid technical basis to promote dialogue and conflict prevention processes from an intercultural perspective and with a gender perspective. The training program included 400 total hours of instruction. It consisted of two diploma courses on education for peace and one preparatory course:

- The first diploma course focused on conceptual knowledge for developing a curriculum framework with a peace-education approach.
- The second diploma course was oriented toward developing practical resources and tools, adapted to the specific cases and contexts in which each teacher worked.
- Finally, the preparatory course supported teachers in progressing toward the completion of their university degrees.

A chart summarizing the professionalization program for educators implemented by the project is presented below:



Strengthening the knowledge and tools of teachers in rural and peri-urban areas—particularly in the central Sierra and the Chocó Andino—was a strategic approach to leverage the role and influence these actors hold within their communities, not only with students but also with families and other community stakeholders. In this way, the project sought to engage an actor with greater potential to expand the peace-education approach.

Immediate Outcome 2.2 – Promoted women’s political leadership and intercultural and gender approaches in local government planning processes

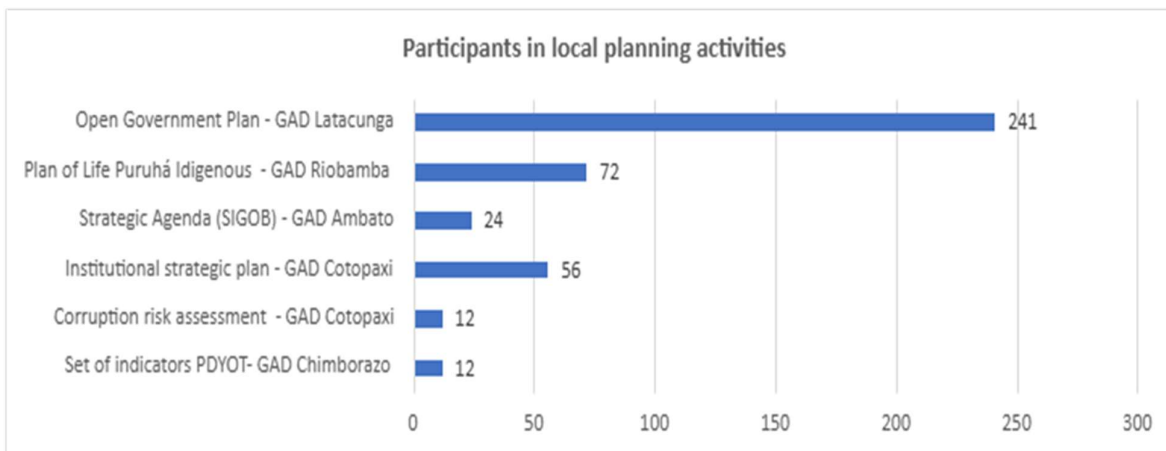
Under this outcome, the following activities were carried out:

- Approximately 350 people—including women, youth, Indigenous peoples, neighborhood leaders, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and others—actively participated in the development of local plans and public

management instruments, in coordination with five (5) local governments in the central Sierra:

- In partnership with the Municipality of Latacunga, the city’s first open-government plan was co-designed, incorporating commitments to strengthen citizen participation, management innovation, and public integrity.
- In collaboration with the Provincial Government of Cotopaxi, led by Lurdes Tibán, an Indigenous leader, a corruption-risk analysis was conducted following public-procurement crimes committed during the previous administration. Based on this analysis, an institutional strategic plan was developed, defining objectives and lines of action for institutional strengthening.
- In Ambato, support was provided to the strategic agenda of the mayor—the first young Indigenous woman, Diana Caiza, to lead the local government. This technical assistance was delivered through UNDP’s regional SIGOB program.
- Together with the Provincial Government of Chimborazo, capacities were strengthened among the planning team, and a collaboratively designed set of indicators was developed for the Provincial Development and Territorial Planning Plan.
- In cooperation with the Municipal Government of Riobamba and the Parish Government of Cacha, a participatory “life plan” was designed for the Puruhá Indigenous communities of the rural parish.

A chart summarizing the planning tools developed in the five (5) decentralized autonomous governments, along with the number of public officials who participated in their development and construction, is presented below:



- Additionally, technical assistance was provided to local governments through programs aimed at promoting leadership and participation in peacebuilding, gender, and rights:
  - A total of 95 women from rural and Indigenous communities were trained in peace promotion, conflict resolution, and gender approaches, in cooperation with the local governments of Riobamba and Latacunga.
  - Approximately 10 officials from the Municipality of Riobamba and 190 secondary-school students from the city participated in the design of training modules on youth leadership and peace promotion. The municipal government team was trained as facilitators to implement this training tool.
  - Support was also provided to the “community kitchens” project of the Municipality of Riobamba, through research on traditional food practices and products. This research resulted in a publication promoting local products and recipes as a strategy to restore the communities’ collective identity and social cohesion.
  - At the Provincial Government of Chimborazo, 14 officials strengthened their capacities to serve as trainers within the institution’s citizen-participation school, with an emphasis on the appropriate use of the participation mechanisms established in Ecuadorian regulations.
  - In cooperation with UNDP’s electoral project, a radio campaign—broadcast in Spanish

- and Kichwa—was conducted on mechanisms for preventing and sanctioning gender-based political violence. It was aired in the lead-up to the 2023 local elections.
- Participation was also supported in the **Intergenerational Regional Meeting on the Implementation of the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean**, held on 27–28 November 2023 in Bogotá, Colombia, through the Indigenous youth leader, Leticia Tituaña.

The implementation of Intermediate Outcome 2 progressed in full coherence with the results framework, by prioritizing territorial intervention and developing a training offer adapted to local needs and priorities. The strategy was aimed at providing comprehensive technical assistance to strengthen capacities in key areas—institutionality, transparency, open government, citizen participation, research, leadership, and planning—ensuring that actions responded to the expected changes in capacities and community articulation. In a complementary way, the project strategically took advantage of the role of teachers in communities and neighborhoods to transfer knowledge and tools in peace education, laying solid foundations for the future formation of dialogue networks and processes of promotion of rights, as established in the results framework. The programming of the result was executed as planned, with the only exception of the interruption of the technical assistance of the SIGOB team to the municipality of Ambato, derived from changes in the local technical staff. Despite this adjustment, the result maintained its expected trajectory: around 350 people from the prioritized provinces participated in the development of local plans and in various training and research activities, which shows a high level of compliance with the expected outputs and effects for this intermediate result.

Regarding budget execution, spending for Intermediate Outcome 2 amounted to USD 385,351.30, equivalent to 99% of the budget allocated to this component and 53% of the project’s total grant.

Among the most significant barriers encountered during implementation were the institutional weaknesses of local governments in the prioritized provinces. Frequent issues included staff and leadership turnover, heavy workloads, and limited technical capacities. As previously mentioned under Intermediate Outcome 1, additional challenges included the low prioritization of conflict prevention and interculturality, limited internet coverage, and digital illiteracy. Collaboration with PUCE also presented challenges due to the complexity of its internal administrative processes and existing gaps related to social-conflict issues.

The achievements under Intermediate Outcome 2 were sustained by three key factors. The first was the strategy of building partnerships with representative local governments in the prioritized territories, combined with UNDP’s ability to adapt to differing contexts and priorities. Among the five local governments involved, three were led by Indigenous authorities, two by Indigenous women, and one by a young Indigenous woman. This allowed direct engagement with the project’s priority groups at the highest local levels.

The second factor was UNDP’s legitimacy among national and territorial actors, positioning it as a partner capable of generating knowledge, building networks, and developing innovative solutions in various development-related areas, ensuring that “no one is left behind.”

Finally, the third factor was the coordination and follow-up strategy, which ensured a continuous presence in the territories and close collaboration with local governments as key partners. As mentioned in the previous component, PUCE’s role as an academic partner was essential, enabling the articulation of the entire training component with educators using a peace-education approach

### III. PERFORMANCE REVIEW

#### PROGRESS REVIEW

(i) Overall progress towards the CPAP outcome and output(s)

As mentioned in Section I “Context,” this project was formulated in alignment with CPAP Outcome 4 and Output 4.2, which focus specifically on reducing threats to citizen security, promoting social cohesion, and preventing conflicts. Therefore, the implementation of this project demonstrates a clear contribution to the CPAP, as it centered on supporting national and local actors in the central Sierra region—particularly local governments (GADs)—in the areas of interculturality, conflict prevention, human rights, and peacebuilding. This was achieved through capacity- and knowledge-development efforts, the creation of participatory tools for public management, and the promotion of local leadership.

(ii) Capacity Development

This project contributed to strengthening the capacities of public institutions at the local level in the prioritized areas of the central Sierra, but also at the national level through the development of several strategic products. Local-level work focused on providing technical assistance to the decentralized autonomous governments (GADs) of five (5) jurisdictions within the prioritized territory: two provincial and three cantonal governments. The project sought to promote leadership among Indigenous, women, and youth profiles, and to enhance capacities in participatory planning, interculturality, human rights, and conflict prevention and management among public officials from these institutions.

At the national level, support was provided for the development of public-management instruments, such as the model for preventing human-rights violations in contexts of social and socio-environmental conflict developed with the Ombudsman’s Office, and the actor analyses delivered to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, which examined stakeholders involved in gasoline and diesel subsidy policies.

(iii) Gender Mainstreaming

According to the project document, this intervention’s outputs were classified as GEN 2. The gender approach was integrated across all project components, in alignment with UNDP’s gender policies and the feminist international cooperation policy of the Government of Canada. However, the shift in national conditions that led to the amendment signed in January 2024 also required adapting activities to focus more directly on work with women in the territory.

As a result, the intervention was reorganized along three levels. First, efforts were directed toward strengthening the management capacities of local governments led by Indigenous women, such as the Provincial Government of Cotopaxi and the Municipal Government of Ambato. Second, the processes for developing local plans and management tools were redesigned to integrate a gender approach into their methodologies and to ensure effective participation of women. Finally, training activities were prioritized around women’s roles, with content on leadership, peacebuilding, interculturality, and rights.

(iv) Human Rights Mainstreaming

The project adopted a human-rights approach as a central guiding principle from its formulation, as it specifically sought to highlight the lack of guarantees and access to rights as one of the structural factors behind social conflict in Ecuador. Accordingly, training activities at different levels incorporated content on specific rights, such as the right to care, the right to the city, and rural rights, among others. Likewise, within this approach, collective rights

were directly addressed in various spaces due to their relevance to interculturality, a core element of this project. As previously noted, the gender approach was also integrated into activities in a complementary manner.

(v) Impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries

Following the project amendment, the target population for this intervention consisted mainly of local actors from the provinces of the central Sierra, grouped into authorities, public officials, members of civil-society organizations, teachers, and citizens. Overall, the activities sought to be inclusive and were designed to work with all these groups through their participation or in capacity-building processes.

The project promoted cooperation with local governments and with society, and implementation with PUCE served as a strategy for designing products and spaces that would provide meaningful contributions to these populations. In this regard, the overall level of satisfaction is quite positive, particularly with the training spaces and with strategic public-management products such as the Plan of Life of the Puruhá people in Riobamba and the Open Government Plan of Latacunga.

The main barriers related to beneficiary access included, on one hand, distance, lack of transportation routes, or, alternatively, limited internet access and digital skills. On the other hand, in the specific case of teachers, the more demanding conditions of their training process made it more difficult to secure extended participation exclusively from the central Sierra. For that reason, participants from other areas with histories of social conflict—such as the Chocó Andino in Pichincha—were also included.

(vi) Communication and publicity

Due to the national context and the growing distance between national actors that hindered dialogue—factors that motivated the project amendment—it was determined that broad media coverage was not appropriate. Consequently, communication efforts were carried out primarily through institutional channels:

**Ambato strengthens intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention with support from UNDP and the Government of Canada**

*20 February 2025*

This article describes the presentation of project activities at an event co-organized by UNDP, the Municipality of Ambato, and PUCE. It highlighted results from the PUCE diploma program on conflict management and peacebuilding, as well as research on local conflict dynamics and on the socioeconomic situation of local populations. <https://ambato.gob.ec/ambato-fortalece-el-dialogo-intercultural-y-la-prevencion-de-conflictos-con-apoyo-del-pnud-y-el-gobierno-de-canada/>

**Chimborazo: Capacities for dialogue, gender, and interculturality — Territories of Chimborazo strengthen capacities for intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention**

*26 December 2025*

This publication summarizes the results-presentation event held in Riobamba, organized with the Embassy of Canada, the Provincial Government of Chimborazo, and the Municipal Government of Riobamba. Key topics included training outcomes for women in rural communities, contributions to Chimborazo's Development and Territorial Planning Plan (PDYOT) through a set of indicators, a traditional-food recipe book promoting local identity, and the life plan of the Puruhá people of Riobamba.

<https://www.undp.org/es/ecuador/noticias/territorios-de-chimborazo-fortalecen-capacidades-para-el-dialogo-intercultural-y-la-prevencion-de-conflictos/>

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## Scholarships for teacher professionalization in Peace Education (PUCE)

6 March 2024

This text summarizes the launch of the Teacher Professionalization Program with a Peace Education approach, implemented by PUCE in partnership with UNDP and the Embassy of Canada. The training offer was targeted at teachers working in Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Tungurahua, and the northwestern zone of Pichincha. The scholarships prioritized teachers with experience in social projects, conflict management, and community leadership. <https://conexion.puce.edu.ec/becas-para-profesionalizacion-docente-en-educacion-para-la-paz/>

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY REVIEW

#### (i) Sustainability

The project established a solid foundation for continuity of intervention and scaling up of results, demonstrating effective capitalization consistent with the results framework. The consolidation of local capacities, the articulation with strategic actors and the generation of technical and training inputs allowed the progress achieved not only to meet the planned outputs, but also to enable favorable conditions for their sustainability and scaling. This projection into the future reflects that the results achieved were not isolated, but contributed to strengthening structures, knowledge and networks that can continue to promote intercultural dialogue, conflict prevention and inclusive participation beyond the project cycle.

This was particularly evident in the training processes carried out with various local actors, whether implemented in partnership with academic institutions or directly by the UNDP team. In addition to the technical-assistance actions delivered to the five local governments in the central Sierra, workshops were conducted with planning, participation, and community-engagement teams to provide a conceptual framework on conflict, peace, gender, and rights. This served as an exit strategy to ensure that these actors could continue implementing the activities initiated by the project.

At the national level, the strategic products developed with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the Ombudsman's Office (DPE) constitute studies and models that will inform decision-making and institutional management within these entities. In all cases, the main challenge going forward is the gradual institutionalization of these proposals within the respective counterpart institutions.

#### (ii) Participatory/consultative processes

After redirecting the project's intervention toward the central Sierra as the prioritized territory, UNDP sought to coordinate closely with local institutions—particularly the decentralized autonomous governments (GADs)—through a strategy that adapted to the priorities and needs of local authorities. It was through local governments and PUCE that UNDP gained access to work with communities and local populations. In this regard, the definition of objectives, scope, and timelines was always agreed upon with local authorities and public servants and consistently aligned with their local planning processes.

For this reason, in several cases, the themes of the interventions—as well as the methodologies developed—were shaped by highly specific local characteristics. Within this area of work, two processes stand out: the development of the Plan of Life of the Puruhá people in Riobamba and the Open Government Plan in Latacunga, both of which involved broad and active citizen participation.

**(iii) Quality of partnerships**

The partnership with the Government of Canada, through its Embassy in Ecuador, was the most significant cooperation for the project's objectives. In addition to being the project's donor, its strong understanding of the national context greatly facilitated the achievement of the results presented in this report. This strategic vision was particularly evident in enabling the project amendment, which shifted the intervention from a national scope to prioritized central Sierra territory, accompanied by the approval of an extension to the duration of the project.

The agreement with PUCE was the second key mechanism for project implementation, as it leveraged the academic rigor and experience of the institution to develop solid training and research offer. However, PUCE has a complex administrative structure and requires harmonization of approaches across its academic units, but interventions such as this one could potentially achieve even greater reach.

Finally, the project's engagement with local governments in the prioritized territories—and the operational flexibility to adapt to their management priorities—constituted the third successful line of cooperation. Nonetheless, GADs still face significant challenges in incorporating conflict-related and interculturality topics into their agendas, as well as in developing adequate management capacities and securing budgets to advance these themes.

**(iv) National Ownership**

The project was implemented under the DIM modality. As such, it did not have a single national counterpart during the implementation process. The amendment approved in January 2024, along with the reorientation of activities toward the central Sierra territories—which enabled the achievement of the results presented—would have been more difficult to accomplish had there been a national counterpart. It is important to consider that, in the original formulation, the national executive branch was one of the stakeholders involved in the national social conflict.

Once cooperation with the local governments (GADs) was established, the intervention was adapted to their priorities, needs, and intervention criteria. This included defining the results, targets, and the budget associated with each workstream. Finally, these counterparts, together with the PUCE team, participated in interviews conducted as part of the preparation for the project's independent evaluation.

**MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW****(i) Monitoring and Evaluation**

The project's governance structure designated the project board as the highest decision-making and activity-monitoring body. This board was composed of the Ambassador of Canada and the UNDP Resident Representative. In this space, annual monitoring reports—both narrative and financial—were reviewed and approved. Project monitoring was also carried out through UNDP's institutional tools and with support from the national office team. In addition, the project's operational team conducted in-person visits on a rotating basis to counterpart local governments (GADs), enabling the planning and subsequent execution of the scheduled activities. These visits occurred monthly during the final year of implementation, totaling approximately 20 trips since the project's localization in the central Sierra was defined. The visits were complemented by follow-up sessions held through virtual platforms. Regarding the agreement signed with PUCE, several in-person follow-up meetings were also held related to project milestones, supported by the UNV personnel assigned to the university.

**(ii) Timely delivery of outputs**

The project underwent an amendment, signed in January 2024, which introduced two types of adjustments. The first was related to its territorial focus, shifting the intervention from a national scale to a local one, concentrating activities in the provinces of the central Sierra. The second was an extension of the project duration, which increased from 12 to 18 months without any additional budget. This was the only modification related to the project's extension and logical framework, and it enabled implementation to proceed appropriately in order to achieve the results reported in this document.

### (iii) Resource Allocation

The project includes expenses related to coordination, administration, and monitoring carried out by UNDP. To provide a reference for this amount, the following components were considered:

- **100%** of the “facilities,” “miscellaneous,” and “rental” accounts.
- **81%** of the “contractual NPSA” account, corresponding to the project's contracted staff. The remaining **19%** reflects the average portion dedicated to development activities carried out by the interculturality specialist, particularly for designing content used in training sessions with counterparts as part of the exit strategy.
- **70%** of the “travel” account. The remaining **30%** was allocated to covering airfare and per diem for international experts who participated in development activities.
- **15%** of the “UN” account, corresponding to cross-cutting activities such as monitoring, event coverage, and communication products. The remaining **85%** corresponds to the profiles assigned to PUCE.

Based on these considerations, the “other costs” category represents **35% of the project's total budget**. Although this remains below the 40% ceiling, the extension of the implementation period—without an increase in the budget—and the higher need for field presence for planning, monitoring, and coordination activities increased these costs beyond what was estimated during the initial project formulation.

### (iv) Cost-effective use of inputs

The project budget was originally designed for a 12-month intervention at a national scale. Therefore, the shift toward a territorial approach and the extension of the implementation period through December 2025 required a much more careful and efficient use of resources. Additionally, this had to be achieved without affecting operations or the project's ability to adequately respond to local counterparts. However, several areas were identified where resources could have been used more efficiently:

- The Low Value Grant signed with PUCE enabled the implementation of several project activities related to capacity building and knowledge management. However, making better use of this mechanism would have required stronger coordination with the local governments (GADs) to ensure more complementary implementation. This should be considered as a key criterion for any future territorial intervention.
- The training offers provided by PUCE and UNDP should also take into account costs that would facilitate participation from people in the central Sierra provinces, who—due to distance, educational levels, limited internet access, heavy workloads, family responsibilities, and gender roles—were not always able to participate consistently in some training spaces, thereby reducing the reach of certain activities.
- Finally, the research and knowledge products generated under the project had varying levels of utility. Those produced with national-level actors—such as the analyses on energy policy and subsidies—provided valuable information for decision-making by authorities. However, at the local government level, management challenges, limited resources, and technical constraints created barriers to fully leveraging these outputs. An example of a useful product was the research on traditional food practices and heritage products, which proved

be practical for local stakeholders. For future initiatives, it is recommended to explore approaches that incorporate local identity components and respond to concrete needs of the population.

**IV. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

#	Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Priority	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Status
1	Resurgence of social conflict with the indigenous people disrupts existing dialogue processes.	September 2023	Problem	High impact  Enter priority on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) Priority = 5	The project was rescheduled and its focus shifted toward the central Sierra, and its implementation period was extended through December 2025.	UNDP	UNDP	January, 2024	Solved
2	The gender perspective is not well received by Indigenous organizations or other actors.	Not identified	Problem	High impact  Priority = 3	There was no negative institutional response from territorial actors regarding the gender-focused activities.	UNDP	UNDP	November, 2025	Solved
3	Local elections may cause changes in the leadership or the expectative of counterparts, making it difficult for the continuity and coordination of the project	February, 2024	Request for Change	High impact  Priority = 4	Efforts were made to jointly identify the management priorities of local authorities that aligned with the project's objectives and to respond with specialized technical assistance tailored to each counterpart.	UNDP	UNDP	June, 2025	Solved
4	Socio-political developments can lead to shifts in the government's security policies, resulting in an increased reliance on repressive, violent, and	October, 2025	Problem	High impact  Priority = 4	As this phenomenon was identified toward the end of the project, the conditions for a planned response were not in place. However, it underscored the need for sustainable actions and medium-term scalability with the counterparts and other	UNDP	UNDP	November, 2025	Solved

	polarizing approaches to conflict management				stakeholders involved.				
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**Table 1: Issues Log**

## V. LESSONS LEARNED

<b>Project-Related CPAP Outcome</b>	Outcome 4, Output 4.2
<b>Project Description and Key Lessons-Learned</b>	
<b>Brief description of context</b>	<p>Ecuador has experienced renewed peaks of social conflict escalation, such as in 2019, 2022, and more recently in 2025. This situation highlights the challenge of strengthening the capacities of institutional actors and citizens to prevent and manage social conflicts based on dialogue and the promotion of agreement-building.</p>
<b>Brief description of project</b>	<p>The project made concrete contributions to ensure that public officials, social organizations, local leaders, and citizens increased their knowledge and had tools that would allow them to advance preventive solutions in intercultural contexts. It also laid the groundwork for training processes through an implementation agreement with PUCE. Likewise, it promoted participatory design and the creation of public-management tools with local governments that incorporate intercultural, gender, and human-rights approaches. Finally, it contributed to strengthening the capacities of local civil-society leaders, helping create favorable conditions for the development of local networks that promote social cohesion, peacebuilding, and intercultural dialogue.</p>
<b>Key project successes</b>	<p>Refocusing the project's scope from a nationwide intervention to prioritized territories with a high Indigenous population enabled the intercultural and gender approaches to find effective channels for implementation. The project's first major contribution was positioning conflict dynamics and interculturality within local agendas in the central Sierra region. This included opening spaces for discussion and providing academic knowledge and conceptual foundations to guide these conversations. A second key factor was the strategic vision and operational flexibility of the Government of Canada and UNDP, which successfully adapted the intervention to an institutional context marked by crisis and high unpredictability. Lastly, cooperation with PUCE through an implementation agreement provided academic rigor to the training offer and knowledge-management processes.</p>
<b>Project shortcomings and solutions</b>	<p>The breakdown of national-level dialogue channels was the most complex challenge faced by the project. This national crisis led to the amendment signed in January 2024, which required revising approaches, activities, partnerships, and logistical conditions not initially foreseen. Adaptation was possible thanks to UNDP's operational structure and relationship networks, which facilitated rapid engagement with local governments in the prioritized area. Implementation in the territory required significant operational flexibility and a rethinking of monitoring and evaluation criteria, with strong on-the-ground presence due to the operational limitations of local governments, capacity gaps within teams, internet-access barriers, and mobility and access constraints commonly present in these provinces.</p>

<b>Lessons learned</b>	Institutional continuity can be strengthened through systematic knowledge-transfer mechanisms. These measures can help mitigate the effects of turnover among authorities and academic personnel, preserving coherence and stability in project support.
<b>Follow-up Actions</b>	The systematization and dissemination of successful experiences—such as the Puruhá <i>Plan of Life</i> and Latacunga’s Open Government Plan—can serve as replicable models in other territories. This may involve broader dissemination by local counterparts through audiovisual materials, life stories and testimonials, case studies, and practical guides on participatory governance and interculturality, promoted through academic institutions, municipal associations, and public-policy spaces.

**Table 2: Lessons Learned**

## VI. FINANCIAL STATUS AND UTILISATION

### Financial Summary

The project operated with a budget of USD \$738,669.19, provided by a single donor, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Development of the Government of Canada. By the end of the implementation period, total expenditure amounted to USD \$735,434.62. This figure represents 99.5% execution relative to the original contribution.

The main challenge in budget execution resulted from the extension of the implementation period and the territorial shift approved through the amendment, neither of which included a budget increase. These changes created needs that had not been foreseen in the original design and required a highly strategic and careful use of financial resources.

### Financial Overview

DONOR	COMMITTED (US\$), as per the cost sharing	RECEIVED(US\$)	EXPENDITURES(US\$)			TOTAL 2023-2024-2025	REMAINING FUNDS(US\$), i.e. (Received- Total Exp.)
			Period 2023	Period 2024	Period 2025		
Dept of Forgn Afrs Trade & Dev	US\$ 0,00	\$738.669,81	\$187.398,19	\$ 276.544,34	\$ 271.492,10	\$ 735.434,62	\$ 3.235,19
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3: Financial overview for the whole duration of the project

### Financial Utilization

DONORS	ACTIVITY	[2023-24-25] EXPENDITURES (US\$)
Dept of Forgn Afrs Trade & Dev	<i>Outcome 1. Intercultural and Gender Sensitive Dialogue and Conflict Prevention in Ecuador</i>	
	Capacities:	175.703,78
	Knowledge:	121.032,92
	<i>Outcome 2. Network of women facilitators and leaders created to promote and sustain intercultural and gender-sensitive consensus-building processes, as well as participatory local development planning.</i>	
	Networks:	140.998,79
	Local Government:	244.352,51
	<i>Seguimiento del proyecto (incluyendo la línea base de género Analysis)</i>	
	Coordination:	49.282,45
<b>Subtotal Dept of Forgn Afrs Trade &amp; Dev</b>		<b>735.434,62</b>
<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>735.434,62</b>

Table 4: Financial utilization by donor and activity for [ex. 2009]

Note: All expenditure figures presented in this report are provisional. As per the cost-sharing agreement,

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*UNDP Head Quarters provides donors with an annual certified financial statement on 30 June of every year.*

**ANNEXES**

**01 Monitoring chart**