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South-South Ideas

**Post-COVID-19 Socio-economic
Policy Responses and South-South
Cooperation Opportunities in the
Andean region**

Prepared under the project

South-South Global Thinkers: The Global Coalition of Think Tank Networks for South-South Cooperation for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

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South-South Ideas

Post-COVID-19 Socio-economic Policy Responses
and South-South Cooperation Opportunities
in the Andean region

June 2022



FARO (Ecuador), FUNDACIÓN ARU (Bolivia)

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Executive summary

This study analyses the socio-economic policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Andean region, emphasizing the role of South-South cooperation (SSC) and its potential to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable recovery. It focuses on the key policy measures implemented in the region in the employment and social protection sectors, further analysing the experiences of Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru.

The research followed a qualitative methodology using mainly secondary sources of information. It included a systematic review of public policy documents, official statistics and budget reports, among other documents available online that allow the actions of governments to be studied, as well as the role of SSC. Primary sources complemented the findings where gaps in the information were identified. Thus, a total of 17 interviews with stakeholders from international organizations and experts in SSC are included.

The results show that the pandemic and the implementation of mandatory lockdown policies deepened existing structural problems. This severely affected already fragile economies and exposed the vulnerability of populations living in poverty and extreme poverty.

In this context, SSC in the Andean countries suffered a setback, partially due to region-specific issues, including varying political agendas. Nevertheless, this study affirmed that the post-COVID-19 environment demands a global and regional response to persistent, common challenges not subject to national geographic borders. It further recommends that SSC's value be reaffirmed, especially among middle-income nations. Recommendations and good practices were identified for this purpose. They included the need to continue encouraging knowledge-sharing environments to identify lessons learned from different countries, establish offices that compile SSC experiences, generate information, and implement sound systems to consolidate data, among others. Challenges for SSC identified included the lack of a unified quantification and valuation system to evaluate its contribution and a current context of uncertainty due to the lack of political leadership that reinforces SSC. However, this situation demands a more active role from other actors, including civil society.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

APCI	Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America
CCT	Conditional cash transfer
CLACSO	Latin American Council of Social Sciences
CSO	Civil society organization
CT	Cash transfer
EAP	Economically active population
ECLAC	Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean
EDEM	Entrepreneurship and Business Development in Mesoamerica
ENCI	National Strategy for International Cooperation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross domestic product
HDI	Human Development Index
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IS	Solidarity Income
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprise
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAEF	Formal Employment Preservation Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEGIB	Ibero-American General Secretariat
SSC	South-South cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
VAT	Value added tax
WHO	World Health Organization
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
US\$	United States dollar
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

COVID-19 severely affected many countries worldwide, requiring governments to take immediate action to protect people's lives and health, while also taking care of their employment and income in the face of an imminent economic recession.

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), just as in other regions, the capacity of the governments in office to act depends on their existing resources and policy instruments, and the performance of the pre-pandemic health care and sanitation systems. Moreover, LAC is among the most unequal regions globally,¹ facing key challenges when taking policy measures, such as gender, income and ethnic disparities, poverty, lack of social protection, informality in the labour market, and little capacity for the productive sector to adopt teleworking practices. The virus outbreak revealed other structural problems specific to each country, such as unemployment and different forms of violence. While each country has its particular national context, countries in the Latin American region also face similar challenges. This is an opportunity for collaboration to significantly reduce the impact of the crisis, especially on the most vulnerable members of the population, and at the same time promote an inclusive and sustainable response.

This study analyses the socio-economic policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Andean region, emphasizing the role of South-South cooperation (SSC) and its potential to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable recovery. It focuses on the key policy measures implemented in the region in the employment and social protection sectors, further analysing the experiences of Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru. It follows a qualitative research methodology, using mainly secondary sources of information. The research team systematically reviewed public policy documents, official statistics and budget reports, among other documents available online that allow the actions of governments to be studied, as well as the role of SSC. For the former, primary sources were also included, with 17 semi-structured interviews conducted online. They were conducted with representatives of international organizations and SSC experts to understand the current role of international cooperation, emphasizing SSC in the countries studied. To select the interviewees listed in Annex 1, the research team first identified the information gaps² in each territory that the representatives could fill.

The results of this research are presented in three chapters. The first chapter addresses the regional context, highlighting the structural problems that have become more visible with the virus outbreak. The second chapter presents the case studies of Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru, which include stakeholder mapping related to SSC in employment and social protection, and policy mapping of both areas to complement the previous exercise; then a policy per topic is further analysed. The third chapter presents a brief comparative analysis, identifying the opportunities for SSC, and highlights good practices and recommendations that can be applied in other Global South countries to strengthen SSC.

¹ Further information is available in the periodic Human Development reports at <https://hdr.undp.org/>. An additional source is the World Economic Report at https://wir2022.wid.world/www-site/uploads/2021/12/WorldInequalityReport2022_Full_Report.pdf.

² Bolivia is the country with most interviews due to the total lack of systematic information on SSC projects, followed by Ecuador. Colombia and Peru were the countries with most information available.

1. General background

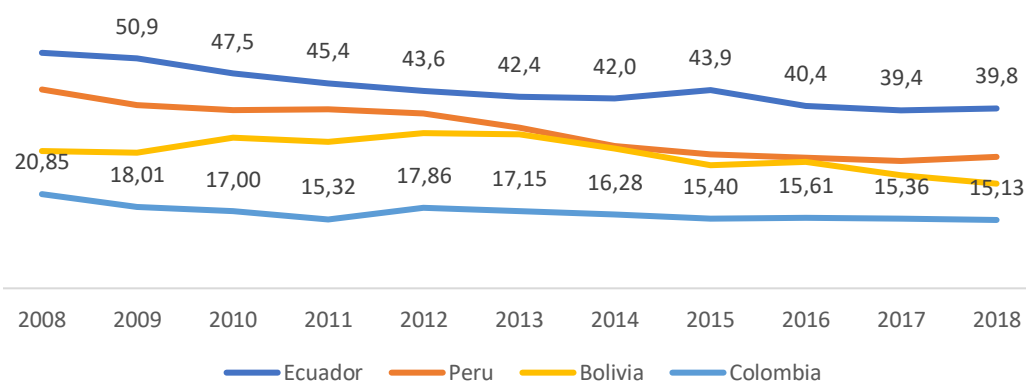
This study analyses the socio-economic policy responses to the virus outbreak in the employment and social protection sectors in the Andean region, emphasizing the role of SSC and its potential to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable recovery.

In this region, there are important differences regarding what public and private facilities can supply to the population.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in LAC made worse the common structural problems in the region. Mobility restriction policies imposed in most Latin American nations revealed the profound inequality that characterizes this territory, where families without a steady income or any social protection cannot afford to stay at home, since they depend on their daily income for survival. Thus, people in vulnerable situations had to choose between protecting themselves from the virus by staying at home to comply with the Government's measures, or going out to seek their daily income in a context of economic paralysis.³

The existing capacity of health care systems was also a key element in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly in this region, there are important differences regarding what public and private facilities can supply to the population. In addition, LAC accounts for a significant percentage of out-of-pocket health expenditure.⁴ Of the countries studied, Ecuador had the highest participation (Figure 1.1), implying that in 2018 approximately 40 percent of health expenditure was financed directly by households, followed by Peru (29.2 percent), Bolivia (23.2 percent) and Colombia (15.1 percent).

Figure 1.1. Out-of-pocket health expenditure in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, 2008–2018 (%)



Source: World Bank (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

Like other low-income countries, the LAC governments had the difficult decision of choosing between two policy options. The first option (chosen by the nations being studied) was to implement lockdown measures to reduce the virus infection rate and prevent overcrowding of health systems, which even in European countries—where systems are stronger and have a greater available budget—were weakening. The second was to support economic activities to prevent a significant increase in the unemployment

³ This is because health safety measures imply a slowdown or interruption of production by reducing working hours, wages, and aggregate demand (ECLAC, 2020a).

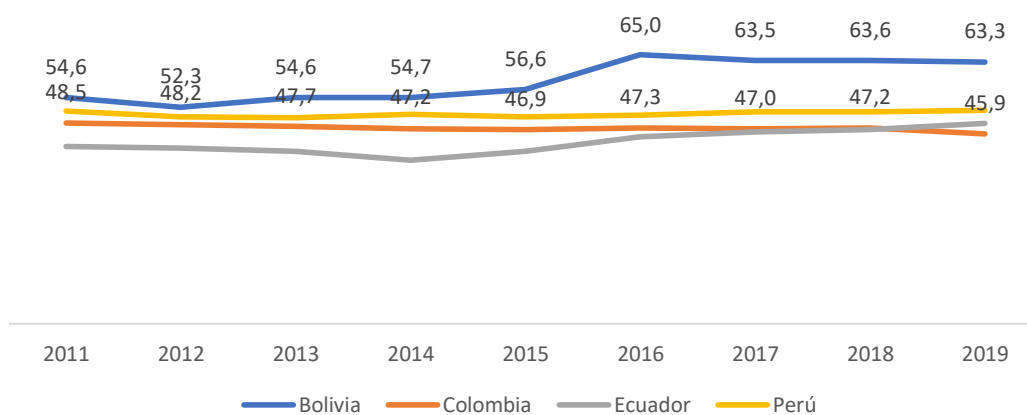
⁴ The indicator measures the percentage of expenditure paid directly by households to contribute to health restoration or enhancement.

rate, so that those who do not have a steady income would have the possibility of generating it. However, this could have quickly compromised national health care systems that in many cases had already undergone budget cuts.

The problem for many of the Andean countries is also related to their limited financing options as middle-income states, which makes them ineligible for humanitarian aid programmes, financing, credits and donations, such as those from the Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Arcediano and Porrás García, 2020). The consequences of this obstacle include a decline in international cooperation with middle-income countries that has contributed to a foreign debt increase due to liquidity problems (*ibid.*). As a result, the Andean countries relied mainly on traditional support from industrialized countries via international cooperation, although they also received international support from non-reimbursable aid sources, donations of goods and services, and technical assistance. From the documents reviewed in this study, aid in the context of the pandemic focused mainly on donations of medical supplies, hygiene kits and vaccines, and the exchange of experiences in optimizing health care systems and emerging responses to protect vulnerable populations.

Despite the efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 in LAC through compulsory lockdowns, two months after the pandemic began, in May 2020, Latin America was the new focus of concern due to the number of cases and death tolls (Rubio *et al.*, 2020). Due to the need to recover the incomes of millions in both the informal and formal sectors, massive lockdown measures ceased in mid-2020. Along these lines, approximately 34 percent of the economically active population (EAP) is in vulnerable employment;⁵ this percentage is higher in the countries studied, ranging from 46 percent to 63 percent (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Vulnerable employment in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, 2011–2019 (%)



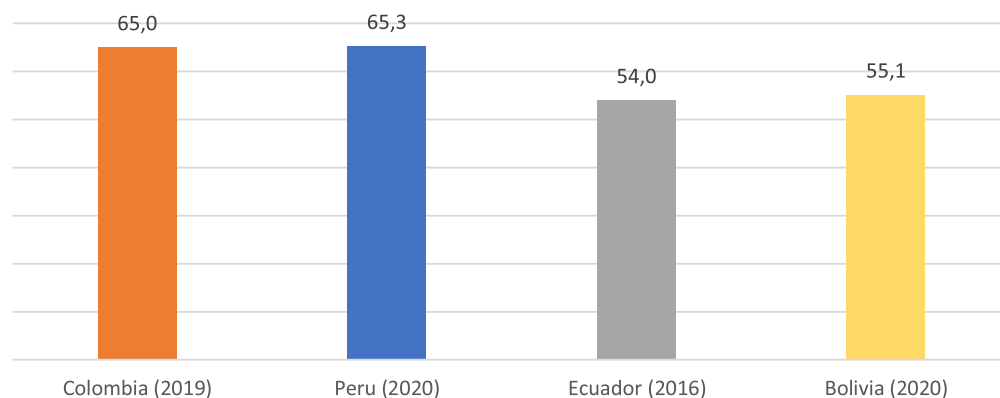
Source: World Bank (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

⁵ It includes unpaid family workers and/or self-employed workers as a percentage of total employment. There is no available data for more recent years.

In addition, in the countries studied, only 60 percent of the population used the Internet in the latest year measured⁶ (Figure 1.3), which could limit the capacity to adopt teleworking.

Figure 1.3. *Population using the Internet (%) in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, the latest year*



Source: World Bank (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

There is growing evidence of the regressive effects of economic crises, affecting vulnerable households more than middle- or high-income households. These vulnerable households include historically marginalized groups, such as indigenous people and Afro-descendants who have been affected by the exploitation of natural resources in their territories, women and girls who often face greater inequality and violence, as well as migrants (Arcediano and Porras García, 2020; Plan International Deutschland, 2021). This was corroborated during the pandemic with the increase of certain risks for these groups, such as femicides, complaints of violence against women and girls, racism and xenophobia. Thus, high degrees of inequality, especially horizontal inequality, generate greater vulnerability (Ligon and Schechter, 2003 in Manzano and Saboin, 2020) and jeopardize minorities. Therefore, in a region characterized by social inequality in terms of socio-economic strata, ethnicity, migratory status and gender, among other factors, multiple and simultaneous situations of discrimination and exclusion were generated, expressed in terms of coverage, access and results (Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2020 in ECLAC, 2021).

Along similar lines, ECLAC (2020 in ECLAC, 2021) warned that about 58 million indigenous people and 34 million Afro-descendants in the region lack access to basic services and live in poor conditions. In indigenous communities, limited access to clean water makes it difficult to practice frequent handwashing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (ECLAC, 2021). Furthermore, the indigenous population has higher levels of overcrowding and lacks basic sanitation services, which made the implementation of safe lockdown measures difficult, and substantially increased their vulnerability compared to other populations (ibid.). Similarly, Afro-descendant communities faced high rates of poverty, less access to health care and education systems, precarious housing conditions, greater rates of informal employment, as well as the prevalence of hypertension and diabetes, making them more vulnerable to the effects of the virus (ibid.).

In addition, migrants experience specific vulnerabilities, including the loss of employment and income sources, overcrowding and poverty, lack of necessary documentation to receive health care attention (Plan International Deutschland, 2021) and even extreme difficulty in returning to their country of origin due to mobility restrictions. In this sense, it

⁶ The data regarding Internet use for Peru and Bolivia is from 2020, for Colombia from 2019, and for Ecuador from 2016.

should be noted that Venezuelan migration currently constitutes a migratory corridor in South America, reaching an estimated five million people (17.5 percent of the Venezuelan population) outside their birth country (ECLAC, 2020). This has altered migration patterns and increased the requests for protection and refuge, which reached 657,405 in 2019 (ibid.). A recent study by Plan International Deutschland (2021) highlights that refugee and migrant women in particular experience extreme vulnerability, where violence is accentuated both inside their homes, neighbourhoods and jobs, and also in public entities that are unaware of their prevailing needs.

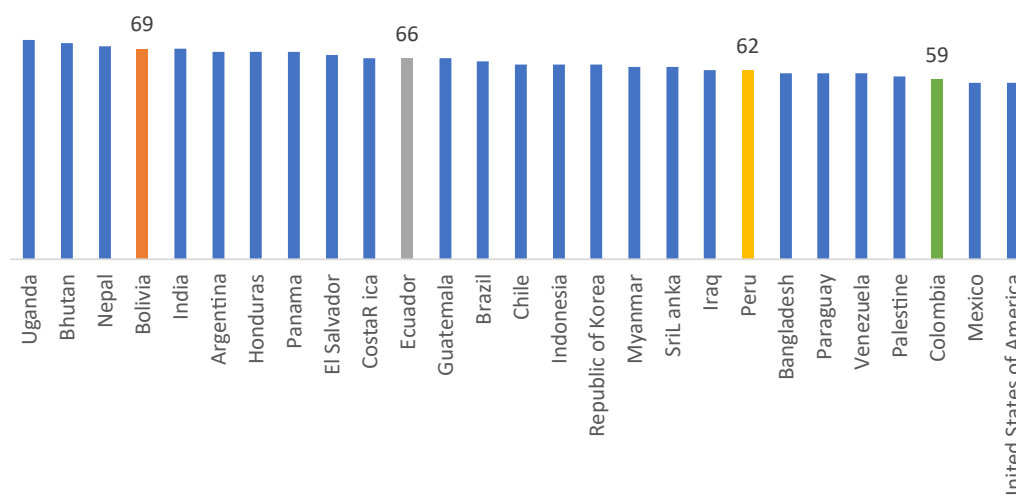
The pandemic has also highlighted the unfair distribution of unpaid tasks inside households, where women and girls perform the majority. Particularly, in times of crisis, the overcrowding of the health care system, school closure and the lack of social services increased the burden of such tasks, with most of them falling on women (Arcediano and Porras García, 2020; Cardín, 2020). As Fiszbein *et al.* (2003 in Elson, 2012) found, this is not new. For example, in Argentina, during the 2001 crisis, 60 percent of the people surveyed increased the consumption of homemade food, which women are usually in charge of producing (with a higher probability in female-headed households). However, as Elson (2012) mentions, the problem goes further, as the domestic sector is unseen and thus absorbs and compensates for macroeconomic shocks without any kind of protection. This sector is key to social reproduction⁷ and is usually severely affected in economic crises (ibid.). It should be noted that, although gender issues have become relevant in international arenas, for Elson and Rodríguez Enríquez (2021) international organizations only started addressing them in 2015, without providing clear guidance.

Although many countries have substantially resumed face-to-face activities, one of the most imminent challenges is the education sector. Nations in LAC were among the most affected, with an average of 158 days of full school closure (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2021 in Grupo FARO, 2021). Several countries in the region—including the countries studied (Figure 1.4)—are among the nations with the highest weekly number of full school closures worldwide (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2021). This has affected 170 million students in the region (World Bank, 2021 in Grupo FARO, 2021), generating challenges for vulnerable populations in each country for several reasons. These include large differences in Internet connectivity and access to computers and/or other digital tools between urban and rural areas, low levels of digital literacy and other key factors required for remote learning; and environment-specific challenges. Thus, Latin America could become the region with the highest growth in learning poverty, reaching 62.5 percent of children who are unable to read and understand a text at the end of elementary school (ibid.). Among the studied countries, Bolivia is the nation with the highest weekly number of full school closures,⁸ reaching 43 per week, followed by Ecuador with 40 (Figure 1.5).

⁷ Social reproduction is understood as a process where relationships are constantly recreated and perpetuated (Mackintosh, 1981), which includes the reproduction of labour and capital through paid and unpaid activities (Elson, 2012).

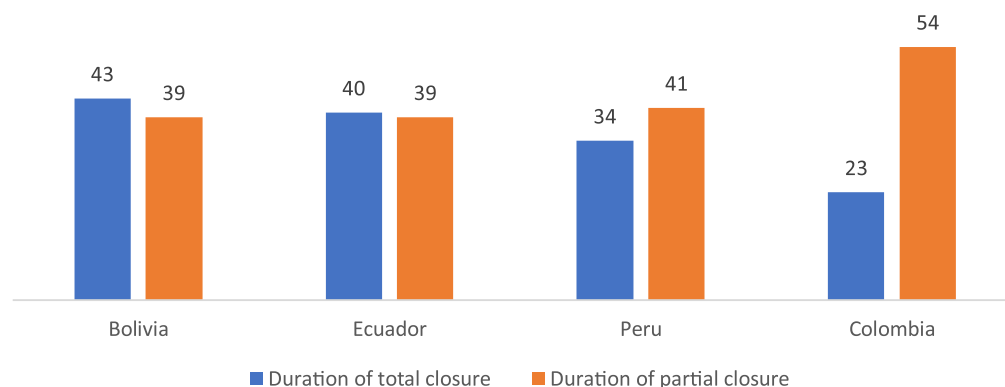
⁸ Information updated on 31 November 2021.

Figure 1.4. Countries with the longest full and partial school closures (weeks)



Source: UNESCO (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

Figure 1.5. School closures in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia (weeks)



Source: UNESCO (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

The Human Development Index (HDI)⁹ groups various key indicators to assess long-term progress. In 2020, the country with the highest HDI of the ones studied was Peru, followed by Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia. In terms of life expectancy at birth, Colombia and Ecuador have the best situation. Expected years of schooling are higher in Peru and Ecuador, while the average years of schooling are higher in Peru and Bolivia. In addition, 75 percent and 73 percent of the population in Ecuador and Colombia have access to safe drinking water systems, while access to safe sanitation systems corresponds to 43 percent of the population in Peru and 42 percent in Ecuador (Table 1.1).

⁹ It uses three basic dimensions: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living, allowing comparison among nations.

Table 1.1. Human Development Index components in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, 2020

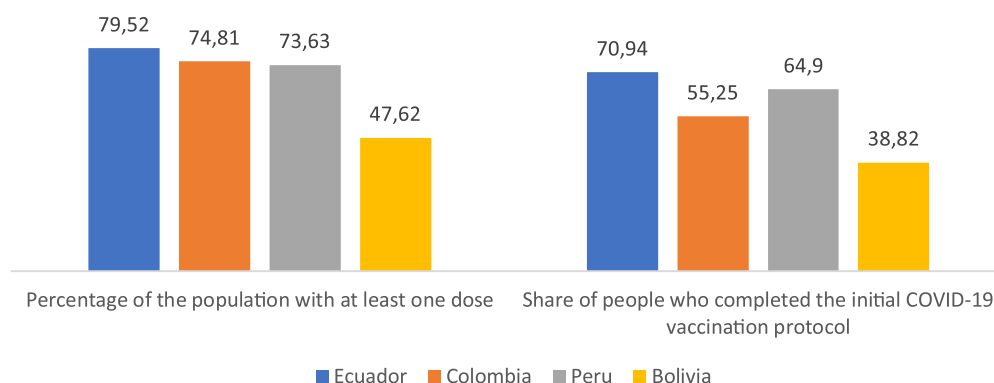
Component	Bolivia	Ecuador	Colombia	Peru
Life expectancy at birth (years)	71.5	77.0	77.3	76.7
Expected years of schooling (years)	14.2	14.6	14.4	15.0
Mean years of schooling (years)	9.0	8.9	8.5	9.7
Population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	N/I	75	73	50
Population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	23	42	17	43
Gross national income (GNI) per capita (PPP \$)	8,554	11,044	14,257	12,252
HDI	0.718	0.759	0.767	0.777

Source: United Nations (2021).

Prepared by: FARO. N/I signifies no information available.

Finally, a key element for safe face-to-face activities is the vaccination process. By the end of December 2021,¹⁰ the vaccination process had made important advances. Ecuador had the highest percentage of its population inoculated, with approximately 80 percent with at least one dose, followed by Colombia, Peru and Bolivia (Figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6. Vaccinated population in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia (%)



Source: Our World Data (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

It is worth highlighting that vaccination is critical for reopening processes and economic recovery. However, the structural problems outlined above reflect the need to build policies to address them directly, requiring an active role from governments, the private sector and civil society, to work together for an inclusive recovery.

¹⁰ Information updated by 31 December 2021.

2. Analysis of socio-economic policies by country

This section unpacks and analyses the socio-economic policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Andean region and the role of SSC. The information is presented in four case studies: Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru. In each one, the context of the COVID-19 outbreak is addressed; the state of SSC is given an overview; and the role of SSC in the sectors of employment and social protection is explored.

2.1 Ecuador

Ecuador faces enormous social and economic difficulties, aggravated by the shutdown of economic activities to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

2.1.1 Context of the COVID-19 situation

The first COVID-19 case in Ecuador was confirmed in early March 2020, leading to the activation of the National Emergency Operations Committee (COE-N) on 13 March 2020, according to the Ministry of Public Health (MSP, 2020). The measures implemented by the committee include mandatory telework, reduction of working hours, closure of education centres, closure of borders to foreign citizens, cancellation of public events, mobility restrictions, lockdown measures and curfew, among others (National Risk and Emergency Management Service, 2020). Despite all these measures, Ecuador was one of the worst affected countries at the beginning of the pandemic: one month after the outbreak of the virus, it had the highest rate of deaths per capita, reaching 900 deaths between March and April (New York Times, 2020).

Social and economic overview

In a dollarized economy with few monetary instruments,¹¹ Ecuador faces enormous social and economic difficulties, aggravated by the shutdown of economic activities to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Some of the challenges include: a contraction in demand, the fall in oil prices since March 2020, and a temporary interruption of oil production that led to a 9 percent GDP drop in 2020 (Central Bank, 2020 in Grupo FARO, 2021a).

First, the policy of shutting down public spaces in March 2020 led to the closing of education centres nationwide. Until May 2021, Ecuador was one of the 30 countries with the most face-to-face activities closure worldwide (UNESCO, 2021 in Grupo FARO, 2021). This led to significant challenges for vulnerable populations, since only 62 percent of households have Internet access in urban areas and 35 percent in rural areas, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC, 2020).

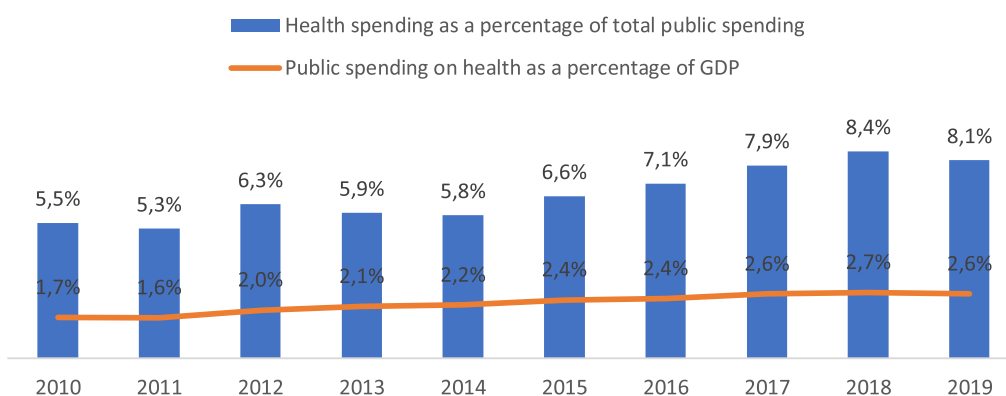
Second, mobility restriction measures drastically reduced the possibility of finding employment or a stable source of income for Ecuadorians and foreigners. Notably, Ecuador has the highest number of recognized refugees in Latin America, reaching 71,550 in December 2021 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2021). At the national level, only one-third of the economically active population has adequate employment (Grupo FARO, 2020) and, according to the Central Bank, the country suffered 335,413 job losses during the pandemic (Grupo FARO, 2021a). In addition, the dominance of informal jobs, which stood at 51.6 percent in the last quarter

¹¹ This is a key factor that differentiates it from other Latin American countries.

of 2020, was a major challenge during the pandemic. People with unstable jobs cannot afford to stay at home, because their family livelihoods depend on their daily income. As a result, between 2015 and 2020, national poverty increased by 9 percent, reaching 32.4 percent, and extreme poverty rose from 8.6 percent in 2015 to 14.9 percent in 2020 (INEC, 2020). Additionally, the Gini coefficient increased from 0.476 in 2015 to 0.500 in 2020 (ibid.).

Third, the outbreak of COVID-19 significantly increased challenges in Ecuador’s health care system. Although the country made an important investment in the last decade (Figure 2.1), the capacity of the public health care system¹² remains limited, fragmented, and segmented (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2021). Thus, public investment in health care is yet to spur a significant reduction in household expenditure, which is evident in the country’s out-of-pocket spending of about 39.8 percent in 2018 (Figure 1.1). Adding to this is the fact that 58 percent of the population is not covered by health insurance (INEC, 2020), indicating the vulnerable situation in the country during the outbreak of the pandemic. The health insurance with the most insured people is the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute (IESS),¹³ a formal-employment-based insurer.

Figure 2.1. Health expenditure: GDP percentage versus public expenditure 2010–2019, Ecuador (%)



Source: Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas (MEF) Ecuador (2021).

Prepared by FARO

Before the virus outbreak, an aggravating situation in Ecuador was the lack of spare fiscal capacity, which according to Beverinotti (2020), compromised the possibility of massive support to vulnerable populations as carried out in other LAC countries. In fact, in 2020 tax revenues and expenses fell by 23 percent and 15 percent respectively, when compared to 2019, resulting in a deficit of US\$5.724 billion, 27 percent higher than the previous year (MEF Ecuador in Grupo FARO, 2021a). Specifically, value-added tax (VAT) contributed about 42 percent to Ecuador’s tax revenue between 2013 to 2020, making it the highest contribution to the country’s tax revenue¹⁴ (Central Bank in Grupo FARO, 2021a). In addition, the country’s tax collection is below the regional average, while its tax expenditure¹⁵ is higher than the regional average (Grupo FARO, 2021a). In 2019, it reached 5.3 percent of GDP, a higher percentage than the 2.6 percent spent on health investment and the 4.5 percent on education (Grupo FARO, 2021b).

¹² The public health care system includes private and state facilities.

¹³ Around 30 percent of the total population insured are covered by the IECS in the country (INEC, 2018).

¹⁴ The public income from the non-financial sector includes taxes (42 percent), social security contributions and oil revenues, with percentages below 20 percent (Central Bank in Grupo FARO, 2021a).

¹⁵ A tax expenditure is the income states legally cease to receive to benefit certain taxpayers, areas, or activities.

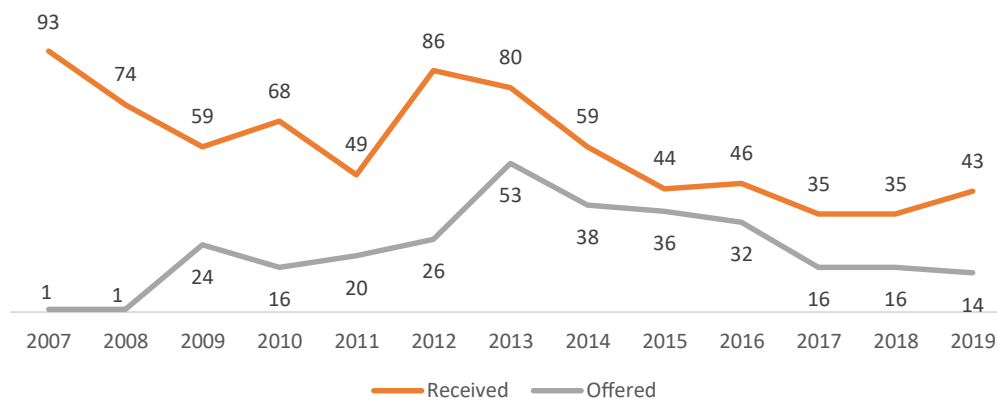
As for debt, according to legislation, the debt-to-GDP ratio cannot exceed 40 percent. The limit was exceeded in 2016, and it reached 68.9 percent in 2020 (Grupo FARO, 2021a).¹⁶ In September 2020, the country signed a US\$6.5 billion agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for 27 months (ibid.). Ecuador is committed to implementing tax reforms, improving public procurement processes, redirecting spending from subsidies to social assistance programmes and modernizing public investment (IMF, 2020). It has a wage bill above the Latin American average, so the IMF recommended a “rationalization of the wage bill that would comprise a mix of employment reduction and lower salaries” (ibid.).

The following section focuses on SSC after examining the Ecuadorian context of the COVID-19 outbreak. It explores the role of SSC in recent years and maps current SSC actors in both the social protection and employment sectors.

2.1.2 Overview of the state of South-South cooperation in Ecuador

As shown in Figure 2.2, since 2010 Ecuador had an upward trend in its participation in regional, bilateral, and triangular SSC initiatives until 2013. The country has participated in 1,064 SSC initiatives between 2007 and 2019. Its SSC profile has been that of a recipient partner, with 771 cases, compared to 293 in which it acted as a cooperation provider (Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), 2021).

Figure 2.2. Evolution of South-South cooperation in Ecuador, 2007–2019 (number of initiatives)



Source: SEGIB (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

As a recipient country, it mainly received aid for the environment, agriculture, disaster management and health; and, as a provider, it provided financial support for education, employment, environment, political participation and civil society (SEGIB, 2021). As a provider, an interviewee mentioned that:¹⁷

- due to economic issues (and) institutional issues, between the periods 2016–2018, there was not much offer of cooperation from Ecuador (...) Obviously in the negotiations we had with the SSC countries, we had on the table the issue of the financial impediment to be able to offer the experiences to other countries.

The following section focuses on mapping SSC in both the social protection and the employment sectors. They both include an overview of the key policy in each sector as well.

¹⁶ Currently, Ecuador is regulated by the Organic Law for Public Finance Organization, approved in 2020, which establishes a schedule to go back to 40 percent by 2032.

¹⁷ Online interview conducted with an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility (MREMH) of Ecuador (Annex 1).

2.1.3 Mapping South-South cooperation in social protection

Table 2.1 shows a map of SSC in the social protection sector during the height of the pandemic in 2020. Eight cooperation initiatives were identified; five of which correspond to bilateral SSC and three to regional SSC. The cooperating countries are Colombia, Panama and Peru, while most regional initiatives are financed by the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF). For further identification of SSC, Table 2.2 presents a policy map. This includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

Table 2.1. *South-South cooperation in Ecuador, stakeholder map of the social protection sector*

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
COVID-19 response	Support to recyclers	South-South	Technical support	Avina (Panama) (financer) CARE Ecuador (executor)	Non-government organizations (NGOs)	\$65,400.00
Refugees	Care for victims of the Colombian conflict	South-South	Humanitarian support	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia (financer) Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) (executor)	State institutions	\$34,895.00
COVID-19 response	Communication elements and diffusion of the national Government's measures and actions against COVID-19	South-South (regional)	Provision of services	CAF (financer) Ministry of Economy and Finance of Ecuador (executor)	1. Multilateral financial institution 2. State institution	\$400,000.00
Child malnutrition	Budget against chronic malnutrition of children in Ecuador	South-South (regional)	Cash transfers (CTs)	CAF (financer) Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion of Ecuador (executor)	1. Multilateral financial institution 2. State institution	\$62,400.00
Gender-based violence	CTs in the context of COVID-19 recovery to support survivors of gender-based violence and mitigate its risks	South-South	CTs	International Organization for Migration of Panama (financer) CARE Ecuador (executor)	1. Intergovernmental organization 2. NGO 3. NGO	\$98,994.00
Poverty	Strategic plan and feasibility study for an integrated care centre in the Guaranda canton, Bolivar province	South-South	Technical support	Avina Panama (financer) Fernando Soliz Carrion (executor)	NGOs	\$4,354.56
COVID-19 Response	Contribute to mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the border area between Peru and Ecuador	South-South	Technical support	Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru (financing) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador (executor)	State institutions	N/I
COVID-19 Response	Regional cooperation between Ecuador, Mexico, Chile, Peru and Uruguay for the reciprocal repatriation of their respective citizen	South-South (Regional)	Regional humanitarian mission	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador	State institutions	N/I

Sources: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility (MREMH), (2021); Government of Peru (2020).

Prepared by: FARO.

Table 2.2. Social protection policy map, Ecuador

Policy name	Cash transfers*	Food baskets	Guarantee of utility access	Suspension of eviction due to non-payment of rent (housing and business)
Body in charge of the policy	Presidency, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion	Presidency, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion	Presidency and National Assembly	Presidency and National Assembly
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	No	No	No	No
Policy status and period	Finalized	Finalized	Finalized	Finalized
Work axes	Money transfers	Food security	Livelihoods	Livelihoods
Policy objective	Improving and increasing the social protection system	Ensuring access to food for vulnerable families	Ensuring families have access to utilities	Ensuring non-eviction of families due to non-payment of rent
Target population	Money transfer beneficiaries	Vulnerable families	General population	General population
Key activities	<p>1. CT payable in April and May 2020 to those earning less than US\$400 a month (400,000 families).</p> <p>2. The IESS will delay payments to the social security system for 90 days for April, May and June 2020.</p> <p>3. Guaranteed access to utilities. The payment exemption amount varies according to each family's consumption.</p>	<p>1. Imports of perishable goods are processed immediately and free of charge if they are destined for priority social care.</p> <p>2. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock authorizes food delivery to families that require it nationwide.</p>	<p>From the state of emergency (20/07/2020) and up to one year later, the increase in the cost of utilities, including telecommunications and Internet services, whether provided by public or private agents, is forbidden. Within 30 days after the publication of the law, the companies will begin the collection of the amounts owed, dividing them into 12 equal monthly instalments without interest, fines, or surcharges.</p>	<p>The Humanitarian Support Act provides for the suspension of eviction due to non-payment of rent. However, this does not imply debt forgiveness; people must pay at least 20% of the value of the outstanding royalties; and, in the case of business premises, tenants shall prove their income has been affected by at least 30% compared to February 2020.</p>
Budget (if any)	No information available	No information available	No information available	No information available

*New transfers, increase in existing transfers, expansion of CTs to new recipients, advance disbursement of transfers.

Source: ECLAC (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

For further analysis, due to the appearance of COVID-19, the emergency Family Protection Grant was selected, since it was the initiative with the greatest scope—with four stages¹⁸—seeking to provide some social protection. The programme had a budget of US\$90.89 million, reaching 960,312 people in vulnerable situations. No international cooperation was identified.

¹⁸ Two in 2020 and two in 2021.

2.1.3.1 Social protection: Family Protection Grant

In Ecuador, there are several transfers aimed at social protection that, since 2019, have formed part of the comprehensive social protection system. Also, with the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, the emergency Family Protection Grant was created with two delivery phases in 2020 and two in 2021, to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the poorest households. The first phase was established on 27 March 2020, appointing the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) as the body in charge. The grant consisted of a one-time transfer of US\$120—two US\$60 payments between April and May 2020—aimed to support the beneficiary households and alleviate the effects of the state of emergency. Beneficiaries of this grant include people with incomes less than the minimum wage, members of the Peasant Social Security Institute, and performers of Unpaid Household Work (Ecuador Legal Online, 2021). Households receiving pensions or other MIES grants were excluded. Female heads of household, followed by male heads of household and other members of legal age (with preference given to women) were the target household collection representatives (ibid.).

To collect the money, the qualifying document was the citizenship identification number with Ecuadorian nationality or dual nationality. Citizens had to present this document at one of the 10,000 collection points through the public and private financial networks nationwide. While citizenship was not directly mentioned, Ecuadorian nationality was established as a requirement with the introduction of the national identity card. Unfortunately, there was no state support similar to the Family Protection Grant for migrants during the pandemic, even if international agencies such as the United Nations and the Red Cross managed to help them in the national territory. On this subject, it should be made clear that, before the pandemic's outbreak, public spending on human mobility programmes was reduced by 88 percent between 2018 and 2020, largely due to the economic crisis that Ecuador has suffered since 2016 (*El Comercio*, 2021). Nevertheless, Ecuador is the country with the highest number of recognized refugees in Latin America, and has a universal approach as a core principle in its Constitution (2008) for access to services related to health and education. The country also subscribes to the 2030 Agenda, which, as noted by Rangel (2020), seeks to ensure the safety, order and regularity of migration by respecting rights regardless of the person's migration status.

Following the procedure of other grants, the MIES (Ecuador Legal Online, 2021) contacted the beneficiaries through text messages and payments were made according to the last digit of the beneficiary's ID card number. In this first grant delivery, the collection was very complex, largely due to the mobility restriction measure and people's anxiety to receive some social protection. In early April 2020, provinces such as Guayas, Manabi, Esmeraldas and Los Rios recorded crowds and long lines for the money collection, while police support was needed to maintain order (*El Universo*, 2020). This situation changed in April's second phase, due to three key differences: 1) a single payment of US\$120 was made to prevent beneficiaries from mobilizing and crowding; 2) people allowed to access this aid were household representatives or individuals with incomes below the equivalent of a family basic food basket for February 2020 at the rate of US\$501.60, rather than the minimum wage; and 3) people who had already received the grant were exempted, as well as people listed in the database provided by the National Directorate of Criminal Offences Against Life, Violent Deaths, Disappearances, Extortion and Kidnapping (Ecuador Legal Online, 2021). Finally, the third and fourth phases of the emergency Family Protection Grant took place in 2021. This study does not address the phases outside the study period.

For the Family Protection Grant application, the MIES accrued US\$90.89 million, which allowed 960,312 beneficiaries to be reached (Table 2.3) (ibid.). By the end of 2020, the

total amount of COVID-19 expenditure was US\$224.59 million (MEF Ecuador, 2021). The MSP received 53 percent, followed by the MIES with 25 percent (ibid).

Table 2.3. Family Protection Grant beneficiaries,¹⁹ Ecuador

Money transfers	Amount	Payment period	Users
COVID-19 Family Protection Grant Phase 1	US\$120 (two payments)	April–May 2020	400,019
COVID-19 Family Protection Grant Phase 2	US\$120	May–June 2020	549,986
Family Protection Grant (Galapagos)	US\$145	October–December 2020	2,315
Nutritional Support Grant	US\$240	October–November 2020	7,992
Total users			960,312

Source: MEF Ecuador (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

Furthermore, 83.29 percent of the expenditure accrued concerning COVID-19 (US\$187.07 million) was oriented towards transfers or donations for investment (US\$137.09 million), goods and services for investment (US\$69.28 million), and expenditures on personnel for investment (US\$48.86 million) (MEF Ecuador, 2021).²⁰ Despite national efforts, the level of social assistance in the framework of the pandemic is one of the lowest among the LAC countries, placing Ecuador as one of the countries in the region with the least support to vulnerable households, both in terms of the proportion of the target population, as well as of expenditure on transfer programmes (IMF, 2020). Therefore, Ecuador has one of the lowest ranges of social protection policy interventions to limit the impact of COVID-19 in the region, along with Mexico and Venezuela (ECLAC, 2021).

2.1.4 Mapping South-South cooperation in employment

Table 2.4 shows a map of SSC in the employment sector during the height of the pandemic in 2020. Only one initiative was identified by Avina of Panama, a Civil Society Organization (CSO) that focuses on transferring knowledge and successful experiences to Ecuadorian recyclers to improve their business (MREMH, 2021). For SSC further identification, Table 2.5 presents a policy map. This includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

¹⁹ The beneficiaries of the contingency coverage due to economic contraction (1,20,9,466) are excluded.

²⁰ In addition, 13.44 percent (US\$30.19 million) has been directed to current expenditures (consumption of goods and services and current transfers and donations); followed by 3.27 percent (US\$7.34 million) to capital (MEF Ecuador, 2021).

Table 2.4. South-South cooperation in Ecuador, stakeholder map of the employment sector

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Know-how transference	Advice on the regulatory, economic/productive (market), socio-organizational and civil society dimensions of waste pickers in several cities in Ecuador	South-South	Technical support	Avina (Panama) (financer) CARE Ecuador (executor)	NGOs	\$145,262.00

Source: MREMH (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

Table 2.5. Employment policy map, Ecuador

Policy name	Teleworking provision	Work-hours reduction	Special contributions	Workday revival for the public and private sector
Body in charge of the policy	Emergency Operations Committee	Presidency, Ministry of Economy and Finance	Presidency, Ministry of Economy and Finance, and Emergency Operations Committee	Ministry of Labor
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	No	No	No	No
Policy status and period	Ongoing (subject to individual company/ organization provisions)	Following the Humanitarian Law, the reduction of working hours can be extended up to two years	In progress	In progress
Work axes	Telework	Workday	Tax revenue	Work-hours revival
Policy objective	Minimizing the spread of COVID-19	Preventing mass worker layoffs Minimizing the spread of COVID-19 Minimizing economic impacts on the public and private sectors	Having other tax income sources due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency	Workday revival with biosecurity measures
Target population	Public and private sector workers	Public and private sector workers	Public and private sector workers	Public and private sector workers
Key activities	1. All public and private companies shall implement teleworking policies for the duration of the health emergency. 2. Suspension of regular working hours and conditions. It was extended for all workers until 12 April 2020. 3. As of 13 April, a local traffic light system was implemented with different restrictions according to the local situation of COVID-19.	1. Work-hours reduction (to six hours) in the public sector, except in the health, armed forces and police sectors. 2. Adoption of the Humanitarian Support Act, which shall be in force until 60 days after the end of the state of emergency. Concerning workdays and salaries, the law provides that private companies may reduce working hours by up to 50% and salaries by 45%.	1. The temporary contribution to the income of public and private workers for nine months. Public servants in the executive receiving an income equal to or greater than US\$1,000 must contribute 10% of their salary. 2. Permanent reduction of 10% in the monthly remuneration of officials of the executive and public companies who have a salary equal to or greater than US\$1,000. Public servants in the health, education, armed forces, and police sectors are excluded. 3. Natural persons performing economic activities, who in 2019 registered an income other than salary, contribute for nine months.	1. Entrepreneurs shall take occupational health and safety measures appropriate to their activities and be responsible for the mobility of their workers. Workers belonging to priority attention groups must carry out their activities through teleworking. 2. Creation of the special emergent workday will be applied in the following cases: if geographic circumstances require the stay for two or more days in sites. Suppose the institution requires consecutive and non-consecutive shifts. When performing workplace activities, only at night; for this, each public institution shall ensure that distancing protocols are followed in common areas. There shall also be areas for public servants' hygiene and rest.
Budget (if any)	No information available	No information available	No information available	No information available

Source: ECLAC (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

For further analysis, the Humanitarian Act implemented in June 2020 was chosen, considering that it is an umbrella regulation in the context of the pandemic, which encompasses labour regulations and agreements (and other measures considered urgent). No international cooperation was identified.

2.1.4.1 Organic Law on Humanitarian Support

The Organic Law on Humanitarian Support, also known as the Humanitarian Act, is aimed at implementing the measures designed to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, promote economic and productive recovery, and maintain employment levels. Accordingly, it covered several aspects, such as education fees, suspension of tenant eviction, prohibition of utility cost increases and suspension of cuts, among others. Regarding employment, Table 2.6 summarizes the key measures established in this Law.

Table 2.6. *Employment measures in the Humanitarian Act, Ecuador*

Modifications, agreements and dismissals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may modify the employment relationship conditions without affecting the full-time basic salary or its proportionality in case of reduced workdays. • Agreements between the employer and the workers are bilateral and are reported to the Ministry of Labor. The validity conditions are for employers to present the company's financial statements and the prohibition of distributing dividends corresponding to the agreements' period. • If agreements are reached with most workers, they become mandatory. • In case of <i>force majeure</i> or fortuitous event, the employer may reduce the workday by up to 50% of the worker's salary, corresponding to the hours worked and the contribution to social security. This may be applied for one year and renewed only once. • In cases where the conclusion of agreements is vital to the subsistence of the company and where no agreements have been reached, the employer may initiate the liquidation process. This is under the criterion of <i>force majeure</i>, according to the General Regulations of the Organic Law on Humanitarian Support (Article 14). • In case of dismissal, compensation is applied based on the last remuneration before the agreement. In this sense, the General Regulations of the Organic Law on Humanitarian Support point out that "One year after the enforcement of the Law, compensations for dismissal of workers under the agreement, shall be calculated following Article 188 of the Labor Code," which provides severance due to untimely dismissal (Article 13). • The cause for the termination of the individual contract by fortuitous event or <i>force majeure</i> shall be linked to the total and definitive cessation of the employer's economic activity. <p>Vacation: Employers may unilaterally notify or establish compensation for days of absence from work as a vacation. New recruitment method: Individual employment contracts may be signed partially or completely, under the concept of Special Emergency Contracts for a specific time with a maximum term of one year and one single renewal.</p>

Source: Organic Law on Humanitarian Support (2020), Chapter III and interpretative provision.

Prepared by: FARO

Former President Lenin Moreno stated that the law saved more than 56,000 jobs, and that "the reduction of the workdays was the solution for companies that made efforts to move forward." He further added that it "also facilitated the creation of 104,000 new jobs" (*El Comercio*, 2020). However, the Humanitarian Act was widely challenged nationwide. For instance, the ombudsman's office mentioned that the employer has the ability to reduce working hours and wages, without previous agreements with the workers by cause of *force majeure* or fortuitous event (*El Comercio*, 2020a). Additionally, the term "fortuitous event" has a wide interpretation in the Law. As a result, authors such as Jaramillo-Macancela and Vázquez-Martínez (2021) and González-Ortiz and Trelles-Vicuña (2020) emphasize that the law could have allowed companies to declare themselves in a state of emergency and carry out mass layoffs, compromising labour rights that are

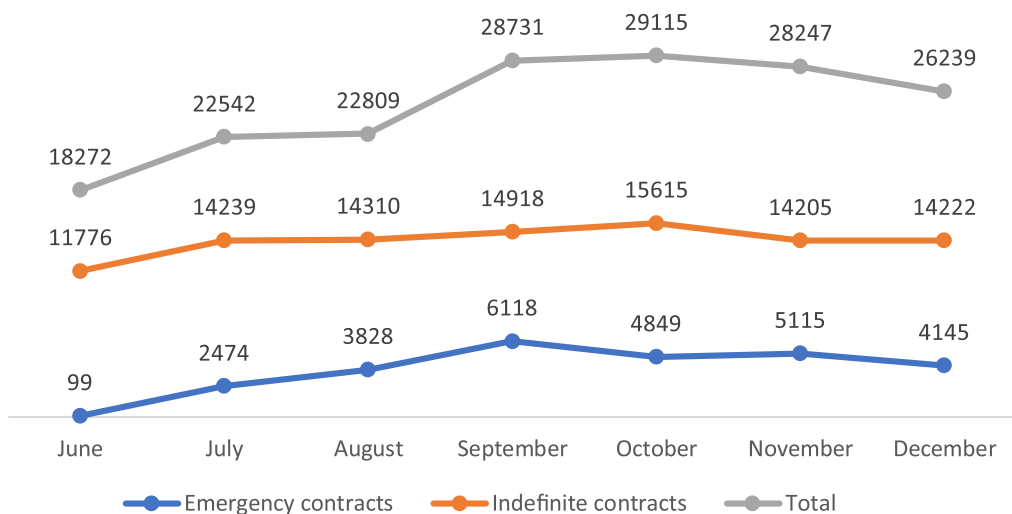
inalienable and intangible according to the Constitution (2008). Thus, González-Ortiz and Trelles-Vicuña (2020) argues that this option leaves workers at a disadvantage, since they cannot use the concept of untimely dismissal, which implies a breach of labour rights, especially when employers' conditions can be imposed. However, according to the Asamblea Nacional (2020), fortuitous event or *force majeure* applies only to the company's total or definitive closing of economic activity. In fact, workers who have been dismissed without the company's closing must be compensated. If a judge determines that the employer unjustifiably used the cause of *force majeure* or fortuitous event to dismiss the personnel, the untimely dismissal plus a penalty of 1.5 percent has to be paid to the employees (Asamblea Nacional, 2020).

As for the new recruitment method, it sought to encourage more flexible recruitment. It is worth mentioning that Ecuador has some of the most restrictive recruitment regulations in the region (Grupo FARO, 2019). However, this new recruitment option is left to the discretion of the employer to define when to hire (González-Ortiz and Trelles-Vicuña, 2020), without further guidance from the state, which is problematic. In addition, Jaramillo-Macancela and Vázquez-Martínez (2021) highlight that this kind of method compromises the principle of job stability by establishing a duration that, once elapsed, gives the employer the power to terminate the employment relationship or hire the person for an indefinite time, which puts the worker in a situation of uncertainty.

The Humanitarian Act also contained reformatory provisions regarding the incorporation of telework into the Labor Code as a form of labour organization and the right to disconnection.

After the approval of the Humanitarian Act, 26,628 new jobs were created between June and December 2020 under the Emergency Contract Modality, accounting for 16 percent of the total new contracts (Ministry of Labor, 2021). The sectors that used it the most were agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries (7,394), manufacturing (5,245), wholesale and retail, and vehicle and motorcycle repair (4,055) (ibid.), showing the need to create more flexible recruitment options for them. The highest increase in these contracts occurred in September 2020 (Figure 2.3), when the lockdown measures established in the third state of emergency ended.

Figure 2.3. Emergency contracts versus indefinite contracts, June 2020 to December 2020, Ecuador (number)

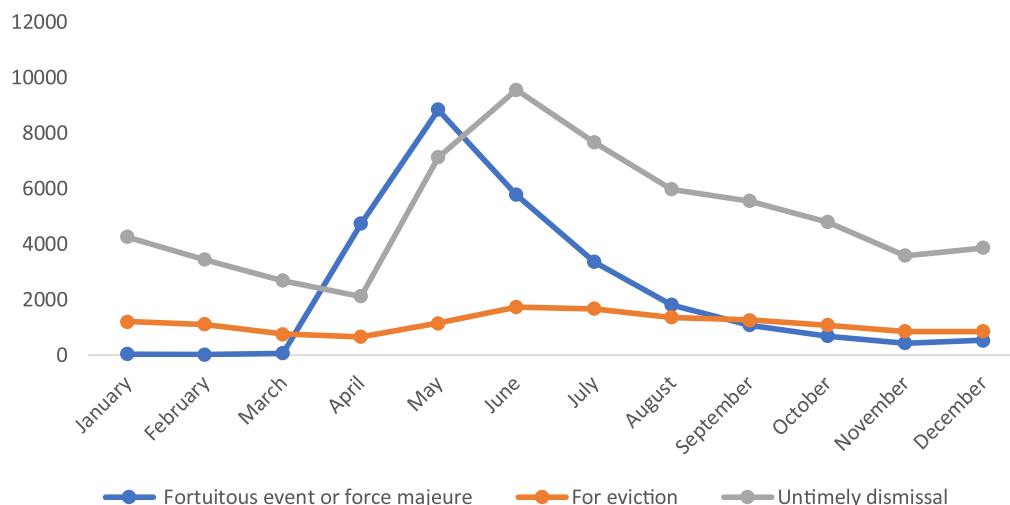


Source: Ministry of Labor (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

In addition, the number of layoffs “due to *force majeure* or fortuitous event” increased dramatically (Figure 2.4), with 22,489 cases by the end of 2020 (Ministry of Labor, 2021). The main sectors using it were trade, vehicle and motorcycle repair, agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries, manufacturing, and lodging (ibid.).

Figure 2.4. Settlement acts: untimely dismissal, eviction, and fortuitous event or force majeure layoffs in 2020, Ecuador (number)



Source: Ministry of Labor (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

Despite the economic crisis and the decrease in the availability of resources to promote international cooperation, Ecuador established a South-South and triangular cooperation fund in 2019, which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and has an initial contribution from the Italian-Ecuadorian Fund for Sustainable Development (FIEDS) of US\$100,000. This fund has been used to prepare and present the ‘Catalogue of Successful Experiences of Ecuador 2021 for SSC’, published in May 2021 by FIEDS. Similarly, in February 2019, the Agreement to Promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation was signed with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with the aim of financing agricultural projects to promote food security, as well as activities to protect the environment (FAO, 2020). It should be noted that Ecuador has active participation in SEGIB, being part of most Ibero-American Cooperation programmes, including the Ibero-American Cooperation Programs, Initiatives and Projects (PIPAS) and the Ibero-American Program to Strengthen SSC (PIFCSS) (SEGIB, 2021).

To summarize, in Ecuador, social assistance during the pandemic was among the lowest in Latin American countries, placing it as one of the worst countries in the region, with the least support to vulnerable households, both in terms of the proportion of the target population, as well as expenditure on transfer programmes (IMF, 2020). Regarding employment, one of the country’s main challenges is to find policy alternatives that allow more flexible hiring while guaranteeing labour rights. Concerning international cooperation in both social assistance and employment, the country must make significant efforts to maintain or promote these areas, as only a few initiatives were identified. Regarding SSC, since 2013 initiatives in the country have declined significantly, mainly due to the economic crisis that Ecuador has been experiencing since the fall in the price of crude oil in 2014, the recent weakening of regional integration initiatives and policies to reduce spending in the country.

The first COVID-19 case in Colombia was confirmed in early March 2020, triggering a major debate between the central and local governments on the measures to be taken (Rodríguez Pinzón, 2020). On 18 March, the executive decreed that the provisions of decentralized authorities should be coordinated with the presidency and that the public order measures decreed by the president would be applied immediately to the actions of the mayors (ibid.). Subsequently, the measures included the entry restriction of non-citizens, a ban on the arrival of international flights, closure of schools and child development centres of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, mandatory confinement and declaration of a state of emergency, among others (Andrián and Hirs, 2020).

Social and economic overview

Similar to other LAC countries, Colombia was affected by external shocks, mainly the fall in oil prices due to the reduction in the global demand caused by COVID-19. In 2019, natural resources accounted for 40 percent of the country's exports, making the Colombian economy extremely vulnerable during the height of the pandemic (Andrián and Hirs, 2020). In addition, the slowdown of the United States of America's economy also generated an indirect negative impact, as this is the main destination for Colombia's exports goods (ibid.). It should be added that, unlike its neighbouring countries, Colombia's exports of goods to China are low, just 1.4 percent of GDP in 2019, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Tourism (MINCIT, 2021).

Additionally, the country faces great domestic economic and social problems, aggravated by the closure of economic activities to reduce COVID-19 infections. First, the very slow pace of economic activities led to an unprecedented loss of 4.9 million jobs compared to 2019 (Andrián and Hirs, 2020). Furthermore, the percentage of people with informal jobs reached 48 percent, according to data from the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE, 2020). In this sense, the informal sector has presented a major challenge when implementing mobility restriction measures, as these households depend on a daily income. Not going out to work means no income and the inability to cover minimum subsistence needs. Therefore, the impact of the crisis can be deemed regressive, mainly affecting the most vulnerable households due to the limited opportunities they have for generating income, further aggravated by quarantine measures.

Vulnerability is also reflected in levels of violence, with the increase in femicides, violence against women, racism and xenophobia. Likewise, Arcediano and Porras García (2020) highlight that Colombia is one of the most dangerous countries for human rights activists, where 971 leaders have been murdered since the Peace Accords (2016). Therefore, lockdown was not a new experience for the country. As of 2019, the Red Cross hinted that approximately 27,600 people remained confined, due to armed groups restricting people's mobility (ibid.). This situation worsened with the pandemic, mainly in rural areas where guerrilla groups and drug traffickers reinforced measures in a violent manner (ibid.).

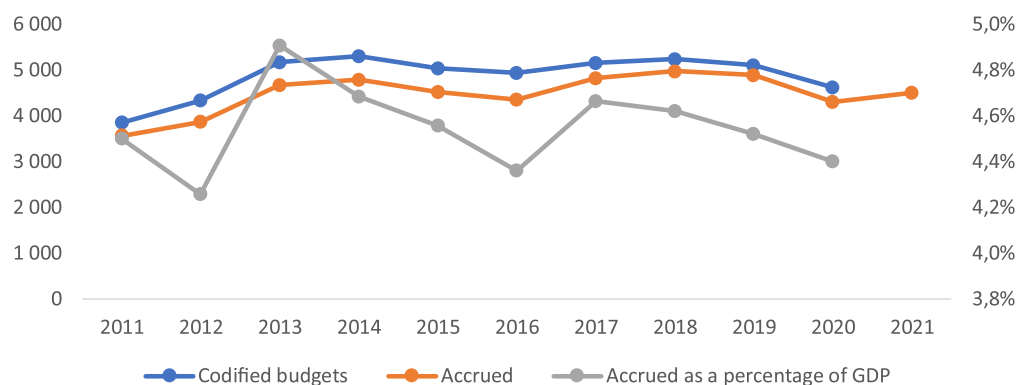
Secondly, between 2019 and 2020, the poverty rate increased by 6 percent, reaching 43 percent, while extreme poverty rates increased by 5.5 percent, reaching 15 percent (DANE, 2020). Among the most affected households are the poor ones and those belonging to the vulnerable middle class, which represented 38 percent of the population in 2018 (Andrián and Hirs, 2020). Such households include informal workers, family businesses operating in that sector, self-employed workers, and microenterprise and small enterprise employees and employers. These households face high rates of instability and greater exposure to risks, due to a lack of social protection, and thus a

Colombia faces great domestic economic and social problems, aggravated by the closure of economic activities to reduce COVID-19 infections.

high probability of going back to poverty even before the pandemic (ibid). In Colombia, about 40 percent of the consolidated middle-class population has informal jobs, which shows that accessing quality employment is not only a problem for people with limited resources (ibid). It is important to bear in mind that a quality job does not only imply a steady income, but also labour rights and social security.

Thirdly, Colombia introduced a virtual learning strategy as an alternative to face-to-face school activities. However, like other nations in LAC, this was prolonged; thus, the country is one of the 30 nations with the longest closure of in-person activities (Grupo FARO, 2021). An important challenge in this regard is Internet connectivity, which could compromise the quality of education. In Colombia, as it is “alarmingly” lower in rural households than in urban areas (IDB, 2020). Data from 2018 shows that only 16 percent of the rural population had Internet connectivity, while in cities it reached 63 percent (DANE, 2018). Also, only 25 percent of students in the lower quintile had Internet access in their homes (World Bank, 2021a). For the return to face-to-face classes, one of the challenges is access to clean drinking water, which is largely driving uneven income generation and a stagnating public budget (IDB, 2020) (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Education accrued and codified budgets in 2011–2021 (million dollars), Colombia



Source: Ministry of Finance Colombia (2021a).

Prepared by: FARO

Fourth, the outbreak of COVID-19 brought challenges to the health care system not only in Colombia but also around the world. However, it should be noted that Colombia was one of the nations with the lowest percentage of out-of-pocket health expenditure, reaching 15.13 percent in 2018 (Figure 1.1). In addition, according to the Integrated Social Protection Information System (SISPRO, 2020), the nation has 90 percent of its employed population affiliated with the social security and health system. However, this data can lead to an error of interpretation, since it only covers workers in the formal sector, representing 47.4 percent of the employed population (ibid).

In terms of response capacity to the virus, Colombia has a high level of international reserves in the Andean region, with a gradual increase in recent years (Andrián *et al.*, 2020), as well as strict compliance to fiscal rules (Rodríguez Pinzón, 2020). Thus, Colombia had a US\$11 billion credit line with the IMF (ibid.) and almost direct funding sources. However, in 2020 and 2021 the country suspended the fiscal rule that keeps structural spending from exceeding structural income by exceeding the annual target. This is possible during exceptional events that affect the macroeconomic balance for a certain time (Castañeda Guerrero *et al.*, 2021). Thus, in June 2020, the Fiscal Rule Advisory Committee (CCRF, 2020) accepted the Government having a GDP gap of 20 percent (structural spending and structural income) for extraordinary expenditure for two years.

By the end of 2019, Colombia was in fiscal consolidation. Between 2018 and 2019, the country showed a 2 percent reduction in current primary spending as a percentage of GDP (Andrián *et al.*, 2020). This fiscal consolidation process proposed by the Government includes rationalization of tax benefits, aiming to improve the horizontality and progressivity of income tax (*ibid.*). However, due to the magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis, it has become essential to expand fiscal space at the cost of higher levels of indebtedness and expenditure reallocations. In addition, this tax reform caused high levels of social unrest, as it was mostly intended to pay for the public debt. After several social protests from different quarters, the issue ended with the withdrawal of the proposal by the executive.

By 2019, Colombia's statistics showed that tax revenues as a percentage of GDP of 19.7 percent were below the average of LAC and other OECD countries, which stand at 22.9 percent and 33.8 percent respectively (OECD, 2021). Concerning the tax structure, the greatest amount is given by the VAT on goods and services (29.6 percent), while the second is the corporate income tax (24.5 percent) (*ibid.*). Compared to OECD members, Colombia collected more in 2019 in VAT and corporate income tax than other countries, amounting to 20 percent and 10 percent respectively (*ibid.*).

The country's tax policy during the pandemic involved extraordinary expenses that increased up to 2.5 percent of the country's GDP (ECLAC, 2021a). For example, the creation of the Emergency Mitigation Fund involved financing with credit from the Savings and Stabilization Fund and the National Pension Fund for Territorial Entities, which correspond to savings to pay pensions after 2040 (Ministry of Finance of Colombia, 2021). As a result, the central government deficit rose from 2.5 percent of GDP in 2019 to 7.8 percent in 2020, mainly due to a significant reduction in tax revenues (ECLAC, 2021b). In the run-up to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government had a budget deficit of -2.7 percent and a debt-to-GDP ratio of 39.8 percent. In this sense, one of the fiscal measures taken to finance the impact of the pandemic is the modification of the fiscal rule. This includes operational targets on the primary overview to ensure the convergence of public liabilities to reasonable levels in the medium term, reducing the structural deficit by 1 percent from 2022 (Castañeda Guerrero *et al.*, 2021).

Having examined the Colombian context of the COVID-19 outbreak, the next section focuses on SSC. It explores the role of SSC in recent years and maps current SSC actors in both the social protection and employment sectors.

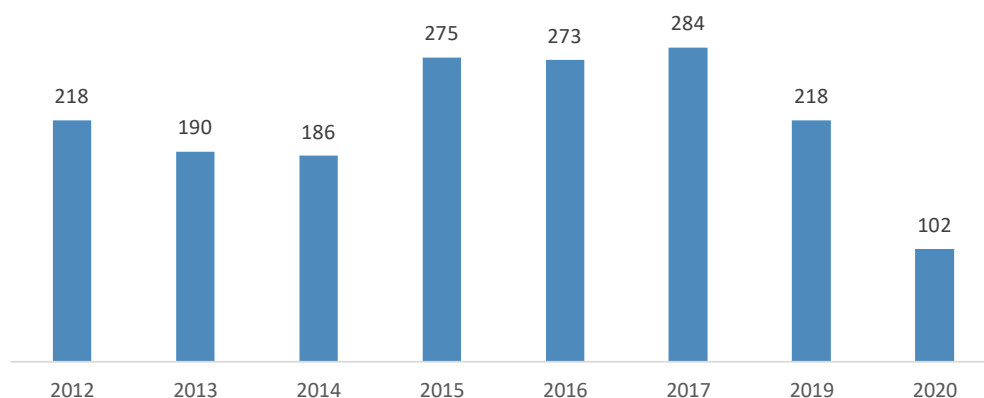
2.2.2 Overview of the state of South-South cooperation

Between 2012 and 2014, the cooperation policy of Colombia included the positioning of SSC and triangular cooperation according to the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia (APC Colombia, 2012a). In the 2015–2018 period, the cooperation objectives focused on advancing SSC through the generation of high-value knowledge (APC Colombia, 2019). Furthermore, the National Strategy for International Cooperation (ENCI) 2019–2022, which was built by collecting information and technical roundtables with national and territorial entities on their cooperation demand and supply, prioritized cooperation actions such as the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 'Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity',²¹ and the advance of SSC and triangular cooperation through the design of tools to measure its effectiveness (*ibid.*).

²¹ It includes efforts to ensure access to effective justice, productive transformation to increase labour and business formalization, and inclusion (APC Colombia, 2019).

These measurement tools registered an increase in participation in SSC between 2012 and 2017,²² but a decrease in 2019 and 2020 (Figure 2.6). It reflects the problems caused by the pandemic, as activities were postponed and cancelled.²³

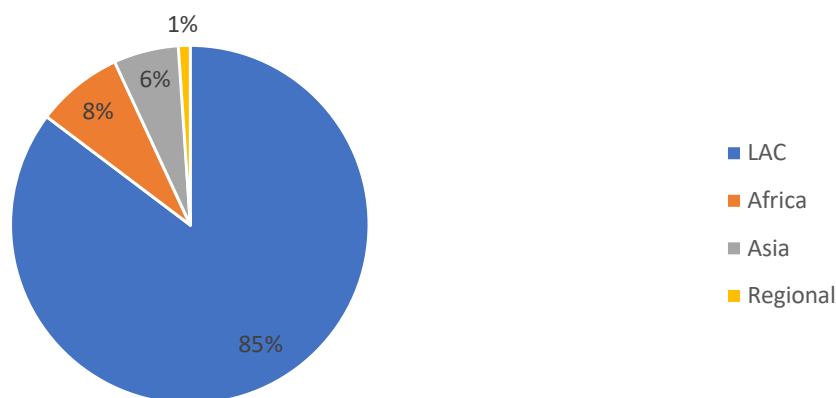
Figure 2.6. *South-South cooperation 2012–2020, Colombia (number of projects)²⁴*



Sources: APC Colombia Reports 2012, 2015, 2021a and SEGIB Reports 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021.
Prepared by: FARO

Of the total number of initiatives in 2020, 84 percent are projects and 16 percent are specific actions²⁵ (APC Colombia, 2021). Regarding the modality, 81 percent were carried out bilaterally, 10 percent were regional, and 9 percent were triangular cooperation. In addition, 85 percent of the initiatives were carried out with partners from LAC (Figure 2.7). Regarding channels, 45 percent of the initiatives are classified as Colombia’s supply, 34 percent are two-way and 21 percent are demand (APC Colombia, 2021).

Figure 2.7. *South-South cooperation initiatives by region 2020, Colombia (%)*



Source: APC Colombia (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

As shown in Figure 2.8, when looking at Colombia’s supply, the main recipient of this type of cooperation is the Latin American region, amounting to 76 percent. During the pandemic, Colombia donated humanitarian assistance to countries in the South, including Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Honduras, Viet Nam, Haiti and Guatemala. The total amount of assistance was US\$780,000. In the case of Ecuador,

²² APC Colombia (2021b) includes within SSC the specific actions proposed by SEGIB.

²³ Online interview conducted with an official of APC Colombia.

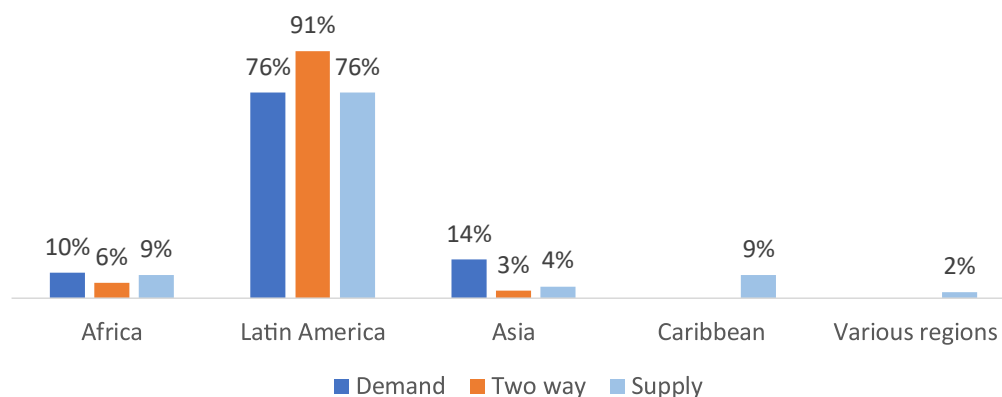
²⁴ Information from 2018 is not available.

²⁵ A project is a set of interrelated actions, which seek to meet a common objective, directed to a specific recipient and complying with a series of methodological measures that allow the identification of objectives, results, activities, budgets and sustainability actions, among other things. Meanwhile, punctual action is understood as an initiative that is executed only once, through tools such as virtual meetings, exploratory visits, exchange of information (APC, 2021).

it reached US\$150,000 from the International Cooperation and Assistance Fund²⁶ of Colombia, in favour of the Special Emergency Committee of Guayas, Ecuador (MREMH, 2021) (APC Colombia, 2021). In addition, Colombia developed the strategy of sharing its experiences with the countries of the South on the policy actions implemented to mitigate the effects of the virus. The *Diálogos del Sur* (Southern Dialogues) plan focused on social, economic and cultural measures; public health measures through information technologies; and educational measures. Thus, Colombia obtained an expression of interest in the exchange of knowledge from various LAC countries (APC Colombia, 2021).

In the case of South-South two-way cooperation²⁷ and Colombia's demand for SSC, Latin America is Colombia's main SSC partner, as the region with which it has been able to have the most negotiation spaces (APC Colombia, 2021) (Figure 2.8). Three SSC and triangular cooperation projects stand out, which are not related to social protection or employment, but instead focus on the exchange of technologies and methodologies with Mexico, Dominican Republic and Uruguay in 2020. This follows the recommendation made at the Second United Nations High-Level Conference on SSC, which was largely to improve access to technology (United Nations, 2019).

Figure 2.8. South-South cooperation by region 2020, Colombia (%)



Source: APC Colombia (2021b).

Prepared by: FARO

Among the main Colombian institutions participating in SSC projects, APC Colombia (2021) identifies the National Apprenticeship Service of Colombia, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, and the Special Administrative Unit for the Management of Restitution of Land Restitution (APC Colombia, 2021). Also noteworthy is the participation in SSC of 13 private non-profit organizations in 2020, such as Caja de Compensacion Familiar de Caldas, Conalgodón and Fedecacao (trade organizations), Universidad de la Sabana, National Federation of the Deaf of Colombia (Fenascol), Fundación Madre Canguro, Fundación Corona, and Red Adelco (local development network), among others. They worked mainly on strengthening public policies and institutions, and on health.

The following sections focus on mapping SSC in both the social protection and the employment sectors. They both include an overview of the key policy in each sector.

²⁶ Created to finance plans, projects, programmes and activities that Colombia carries out with other developing countries within the framework of SSC and triangular cooperation (APC Colombia, 2012a).

²⁷ It applies to those cooperation initiatives in which the participating countries play the role of both providers and recipients.

2.2.3 Mapping South-South cooperation in social protection

In the area of social protection, in 2020 Colombia worked through SSC to address the effects of the pandemic on two of the projects identified in Table 2.7, specifically in the areas of migration and CTs. APC Colombia designed and executed exchange spaces on CT policies with participants from LAC. This initiative arose due to the pandemic, and resulted in six spaces for strengthening and identifying opportunities to exchange experiences in an online format called *Diálogos del Sur*. During these dialogues, good practices and public policies to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 were shared. In one of these spaces, the experience of the Colombian Department of Social Prosperity in the delivery of CTs to vulnerable families during the period of mandatory isolation was shared (APC Colombia, 2021). This space was public and was attended by participants from Costa Rica, Argentina, Ecuador, Suriname, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras and Mexico, among others, while the implementation of the CTs of several programmes was presented. Through this, Colombia contributes to the construction of public policies with other countries of the South.

Concerning migration, APC highlights the contribution made by Colombia, using US\$70,000 for the Regional Response Plan for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, executed by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (APC Colombia, 2021a). This project is presented within SSC, since it is a strategy applied in 17 Latin American countries to finance and implement actions in health, protection, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, food and livelihoods, and integration for refugees and migrants from Venezuela and host communities (R4V, 2020; Observatorio Venezolano de Migración, 2021). The plan requires US\$1.41 billion to assist more than 2.4 million people in situations of risk.

As observed, there are few SSC stakeholders involved in this area. For further SSC identification, Table 2.8 presents a policy map, which includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

Table 2.7. South-South cooperation in Colombia, stakeholder map of the social protection sector

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
CTs	<i>Diálogos del Sur</i>	South-South	Exchange of experiences	Department of Social Prosperity of Colombia (Executor); Institutions in Costa Rica, Argentina, Ecuador, Suriname, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras and Mexico (recipients)	State institutions	N/I
Refugees and migration	Regional response plan for refugees and migrants from Venezuela	Triangular	Humanitarian support	Colombia (financer); UNHCR and IOM (executors); 17 Latin American countries (recipients)	Multilateral organizations; State; States	\$70.000
Protection of senior citizens	To improve the quality of life of the elderly in Mexico and Colombia	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance and humanitarian support	Ministry of Labor of Colombia (executor) National Institute for the Elderly of Mexico (executor)	State institutions	N/I

Sources: APC Colombia (2020^a), APC Colombia (2021).
Prepared by: FARO

Table 2.8. Social protection policy map, Colombia

Policy name	Money transfers	Meal transfers	Guarantee of utility access and other services
Body in charge of the policy	Department of Social Prosperity, Ministry of Agriculture, National Planning Department, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Health	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Central Government	Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labor
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	No	No	No
Policy status and period	To be finalized	Finalized	Finalized
Work axes	Family income	Food security	Livelihoods
Policy objective	Ensuring the family income of people and families in vulnerable situations	Ensuring access to food for minority groups and elders	Ensuring access to utilities during the COVID-19 pandemic
Target population	People in vulnerable situations	Minorities and elders	People with low income
Key activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional income for families already receiving support from conditional CT programmes: Familias en Acción, Jóvenes en Acción, and Adulto Mayor. 2. An economic incentive of two COP80,000 payments to 500,000 rural families approved for the rural sector. 3. The Government returned a percentage of VAT to lower-income families. This was expected to happen five times in 2020. 4. Additional income called Ingreso Solidario of COP160,000 for 3 million families in the informal sector not beneficiaries of traditional CTs. 5. Companies must replace the "transportation subsidy", a transaction for workers earning less than two minimum wages intended to cover transportation fees, with a "digital connectivity subsidy" of the same value. 6. Transaction of COP207,000 to beneficiaries of the subsidized health regime who are infected with COVID-19. 7. Seven days minimum daily wage paid to those infected by COVID-19. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food baskets for minority groups (Afro-descendants, indigenous, LGBTI) 2. Food baskets for elders without other social assistance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The cost of utilities in middle income (strata 3 and 4) can be deferred for 24 months without interest 2. The cost for low-income utilities (strata 1 and 2) can be deferred for 36 months without interest.
Budget (if any)	NA	US\$41.80 million	Non-existent

Source: ECLAC (2021a).

Prepared by: FARO

For further analysis, the Solidarity Income (IS) programme was selected as it was the major social protection initiative, developed to combat the devastating effects COVID-19 pandemic, and specifically to support vulnerable households with a reach of three million households and an investment of US\$1.4 billion, which is expected to reach US\$1.8 billion.

2.2.4.1 Social protection: Solidarity Income programme

There are several social assistance programmes in Colombia.²⁸ The IS programme was created to support households in poverty, extreme poverty, and economic vulnerability. The Government delivers the programme to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 emergency on those homes (Social Prosperity, 2021) such as the substantial reduction of households eating three meals a day (approximately 17 percent) following the implementation of mobility restriction measures (ibid.). Through Legislative Decree No. 518, under which the programme was created, the Emergency Mitigation Fund (FOME) was also established as a funding source, along with the previously addressed business

²⁸ The Familias en Acción programme consists in supplementing income and improving the health and education of children under 18 in families living in poverty and vulnerability; the Jóvenes en Acción programme accompanies young people in their technical, technological and/or professional training with the delivery of conditional cash transfers (CCTs); the VAT Return programme is for lower income families to receive resources that will alleviate the impact of the tax levied; and the Familias en Acción or Colombia Mayor (Senior Colombia) programme seeks to increase the protection of elders who do not have a pension through the provision of an economic subsidy. Around fifteen additional bank drafts were delivered between March and June 2021 to these beneficiaries, according to the Fondo de Solidaridad Pensional (2021).

subsidy. The FOME is financed with loans from the Savings and Stabilization Fund and the National Pension Fund for Territorial Entities of Colombia, which will be paid over the next 10 years, according to the Ministry of Finance of Colombia (2021). However, it has not received funding from any international cooperation mechanism (Oviedo, 2021).

Three bodies were responsible for implementing the programme. First, the Ministry of Finance is the manager, setting the number of resources transferred and the time frame. Second, the National Planning Department identified the beneficiary households, taking account of those registered in the Identification System for Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs (SISBEN), and using additional sources of information that would improve the targeting and locating of persons. Finally, Banca de las Oportunidades, executor of the financial inclusion policy, matched the beneficiary household database with tenure of financial products (Social Prosperity, 2020) to establish who had active deposit accounts.

The National Planning Department structured the master database with several administrative records to identify households not covered by the transfer programmes, using SISBEN as the main tool (Social Prosperity, 2020a). SISBEN allows the identification of potential government aid beneficiaries (ibid.) by seeking to approximate the per capita income of households and compare it with the extreme poverty line (Gallego *et al.*, 2021).

The programme has been a challenge for the Government, which managed to build rapid alliances with various public and private bodies, including financial bodies, to obtain information, update it, and deliver the money while minimizing physical contact (Gallego *et al.*, 2021). However, Colombia already had experience in identifying beneficiaries for social programmes.²⁹ Thus, the identification task in 2020 for the IS had an advanced path that allowed faster implementation of the programme, which is why it constitutes a valid policy implementation experience to be shared among other countries of the South.

Currently, IS has supported three million households (Social Prosperity, 2020a) with an investment of US\$1.4 billion. It is expected to reach US\$1.8 billion, so that each beneficiary household will receive 15 bank drafts (Gallego *et al.*, 2021). In addition, during the COVID-19 emergency, it recorded seven payments in 2020 (Social Prosperity, 2020a). Furthermore, Serrano (2022) affirms that Colombian households in 2018 had characteristics of being vulnerable, with even middle- or upper-class households experiencing poverty. In other words, Serrano found that in 2020 there was a reduction in the size of the middle and vulnerable classes. Cuesta and Pico (2020) also show that the impact of the lockdown on poverty provoked an increase of 3.0 to 9.1 percentage points, or 1.5 million to 4.4 million people in Colombia. However, the set of mitigation policies previously described reversed poverty by between 2.16 and 2.23 percentage points. Specifically, Cuesta and Pico (2020) found that the IS and Familias en Acción programmes reduced poverty by between 0.8 and 0.3 percentage points each. In addition, the study by Gallego *et al.* (2021) performed an impact analysis of IS through a comparison between the beneficiary and non-beneficiary households that “are similar in socio-economic characteristics determined before the programme but differ in a crucial dimension. For example, those households whose per capita income ratio to the extreme poverty line was a few hundred below the cut-off point were eligible while those with higher marginal ratios were not.”

The most significant results of the programme identified by Gallego *et al.* (2021) are: A) It effectively increased the probability, by approximately 6 percent, that households in a situation of greater poverty would maintain a basic level of income without acting as

²⁹ Through the SISBEN implemented in 1995, information is periodically collected for most of the country's households. It includes the estimation of an individual targeting index that classifies people into four groups: population in extreme poverty (A), population in moderate poverty (B), vulnerable population (C) and the population that is neither poor nor vulnerable (D) (Ibarrarán *et al.*, 2017; Serrano, 2022).

a disincentive for its members to be included in the labour market. In fact, it was shown that beneficiary households were more concerned about the status of the labour market. B) It did not affect food consumption. However, in a subsample with households that lost their livelihoods, evidence was found that households which received the IS substantially increased their food consumption, compared with ineligible households that also lost their income (ibid.). While this shows the heterogeneous effects of the crisis, as noted by Gallego *et al.* (2021), it also highlights the importance of the programme as it covered people who received no other aid from the State and had no other source of income. C) Household spending on hygiene, health, and education has increased. This result has vital implications, as it shows expenditures on the items mentioned above do decrease when income falls, but when households improve their economic situation minimally, they tend to spend on these items again. While this may be quite logical, further research concerning the permanence of CCT programmes is necessary, given that households alone are using the money for key issues. D) No significant effects were found on issues of domestic violence and the mental health of household members. This shows that this problem goes far beyond income. Therefore, it is vital to have policies directly oriented towards addressing gender-based violence and health issues, including mental health. E) It effectively increased the probability that someone in the household will open a bank account by 14 percent, and the use of digital instruments, versus ineligible households. In this sense, although the programme's objective was related to providing monetary support in times of crisis, as noted by Gallego *et al.* (2021), "its long-term legacy is financial inclusion. In the future, the challenge to ensure that financial inclusion is sustainable and translates into greater savings opportunities, access to credit at low interest rates, and access to other financial services for many households that, before the programme, were not only outside social safety nets but also outside the financial system remains."

2.2.4 Mapping South-South cooperation in employment

As of 2020, no SSC projects were specifically identified in the employment dimension. However, triangular cooperation projects unrelated to the pandemic were implemented (Table 2.9). One of these is the Entrepreneurship and Business Development in Mesoamerica (EDEM) project, which emerged from a larger project called Adelante, funded by the European Union to promote SSC strategies in LAC (Adelante Program, 2020), and which appointed APC Colombia as the administrator. EDEM's objective is to contribute to business competitiveness in Mesoamerican countries and reduce poverty and inequalities in the region. Specifically, within the framework of the EDEM project, the following strategies are being implemented: a) strengthening of national entrepreneurship ecosystems; b) knowledge transfer; c) exchange of experiences; d) transfer of the Integral Model of Entrepreneurial Services; e) entrepreneurship support; and f) access to collaborative networks. In addition, as part of the project, the Mesoamerican Platform for SSC (Cooperasur) was built, where tools are made available to the countries for workshops and virtual courses related to strengthening business capabilities (Cooperasur, 2020).

Although there are no employment-related projects specifically associated with SSC, the triangular cooperation initiatives imply significant efforts to advance this type of cooperation in the region. The EDEM project implies the need and willingness of the countries involved to strengthen capacities and to do so through the transfer of knowledge between countries with common goals. Along the same lines, the importance of organizations such as the European Union (Colombia's third largest cooperating partner) is clear, as they promote alliances by donating resources with specific objectives focused on promoting SSC.

For further SSC identification, Table 2.10 presents a policy map. This includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

Table 2.9. SSC in Colombia, stakeholder map of the employment sector

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Entrepreneurship promotion	EDEM	Triangular	Knowledge transfer and exchange of experiences	European Union (donor); APC Colombia (executer); Chambers of Commerce, Ministries of Commerce and Economy, and companies of Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Panama, Belize, Costa Rica and Mexico (recipients)	1. State agency 2. Public institution 3. Public institutions and private companies	\$2.7 million
Transfer of knowledge	Sowing Capabilities Project	Triangular	Technical assistance	1. FAO Brazil, FAO Colombia, FAO Regional (executing agencies) 2. Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), Brazil (executors) 3. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Colombia (recipient)	1. International organization 2. Public institutions 3. Public institution	N/I

Sources: APC Colombia (2020), FAO (2020)
Prepared by: FARO

Table 2.10. Employment policy map, Colombia

Policy name	Telework	Unemployment insurance	Subsidies	Workday regulations
Body in charge of the policy (responsible)	Ministry of Labor	Ministry of Labor	Ministry of Finance and Senate	Ministry of Labor
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	No	No	No	No
Policy status and period	In force (Senate of the Republic approved Law on Telework)	Finalized	Finalized	Finalized
Work axes	Employment	Household income	Employment	Workday
Policy objective	Decreased likelihood of infection	Securing an income for unemployed people	Maintaining the population's employment and income	Regulating workdays
Target population	Sectors in which the physical presence of workers or officials is not required in the facilities	Unemployed persons	Employed population	Employed population

Policy name	Telework	Unemployment insurance	Subsidies	Workday regulations
Key activities	1. Promotion of telework. The country had already had a teleworking regulation since 2008. Moreover, in 2020 it was promoted to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. 2. Extended for three months until the employee and the company determine it, without involving variation of the working conditions established at the beginning of the employment relationship.	1. Unemployment insurance for workers affiliated with the Compensation Fund (two minimum wages paid in 90 days). 2. A subsidy of 25% to the minimum wage for workers in the age range of 18 to 28 years of age.	1. Companies with at least three workers that have experienced a 20% reduction in income or more have access to a subsidy to pay their formal workers from the Formal Employment Preservation Fund (PAEF). 2. The Government funds 40% of the additional monthly income (work premium) for minimum wage workers. 3. Additional benefits are granted to the tourism and entertainment sectors (+10% subsidy) and companies with female employees (+20% subsidy)	1. Optional work leave: Employers may grant early group leave (vacation). 2. Prohibition of work dismissal: The Government decrees that COVID-19 is not an acceptable reason to lay off employees. In addition, it prohibits the firing of public contractors. 3. All recently unemployed people's mortgage loans are extended for six months. 4. Workers can access their savings—which can usually only be used to buy a home or pay for education—if they are fired. 5. Redistribution of work-hours: Employers may modify the 48-hour weekly workload as they see fit (but not exceeding 12 hours per day) to reduce labour crowding.
Budget (if any)	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent

Source: ECLAC (2021a).

Prepared by: Grupo FARO

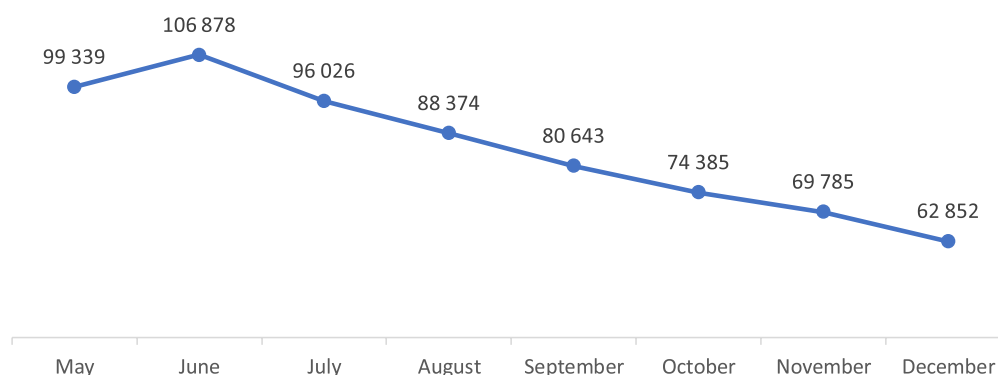
The PAEF is a government initiative to support payroll payments for 11 months. It is outlined in the next table, since it was the core employment protection policy in 2020. As a result, as of December 2020, 678,282 subsidized employers were registered, with a peak in June.

2.2.4.1 Employment: Formal Employment Support Program

The PAEF was created through Legislative Decree No. 639 in May 2020 to provide payroll support to the business sector. This is considering the fact that lockdown measures severely affect economic activities and, thus, limit the ability of companies to meet their obligations to their workers. To this end, the resources of FOME, created in March 2020, were used to meet the needs of health care resources, counter adverse effects on production and maintain employment and growth.

The programme stated that the beneficiaries—companies established before 2020—must have renewed their trade registration by 2019; to demonstrate an income reduction of 20 percent or more (which was determined by the Ministry of Finance), and to have not received any other contribution. The contribution was calculated considering the number of employees multiplied by up to 40 percent of the monthly minimum wage. In this sense, employees were considered dependent workers who appeared on the Integrated Contribution Settlement Form and who have not been temporarily suspended from their contract or on unpaid leave. Thus, the payment (one per month) would be effective in May, June and July, and could be requested up to three times for payment of wages of formal employees. The beneficiary had to submit documentation to the financial institutions, who reported to the Social Protection Pension and Parafiscal Management Unit, in order to keep record of the beneficiaries and prevent double applications. As of December 2020, about 678,282 subsidized employers were registered, with June being the peak month (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9. *Employers who received the subsidy in 2020, Colombia (Number)*

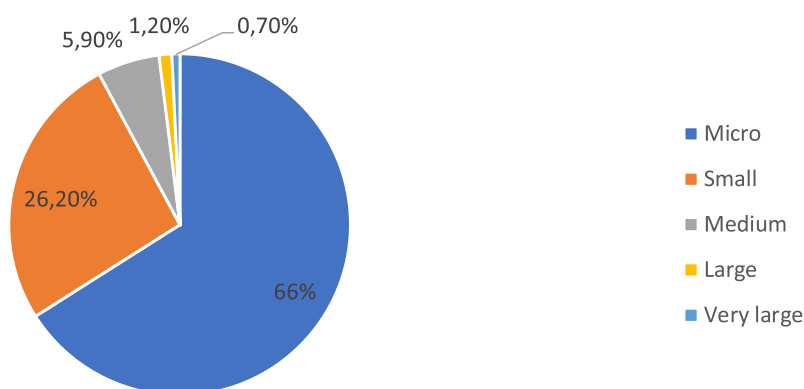


Source: Pensions and Parafiscal Unit (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

In addition, according to official data, 66 percent of subsidized companies that received PAEF were microenterprises, followed by 26.2 percent of small enterprises, and only 5.9 percent of medium-sized companies, while large companies were even less (Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10. *Subsidiaries by size, Colombia (%)*



Source: Pensions and Parafiscal Unit (2021).

Prepared by: FARO

PAEF contributed to sustaining formal employment and payroll in times of crisis. However, it should be emphasized that only 47 percent of the employed population is part of the formal sector of the economy. Like other countries in the region, the population working in the informal economy was facing a situation of vulnerability, due to the lack of labour rights and guarantees. In this sense, it is vital to consider that informal employment not only involves poor households that could receive support from social assistance programmes, but vulnerable middle-class households that did not have any state support.

In summary, not many projects in Colombia were registered in SSC, specifically on social protection and employment. However, it is important to mention that Colombia has carried out interesting initiatives expressing the will to promote SSC. These efforts can be seen in the planning of resources in the ENCI, which aligns with the country's objectives and allows more efficient resources coordination. Along the same lines, Colombia has developed strategies to consolidate cooperation needs and identify opportunities to offer cooperation to the countries of the Global South. Finally, the review of projects shows that triangular cooperation can be very useful for creating and executing initiatives between countries of the South and for the generation of alliances between them. By resolving the budgetary limitations of Southern countries, the way is open to generating projects where new partners and themes can be discovered in line with SSC.

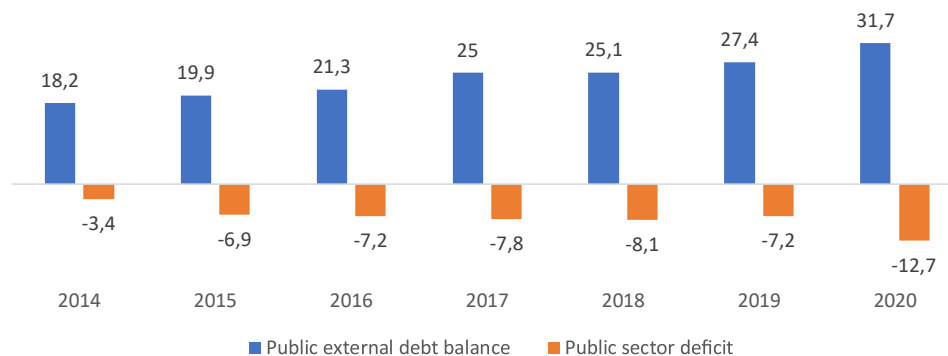
The emergence of the pandemic in Bolivia was accompanied almost immediately by a period of lockdown, which with certain interruptions extended until August 2020 (UNICEF and Fundación ARU, 2020). After the first case on 10 March 2020, the Government declared a health emergency, and on 21 March, a total lockdown (until 31 May 2020) (France 24, 2020). Only essential services such as health care, food distribution and medical supplies were functioning during this period. In June 2020, the state of emergency was lifted and a dynamic quarantine phase began that varied according to each territory, depending on the epidemiological threat levels. The infections were concentrated in the most populated departments (Santa Cruz, La Paz and Cochabamba), which also have the greatest economic activity (Ministry of Health and Sports, 2021). In September 2020, lockdown measures were gradually lifted. It is important to mention that the measures adopted were influenced by social conflicts, the reduced legitimacy of the interim Government and the change of the national Government in November 2020.³⁰ Since February 2021, vaccination has been part of the Government's strategy to preserve health and revive economic activities.

Social and economic overview

Bolivia faces enormous economic and social problems associated with the pandemic and the confinement implemented in 2020.

In the economic sphere, the decline that had already been observed since the middle of the decade was consolidated by the arrival of the pandemic. The contraction of real GDP during 2020 stood at (-) 8.4 percent, in contrast with the growth registered in 2019 (2.2 percent) and above all much lower than the average annual growth in the 2011–2019 period (close to 4.7 percent), which placed Bolivia among the countries of the region with the greatest economic dynamism (ECLAC, 2018). The subsequent economic contraction associated with the pandemic and the deterioration of fiscal indicators worsened the country's long-term prospects. The percentage of external debt balance, which recorded a gradual growth before the pandemic (reaching 27.4 percent), reached 31.7 percent of nominal GDP in 2020. The public sector deficit, which in 2019 reached 7.2 percent of GDP, increased by five percentage points in 2020, reaching 12.7 percent, according to the Central Bank of Bolivia (2020) (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11. Public external debt balance and public sector deficit 2014–2020, as a percentage of GDP, Bolivia (%)



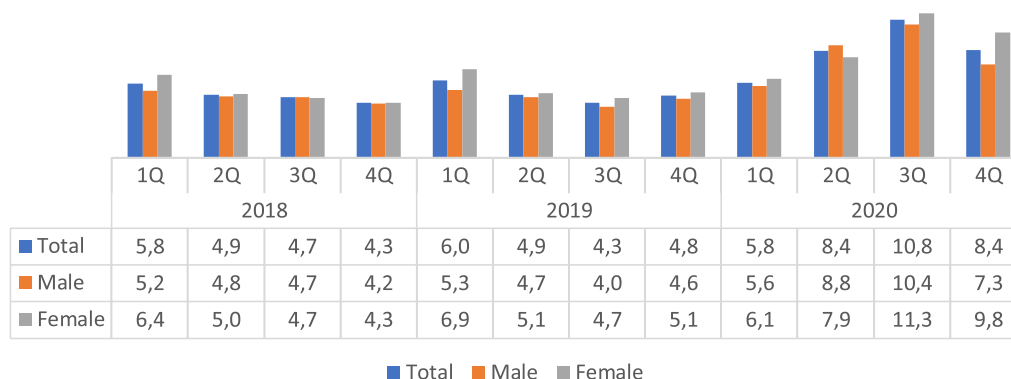
Source: Central Bank of Bolivia (2020).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

³⁰ The legitimacy was questioned as the interim government had low parliamentary representation. Its decision to later participate in elections further affected its ability to manage the crisis.

According to the ILO (2021), labour income fell by 30 percent between July 2019 and July 2020, which corresponds to the end of the strict quarantine phase. Consistent with this, the urban unemployment rate rose from 4.3 percent in the third quarter of 2019 to 10.8 percent in 2020, with notable differences between men and women (Figure 2.12). Although the first negative impact was more evident among men, their recovery was more accelerated, taking the male unemployment rate up to 7.3 percent by the end of 2020, while the female rate reached 9.8 percent (ILO, 2021). The levels of underemployment, comprised of people who work fewer than 40 hours a week, also increased from levels close to 5 percent to 15 percent in the post-pandemic period, according to the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2021). Thus, falls in income levels and an increase in people working less than expected suggests a deterioration in working conditions.

Figure 2.12. Quarterly urban unemployment rate by sex 2018–2020, Bolivia (%)

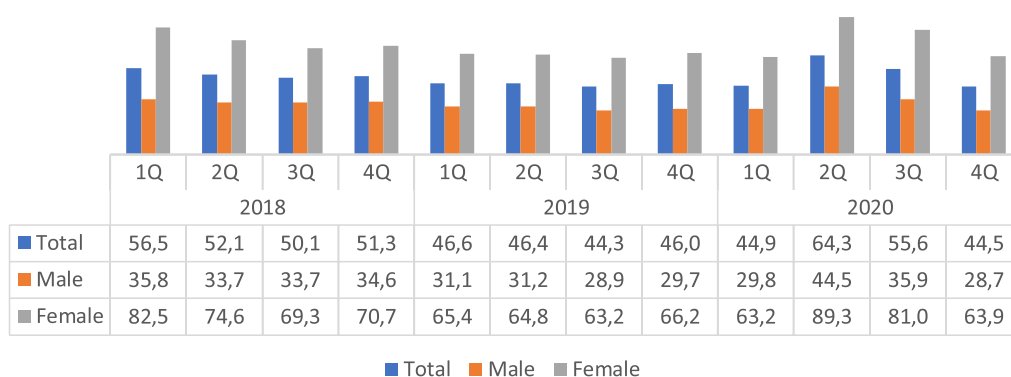


Source: INE (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

In addition, one of the most notorious effects of the pandemic was the reduction in labour force participation, which reached 59 percent at a time of increased rigidity in the compulsory lockdown (March to April 2020). This represents a reduction of 8.4 percent, compared to a similar period in 2019 (ILO, 2021) (Figure 2.13).

Figure 2.13. Urban economic burden index³¹ by sex 2018–2020, Bolivia (%)



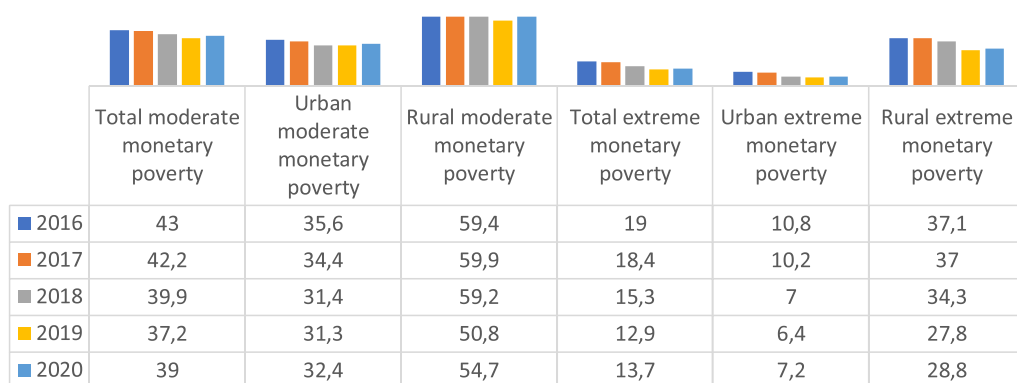
Source: INE (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Poverty increased by almost two percentage points between 2019 and 2020, from 37.2 percent to 39 percent (INE, 2021). However, there are differences between urban and rural areas (Figure 2.14). These changes are consistent with an increase in inequality, measured through the Gini coefficient, which reached 0.45 in the same period (INE, 2021).

³¹ Inactive people not participating in the labour market as a percentage of the number of active people.

Figure 2.14. Incidence of monetary poverty by area 2016–2020, Bolivia (%)



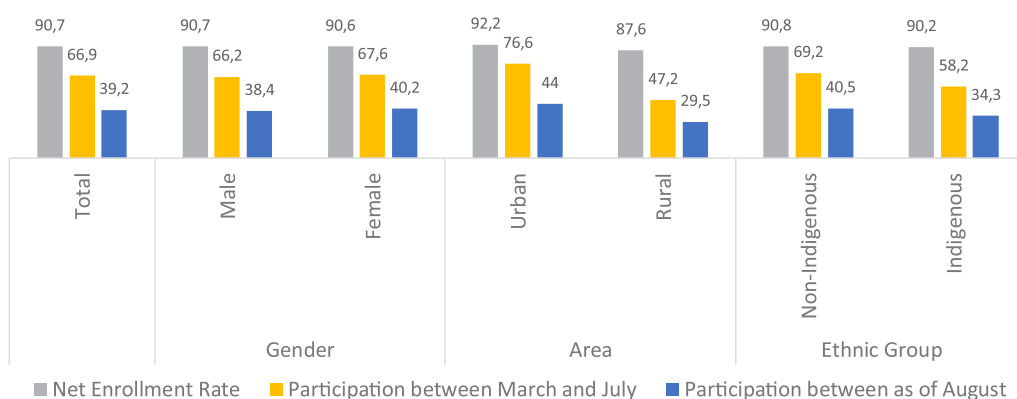
Source: INE (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

The pandemic resulted in greater problems of access to and quality of social services. In the health space, the problem became more evident during the first wave of the virus (July and August 2020), when health services were overwhelmed (Ministry of Education, 2020; UNICEF and ARU, 2021). During this period, people were unable to exercise their basic economic, social and cultural rights (UNICEF, 2021b; De La Galvez, 2021). At the same time, various government measures were taken to increase fiscal and financial resources allocated to address the pandemic. These measures increased the percentage of public expenditure budgeted for health, which in 2020 and 2021 represented approximately 10 percent of the general state budget, compared to an average of 6.8 percent during 2011–2018 (Ministry of Economy and Public Finance, 2021). However, in addition to infrastructure and medical supplies, the health situation also requires adequate management and specialized human resources (mainly health care workers), which the country does not have in sufficient supply (Castilleja-Vargas, 2020).

The education sector was also directly affected by the measures taken to contain the pandemic, with Bolivia being the country with the most weeks of total school closure among the studied countries (69 weeks in total). It should be noted that, before the pandemic, enrolment levels³² exceeded 90 percent, as shown in Figure 2.15.

Figure 2.15. Enrolment rate and education activities participation, Bolivia (%)



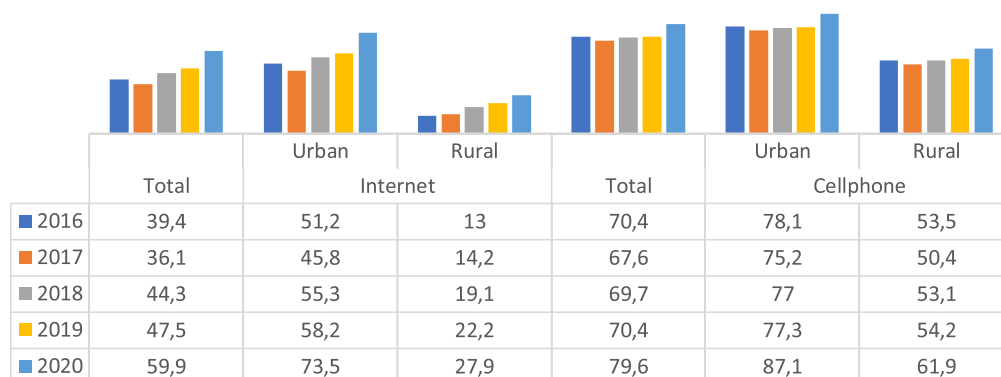
Sources: UNICEF and ARU (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

³² In elementary, middle, and high school.

The paralysis of the majority of economic, social and education activities led to the increased use of information technologies during 2020, with significant territorial differences (Figure 2.16).

Figure 2.16. *Internet and cell phone users by area 2016–2020, Bolivia (%)*



Source: INE (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

The effects of the pandemic raise many different public policy challenges. The previous analysis revealed problems related to the decline of the general economic situation, increases in unemployment, greater labour inactivity, falls in family income and reduced capacity of social services to cope with the effects of the crisis. To address this situation, the country implemented a series of containment programmes that mainly involved CTs to the population, basic services subsidies and a series of measures through financial services to facilitate the payment of credits, prevent business closures, or facilitate the conversion of some of them in the new health and economic context (ILO, 2021; UNICEF and ARU, 2020).

Having examined the context in which the Bolivian COVID-19 outbreak took place, the following section focuses on SSC. It explores the role of SSC in recent years and maps current SSC actors in both the social protection and employment sectors.

2.3.2 Overview of the state of South-South cooperation

In Bolivia, the general guidelines for SSC were established in 2012 to have broader coordination among cooperation projects with developing countries, according to the Ministry of Development Planning (MPD, 2019). Through the Vice Ministry of Public Investment and External Financing, it coordinates this cooperation, although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MREB) also plays an important role in establishing contacts with its peers in other countries. Periodic meetings with different developing countries constitute the main method of implementing SSC. This way, cooperation plans in different sectors are promoted. From 2012 to 2021, Bolivia participated in cooperation plans with other regional countries in areas such as health and basic sanitation, environment, metrology, agriculture, culture and public safety (MREB, 2016; MREB, 2017).

Unlike other countries in the region, Bolivia does not have a systematic record of cooperation initiatives in which it was involved, even though this would allow periodic follow-up or evaluation of their scope and success. Therefore, with the idea of grouping most of the initiatives and projects that support countries, the SEGIB Report (2020) is taken as a reference. In this document, Bolivia stands out as a recipient of cooperation; it is listed as a recipient in 73 of the 106 actions (SEGIB, 2021). Following the trend in the region, its participation is concentrated in bilateral cooperation initiatives.

It is not easy to establish a pattern in the distribution of SSC initiatives when looking at the sectors involved in this exchange. Of the total number of initiatives (106), 35 fall into the generic category of “other sectors” (SEGIB, 2021). The sectors most frequently mentioned are agriculture, environment, health, water supply and sanitation. Regarding regional cooperation agreements, the municipal government of La Paz created the Municipal Cooperation Agency. This agency worked on several projects with Colombia, Brazil and Mexico in training municipal officials, security, sports and recreation staff, and to develop manufacturing activities.

The following section focuses on mapping SSC in both the social protection and the employment sectors. They both include an overview of the key policy in each sector.

2.3.3 Mapping of South-South cooperation in social protection

Based on existing systematization documents (MPD, 2010), both the bilateral meetings on cooperation and the cooperation programmes resulting from these meetings were analysed to identify SSC stakeholders in this area. This was done using a review of bilateral cooperation agreements, which revealed three social protection programmes in 2020 within the agreements made between Colombia and Uruguay (Table 2.11).

For further SSC identification, Table 2.12 presents a policy map. This includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

Table 2.11. *SSC in Bolivia, stakeholder map of the social protection sector*

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Indigenous communities	Risk management to reduce the vulnerability of indigenous communities	South-South	Technical assistance	Colombia (technical support) Bolivian national, subnational, and academic entities (recipients)	State institutions	N/I
Deaf people	Implementation of the National Communications Center for the Deaf	South-South	Technical assistance	Colombia (technical support) Ministry of Health and Sports of Bolivia (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Young population	Development and consolidation of youth information centres in Bolivia and youth housing policies in Uruguay	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	Mutual collaboration (Ministry of Justice; Plurinational Directorate of Youth of Bolivia; Ministry of Justice; Plurinational Directorate of Youth of Bolivia)	State institutions	N/I

Sources: MPD (2018) and APC Colombia (2021).
Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Table 2.12. Social protection measures map, Bolivia

Policy name	Money transfers	Guarantee of utility access
Body in charge of the policy	Ministry of Education; Ministry of Economy and Public Finance	Electricity and Nuclear Technology Control Authority, Water Control and Social Control Authority, National Hydrocarbons Agency
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	IDB
Policy status and period	April 2020 to June 2021	April to June 2020
Work axes	Money transfers	Utilities discount
Policy objective	Alleviating the economic conditions of vulnerable groups (families with students in the education system, pregnant women, elders, people with disabilities, and people without social benefits)	Alleviating the economic conditions of families through the use of utilities
Target population	Students of public and private sector education units; elders, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities; people without benefits, remuneration, or state income	Households consuming utilities
Key activities	1. Family Grant: Transfer for an amount of US\$73 (BOB500) for each student of the public and private sector education units of the subsystems of regular education, alternatively public education and the public special education subsystem. Nearly 2.9 million payments were made. 2. Family Basket: Transfer of US\$58 (BOB400) for elders who receive <i>Renta Dignidad</i> (Dignified Income) but not retirement pensions; mothers who usually receive the Juana Azurduy de Padilla Grant; and people who receive the disability benefit. More than 1 million payments were made. 3. Universal Grant: Transfer of US\$73 (BOB500) intended for people aged 18 to 60 who did not receive a salary or income from the State. Nearly 3.6 million payments were made. 4. <i>Renta Dignidad</i> (Dignified Income): This grant annually provided to the elderly population was given in advance to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. 5. Grant against Hunger: Transfer of US\$146 (BOB1,000) to persons who do not receive state wages or income, mothers benefiting from the Juana Azurduy de Padilla Grant, people with disabilities registered in information systems, independent insured persons and members of the mining credit union sector in the comprehensive pension system.	1. Cutting off utilities, including telecommunications, is prohibited 2. Weighted discount on electricity billing, based on consumption 3. 50% discount on domestic water and gas consumption during April, May and June 2020
Budget (if any)	Not available	Non-existent

Source: ECLAC (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

For further analysis, the Universal Grant was selected, considering that it aimed to support people between 18 and 60 years old, who do not have other benefits or state remuneration. The programme had an estimated budget of US\$260 million, reaching 3.61 million beneficiaries.

2.3.3.1 Universal Grant

Given the magnitude of the crisis, a mechanism was needed to protect a large part of the population quickly and effectively. The implementation of the Universal Grant met this need, since it was well adapted to the high level of informality in the labour market. Approved in April 2020, it consisted of a single CT of US\$72 to people between 18 and 60 years old, who did not receive other benefits or remuneration provided by the State, who were not insured in the pension system, and/or who did not receive pensions or rents (Government of Bolivia, 2020). This way, it was expected that Bolivia's existing CT programmes could be extended to cover a large part of the population that was traditionally excluded from this kind of benefit.

A universal approach prevails in the allocation of such benefits. Target groups typically include students in public education systems, pregnant women without health insurance, people with disabilities and senior citizens. However, targeted transfers are not very common practices. For example, men in self-employed jobs have difficulties accessing this type of benefit, because they do not constitute a priority group or a vulnerable group. Wishing to extend protection mechanisms to this population, the Government of Bolivia designed the Universal Grant. The working population of the informal sector became more relevant due to the paralysis of economic activities during the lockdown, as they experienced particular vulnerabilities (Acevedo *et al.*, 2021).

According to a World Bank official,³³ the Universal Grant was proposed by the World Bank in an effort to expand and improve social safety networks. The original design was the responsibility of the national Government in March 2020, but several features of the implementation were borrowed from similar projects in the region that the World Bank had collaborated on. This was the case with the technical support offered in order to the target population based on the available data, despite the fact that the country has a wide set of administrative data sources. In the end, identity records from the SEGIB were fundamental to locating the potential grant beneficiaries, since they could exclude populations already received prior benefits. In addition, it was essential to work with the country's banking system. Thus, the grant delivery was carried out through the bank network, using a previously existing computer system that helped to recognize the beneficiaries. Simultaneously, this system made it possible to implement the delivery according to the last ID card number.

Beyond the initial projection of 2.67 million beneficiaries, the latest government record mentions 3.61 million beneficiaries (Ministry of Economy and Public Finance, 2021). Approximately 55 percent of them were men and 45 percent were women (UNICEF and ARU, 2021). If we consider that the individual amount corresponded to US\$72, the total transfer amount can be estimated at US\$260 million. The grant distribution is concentrated in urban areas (73.6 percent) and, to a lesser extent, in rural areas (26.4 percent) (*ibid.*). Although this composition is consistent with the population's geographical distribution, it still leaves room for improvement in rural areas. It is worth mentioning that the Government elected in October 2020 implemented the Grant against Hunger at the end of 2020 by taking advantage of the distribution structure of the Universal Grant (*ibid.*). While deeper analysis of the grant's delivery and its implications in rural environments is required, *ex-ante* measurements suggest the slightly progressive nature of the grant, which also was considered a pro-poor action (Oxfam, 2020).

From the available evidence, it is possible to establish some challenges posed by the design and implementation of the Universal Grant. A) A record of information is required to identify potential beneficiaries of similar measures. This action could involve using the same databases to avoid duplication in allocating transfers. B) It is necessary to ensure the complementarity of the grant—as a short-term protection measure—with others that promote protection in the long term. C) It must be noted that the delivery of this type of benefit also answers to political interests, which force the use of operational mechanisms that facilitate its adaptation to different contexts, without losing sight of its potential capacity to mitigate future shocks effectively. D) It must be recognized that the country's fiscal capacity to sustain these types of benefits remains low.

³³ Online interview with a World Bank Official for Bolivia and Peru (Annex 1).

2.3.4 Mapping South-South cooperation in employment

Table 2.13 provides information on initiatives related to employment. It was only possible to identify triangular cooperation. For further SSC identification, Table 2.14 presents a policy map. This includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

Table 2.13. *South-South cooperation in Bolivia, stakeholder map of the employment sector*

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Support for wine producers	Capacity-building of wine producers for sustainable management of water and energy resources in the department of Tarija	Triangular	Technical assistance	Argentina and Germany (technical support) Autonomous Departmental Government of Tarija (Bolivia) (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Support to cotton producers	Project +Cotton, with technical support for saving seeds and access to textile markets for small farmers	Triangular	Technical assistance	Brazil and FAO (technical support) Ministry of Rural Development and Land of Bolivia, Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy of Bolivia (recipients)	State institutions	N/I
Support for family farmers	Transfer of knowledge and experiences to promote the development of family agriculture	Triangular	Technical assistance	Brazil (technical support) Ministry of Rural Development and Land of Bolivia (recipient)	State institutions	N/I

Source: German Society of International Cooperation (GIZ, 2018) and FAO (2020).
Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Table 2.14. *Map of employment measures, Bolivia*

Policy name	Labour protection	Optional labour licenses	Work-hours reduction	Prohibition of dismissals
Body in charge of the policy	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security; Ministry of Economy and Public Finance	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	IDB	No	No	No
Policy status and period	Ongoing (subject to individual company/organization provisions)	In progress	No	No
Work axes	Telework, wage payments, job preservation, business continuity	Labour licenses	Work-hours reduction	Labour protection
Policy objective	To have a regulatory framework for temporary and permanent teleworking activities; to ensure resources to safeguard jobs	To protect workers at higher risk of illness	To avoid higher infection levels among workers	To protect public and private workers in the health emergency phase.
Target population	Public and private sector workers; micro-, small and medium enterprise (MSME) workers	Public and private sector workers	Public and private sector workers	Public and private sector workers

Policy name	Labour protection	Optional labour licenses	Work-hours reduction	Prohibition of dismissals
Key activities	1. Teleworking: Application according to possibilities; teleworking in employment contracts; provision of equipment and training to workers; digitization of services and procedures to promote teleworking in the public sector. 2. Special programme to support MSMEs; emergency plan to support employment and job stability 3. Provision of credit to MSMEs through financing mechanisms established between the State and the financial system.	1. Special labour provisions for persons at risk 2. Granting of special work leave for people with basic diseases, people over 59 years of age, pregnant people, people with children under five years of age (special leave for the father or mother)	1. Work-hours reduction 2. Reduction of work-hours from 08: 00 to 13: 00 during the first days of the pandemic in Bolivia (before lockdown).	1. Prohibition of dismissals in the health emergency phase. 2. Prohibition of dismissals, removals, transfers, or disassociations of workers in the public and private sectors, during the confinement phases and the two months after its conclusion.
Budget (if any)	US\$204 million	Non-existent	Non-existent	Non-existent

Source: ECLAC (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

The programme to support MSMEs, implemented in April 2020, was chosen for further analysis. This measure is based on the need to protect and anticipate short-term problems that could threaten the continuity of the operations of such enterprises, as well as reduce threats to employment. It was expected to reach a minimum of 11,960 companies eligible for financial intermediaries of credit.

2.3.4.1 Special programme to support micro, small, and medium enterprises

The special programme to support MSMEs is aimed at resolving a potential bottleneck associated with the economic crisis, resulting from the pandemic and the extended period of confinement: access to credit. Approved in April 2020, the programme attempts to provide resources to safeguard the sources of employment, operation and continuity of these companies, given the health emergency. It is based on the need to protect MSMEs and anticipate short-term problems that could threaten their continuity of operations, and in this way reduce threats to jobs.

This measure is particularly important at a time when access to credit for MSMEs could be reduced because of the economic crisis. This was a possibility even before the pandemic, evident in the trend observed in recent years towards the lesser importance of MSMEs in the credit portfolio. For example, in 2012, the MSMEs portfolio accounted for 51.5 percent of the total financial system portfolio, down to 42.1 percent in 2019 (IDB, 2020). The programme's implementation consisted of the consolidation of the Productive Development Trust between the Ministry of Economic and Public Finance and the Productive Development Bank, placing loans to financial bodies for subsequent loans to MSMEs. Through regulations, an allocation of up to US\$219 million of state resources, a maximum amount of US\$73 million from the Productive Development Trust, and the possibility of funding the programme through loans from the Central Bank of Bolivia

was established.³⁴ A part of the financing also came from the IDB through the Global Credit Program to defend the Productive Fabric and Employment in Bolivia. The funding consisted of US\$130 million.

One of the programme’s objectives was to grant at least 30 percent of the credits to women-owned companies (IDB, 2020). With this measure, a minimum of 11,960 companies that would be eligible were expected to be reached. In addition, loans had to have a term of up to five years and a grace period of one year. The financing was based on the type of company, with a maximum amount of up to US\$16,991, using the following criteria.³⁵

Table 2.15. *Maximum amounts and rates for the MSMEs special support programme, Bolivia*

Type of company	Maximum credit amount (BOB)	US\$	Annual interest rate (%)
Medium	115,000	16,691	6
Small	75,000	10,885	7
Micro	35,000	5,079	11.5

Source: IDB (2020a).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

This programme offers important lessons in terms of its approach to the informal employment reality in Bolivia. In addition to being a measure with the potential to revive the economy, it can improve levels of equity by providing credit to economic units with lower economic capacity. From this perspective, the analysis of the “productive links” that manage to connect the microenterprises and small enterprises in those sectors most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 can be useful regarding the agri-food, tourism and hotels, textile and machinery/equipment sectors. However, it is still too early to make an assessment. In addition to aspects related to the effectiveness of the programme—linked to the ability to ensure the survival of companies and the ability to preserve the employment they generate—the evaluations should allow the most effective cooperation modalities to be identified (financing, technical assistance or training, to mention some examples), including their complementarity with SSC initiatives.

In summary, the pandemic and the periods of lockdown generated a series of immediate and long-term effects, including increases in the poverty rate, a reduction in income levels, and worse labour conditions, reflected in higher levels of unemployment, underemployment and labour inactivity. At the same time, the access to health and education services was reduced, which could influence the population’s welfare conditions in the future. High levels of informality in the economy, social conflicts and political tensions made it difficult to define measures to address the health and economic crisis. In this context, Bolivia received support from international cooperation agencies, particularly multilateral banks. The fact that SSC practices were not quickly activated in response to the crisis highlights their sporadic and circumstantial role in the country.

³⁴ The characteristics of the programme are established by Supreme Decrees 4216, 4270 and 4331 of the 2020 management. In addition to Official Letter /ASFI/DNP/CC-2842/2020 and RM-MEFP 159/2020.

³⁵ The classification of the companies is made considering the number of employees, assets and annual sales income to build and index ranging from 0 to 1 (microenterprises below 0.035; small enterprises between 0.035 and 0.05 and medium enterprises equal to 1).

Peru opted for a combination of radical measures on social isolation and strong public spending. According to the MEF Peru (2020), a budget equivalent to 20 percent of GDP was allocated to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and confinement. When the first virus case was registered on 6 March 2020, preparedness, response and clinical management measures were implemented, minimizing physical contact between people, improving the channel of communication with the public, and isolating patients with suspected infections (Ministry of Health of Peru, 2021). One week later, the Government declared a state of emergency, which involved a nationwide lockdown, the strengthening of the health system, restrictions on commercial, cultural and recreational activities, border closures, reduction of transport supply, intervention by the Police and Armed Forces to ensure compliance with the measures, postponement of the school academic year, suspension of classes in technical institutes and universities, and 14 days of quarantine for those arriving in the country (*El Peruano*, 2020). Following the national lockdown, which lasted from 16 March to 30 June, the resumption of economic activities was gradually allowed (France 24, 2020a).

Social and economic overview

The pandemic found Peru in a situation of political instability and uncertainty.

The pandemic found the country in a situation of political instability and uncertainty. During the first months of the state of emergency, four ministers of health were appointed, and from November 2020 to the time of writing this report, the country has had three presidents. Moreover, the presidential and parliamentary elections of April 2021, and the second round which took place in June 2021, were marked by fragmentation (the candidates who passed to the second round obtained less than 20 percent of the popular vote) and by an electoral process questioned by the losing candidate, despite the supervision of international organizations.

Concerning the economic situation, Peru had solid macroeconomic fundamentals with a debt/GDP ratio of 26.8 percent (2019), access to international financial markets, a high stock of international reserves (about 29.6 percent of the GDP by 2019), and low inflation expectations after years of effort to manage its monetary policy (Diaz-Cassou *et al.*, 2020). However, the pandemic led to the contraction of the economy by 11.1 percent in 2020 according to the Central Reserve Bank of Peru (BCRP, 2021). The supply shock, social distancing and quarantine generated production paralysis in several sectors, including trade services, tourism, transport and education, representing around 60 percent of the country's GDP (*ibid.*). The demand shock affected the country both internally and externally. The reduction in employment and the global participation rate³⁶ (Figure 2.17) led to lower demand by households due to lower purchasing power and adjustment in economic expectations. External demand contracted due to a fall in exports in sectors such as mining, which represents around 60 percent of exports (BCRP, 2021). This was accompanied by the volatility of financial conditions, capital outflows, currency depreciation and falling commodity prices (MEF Peru, 2020). In addition, the fiscal deficit grew from 1.4 percent in 2019 to 8.4 percent of GDP in 2020, and the public debt increased from 13 percent to 22.4 percent of GDP in the same period (MEF Peru, 2021).

³⁶ This is calculated as the economically active population, or economic population in working age.

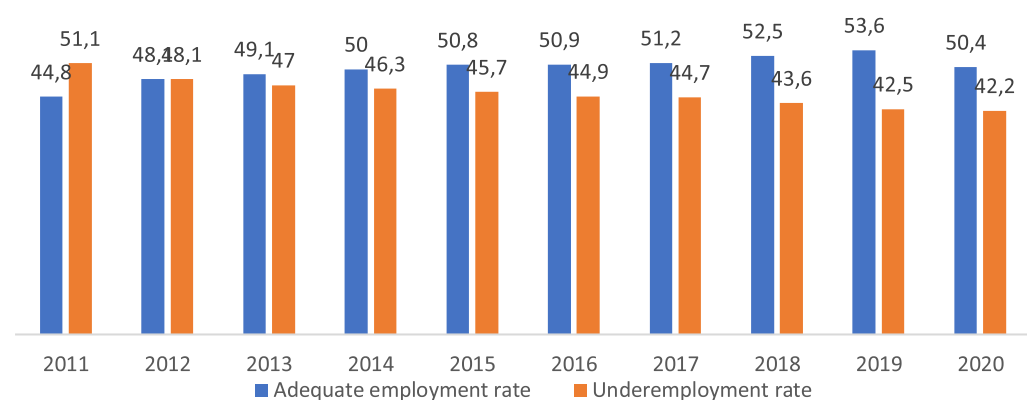
Figure 2.17. Global participation rate 2011–2020, Peru (%)



Source: National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI, 2011–2021).
Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Between 2011 and 2019 employment quality indicators were improving, but the adequate employment rate decreased in 2020 (INEI, 2021), as shown in Figure 2.18.

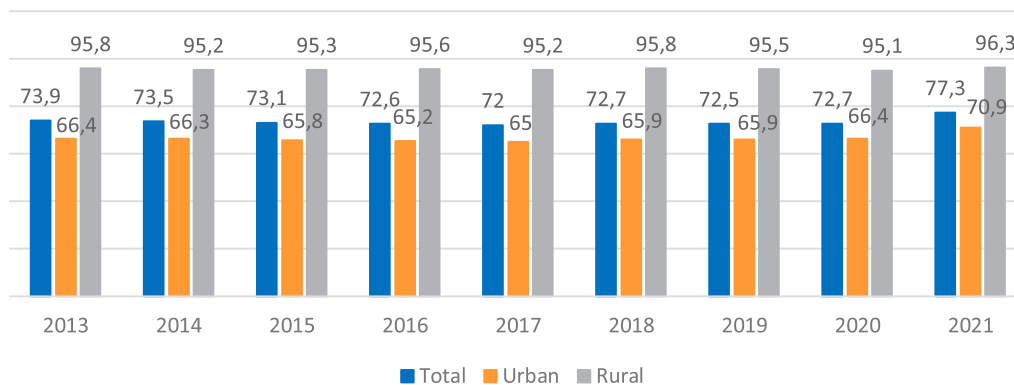
Figure 2.18. Adequate employment and underemployment 2011–2020, Peru (%)



Source: INEI (2021).
Prepared by: Fundación ARU

With the pandemic, informal employment increased. The impact was greater in urban areas, as shown in Figure 2.19. In rural areas, the situation was similar to the pre-pandemic situation, despite an important internal migration of 167,000 Peruvians in the first weeks of the quarantine (Díaz-Cassou *et al.*, 2020). In the case of men, informal employment rose from 70.3 percent in 2019 to 74 percent in 2020, while in the case of women it rose from 75.8 percent in 2019 to 77.3 percent in 2020 (INEI, 2021).

Figure 2.19. Informal employment rate by area of residence, Peru (%)



Source: INEI (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

The outbreak of COVID-19 also made visible the growing inequality in the country. A look at income distribution before and after taxes and transfers shows that public policies had a lower redistributive effect when compared to other countries in the region and the OECD.³⁷

Concerning the health sector, Peru was characterized by its lower public expenditure compared to other countries in the region and the OECD. Between 2010 and 2014, according to the World Bank (2017), the public expenditure in health barely increased from 2.7 percent to 3.3 percent of GDP. This reduced expenditure partly explains the country's weak capacity to cope with the pandemic, as it has a ratio of 3.3 intensive care unit beds per 100,000 inhabitants, below other LAC countries such as Colombia (11.5) or Argentina (18.3) (Diaz-Cassou *et al.*, 2020). In 2020, public expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP was 2.8 percent (MEF Peru, 2021a). Similarly, the unequal capacity of families to deal with the health crisis showed serious equity problems within the health system. For example, the out-of-pocket economic contribution of households towards total health expenditure in the country was 29 percent, one of the five highest rates in Latin America (Social Protection Commission, 2017). In addition, access to health services depended significantly on the household's financial capacity, meaning out of the population suffering from a health problem, only half get care in a health facility, which is not an equitable outcome. This percentage is just 30 percent among people with lower incomes who fall ill and have an affiliation to the comprehensive health insurance scheme. In 2019, approximately 22 percent of the population lacked insurance (INEI, 2011–2021).

Education was severely affected by the suspension of classes and the economic crisis. It is estimated that the closure of schools caused loss of learning, increased school dropouts and increased inequality (World Bank, 2020). UNICEF (2021a) estimated, with data from the Statistics of Education Quality (ESCALE), that the fall in household income could increase the cumulative dropout rate in basic education from 9 percent to values between 11.3 percent and 18.4 percent in 2020. Although one of the answers was long-distance education, with the televised programme *Aprendo en Casa* (Learning from Home), this type of solution was not sufficient to accomplish high-quality distance education, since it requires a set of tools that depend on connectivity. According to the IDB (2021), only 52 percent of the national population has 4G coverage, which is below the Latin American average of 66 percent. There are noticeable differences between regions: in Metropolitan Lima this percentage is 63 percent, while in rural areas it barely reaches 6 percent (*ibid.*). In the case of higher education, the cumulative dropout rate

³⁷ See INEC (2017). Other materials include Lustig (2017), OECD/CAF/ECLAC (2018,) and OECD/United Nations/CAF/EU (2019).

went from 19.3 percent in 2019 to 31 percent in 2020, as 65 percent of universities were not prepared to provide virtual education (ibid.). In addition, in non-university higher education, the dropout rate increased from 39.2 percent in 2019 to 55.6 percent in 2020, according to the Ministry of Education (MINEDU, 2021).

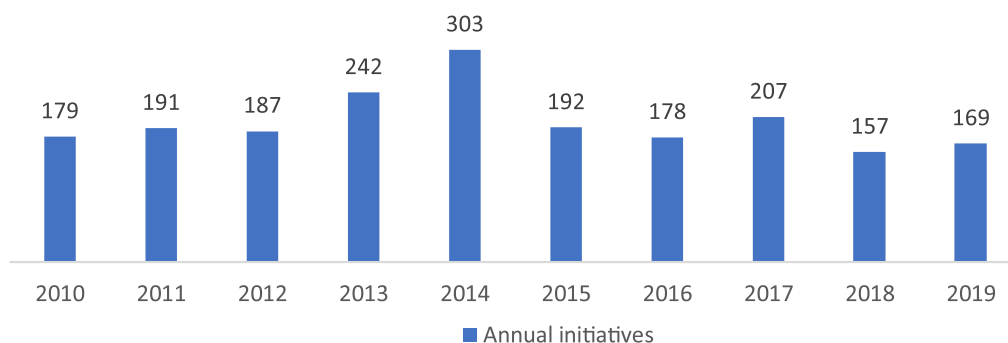
The pandemic also uncovered the strong gender disparities that were evident in the country. Line 100, which is part of a telephone exchange enabled by the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) to deal with cases of gender-based violence, recorded an increase of almost twice as many calls between May and October 2020, compared to previous years (2017–2019) (MIMP, 2021). Chat 100—part of the same programme—received six times more queries between May and October 2020 than in the 2017–2019 period (ibid.). Finally, the magnitude of Venezuelan migration, which according to the 2017 census was around 60,949 people, also posed challenges in providing public services in the context of the pandemic.

Having examined the Peruvian context in which the COVID-19 outbreak took place, the next section will focus on SSC. It explores the role of SSC in recent years and maps current SSC actors in both the social protection and employment sectors.

2.4.2 Overview of the state of South-South cooperation

Peru has had between 180 and 200 SSC initiatives per year. As shown in Figure 2.20, the year with the highest number of initiatives was 2014.

Figure 2.20. Evolution of SSC 2010–2019, Peru (number of initiatives)

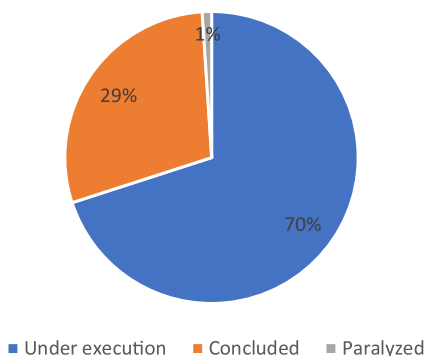


Source: SEGIB (2020).

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In 2020, SSC had 84 projects, whose status is shown in Figure 2.21.

Figure 2.21. Status of SSC projects, Peru (%)



Source: APCI (2021b).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Among SSC projects, Peru was a recipient in 30, a provider in 35, and a two-way cooperator in 19 projects, according to the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI, 2020). The main provider of this type of cooperation was Brazil, while the main recipient was Colombia. In the case of triangular cooperation, eight projects were undertaken in 2020 with partners such as Germany, Japan and the ILO, in which Peru was the recipient of cooperation in two projects, a provider in four and a two-way cooperator in two (APCI, 2021b).

The following section focuses on mapping SSC in the social protection and employment sectors. Both include an overview of the key policy in each sector.

2.4.3 Map of South-South cooperation in social protection

Particularly in the area of social protection, 43 projects were identified as a response to the pandemic, involving an amount of US\$5.8 million, in various aspects such as poverty alleviation, food security, transportation, connectivity, health and production, among others (APCI, 2021b). These are part of the 869 cooperation projects related to social protection made in 2020 (APCI, 2020). However, only three were related to SSC and none to triangular cooperation. For further SSC identification, Table 2.17 presents a policy mapping. This includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

Table 2.16. *South-South cooperation in Peru, stakeholder map of the social protection sector*

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Development and social inclusion	Articulation and coordination of development and social inclusion policies and programmes	South-South	Technical assistance	Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger of Brazil (provider) Peru's Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Women and vulnerable populations	Strengthening the management of monitoring and evaluation of social programmes of the Ministry of Women's Affairs	South-South	Technical assistance	Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger of Brazil (provider) MIMP of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Housing	Technical assistance for the participation of national financial institutions in the operation of the programme <i>Bono de Vivienda Para una Vida Mejor</i> (Housing Grant for a Better Life), Phase II	South-South	Technical assistance	Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation of Peru (provider) National Commission of Housing and Human Settlements of Honduras (recipient)	State institutions	N/I

Source: APCI (2021b) CARTA N° 0058-2021-APCI/ACCIP.
Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Table 2.17. Social protection measures map, Peru

Policy name	Money transfers	Meal transfers	Guarantee of utility access and other services	Others
Body in charge of the policy	Central Government, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Central Bank	Central Government	Ministry of Economy and Finance	Central Government
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	No	No	No	No
Policy status and period	2020–present	2020–present	2020–present	2020–present
Work axes	Family income	Food security	Livelihoods	Liquidity and home
Policy objective	Ensuring the family income of people and families in vulnerable situations	Ensuring access to food for minority groups	Ensuring access to utilities during the COVID-19 pandemic	Ensuring liquidity and access to own housing
Target population	People in vulnerable situations	Vulnerable people	People with low income	People with low income
Key activities	<p>1. The Government pays 35% of workers' wages for those who earn less than US\$435. 2. Withdrawal of up to US\$700 from the time-of-service compensation (CTS, in Spanish) (workers' benefit consisting of two deposits a year made by the employer, which together add up to approximately one monthly salary) 3. Transfer of US\$58 million by the Government to municipalities of the country to acquire essentials. 4. Transfer of US\$87 million to 800,000 families of self-employed workers. 5. The record of households living in poverty or extreme poverty receiving a US\$110 cash subsidy under the National Household Targeting System (SISFOH) in geographic areas with the greatest health vulnerability. In total, there are 2.8 million households. (US\$308 million) 6. Transfer in favour of the Regional Government of the Department of Cusco to face the health emergency. 7. Advance transfer authorized to users of national programmes (social programmes) of the MIDIS. 8. Additional income of US\$186 for more than 1 million families in rural areas. 9. Transfer of US\$186 made to 6.6 million families without income, part of the Universal Family Grant. 10. Workers who earn less than US\$587 and work in companies of fewer than 100 people, who have seen their economic activity completely paralysed, receive a monthly transaction of US\$186 for three months. 11. The Central Bank creates personal savings accounts for every citizen over 18 years of age to facilitate transfers. 12. Subsidy for families living in poverty in regions with extreme rates of COVID-19 transmission.</p>			
Budget (if any)	US\$5.328 million	US\$52.3 million	US\$195.6 million	Non-existent

Source: ECLAC (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Following on from this, key vulnerable household grants are analysed in more detail. In Peru, there was no single policy encompassing a subsidy strategy for different vulnerable groups; instead, measures were deployed as the pandemic progressed, intending to prevent the increase in poverty and income inequality and stimulate aggregate demand (MEF Peru, 2020). Therefore, the social protection measures adopted to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic involved those aspects related to the alleviation of vulnerable and poor households. Those that had the largest budget (US\$3.202 billion) and mass management were CTs in the form of household grants (ibid.). There were five main grants intended for poor and vulnerable households for social protection: *Yo me quedo en casa* (I stay at home) Grant, Rural Grant, Self-employment Grant, Universal Family Grant. They were implemented in 2020 to provide aid to about 8.5 million households during that year and offer coverage to 63 percent of the total households (ibid).

2.4.3.1 Vulnerable household grants

'Yo me quedo en casa' (I stay at home) Grant: This grant consisted of a subsidy of US\$186 distributed in two parts of US\$93 each. The Government allocated a budget of US\$512 million to benefit 2.7 million households living in poverty or extreme poverty via the SISFOH. The delivery of this grant required people to verify whether or not they were beneficiaries in a platform set up by the Government, which established the date, the part, and the mode of collection of this grant for the target population (Plataforma Digital Unica del Estado Peruano, 2021).

Rural Grant: This consisted of a one-time grant of US\$186. The Government allocated a budget of US\$204 million to benefit 1.6 million households in rural areas (Plataforma Digital Unica del Estado Peruano, 2021). The target population of the Rural Grant was households in poverty or extreme poverty that had not received other forms of economic support or assistance from social programmes during the COVID-19 national emergency. SISFOH was used for household identification, along with records of the agencies and programmes attached to the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation (MIDAGRI). The payment could be made through an over-the-counter cash payment from one of the banks selected for this purpose, mobile banking, ATM withdrawal or “pay carts” (which consisted of face-to-face payment at pre-established places and dates). Before the collection, people had to verify their status as beneficiaries, which was done online through a specific platform or by accessing in-person care centres at the Tambos of the National Action Platforms for Social Inclusion programme.

Self-employment Grant: This was a subsidy of US\$186 delivered in two parts to households with self-employed workers (Plataforma Digital Unica del Estado Peruano, 2020c). The Government disbursed US\$145 million to serve 780,000 households. The identification of the beneficiaries was carried out under the following criteria: households had to be classified as poor according to SISFOH; they had to be located in areas of greater vulnerability according to the Ministry of Health; they should not be beneficiaries of other social programmes; they should not be registered as public- or private-sector dependent workers; and they should not have members in public office. As in previous cases, the Government established a platform to verify the status of beneficiaries and the date, place and payment mode.

Universal Family Grant: This consisted of a grant of US\$186 per household, which represented a total budget of US\$2.342 billion to benefit 12.6 million households (Plataforma Digital Unica del Estado Peruano, 2021). This grant was delivered in two stages (revision of the database to verify the beneficiary status and collection). A reverse-targeting method was used to identify the target population, according to which all

households with high incomes were excluded, and the National Registry for COVID-19 measures was created. The registry identified households and people living in poverty, beneficiaries of social programmes, households with members not on the payroll, and households who had not received previous grants. For payment, a recipient of the beneficiary household was identified and assigned a payment method for the grant delivery that was similar to other grants.

Three main additional challenges were identified: 1) There were difficulties for the State in identifying potential beneficiaries. In this regard, with the lessons learned from the first three grants, the National Household Registry web platform was set up by the National Identification and Civil Status Registry, through which families not benefiting from previous grants could be registered. Thus, families living in poverty and vulnerability could be integrated into a single register (MEF Peru, 2020). 2) Low financial inclusion and insufficient penetration of digital technologies—especially in rural areas and low-income households—also compromised the success of these policies. In this sense, new modalities were implemented, such as the account deposit at Banco de la Nación and private banks, cell phone banking at Banco de la Nación, Interbank’s Tunki electronic wallet, and pay cards (ibid.). 3) Logistic problems were encountered in delivering benefits to citizens in remote areas. For this reason, security vehicles were used for the direct distribution of money to households in remote areas of the country (ibid.). It is worth mentioning that the *Yo me quedo en casa*, Self-employment and Rural Grants faced significant delays (about three months) before reaching their total target population (Diaz-Cassou *et al.*, 2020). The relevance of the grant amount compared to the lockdown duration is debatable. The budget needed to finance these grants required an increase in the fiscal deficit and indebtedness. No international cooperation support is recorded.

2.4.4 Mapping South-South cooperation in employment

Regarding employment issues, four projects were designed in response to COVID-19, which represented US\$202,896.19 (APCI, 2021b). They are part of the 339 employment projects, two of which are related to triangular cooperation and 23 to SSC. The latter are in Table 2.18. For further SSC identification, Table 2.19 presents a policy map. This includes the policies implemented by the Government in response to COVID-19.

Table 2.18. South-South cooperation in Peru, stakeholder map of the employment sector

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Capacity-building	Implementation of a social intervention project based on the Haku Winay/Noa Jayatai experience – Fondo de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Social – MIDIS	South-South	Technical assistance	MIDIS of Peru (provider) Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) of Panama (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Tourism	Alternative development in Alto Huallaga through ecological tourism	South-South	Technical assistance	Presidential Counselor's Office for the Stabilization and Consolidation of Colombia (provider) National Commission for Development and Life Without Drugs of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Development of production systems	Capacity-building in surveillance, control, and sustainable production systems in the protected areas of the Colombia-Peru border (La Paya National Natural Park and Amacayacu National Park-Colombia and Güepi-Sekime National Park and Yaguas Reserved Zone-Peru)	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	National Service for Natural Areas Protected by the State of Peru National Natural Parks of Colombia	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, construction	Consulting and technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of students and workers linked to the construction sector	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	National Training Service for the Construction Industry of Peru National Apprenticeship Service of Colombia	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, agriculture	Strengthening of the productive, associative, and marketing capacities of the Sacha Inchi value chain for border producers in the Arenillas canton, province of El Oro	South-South	Technical assistance	National Institute for Agrarian Innovation of Peru (provider) Binational Development Plan for the Border Region – Chapter Ecuador (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, fishing	Training in the design, construction, and use of various fishing gear technologies for resource extraction, based on the ecosystem approach (environmentally safe and selective) for Costa Rica	South-South	Technical assistance	Peruvian Sea Institute (provider) National Learning Institute of Costa Rica (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, agroforestry	Strengthening local capacities for the management and sustainable use of timber and non-timber species in community forests in the Yavari and Purus watersheds	South-South	Technical assistance	Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária of Brazil (provider) Peru's Special Project for the Integral Development of the Putumayo River Basin (recipient)	State institutions	N/I

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Capacity-building, agroforestry	Strengthening local capacities to develop agroforestry systems in Amazonian border communities	South-South	Technical assistance	Agropecuaria of Brazil (provider) Peru's Special Project for the Integral Development of the Putumayo River Basin (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Labour inspection	Institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion emphasizes labour inspection	South-South	Technical assistance	Ministry of Labor and Employment of Brazil (provider) Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, agriculture	Strengthening technical capacities in selection, seed potato production and crop health	South-South	Technical assistance	MIDAGRI of Peru (provider) Ministry of Rural Development and Lands of Bolivia (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, water, and sanitation	Technical assistance and exchange of experiences on the dual-training system and certification of labour competencies for technical operating personnel in water and basic sanitation	South-South	Technical assistance	National Service for the Sustainability of Basic Sanitation Services of Bolivia (provider) Ministry of Housing, Construction, and Sanitation of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, agriculture	Seed potato technical assistance intervention methodologies for family farming	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	Ministry of Rural Development and Lands of Bolivia (provider) MIDAGRI of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building	Strengthening of technical and commercial skills of specialists in domestic South American camelids (Alpaca and Llama)	South-South	Technical assistance	Ministry of Rural Development and Lands of Bolivia (provider) MIDAGRI of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, livestock, handicrafts	Strengthening knowledge for improving the livestock and dairy chains and the artisanal farming sector between Lampa and Florida	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	Provincial Municipality of Lampa, Peru Departmental Municipality of Florida, Uruguay	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building	Training for technological innovation in managing the production system for the cultivation, harvesting, and post-harvesting of Hass Altura and Antillean avocado from Bajío	South-South	Technical assistance	MIDAGRI of Peru (provider) Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock of Honduras (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building	Strengthening effective management in natural protected areas through productive initiatives and the design and implementation of financing mechanisms	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	National Service of Natural Areas Protected by Peru's State National Commission of Natural Protected Areas of Mexico	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, migration	Homologation of labour skills certification: a contribution to migrants' employability	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	Chile Valora (provider) Ministry of Labor of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I

Topic	Overview	Cooperation type	Modality	Stakeholders	Stakeholder type	Total amount
Capacity-building, agriculture	Strengthening gastronomy from Peru to St. Lucia: harvest from field to table	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	Centro de Formación en Turismo of Peru (provider) Synergy Training and Education Center of St. Lucia (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, tourism	Development of tourism with community participation / Strengthening the sustainability of the community tourism product in the San Martin Region	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism Ministry of Tourism and Sports / Mahidol University International College of Thailand	State institutions	N/I
Development of productive sectors	Alternative development project	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	National Commission for Development and Life Without Drugs of Peru Department of Agriculture Kasetsart University, Kamphaeng Saen Campus (Thailand)	State institutions	N/I
Gastronomy	Exchange of experiences between Peru and Thailand: Gastronomy, techniques and ingredients, research and tourism development	Two-way South-South	Technical assistance	Centro de Formación en Turismo of Peru Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand	State institutions	N/I
Human Resources	Human resources development	South-South	Technical assistance	Thailand International Cooperation Agency (provider) APCI (recipient)	State institutions	N/I
Capacity-building, livestock	Transfer of knowledge and practices that strengthen livestock development in Peru, in its beef cattle components with special emphasis on the “green meat” denomination and silvopastoral systems	South-South	Technical assistance	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Paraguay (provider) Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation of Peru (recipient)	State institutions	N/I

Source: APCI (2021b) CARTA N° 0058-2021-APCI/ACCIP.
Prepared by: Fundación ARU

Table 2.19. Employment measures map, Peru

Policy name	Labour protection	Others
Body in charge of the policy	Ministry of Labor	Ministry of Labor
Was any type of international cooperation identified?	No	No
Policy status and period	2020–present day	2020–present day
Work axes	Employment	Workdays and job creation
Policy objective	Maintaining the population's employment and income	Regulate work-hours and create new jobs
Target population	Employed population	The employed and unemployed population
Key activities	<p>Workers who cannot enter the country due to the COVID-19 emergency can telework from wherever they are.</p> <p>To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the public and private sectors must implement teleworking.</p> <p>When work is not compatible with teleworking, employers must grant paid work leave for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.</p> <p>The EsSalud Social Health Insurance Institute is authorized to grant workers whose salary is up to US\$587 (PEN2351,53) and who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 the temporary disability benefit of 20 days.</p> <p>Teleworking does not apply to workers with confirmed COVID-19, nor to those on medical leave, in which case the suspension of the worker's obligation to provide services without affecting the payment of their remuneration comes into force.</p> <p>The financial transfer in favour of the EsSalud Social Health Insurance Institute to finance the empowerment, implementation, adaptation and operation of the Villa Panamericana to treat patients with confirmed COVID-19. Assistance to insured and uninsured symptomatic patients is authorized.</p> <p>Subsidy of 35% to the payroll of companies for the workers who have salaries of up to US\$366.81.</p> <p>In April 2020, workers' contribution of 10% to Pension Fund Administrators is suspended.</p> <p>Workers in the formal sector will be able to withdraw up to US\$587 (S/. 2,351.53) from the time-of-service compensation (CTS, in Spanish) fund to maintain the necessary liquidity during the crisis.</p>	<p>Freedom of choice of working hours will be provided to workers to prevent overcrowding in offices.</p> <p>Approximately US\$36.7 million was allocated to creating temporary jobs in the rural sector.</p> <p>Approximately US\$170 million was allocated to provide 226,070 new jobs under the 'Peru Trabaja' (Peru Works) programme.</p>
Budget (if any)	Non-existent	US\$204 million

Source: ECLAC (2021).

Prepared by: Fundación ARU

For further analysis the *Reactiva Peru* programme was chosen due to its budget, the largest compared to other policy measures (MEF Peru, 2020a), and its scope.

2.4.4.1 Reactiva Peru programme

Reactiva Peru (Reactivate Peru) provided many resources to inject liquidity into various markets. This programme has a budget of US\$14.670 billion, the largest amount compared to other policy measures (MEF Peru, 2020a), though it was not supported by international cooperation.

The logic of the programme was to inject liquidity into companies through loans with a low interest rate, to ensure the payment chain. Therefore, although payroll subsidies may seem a measure more directly related to employment protection when allocating resources to *Reactiva Peru*, a financing mechanism was chosen for companies to contain the effects of COVID-19 on employment and the payment chain. Thus, the effect of the pandemic on the payment chain and the financial system's stability was considered, given that the economy is interconnected through companies of different sizes. On the one hand, companies' wages are used for the consumption of goods of other companies that also pay salaries to their workers. On the other hand, the money suppliers receive from these companies cover workers' wages and payments to other suppliers.

For the delivery of these credits, four steps were considered: 1) The company requests credit from the financial institution; 2) The financial institution evaluates and participates in the liquidity auctions of the BCRP; 3) The MEF Peru grants the guarantee to the credit in such a way that the financial entity provides the credit; and 4) The financial institution grants the credit to the company at a low-interest rate to finance its working capital.³⁸

The programme's design considered limits on coverage levels and specific conditions for companies that would like to access credit. The percentages of guarantees could vary between 80 percent for the highest credits (higher than US\$1,833,741 and lower than US\$2,444,988) and 98 percent for the lower credits (up to US\$22,005) (MEF Peru, 2020a). The main conditions that companies had to meet were: not having tax debts administered by the National Tax Administration Superintendence for periods before 2020; being classified as "Normal" or "With Potential Problems" until February 2020 in the Financial System, the Risk Central of the Superintendence of Banking, Insurance and Pension Fund Administrators; not having been classified as other than "Normal" within 12 months before the granting of the loan (in the case of non-compliance with the above classification); not having links with the financial institution granting the credit.

As of 30 October 2020, the programme benefited 501,298 companies, of which 98.2 percent were microenterprises and small enterprises (MEF Peru, 2020). The main challenges faced in implementing *Reactiva Peru* are related to eligibility criteria and the presence of a large informal sector. According to international studies, in its first phase, the programme oriented only 3.9 percent of its resources to microenterprises and small enterprises in loans of up to US\$3,335. Subsequently, in a second phase, following a change in the maximum amounts of credit granted to the beneficiary companies and in the eligibility conditions, access to credit by small companies was facilitated. The changes mentioned correspond to Supreme Decree 124-2020-EF and are summarized in four key points: (1) the extension of the months covered by the programme guarantee; (2) making the guarantee covering microenterprises and individuals with businesses more flexible; (3) the extension of total loan amounts by tranche; and (4) the change of conditions for the first-stage beneficiary companies to be able to apply for new loans in the second stage.

However, the large informal sector made support effectiveness difficult, since the programme did not offer financial assistance to productive households and microenterprise units in a more precarious economic situation (Diaz-Cassou *et al.*, 2020).

³⁸ A detailed description can be found in MEF Peru (2020).

A preliminary assessment of the Peruvian case reveals that, despite the country's sustained economic growth over the past 20 years, the public sector lacks the resources and capacity to fully perform its fundamental role of providing public goods and guaranteeing the population access to its essential rights. The development of a social protection system to reduce inequalities, which became more evident during the pandemic, was insufficient. Thus, in 2020 Peru presented a decline in social indicators, one of the largest contractions in employment and economic activity in the region, and one of the worst health outcomes worldwide in COVID-19 mortality. Particularly in the areas of social protection and employment, the country took advantage of the strength of its public finances to promote strategies to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. In a complementary manner, international cooperation contributed to alleviating economic and social problems, mainly in the form of ODA. Concerning SSC, the pandemic had a negative impact, given the difficulty of continuing face-to-face knowledge-sharing practices. In addition, SSC projects implemented in the context of the pandemic focused mainly on the health sector, leaving aside issues such as employment and social protection.

3. South-South cooperation opportunities, recommendations and challenges to contribute to the sustainable and inclusive long-term recovery of the social protection and employment sectors

3.1 Comparative analysis

In 2020, SSC initiatives have suffered a setback due to the difficulties each country faced in cushioning the effects of the pandemic.

COVID-19 harshly affected many countries worldwide, demanding governments take immediate action. They had to balance the need to protect people's lives and health from an unknown virus, while also taking care of their labour and income sources in the face of an imminent economic recession. This chapter identifies SSC opportunities, recommendations and challenges, which together will contribute to a sustainable and inclusive long-term recovery in the social protection and employment sectors. It summarizes the findings in both areas for the countries studied in a comparative manner. It also identifies opportunities and challenges that need to be taken into account while addressing SSC (as they are part of its strengths and weaknesses). And, finally, it gives recommendations to promote SSC, arguing that it is not only a means but also an end itself.

In 2020, SSC initiatives have suffered a setback due to the difficulties each country faced in cushioning the effects of the pandemic. In Colombia, there were not many SSC projects, specifically in social protection and employment, despite the important technical effort to systematize cooperation from a quantitative and value-added approach (ECLAC, 2021c). In Peru, a similar situation occurred, with fewer SSC projects in the areas of social protection and employment, although the country valuably participates in other SSC initiatives. In Ecuador, eight initiatives were identified, led primarily by countries such as Panama, Peru and Colombia, and international organizations such as the CAF. In Bolivia, the lack of information and systematic records regarding cooperation initiatives did not allow for periodic follow-up or evaluation of their scope in recent periods.

3.1.1 Social protection

In the social protection sector, it was found that the responses were focused on the generation of CTs to vulnerable populations. A reason for the rapid creation of CTs could be related to the beneficiary identification schemes and organizational and logistical aspects of existing CCT programmes.³⁹ These CTs intended to provide the necessary economic resources to cover basic needs, such as food and health supplies, and were financed with public resources. There are no cases of non-reimbursable international cooperation. In the case of Bolivia, the Universal Grant had technical assistance from the World Bank.

³⁹ These programmes have been popular in the region since the 1990s.

Actions taken in the four countries exposed similar social and economic problems and similar execution or logistic issues, such as identifying vulnerable and poor populations, the contact process and the delivery of transfers. Regarding logistics, the difficulties faced by Ecuador and Peru in the delivery of CTs caused crowds and delays. Nevertheless, the programmes were adjusted. In addition, among complementary efforts, the destination of the transfers was also focused on rural populations, which generally implies significant logistical complications. In this sense, the generation of spaces to exchange experiences between countries in the framework of SSC could offer tools that improve responses for these populations in future crises. Further details about CTs in the different countries are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Summary table for social protection measures implemented in Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru

	Ecuador	Colombia	Bolivia	Peru
Name of measure	Family Protection Grant	Solidarity Income Program	Universal Grant	Vulnerable Household Grants
Main actions	Provision of cash support to vulnerable population with income less than the minimum wage.	Identification of families with the highest vulnerability in coordination with various institutions.	Provision to people between 18 and 60 years old, who do not have other state benefits or remuneration.	Provision of grants for poor and vulnerable households in poverty or extreme poverty, households in rural areas, self-employed workers.
Advantages	Alleviate the effects of the crisis on the poorest households through CTs during the lockdown, with a preference for women heads of household. Covered vulnerable households that did not have state support before the pandemic.	Financial support to households in poverty, extreme poverty and economic vulnerability, with a preference for women heads of household. Covered people who received no other aid from the State and had no other source of income.	Access was given to a larger population than initially projected.	Alleviate the crisis effects on the poorest households through CTs.
Disadvantages	There was no state support for people in human mobility during the pandemic. The first grant delivery generated crowds and long queues for the money collected in the middle of the pandemic.	Difficult to identify inclusion and exclusion errors.	The grant distribution was concentrated in urban areas.	Some of the grants presented significant delays in their effective collection (up to three months). Difficulties for the State in identifying potential beneficiaries and logistical problems in remote areas.
Medium- and long-term challenges	Alleviate poverty, including poverty increased by the pandemic. The policy was a temporary relief.	It was effective in increasing the probability, by approximately 6%, that households in a situation of greater poverty would maintain a basic level of income.	It is necessary to identify prioritization criteria without violating the Bolivian system's universality.	Alleviate poverty, including poverty increased by the pandemic. The policy was a temporary relief.

Sources: Various sources cited in the case studies

Prepared by: FARO

3.1.2 Employment

The responses varied significantly among the studied countries in the employment sector, but the four countries took *ad hoc* measures to continue production and avoid economic paralysis. Table 3.2 summarizes the key measures in this sector in the four countries.

Table 3.2. Summary table for employment measures implemented in Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru

	Ecuador	Colombia	Bolivia	Peru
Name of measure	Organic Law on Humanitarian Support	Formal Employment Support Program	Special Program to Support Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises	Reactivate Peru Program
Main actions	Reducing layoff costs in the event of <i>force majeure</i> . Creating new forms of recruitment. Reducing work-hours.	Providing cash support through payroll subsidies, mainly from the business sector.	Securing resources for MSMEs through the placement of credits.	Injecting liquidity to companies through loans with low interest rates to ensure the payment chain.
Advantages	Promoting more flexible recruitment.	Supporting the maintenance of current stable employment levels.	Anticipating short-term issues that could threaten micro, small and medium enterprises' continuity and trying to reduce threats to jobs.	Providing financing options to companies to try to secure the payment chain, considering that the economy is interconnected between companies of different sizes.
Disadvantages	Increase dismissals without payment of previously established settlements.	The fund was only available to the formal sector.	It is still too early to make an assessment.	The large informal sector generated difficulty for support effectiveness since the programme did not consider financial assistance to the productive household and microenterprise units in more precarious economic and employment conditions.
Medium and long-term challenges	Promoting job creation through more flexible and adaptive hiring schemes—depending on the economic sector—which guarantee workers' labour rights. Promoting the formalization of the economy.	Promoting the formalization of the economy so that the measures introduced by the Government protect more companies and their workers.	There has been less emphasis on MSMEs within the credit portfolio in recent years, so it is necessary to promote access to credit in this sector.	Eligibility criteria and a large informal sector

Sources: Various sources cited in the case studies.

Prepared by: FARO

The limitations of SSC not only take place in the social protection and employment sectors. However, in a general overview, the rapid speed with which COVID-19 spread across the world evidenced global interconnection and interdependence, and highlighted unresolved problems that transcend national boundaries. As a global challenge, it is clear that this demands a joint or global response. Thus, SSC has a significant potential to contribute to the path of sustainable and inclusive development.

3.2 South-South cooperation opportunities and considerations to contribute to sustainable and inclusive development

This section identifies SSC opportunities and considerations, which must be taken into account as part of its strengths and weaknesses, highlighting specific opportunities in the employment and social protection sectors which are the main focus on this study. This results from a literature review regarding SSC in Latin America, interviews with experts and representatives of international organizations in the Andean region, and the authors' own reflections on the research process.

In this context, SSC is understood, broadly for practical purposes, as a framework for collaboration between countries from the Global South. Thus, SSC is presented not only as a means but also as an end in itself. The basis for this is an epistemological perspective, considering that knowledge production significantly depends on the political situation and the region in which one is located (De Sousa Santos, 2011). Thus, research and knowledge transfers reflect similar problems, as well as the challenge to create relevant and context-specific solutions. In this framework, the processes of knowledge production from the Global South and its dissemination among peers transcend national borders, reflecting problems studied and experienced by all those involved in this difficult task.

First, among the strengths of this type of cooperation, it is often highlighted that it is directed by the recipient country itself, which, by identifying its own needs, defines where it requires support. This is a significant difference from the traditional cooperation process, which may have a standard supply that has not necessarily been adapted to the country's needs or institutional framework, and that may require the recipient country to adjust to the agendas of the cooperating partners (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021; Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), 2019; Aguirre Crespo, 2013). Thus, SSC is rather defined as on-demand cooperation, as stated by two interviewees.^{40, 41} As a result, CLACSO (2019) states that there is a direct relationship between what the cooperation recipient requests (based on their needs) and the SSC projects that address them. In this sense, it should be emphasized that both the process of self-identification of needs and the cooperation itself could promote the legitimacy of interventions, if they become participatory exercises. This is possible considering that, in the long run, the sense of ownership drives an important part of the actors' commitment.

Second, for Roy and Andrade (2010 in Besada, 2019), the key differentiation of SSC (from usual foreign aid and donors from the Global North) goes further. They establish the focus on processes of knowledge exchange (including experiences and technologies) as a cornerstone, highlighting SSC as cooperation that is not limited to financial resources (that may or may not exist), but instead makes use of sending experts to support the development projects' design and implementation (Besada, 2019). This was also mentioned in the interviews as a strength of SSC (Table 3.3).

Following on from this, an additional crucial consideration for SSC development is the need to value these encounters for knowledge transfer.^{42, 43} This implies an understanding that cooperation comes in various forms, including financial resources, knowledge transfer and experience sharing. To do so, an interviewed official from APC Colombia⁴⁴ mentioned the need to share experiences that have reduced implementation costs, to highlight the value of SSC. A brief example of this is the short time invested in the development of teleworking regulations in Ecuador—which took place in the context of confinement—because of the experience shared by the Ministry of Labor of Ecuador in Colombia, as stated by an interviewed labour expert.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Online interview conducted with an official of APC Colombia (Annex 1).

⁴¹ Online interview conducted with an official of the RECID Ecuador (Annex 1).

⁴² Online interview conducted with an official of APC Colombia (Annex 1).

⁴³ Online interview conducted with an official of the MREMH of Ecuador (Annex 1).

⁴⁴ Online interview conducted with an official of APC Colombia (Annex 1).

⁴⁵ Online interview conducted with a member of Centro de Estudios de Política Laboral (Annex 1).

Table 3.3. South-South cooperation strengths

Strengths	Interviewees			
	Public officials of the central and decentralized state	International organization official	Members of CSO	Academy
Regular use of knowledge-sharing spaces (experiences, good practices and lessons learned)	X	X	X	X
Technical support on programmes and projects	X			X
Practices of cost-sharing among countries	X			
Take advantage of triangular cooperation and generate strategic alliances for SSC advancement	X			X

Sources: Interviews

Prepared by: FARO

The limited budget is seen as an important constraint for the progress of SSC, as stated by three interviewees.^{46, 47} One of them highlighted the fact that: “we were in a time of budgetary austerity, so, between 2016 and 2019, Ecuador did not have a budget allocated by public institutions to be able to face the issue of shared costs, which is a principle of the SSC.”⁴⁸ Other challenges mentioned in the interviews are summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 South-South cooperation challenges

Challenges of SSC	Interviewees			
	Public officials of the central and decentralized State	International organization official	Members of CSO	Academy
Limited budget	X		X	X
Improvement of coordination systems to consolidate information	X		X	X
Lack of a standardized quantification and valuation system	X			X
Local regulatory framework difficult for hiring international experts and consultants from other countries	X			

Sources: Interviews

Prepared by: FARO

Third, when addressing SSC, a commonly mentioned strength is a certain familiarity with the context by all the parties involved (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021; Aguirre Crespo, 2013). This is highly valued in the design and implementation of development projects, because there is room for replicability, or more straightforward applicability, due to fewer modifications being needed to recreate practices and projects in similar situations (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021; Besada, 2019).⁴⁹ The common circumstances could include

⁴⁶ Online interview conducted with an official of APC Colombia (Annex 1).

⁴⁷ Online interview conducted with an official of the RECID Ecuador (Annex 1).

⁴⁸ Online interview conducted with an official of the MREMH of Ecuador (Annex 1).

⁴⁹ Online interview conducted with an official of APC Colombia (Annex 1).

inequity and poverty, migratory phenomenon, informality, gender disparities, but also institutional and political systems and arrangements. Nevertheless, it is vital to have a preliminary technical analysis for effective replicability, as there are particularities in every territory. As one of the interviewees mentioned: “the socio-economic reality of the countries has made it possible to find common points (...) because you can apply the same recipe in one country and the other, with its nuances obviously, but there is all that viability due to all those strengths.”⁵⁰

In this context, a further opportunity for SSC among the Andean countries is to learn from their initiatives in the employment sector. Particularly given that they all currently face similar challenges and the measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 varied significantly in this area.

- In the case of Peru and Bolivia, the measures focused on loans providing financing options to secure the payment chain, considering that the economy is interconnected and anticipating short-term issues that could threaten production and employment continuity. These policy options could be applied in countries with limited funding but higher levels of liquidity, and therefore a knowledge-sharing experience could particularly interest countries in this situation.
- In addition, particularly in Peru, the systematization of the work with the private sector in employment could be an experience shared with other nations.
- In the case of Colombia, a subsidy to support payrolls and so maintain the current stable employment levels was offered. This option could be applied where funding is available as well as liquidity, and thus could particularly interest nations in a similar position. It is worth mentioning that this opportunity for Colombia could even include the creation of the FOME previously mentioned, which would provide cash for this measure, whereas other countries would need to finance their policies with debt.

All the initiatives related to employment were short-term, and subsequently left the informal sector out of the equation. Thus, further research and evidence on how to include the informal sector in the policymaking process is an opportunity for SSC, as Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru all have a large percentage of their population that depends on the informal economy with a range from 46 percent to 64 percent of their economically active population in vulnerable employment (Figure 1.2).

Fourth, SSC is also cooperation-based, given the horizontal relationships between its actors. This is crucial, especially in knowledge-building and knowledge-sharing processes. It could result in the reduction of the ‘distance’ between the provider and recipient countries, which is important for both processes. In fact, a vital part of the SSC and triangular cooperation initiatives is that they are implemented with consideration for a shared history and culture, geographic proximity, and other complementary social and economic factors; in addition to identifying common objectives and unique situations (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021; Besada, 2019).

However, two considerations need to be addressed here. First, there is not yet a systematized record that allows the magnitude of technical transfer exchanged between developing countries to be measured. This is a significant constraint regarding SSC evaluation. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Huitron (2016), there are plenty of case studies that have proven SSC’s contribution to knowledge transfer and capacity reinforcement of partner countries. Secondly, collaborative work among countries with a shared history and culture is not always easy. Its effectiveness depends on the manner in which previous conflicts were solved and the current existence of good diplomatic relations and shared

⁵⁰ Online interview conducted with a professor and research expert in SSC (Annex 1).

interests and values. All these are enabling factors for the encouragement of SSC. For example, in the case of LAC, SSC has been on a journey of progress lasting at least 40 years (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021; Ibararán *et al.*, 2017), with inevitable difficulties along the way that need to be taken into account.

- In the social sector, social protection is an example of the progress achieved.⁵¹ Thus, there are opportunities for SSC in the short and long term.

In the short term, Colombia and Peru have built interesting mechanisms to reach the most vulnerable populations, which could be shared with other countries, including Bolivia and Ecuador. This could help promote an efficient identification mechanism and reduce the probability of exclusion errors. In the long term, SSC offers the opportunity to re-evaluate whether the conditionality of the CCT programmes affects consumption and human capital accumulation. There is new evidence in Colombia that the unconditional CTs implemented in the framework of the pandemic promoted an increase in household spending on health, hygiene and education (Gallego *et al.*, 2021), which implies that households are using the money for key issues. Further research and evidence are needed. Similarly, it is worth mentioning that CCTs have reached the parts of the population traditionally excluded from social protection services, taking a multidimensional approach and promoting the coordination of intersectional actions (Cecchini and Atuesta, 2017), and, in some instances, stimulating the share of good practices not only among the countries in the South but worldwide. Nevertheless, operational costs of implementing and monitoring CCT have been controversial, as they could be high not only for the implementation bodies but also for households, especially women (Devereux 1999; UNICEF, 2018). This is because women have historically been responsible for the care of children, and now with CCT, they invest time in demonstrating the counterpart responsibilities that such programmes demand (*ibid.*).

- Continuing with the journey of SSC in the region, LAC has stood out in the international cooperation sphere for its active role in SSC in the last decade (Ayllón, 2015). The reasons why can be analysed from both an internal and an external perspective.

From an internal position, there are visible examples of governments that arrive in power supporting SSC as a political project to promote regional integration and the consolidation of what they call “post-liberal” and “post-hegemonic” proposals (Ayllón, 2015). Such a perspective aligns with the view of SSC as cooperation that reinforces “the rupture of the centre-periphery relations” (Iglesias, 2010 in Aguirre Crespo, 2013). Nevertheless, this has repercussions, due to the mistaken idea that SSC is only part of such actors’ agendas. In this sense, it should be noted that SSC has been promoted by governments that self-identify as “progressive” or centre-left, but also by “liberals” or centre-right governments that have identified in SSC an opportunity to encourage trade alliances and, in this way, prevent a confrontational narrative (Ayllón, 2015). Now a new challenge arises: to establish SSC as a tool with all the strengths previously mentioned but without political affiliation. Nevertheless, this should not imply abandoning the roots of SSC and its principles of solidarity, mutual benefit, complementarity, equality, non-conditionality and respect for sovereignty. On the contrary, SSC could continue reinforcing itself by offering alternatives to “vertical” relations (Iglesias, 2010 in Aguirre Crespo, 2013).

From an external perspective, Ayllón and Ojeda (2013) state that the flourishing of SSC was influenced by the decrease of the ODA flows due to two agendas: the Millennium

⁵¹ A common innovation from countries of the South related to social assistance is the implementation of CCT in several countries, starting in the early 1990s. The idea was to alleviate current household poverty, while preventing intergenerational transmission by incorporating conditioning schemes that promote the accumulation of human capital in children (Ibararán *et al.*, 2017).

Development Goals (MDGs, and later SDGs), which largely shifted development aid towards Africa, and the fight against terrorism and insecurity, which in Latin America is associated with the fight against drug trafficking (*ibid.*). This promoted a concentration of donors on the most vulnerable countries in the region, such as Haiti and others in Central America, and nations with historical internal conflicts, such as Colombia, Mexico and Brazil (Ayllón and Ojeda, 2013). The limited financial options made worse the situation in middle-income countries, which were ineligible for funds from the ODA, and this in turn distorted the perception of donors about the current development challenges in the region (Arcediano and Porras García, 2020; Ayllón and Ojeda 2013). Therefore, despite efforts in the international arena to consider other dimensions beyond GDP when addressing development issues, it is still the primary basis for allocating financial resources for cooperation, without considering the levels of inequality and poverty within nations. As a result, middle-income countries in LAC faced difficulties in traditional cooperation, favouring an increase in the exchange of horizontal collaboration between them (Aguirre Crespo, 2013).

Despite the progress in SSC, a major and persistent weakness is the lack of an epistemological framework, related to a theoretical and conceptual framework that can guide the actions of those involved by following its logic (CLACSO, 2019). This is true not only for LAC countries, but for others in the South. It becomes even more challenging due to the variety of actors involved in SSC, which has a clear tendency towards constant growth, due to more participation from business companies, social organizations and academia. As a result, there could be an important trade-off to consider: more actors strengthen SSC but, at the same time, make the development of a single framework even more difficult.

Additionally, it should be noted there are significant differences between subregions in South America. This could partly be because not all countries are going at the same pace or pursuing the same goals (CLACSO, 2019). On the one hand, important new cooperation experiences and strategies in the Southern Cone have contributed towards SSC's conceptual progress and guidelines (Aguirre Crespo, 2013). On the other hand, in the Andean region, SSC is still limited to a few experiences that focus on technical cooperation, and even fewer experiences in the social protection and employment sectors, as shown in this study.

In this context of limited SSC, the role of triangular cooperation is of paramount importance to support experiences and sharing environments among countries that do not necessarily have the available financial means to do so.

In addition, triangular cooperation can also contribute to the capacity-building of those involved and help broker SSC partnerships (Besada, 2019). This is even more evident for projects in common areas or common situations, such as border crossings, where situations of social vulnerability arise for those seeking to exercise their human right to mobility.

Therefore, triangular cooperation could serve as a bridge for SSC, facilitating resources that are generally scarce in this type of cooperation and promoting the generation of projects and strategies between the Global South countries (Steering Committee, 2010). Additionally, it can help with one of the challenges of traditional cooperation which is funding. Northern countries do not limit themselves to financing, but become more actively involved in technical processes, together with Southern countries, to transfer knowledge.⁵² Nevertheless, according to an interviewed member of the MREMH, it must follow a cooperation agenda to work on national priorities and development plans, and avoid unwanted imbalances in the cooperation projects to favour one country over

⁵² Online interview conducted with an official of APC Colombia (Annex 1).

another.⁵³ In this context, an interviewed member of the Red Ecuatoriana de Cooperación Internacional y Desarrollo (RECID, 2021)⁵⁴ also mentioned the need to focus on the action of cooperation itself, as currently there are many CSOs implementing projects funded by multilateral entities, especially in humanitarian assistance, where the support provided is not necessarily clear.

Similarly, in social protection, the lack of social protection systems in the Andean region was made clear by the need to create urgent support for populations in vulnerable situations once compulsory national lockdowns were in place. First, it was evident that social assistance programmes did not cover all the people in need. In Ecuador, for example, the available CT programmes only covered 37 percent of poor people (IMF, 2020). It should be highlighted that this issue was there from the start, not only due to restricted budgets, but also due to the conceptualization of poverty itself and targeting approaches deeply rooted in cultural frameworks (Chhachhi and Truong, 2009). Secondly, the arrival of COVID-19 evidenced the lack of social protection systems for the population in general, including people at risk of falling into poverty due to macroeconomic shocks. Therefore, while efforts to reactivate the economy are important, such as the vaccinations (Figure 1.6) that are vital for safe face-to-face activities, structural problems reflect the need to build policies to address them directly. Regarding social protection, for example, it is vital not only to expand the social assistance aid, but also to create social protection systems on this path of sustainable and inclusive responses after COVID-19.

SSC could support this process in at least two ways. First, further research and dissemination among peers regarding re-evaluation of the approach (universal versus targeted) and establishment of constant verification mechanisms that allow historically excluded populations to access the scheme. This could be an opportunity for sharing good practices, especially from actors such as CSOs, considering their historical role in promoting accountability processes for the States from a neutral party. Second, policy alternatives that are not attached to formal employment could be explored and shared. This is due to structural issues such as the high levels of informality in the studied nations, which reached 50 percent even before the pandemic; the new forms of work in emerging economies that at present do not necessarily provide access to existing employment-based social protection systems (for example digital work platforms); and the fact that employment is a macroeconomic variable affected in periods of crisis. Therefore, it is vital to have social protection systems that act in both individual adverse situations and during large macroeconomic crises. The exploration of funding sources available for this matter could also be an opportunity for SSC, since many of these countries have faced similar barriers but have financed their social assistance measures differently.

To sum up, the economic and social crisis aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic has put international cooperation mechanisms to the test, including SSC. However, based on the spirit of cooperation, equal partnership and global solidarity demonstrated by the countries of the South (UNOSSC, 2020), the principles and role of SSC are fundamental to promoting an inclusive and sustainable recovery, not only in LAC but also in the Global South. Therefore, SSC should not be seen as something that eliminates the need for traditional North-South cooperation or aid, but as an opportunity that will, among other things, help to address the reduction of cooperation and financing from the North (Steering Committee, 2010). Following on from this, the next subsection suggests some mechanisms and recommendations that can potentially enhance the role of SSC, not only in the Andean region but in other nations of the Global South as well.

⁵³ Online interview conducted with an official of RECID Ecuador (Annex 1).

⁵⁴ Online interview conducted with an official of RECID Ecuador (Annex 1).

3.3 Good practices and recommendations to promote South-South cooperation

3.3.1 Good practices to promote South-South cooperation in the Global South

Colombia has the most institutionalized SSC of the case studies. From its experience, the following good practices that can boost cooperation between countries in the Global South have been identified:

- The construction of a list of needs in 2020 from public institutions, requesting international cooperation regarding the COVID-19 emergency.

This initiative helped address resources towards sectors and problems identified from the country's needs, instead of adapting to others' agendas. In addition, the list helped external actors to identify where the Government required support and to focus their response efforts (APC Colombia, 2021a).

- *Diálogos del Sur* is a project that seeks to make policy information available to other countries in the region.

This practice helped disseminate information and identify opportunities for cooperation to respond quickly to the population's needs (APC Colombia, 2021b). It should be mentioned that this initiative was highly appreciated by an interviewed member of the MREMH of Ecuador,⁵⁵ who highlighted that it was a space to address how best to respond to COVID-19.

- The consolidation of the ENCI 2019–2022.

Within the framework of this strategy, the country sought to identify cooperation supply and demand, while mapping sectors and themes through technical roundtables (APC Colombia, 2019).

A knowledge management hub was built to exchange cooperation experiences virtually. This was not only implemented in the context of the pandemic; it is also expected that the hub will have a virtual campus to develop thematic and sectoral cooperation activities, as mentioned by an interviewed official of APC Colombia.⁵⁶

A similar idea to the hub was the SSC Toolbox, an innovative instrument in Colombia where guidelines, mechanisms and steps to be followed for the exchange of knowledge are all detailed, as well as technical formats and monitoring of cooperation projects that can be very useful for Southern countries (Nivia-Ruiz, 2020).

In the case of Ecuador, two aspects were identified that can be replicated in other Southern countries as good practices:

- The construction of a catalogue of successful experiences to share good practices for programmes, projects, services, public policies, methodologies and technological developments. Colombia also has a similar exercise in its SSC portfolio.

This initiative was implemented to attract more SSC projects. According to an interviewed member of the MREMH of Ecuador,⁵⁷ this exercise has already helped to identify new opportunities for SSC that would be implemented in 2022, where Ecuador is going to share its successful strategy in the vaccination process, as well as the implementation of the Emergency Operations Committee at the beginning of the pandemic to address the immediate response to COVID-19.

⁵⁵ Online interview conducted with an official from the MREMH of Ecuador (Annex 1).

⁵⁶ Online interview conducted with an official from APC Colombia (Annex 1).

⁵⁷ Online interview conducted with a member of the MREMH (Annex 1).

- Creation of the South-South and triangular cooperation fund

This fund finances initiatives to share successful public policy experiences of central and local government organizations, as highlighted by an interviewed member of the MREMH of Ecuador.⁵⁸ This implies that there is already a budget available for this kind of cooperation, a vital step towards its strengthening. In addition, just like the previous initiative, a similar fund in Colombia called the International Cooperation and Assistance Fund was identified. It also focuses on financing plans, projects, programmes and activities with other developing countries within the triangular and SSC framework.

Creating national and regional funds for SSC is another way to promote this type of cooperation focused on emergencies. As was seen in 2020, initiatives in the Andean region were somewhat scarce.

3.3.2 Recommendations to promote South-South cooperation in the studied countries

To promote SSC in the studied countries, the following recommendations have been identified:

- Generation of information and implementation of sound and easily updated systems is essential to strengthening SSC (Grasa, 2014). Without this, progress in professionalizing this type of cooperation is even more complicated, since it is impossible to conduct analysis or quantify the value of SSC.
- Establishing offices (research centres, CSOs and others) that compile all SSC experiences in the countries involved is vital to generating more studies oriented towards its advancement. However, one of the challenges encountered in this research was identifying SSC in ministries. Given the diversity of initiatives, it is often not registered in the foreign ministry, but in departments within the ministries themselves. Moreover, the identification of SSC becomes even more complex in the private sector and CSOs, as it is not necessarily considered official cooperation. Thus, it is excluded from national accounting efforts.
- The homologation of quantification and valuation for this type of cooperation is needed to assess SSC properly. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the fact SSC experiences focus on knowledge transfer makes it hard to quantify this type of cooperation and research its impact. This was also a challenge during the research for this report, but many interviewees mentioned the lack of a unified quantification and valuation system, highlighting the absence of a standard methodology to quantify especially technical cooperation.

Regarding the importance of this last topic, it should be pointed out that there is a consensus that valuation is necessary, but there is still no agreement on how to proceed (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021). This is driven by some actors who perceive valuation as an agenda of traditional donors or a programme inherited from “aid effectiveness” (ibid.). This implies that there is no agreement on the opportunities that valuation offers. In this regard, it should be pointed out that Colombia has developed a model named Quantification and Value Adding Model that could be further analysed⁵⁹ as an option built for and from the South.

In addition, particular recommendations to national governments, the private sector and CSOs are provided in the following subsections:

⁵⁸ Online interview conducted with an official from the MREMH of Ecuador (Annex 1).

⁵⁹ The Quantification and Value Adding Model considers direct costs (air tickets, travel expenses, insurance and logistics) and indirect costs related to experts who transfer knowledge (calculated based on the number of experts, monthly and daily salary, days of duration of the activity), as summarized by Nivia-Ruiz (2020).

3.3.2.1 National governments

- All governments should continue working on cooperation strategies that allow public entities to direct resources towards the country's priorities. Colombia built an Official List of Needs during the pandemic, which could be replicated in this country for SSC and in other nations. It is worth highlighting that these types of strategies could help improve an organization, especially in times of crisis such as during the pandemic.
- States need to build cooperation agendas and plans to promote SSC. These documents should include specific objectives and goals around SSC in the short and long run, priorities, a range of actions on different topics, the roles of state bodies, and decentralized levels of governments related to SSC. Otherwise, there is a risk of working sporadically on isolated initiatives.
- Mechanisms must be built to collect information about ongoing SSC initiatives. This is the first step towards organizing and summarizing initiatives that should later be evaluated to determine the contribution of SSC.
- It is essential to systematize cooperation initiatives that include lessons learned and challenges, to promote SSC as a key step for knowledge dissemination by stakeholders.

3.3.2.2 Private sector

- The inclusion of the private sector in the SSC strategy is needed, as has been the case in Colombia (Oviedo, 2021), and this inclusion should be in line with national planning and priorities. An example of this is the international cooperation guidelines for the private sector, published in 2016 in this country (Fundación Andi and APC Colombia, 2016), intended to guide those private organizations interested in working with cooperation agencies in the development of social projects. However, this guide's slight emphasis on SSC reveals the vast amount of work that remains to be done, not only among companies in Southern countries, but also among trade unions, federations and chambers of commerce.
- It is vital that the private sector record ongoing SSC initiatives. Trade unions, federations and chambers of commerce could play an important role in developing similar platforms to collect information on current SSC projects.
- Creating a portfolio of possible opportunities (supply and demand) related to SSC could also promote its advancement. For example, private entities have a lot of knowledge and experience in the innovation and development of technological tools, which could be shared with other Southern countries.

3.3.2.3 Civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations

- Much of SSC and triangular cooperation is implemented through CSOs and NGOs that work directly in the territories. This cooperation is not being effectively registered by States, because it is not necessarily considered official cooperation, but also due to the lack of systematization of the experiences of CSOs. Therefore, it is necessary to have spaces to register ongoing SSC initiatives, which could be developed for CSO networks to promote registration, not only at the local level but also at a supranational one. This could be the first step towards creating a portfolio that enhances SSC.

- It is essential to encourage the continuous systematization of CSO work, including the development of lessons learned and the definition of initiatives that could be shared in SSC spaces. It should be highlighted that, according to Aranguren and Camacho (2017), CSOs are catalysts and leaders in matters of governance and management of technical and financial resources. For this reason, they are actors who are called on to work in SSC to share their good practices and lead participatory regional projects.
- The academy can also contribute to the construction of a public SSC policy through the inclusion of expert researchers and knowledge networks (Aranguren and Camacho, 2017). In addition, it can contribute directly to context research and give recommendations for SSC projects to support decision-making processes.

In this chapter, opportunities and recommendations to promote SSC have been identified, but the present situation for SSC must also be considered. As Malacalza (2020) states, this cooperation is in a phase of stagnation and uncertainty. Globally, this could be the result of the crisis caused by the dispute between China and the United States of America, which makes international hegemony unstable, as well as an increase in reimbursable financial cooperation (*ibid.*). In Latin America, efforts in the previous decade to institutionally establish SSC in the region led some countries to create specialized cooperation agencies or technical offices in ministries; but later (starting in 2015) they were merged, replaced and even eliminated (CLACSO, 2019). The Unión de Naciones Suramericanas was abandoned by Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay; and despite the later creation of the Forum for the Progress and Integration of South America in 2019, the lack of presidential discourses highlighting the need for regional integration processes reflect the uncertainty of SSC (Malacalza, 2020). It may even compromise its sustainability. This situation is aggravated by the erroneous idea that SSC was part of a previous political agenda. As a result, there is a lack of consensus on whether or not to have a multilateral body to coordinate SSC efforts (Huitron, 2016; Malacalza, 2020).

In a scenario of SSC decline, new narratives and orientations for regional cooperation appear. Thus, for Malacalza (2020), the certainties of the previous decade cannot be taken for granted.⁶⁰ However, the lack of political leadership or discourse that reinforces SSC should not imply that it is left aside to implement development projects. On the contrary, this situation demands a more active role from other actors beyond the governments in power, such as the CSOs. It should be noted that CSOs participating in regional and international platforms and forums were already seeking recognition, as part of the cooperation actors in the previous decade (Dolcetti-Marcolini, 2019).

The relevance of CSO participation, especially in socio-economic issues, is vital in the current circumstances, due to the restricted public budget, limited funding for middle-income countries, and structural adjustment agreements with international entities that historically implied State withdrawal from social sectors. Thus, CSOs must overcome the challenge of “having to accept roles already assigned to them” (Dolcetti-Marcolini, 2019) and play a constant, active part in the socio-economic response. Following on from this, CSOs have an opportunity to make use of their “accumulated experiences (which) constitute part of their defense mechanisms (...) in the face of current and future transformations of hegemonic ideas of the State, cooperation and development” (*ibid.*). Therefore, in promoting an inclusive and sustainable response, there are plenty of

⁶⁰ They include incentives made possible by the economic boom, active presidential diplomacy that served as a useful political tool to accelerate decision-making and/or resolve disputes, available mechanisms and funds for regional cooperation, and an active role for Latin American countries as key agents in the development of the global architecture of the international cooperation for development.

opportunities for SSC from CSOs and even more through CSO networks, such as in the generation of evidence-based public policy proposals or creating spaces of dialogue that encourage participation in these processes. It should be highlighted that, increasingly, these are better CSO networks within and across regions (UNOSSC, 2021).

The post-COVID-19 environment requires global and regional integration. Thus, it is necessary to reaffirm the value of SSC, especially among middle-income countries, by encouraging knowledge and technology transference, as SSC has the potential to offer funding and expertise to solve self-identified needs. Finally, it should be noted that, even though structural problems in the region are not subject to national geographic borders—that would demand a superior joint approach—still SSC's role in both employment and social protection has been limited in the countries studied in the context of the pandemic.

Conclusion

COVID-19 harshly affected countries worldwide, requiring governments to take immediate action. They had to balance the need to protect people's lives and health from an unknown virus, with the need to take care of labour and income sources in the face of an imminent economic recession. In LAC, as in other regions, the decisions of the governments in office depended on their existing resources and policy instruments, and the performance of the pre-pandemic health and sanitation systems. In Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru this resulted in compulsory lockdown measures with consequences that worsened the existing structural problems.

A general overview shows that, in 2020, SSC initiatives have suffered a setback.

This study analysed the socio-economic policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Andean region, emphasizing the role of SSC and its potential to contribute to an inclusive and sustainable recovery. It focused on the key policy measures implemented in the region in the employment and social protection sectors, further analysing the experiences of Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru. The research followed a qualitative methodology, using mainly secondary sources of information. It included a systematic review of public policy documents, official statistics and budget reports, among other documents available online that allow the actions of governments to be studied, as well as the role of SSC. Primary sources complemented the findings where gaps in the information were identified. Thus, a total of 17 interviews with stakeholders from international organizations and experts in SSC are included.

Regarding social protection, it was found that the responses were focused on the generation of CTs to vulnerable populations. Their aim was to provide the necessary economic resources to cover the basic needs of vulnerable people, such as food and health supplies. They were financed with public resources, and there were no cases of non-reimbursable international cooperation or SSC, although in Bolivia technical assistance was received from the World Bank. Regarding employment, the responses varied among the countries studied. In Peru and Bolivia, the measures focused on loans, providing financing options to secure the payment chain, considering that the economy is interconnected and anticipating short-term issues that could threaten production and employment continuity. In Colombia, the policy offered a subsidy to pay payrolls so that current stable employment levels could be maintained. In Ecuador, the measure allowed more flexible recruitment and a reduction in layoff costs for enterprises. As with social protection, there were no cases of SSC.

A general overview shows that, in 2020, SSC initiatives have suffered a setback. This could be attributed to the difficulties that each country had to face to cushion the effects of the pandemic in its territory. However, factors such as a shift in the political agenda in the region, lack of presidential discourses promoting SSC, and no consensus about a regional entity that works in this regard could have also influenced the reduced cooperation.

Nevertheless, the rapid speed at which COVID-19 travelled worldwide was powerful evidence of global interconnection and interdependence, and highlighted the

unresolved problems that transcend national boundaries. This demands a joint response to persistent common challenges, and SSC has significant potential to contribute to the path of sustainable and inclusive development. The basis for this is an epistemological perspective, considering that knowledge production significantly depends on the political position and the region in which someone is located. Therefore, research and knowledge transfers are vital to solving similar problems, as well as to building relevant and context-specific solutions. In this framework, the processes of knowledge production from the Global South and its dissemination among peers transcend national boundaries, and thus SSC should be seen not only as a means but also as an end in itself.

Thus, the current uncertainty over the future of SSC should not imply an abandonment of these processes. The lack of political leadership or discourse reinforces SSC demands for a more active role from other actors beyond the governments in power, such as civil society. This is even more relevant in the current circumstances, due to the restricted public budget, limited funding for middle-income countries and structural adjustment agreements with international entities that historically implied the State's withdrawal in social sectors.

Following on from this, regardless of who takes the lead in the advancement of SSC and the thematic areas that are prioritized, certain long-term reflections must be considered:

- Generation of information and implementation of sound and easily updated systems is essential to strengthening SSC. Without this, progress in professionalizing this type of cooperation is made even more complicated, since it is impossible to conduct analyses or quantify SSC's value.
- Establishing offices that compile all SSC experiences in the relevant countries is vital to generate more studies oriented towards its advancement. However, one of the challenges encountered in this research was identifying SSC responsibility in ministries, because, given its diversity, it is often not registered in the foreign ministry but in smaller departments within the ministries themselves. Moreover, the identification of SSC becomes even harder in the private sector, as it is not necessarily considered official cooperation and thus it is excluded from national accounting efforts.
- The homologation of quantification and valuation of this type of cooperation is necessary to assess SSC properly. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that, since SSC experiences focus on knowledge transfer, it is very difficult to quantify and study its impact. This was a challenge for the researchers, but many interviewees also mentioned the lack of a unified quantification and valuation system, highlighting the lack of a standard methodology to quantify technical cooperation especially.

Finally, in this study, further recommendations and good practices were identified to promote SSC, highlighting opportunities in the social protection and employment sectors.

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Annex 1. List of online interviews

No	Date	Area of expertise	Organization	Place of work	Responsible
1	03.12.2021	Employment	Official of the Ministry of Labor	Ecuador	FARO
2	08.12.2021	International cooperation	Official of the RECID	Ecuador	FARO
3	21.12.2021	International cooperation	Official of the MREMH of Ecuador	Ecuador	FARO
4	08.12.2021	Employment	Member of the Centro de Estudios de Política Laboral	Ecuador	FARO
5	07.12.2021	LAC Cooperation	Official of APC Colombia	Colombia	FARO
6	06.03.2021	SSC in LAC	Professor and researcher at the National Open and Distance University of Colombia	Colombia	FARO
7	08.12.2021	International and SSC	Professor and research expert at Comillas Pontifical University	Spain	FARO
8	10.11.2021	International labour standards	ILO officer for the Andean Countries	Andean region	FARO
9	17.08.2021	Social protection	World Bank official for Bolivia and Peru	Bolivia	Fundación ARU
10	18.10.2021	International relations and cooperation	Official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Bolivia	Fundación ARU
11	17.09.2021	External financing and public investment	Official of the Ministry of Public Investment and External Financing	Bolivia	Fundación ARU
12	27.10.2021	International cooperation	Former officer of the Swiss Development Cooperation	Bolivia	Fundación ARU
13	24.11.2021	External financing and public investment	Official of the Ministry of Public Investment and External Financing	Bolivia	Fundación ARU
14	26.11.2021	Measurement of development projects	Responsible for measurement, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects	Bolivia	Fundación ARU
15	16.03.2022	International negotiation	Official of APCI Peru	Peru	Fundación ARU
16	16.03.2022	SSC	Official of APCI Peru	Peru	Fundación ARU
17	22.06.2022	Researcher	Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE) Peru officer	Peru	Fundación ARU



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