

Training Program in Mental Health and Resilience

INTRODUCTION:

In Ecuador there is an unmet need to support frontline COVID health workers with their mental health, as they have long been exposed to stress and anxiety caused by caring for patients during the pandemic, for that reason, this project is a valuable contribution for health professionals in Ecuador.

Objective

Implement a mental health and resilience training program that will provide healthcare workers on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19 in Ecuador, with the knowledge, tools, and techniques to support and maintain their well-being and resilience so they can continue the fight.

Project Description

On August 31st 2021, the agreement between Project HOPE and the Catholic University of Cuenca was signed with the aim of implementing the Mental Health and Resilience project, based on the NY Heroes model.

University professors received previous training in the model and also attended sessions with Project Hope staff in the Dominican Republic to learn about their experience in the TOT sessions that had already been implemented. Subsequently, the psychology professors of the University contextualized the material of NY Heroes. The Project HOPE representative in Ecuador, Ramiro Proaño obtained the support of the Ministry of Health to implement this project in 23 provinces, for this 14 psychology professors were trained as master trainers, to have 2,000 participants between TOT cascade sessions. The project ended in March 2023 with the following results:

Indicators

Indicator	Target	Achieved	Progress Status
Number of participating hospitals	14 hospitals nationwide	118 hospitals nationwide	843%
Number of people trained in the Cascade Sessions	980 people nationwide	1,505 people nationwide (Cascade Sessions)	100%

Number of trainers trained	140 trainers (10 for each hospital)	477 trainers (10 for each hospital)	341%
Professors from the Catholic University of Cuenca, trained as Master Trainers.	14 professors from the Catholic University of Cuenca trained	14 professors of the Clinical Psychology Career of the Catholic University of Cuenca	100%

Professions of trained health personnel

PROFESSION	%
Administrative Staff (44)	3%
Dentist (147)	10%
Pharmacist (47)	3%
Nurses (383)	25%
Doctor (660)	44%
Psychologist (50)	3%
Primary Care Technical (174)	12%
TOTAL (1,505)	100%

Recommendations and next steps

Do not extend the time between the TOT and waterfall sessions, this causes the continuity of information and feedback on the progress of the project to be lost.

Waterfall sessions should be done after business hours, to increase concentration and reduce dropouts as there were 1,505 participants who attended two and three sessions, but also more than 1,000 attendees who only attended one session.

The next step that the University will take is to incorporate the Resilience and Mental Health training material into the Community Promoters project.





TRAINING OF HEALTH PROMOTERS WITH EMPHASIS ON COVID

Introduction

The world has never faced a crisis like COVID-19. The pandemic is affecting health around the world. It has never been more urgent to support the global response, led by the World Health Organization (WHO).

In order to strengthen primary health care actions with the participation of communities, the Universidad Catolica de Cuenca, with the support of the Project HOPE, developed the project “Training Community Health Promoters with an Emphasis on COVID-19”, in the provinces of Azuay, Cañar and Morona Santiago.

Project Description

This second cohort was carried out because of the visit of the Project HOPE commission and the director of the Americas, Andrea Dunne-Sosa in December 2021. Project HOPE expressed its desire to support a new cohort of Community Promoters, thus giving a new fund for the implementation of the project to the Universidad Católica de Cuenca. In this way, a new budget planning is established besides it is presented new objectives in relation to the previous project and incorporates the Tele-ECHO clinic as a core objective.

Outcomes

- The Health Promoters with Emphasis on COVID curriculum was updated and uploaded to the University's EVEA platform, including the translation to Kichua and Shuar. In addition, it included Mental Health content as a new training module.
 - Professors and students of the University elaborated communicational products.
 - The training process ended with 337 certified promoters who graduated.
 - Replications of training were achieved with the direct participation of the community promoters in each of their rural locations. As a result, they exceeded 1200 community leaders.
 - Tele ECHO clinic was implemented with six sessions with 636 participants in total.
 - Universidad Catolica manufactures biosafety kits in its laboratories, which will be delivered to each community by each promoter. The kits contain soap, and antiseptic
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gel, which has been elaborated by students and professors of the Bio pharmacy faculty.

Indicators

Indicator	Target	Actual	Progress Status
A COVID 19 curriculum approved by the Ministry of Public Health.	1	1	100%
Community promoters trained.	337	337	135%
Community leaders with information on COVID 19.	1000	1200	120%

Conclusions

The Community Health Workers with Emphasis on COVID-19 Program implemented this year was updated with new tendencies of COVID-19, such as the importance of Vaccination and the Mental Health content, which was a whole unit to address themes such as psychological first aid.

The training was challenged by the strikes with the Indigenous movement that took the whole country, the strikes affected the number of participants in the synchronic sessions. However, the University asked for an extension of the program to Project HOPE. Thereby, the program ended with 337 certified promoters graduating. The participants were from 13 provinces of Ecuador. Thus to 1624 people, the theme of COVID-19 was replicated. Besides, six sessions of the tele-ECHO clinic were implemented with 636 participants in total.





