

# Detect, Prevent, Respond, Recover *Digitally*



Effective use of digital tools to interact with the population about Public Health Emergencies in Latin America and the Caribbean



## What are digital tools for population interaction?

Digital tools for population interaction are a set of tools and tactics to communicate with different audiences of a population quickly and effectively about what measures each citizen

should take to detect, prevent, respond and/or recover from the effects of public health emergencies.



## Why are these tools important for the public health emergencies?

While governments are making remarkable efforts to respond quickly to the communication and information needs of different audiences, a need to integrate such efforts is still needed. Coordination of communication actions using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) between and within countries can help to reduce false information, support the decentralization of information,

and allow citizens to provide and receive information. An integrated **Digital Mass Communication** strategy provides a space for coordination between the many government policies and entities involved in crisis response, preventing significant loss of life and resources and generating effective communication with citizens by fostering support and collaboration in the measures needed to combat the crisis.

Having a strategy for using digital tools to interact with the population allows for efficient and effective administration, use and acquisition of the digital and tactical toolset to be able to respond to the population in public health emergencies effectively

### THESE TOOLS CAN HELP IN 4 KEY AREAS:

- **DETECT:** Mass and rapid collection of population data regarding symptoms and/or movements to support locating and containing outbreaks of infection in a territory.
- **PREVENT:** Share official information on prevention measures to the population and provide official data and figures.
- **RESPOND:** Use data to act, for example, follow up on cases with symptoms automatically or generate alerts to the population or health system based on citizens' reports.
- **RECOVER:** Continue to share information on prevention measures to the population, such as transitioning to the next stage of the pandemic, and providing official information and figures to the population.

## What are some examples?

Mobile apps have been or are being used around the world to help citizens have official information and/or pre-diagnose COVID-19.

While the citizen receives information on how to act after diagnosis, agencies collect data to locate spillovers and follow up on the most severe cases and instruct people with symptoms. Some countries have incorporated other technologies, such as telemedicine

and call centers, to support these processes. Others are exploring how to combine digital tools with behavioral economics to improve the effectiveness of these messages. These same tools can be adjusted to provide key information throughout the phases of the pandemic, for example, provide key information to the population as they return to work.

### Examples for Detect & Prevent:



WHO



COSTA RICA



MEXICO CITY



PANAMA

There are various types of tools collect information, some examples include:

- Mobile app
- Chatbot
- Calling system
- Web form
- 2-way communication SMS/Instant Messaging System
- Mass communication with SMS

## What elements are needed to get started?

### COORDINATION TEAM:

Interdisciplinary team composed of the following profiles is necessary at minimum:

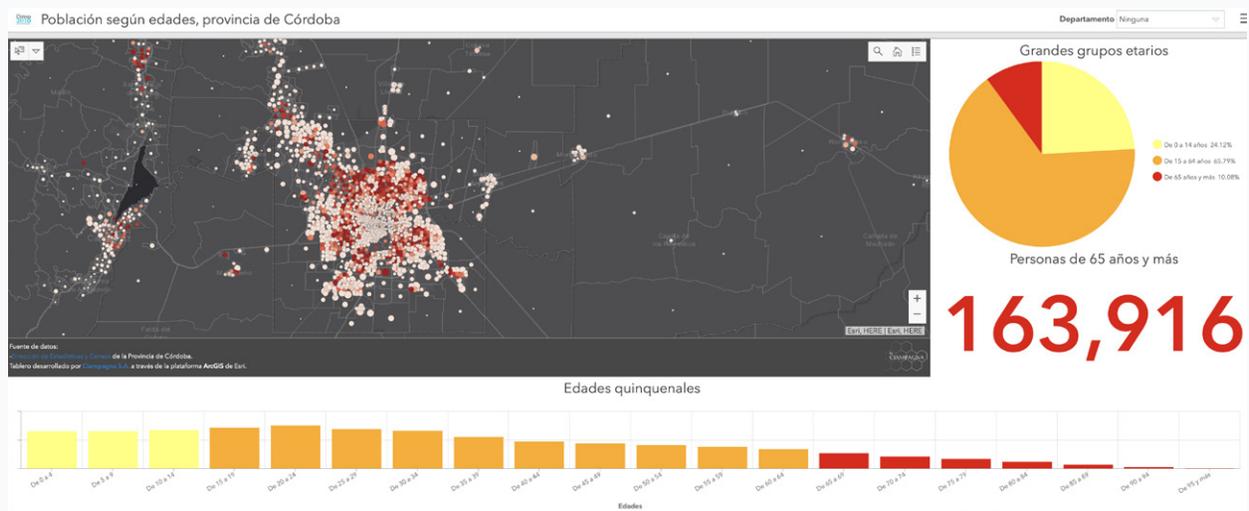
- **COMMUNICATIONS**
- **TECHNOLOGISTS**
- **HEALTH**
- **LEGAL AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

This team will need to work with public and private partners like Telecommunication agencies to support implementation.

### PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY:

- **DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY:** Strategy that describes how the government will harness digital tools for the emergency COVID-19 and how these tools fit together.
- **COMMUNICATION PLAN:** A communication plan that takes a closer look at the objective, audiences, channels, and conversion funnels for each audience of the digital tool.
- **BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM:** Infrastructure for storing data from these tools and powering a Business Intelligence system to make it easier to use data for decision-making to improve them.

## Example of a Business Intelligence System



**Source:** [ArcGIS](#). Here we can see the geographic distribution of the population by age. You can make visualizations of locations of calls about COVID-19, where people are interacting with digital tools and where they are not, and much more to support decision-making. Make sure your data are anonymous and protect privacy and confidentiality.

## What considerations are important to contemplate when getting started?

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Be clear about the problem you want to solve with the tool and the information you need to take action.
- Ensure governance mechanisms for the management and use of information during and after the crisis – this applies to both ministries and product or service providers.
- Use of standards for data collection to facilitate data exchange and use for decision-making.
- Confirm that service contracts for tools stipulate modifications, maintenance and support of technological tools.

### COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Establish and use 'official'<sup>1</sup> communication channels that reach all parts of the population.
- Ensure that messages are clear, well thought out, and support the designed behavior change. Think through un-intended

consequences and work with experts in communication for behavior change.

### PRIVACY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The nature of the data being processed is highly sensitive. It is the responsibility of all actors to restrict access to them and make proper use of them.
- Consider national data protection laws together with the emergency nature of each country. As an example, see [European Data Protection Board statement regarding processing of personal data in COVID-19 Context](#).

1. An official information channel is easily identified by the citizen as coming from the country's official source, with the intention of preventing the spread of fake news or scams.

# What should I monitor to see if the tool is effective in my context?

- % of the population reached by the different channels of communication, disaggregated by age, sex, and geographical area.
- % registered people providing data.
- % user satisfaction of platform.
- Decisions made based on information from the platform.

## Where can I learn more?

- [WHO COVID-19](#)
- [PAHO IS4H](#)
- [IDB +Digital](#)
- [Kopernick Impact Tracker, Mobile Data Tools](#)
- [WHO Behavioral Insights group](#)
- [PAHO Behavioral Insights group](#)
- [Behavioral Insight Team \(BIT\)](#)
- [ideas42](#)

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The authors would like to thank the PAHO/WHO Department of Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health (EIH), Office of the Assistant Director: Sebastian Garcia Saiso, EIH Department Director; Marcelo D'Agostino and Myrna Marti, EIH Digital Health Advisors for their valuable inputs and comments to this document.

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