

# Global Health Day

## **Intercultural Health Reform in Ecuador: Exploring Effectiveness in Addressing Sexual & Reproductive Inequities**

**Laura Hurley**

By the numbers, Ecuador boasts a rich multicultural population. Yet for many years, social, economic and health inequities contributed to poor sexual and reproductive outcomes among rural and indigenous populations. Historically, these populations have experienced disproportionate maternal mortality rates, lack of access to traditional birth attendants due in part to discrimination, high unwanted pregnancy rates and inconsistent contraception access. In 2008, Ecuador underwent significant revision of its constitution to officially include intercultural health as a pillar within the health system, and outline access to health care as a right for all individuals.

Despite the transformation, it is unclear to what degree policy has translated to practice and influenced outcomes over the past twelve years. This paper explores sexual and reproductive health outcomes for Ecuadorian women, with particular emphasis on rural and indigenous women, since the establishment of the 2008 constitution. Recommendations for targeted interventions are provided, in order to best support complete integration of modern policy for culturally appropriate practices and equitable outcomes.

*This research was presented as part of Northwestern University Institute for Global Health's Annual Global Health Day on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.*