

### 3. Experiences and lessons learned in the 2020 Census

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Mexico was one of the few UNECE countries (8 out of 53 countries that provided information) that managed to complete its census during 2020, and one of the first to publish results. Thanks to this, we now have updated sociodemographic figures which facilitate the allocation of federal budgets, election planning, and the identification of the population vulnerable to the pandemic, which will be useful for the design of ad hoc public policies, such as vaccination. Hence the importance of having the information promptly, to which both historical statistical information and the use of technology contributed.

Among the lessons learned from our 2020 Census is that, to implement a statistical project of this magnitude, decisions must be made based on statistical and historical evidence. In Mexico we took into account the behaviour of past pandemics, such as the 1918 flu pandemic (H1N1) and the SARS-CoV-1 of 2003; we analyzed their dynamics and impact and timing, not only on the population and on excess mortality, but also on the financing of government programmes, such as statistical surveys. This allowed us to make better-supported decisions, which prompted us to continue with the collection of information in the initial stage of the pandemic while seeking to minimize all risks.

Another lesson learned was the importance of planning the census project. Due to the technification of our census, a large part of our work was devoted to the planning, design, and technological development phase, before the survey stage, which subsequently facilitated fieldwork, even during the pandemic. It is worth mentioning the need for robust risk management in census programmes that considers not only the usual or obvious risks but also those that are unlikely, such as a pandemic or political-civil conflicts. By doing so, we were able to take a clear stance on the crisis and have a predefined course of action.