

## Additional file 1: Observation guide

### Mental health and social inequality in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic – a qualitative study among adolescents living in Bogotá, Colombia

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This guide was designed to support the direct observation sessions conducted in schools and neighbourhoods. It includes the instructions for the researcher to record field notes related to adolescents' mental health, evidence of social inequality and challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Observation guide:

The researcher must always keep the field diary readily available, ensuring that all observation activities are recorded in a timely and appropriate manner.

Notes should be kept in an organised manner, and their construction should consider the characteristics of the records in Table A.

Table A: Characteristics of the field notes

| Characteristic                        | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Description of the observed situation | This involves providing an objective account of the context in which the action takes place. It includes brief notes on the relationships and situations of the individuals within the observed setting and everyday life. Speech or conversations may be included, but no personal data should be recorded.                                                                                         |
| Impressions                           | These refer to the subjective record of the observations and are important because they help the researcher evaluate and make sense of what is being observed. They include introspective comments about what the researcher sees and experiences, as well as what these experiences mean to them. Therefore, impressions should be recorded for all observations.                                   |
| Preliminary reflections               | These refer to the interpretations that allow the researcher to examine the elements recorded in the two previous sections. They help to explain what has been observed and to highlight why the observations were relevant to the research. In this section, the researcher should begin analysing the elements emerging from the description, potentially using preliminary analytical categories. |
| Theoretical notes                     | These involve relating the described situations and interactions to relevant theoretical frameworks for further analysis. This section initiates a theoretical argument aimed at understanding how the observed elements function within the research problem or object of study.                                                                                                                    |