



## Reading & Summary

### Paraguay's El Surti Shows How Hot Weather Hurts Delivery Drivers

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El Surti, a news group in Paraguay, has been reporting on climate change for a few years. They've written about the COP28 climate meeting, looked into the increase in gas stations in Asunción, and recently studied how rising temperatures affect workers.

Their report, called "Work at risk in the face of heat that is not normal," is about an experiment with delivery workers in Asunción, Paraguay. The experiment showed the dangers they face because of hotter temperatures caused by climate change. The report came out in November after eight months of research.

In 2022, Paraguay had a very hot summer with temperatures over 106.7 °F in the shade. The report says that in the last 40 years, heat waves in Paraguay have become three times more common. There's proof that this is linked to climate change.

Jazmín Acuña, who is in charge of the project, told LatAm Journalism Review (LJR) that they want to show who is responsible for the climate crisis, point out false information, and find possible solutions. They also try to make sure their stories are interesting to their audience by choosing the right formats and focusing on the right angles.

Acuña said they decided to focus on motorcycle delivery drivers because they are a new type of worker in Paraguay. Many of them are young and live in the city, just like the people who read El Surti. Also, many readers use delivery services or work as delivery drivers.

The El Surti team also realized that there had been a lot of coverage about how heat affects jobs like construction and farming. However, there wasn't much information about how high temperatures affect new jobs like delivery driving.

El Surti worked with delivery workers in Asunción to show the risks they face from rising temperatures.

El Surti worked with América Futura from El País and the Pulitzer Center on this project. Both groups have been helping to fund news investigations in Latin America.

Christine Spolar, an editor at the Pulitzer Center, helped the El Surti team contact Andreas Flouris, a scientist who is an expert in studying heat and labor. Flouris helped them design the scientific experiment.

Flouris told LJR that it was great working with Jazmín Acuña. He said that journalists know what is important to address because they are in touch with society.

The experiment involved five delivery drivers who volunteered for seven days in February and March 2023. These months were right after a very hot December in Paraguay. The drivers wore monitors on their bodies to record their core body temperature.

Acuña said that they also collected data on the delivery people's heart rates and the weather conditions. They put all the information into a database for later analysis. The monitors showed that the delivery drivers' core temperatures increased at times. One delivery woman's temperature rose

so high that she had mild hyperthermia, which means her body lost the ability to cool itself down.

The investigation also involved looking at data from Paraguay's Weather Service to calculate the wet bulb temperature index. This index measures how dangerous it is to be exposed to heat.

They also collected data on temperature, humidity, wind speed, and radiation on the same days that they monitored the delivery workers.

Acuña said that they used a calculator from the Heat-Health Organization to find out that the delivery drivers were exposed to high and extreme health risks due to heat. For example, the day the delivery girl suffered mild hyperthermia, she was exposed to these risk levels. Dr. Flouris also said that the radiation levels were very high. With these levels of radiation and high temperatures, the delivery drivers feel like they have a hair dryer turned on their face for hours.

El Surti has been reporting on climate change for a few years.

The report also included:

- A review of scientific studies
- Requests for public information
- Interviews with delivery workers and experts
- A list of laws and other actions in the region related to heat protection in the workplace

The El Surti team said that the most difficult part of the investigation was conducting the experiment.

They had to gain the trust of the delivery workers by working with the union. They also had to deal with weather conditions like rain and the delivery drivers' availability.

Romina Cáceres, a reporter for El Surti, told LJR that it was hard to find times and places that worked for the delivery drivers because they are always on the street and don't have set schedules. They got 13 delivery drivers to answer a long survey, 10 to give in-depth interviews, and five to participate in the experiment.

The journalists said that Flouris recommended that they repeat the experiment to get more data and draw better conclusions.


Flouris told LJR that workplace heat stress is a very important issue. Millions of people around the world are exposed to heat stress at work every year, and many of them experience heat-related problems that are not reported. He said that it's encouraging that the media is starting to pay attention to this issue, but more needs to be done to protect workers.

The report has been well received in Paraguay. The journalists presented their findings to representatives from the Ministries of Labor and Health, delivery drivers, legislators, and members of their audience, such as doctors and urban planners. This was to discuss concerns and encourage action.

Cáceres said that they received comments from workers in different fields about how heat affects them at work. Other news outlets also started talking about thermal stress. For the first time, the Ministry of Labor published recommendations for employers and employees on how to deal with extreme heat, reminding them that there are regulations in place.

Christine Spolar worked as a climate editor for the Pulitzer Center.

## Instructions:

 examples

Write a caption for the "Instagram-style" post from the point of view of one specific person or group from the article.

Be sure to include some vocabulary terms in a way that shows you understand their meaning.

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