

TC ABSTRACT
TEACHERS CLOSING GAPS

I. BASIC PROJECT DATA

▪ Country:	Ecuador
▪ TC Name:	Teachers Closing Gaps
▪ TC Number:	EC-T1281
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Yyannú Cruz Aguayo (SCL/EDU), team leader; Norbert Schady (SCL/SCL), co-team leader; Julien Hautier (EDU/CEC); Maria Teresa Soto-Aguilar (VPC/FMP); Claudia Cox (SCL/EDU)
▪ Indicate if: Operational Support, Client Support, or Research & Dissemination.	Client Support
▪ Reference to request:	IDBDOCS# 37912502
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	July 18, 2013
▪ Beneficiary:	Ecuador
▪ Executing agency and contact name:	Bank-executed (contact name: Yyannú Cruz Aguayo)
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$400,000
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$0
▪ Disbursement and execution period:	Disbursement: 30 months - Execution: 24 months
▪ Required start date:	September 1, 2013
▪ Types of consultants:	Firm and individual consultants
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/EDU
▪ Included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ GCI-9 Sector Priority:	Social Policy for Equity and Productivity

II. OBJECTIVE AND JUSTIFICATION

- 2.1 This Technical Cooperation (TC) is motivated by two salient features of education outcomes in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). First, in Latin America, differences in cognitive development between children from poor and less poor households emerge early. In Ecuador, by the time they are five years of age, the poorest children are on average 1 ½ years behind their better-off counterparts in terms of their cognitive development. The second salient feature of education systems in LAC is the fact that students from the region perform dismally on international tests compared to students from other countries with similar income levels; less than 5 percent of children in LAC reach the score of the average student in the East Asian tigers on the PISA international tests.
- 2.2 The general objective of the TC is to identify the characteristics of teachers that allow young, disadvantaged children, who enter school with profound deficits in cognitive development, to close these skills gaps. Thus, the TC is aligned with the Bank’s GCI-9 priority of “Social policy for equity and productivity,” in the strategic area of “raising the quality and equity of education.” The goal of this TC is also strongly

linked to specific goals mentioned in the Country Strategy for Ecuador 2012-2017, which identifies Social Development as one out of the main areas for Bank Intervention.

- 2.3 The specific objective of this TC is to continue a project (funded for a first year by EC-T1236) that evaluates different dimensions of teacher quality “Closing Gaps.” Among other aspects, the TC evaluates the impact of a central dimension of teacher quality – the interactions between teachers and students – by assessing the learning outcomes of a cohort of children starting first grade in Ecuador. For this purpose, it uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), an instrument that evaluates teachers on three dimensions: social-emotional support, classroom management, and instructional support. In the US, better performance on the CLASS is associated with higher learning of students.
- 2.4 In 2012, through an agreement and with the support of the Ministry of Education, 15,000 children entering kindergarten, in 204 schools, were randomly assigned to their teachers. At the beginning of the school year 2012-2013, an assessment of each child’s baseline level of development was performed; each class was later filmed, and the resulting videos were coded using the CLASS. At the end of the school year, a set of 13 tests (math, literacy and executive function) was conducted and collected. Household surveys for each child were also collected. The analysis of this information will allow to answer the following questions: i) Are there any “teacher effects” that explain the closure, or partial closure, of learning gaps for the poorest children?; ii) What makes a teacher better or worse than another? Can the observational instrument used in the study, which has been found promising in the US, identify who are the best teachers in Ecuador?; and iii) How does teaching quality (“teacher effects”) interact with the home environment?
- 2.5 It was critical that the study was extended for at least four reasons. First, only one year of exposure to a good or bad teacher might not be enough to fully identify her/his impact on learning outcomes—especially given the difficulty of measuring learning outcomes for very young students. Second, with the extension to a second school year, it will be possible to identify the impact on learning outcomes of different combinations of teacher quality. Third, the experimental design of the project will allow us testing other instruments to evaluate teacher quality. Finally, a fundamental consideration with important policy implications is to understand if teacher quality could vary from year to year; that is, for example, whether “good” teachers in one year are also “good” in the next year.
- 2.6 TC resources were approved early this year (EC-T1275) to fund activities related to the first three reasons listed above. This TC would fund the extension of the work underway for an additional year in terms of the last reason: to gather information that would allow to study the stability or instability of teacher effects from one academic year to another.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

- 3.1 This TC will have one component: **Measuring child development and learning.** The main objective of this component is to measure the learning outcomes of children

at the end of kindergarten in this academic year. The set of tests used to measure learning/development outcomes of the study’s original cohort will be applied to a new cohort of kindergarten students. It is estimated that the sample will include approximately 15,000 children; these children are the new students of the original sample of kindergarten teachers in the study. At the beginning of the school year 2013-2014 (May 2013), these children were randomly assigned to their teachers as they began kindergarten. In order to verify the compliance of this assignment, each school has already been visited weekly during the first five weeks of the school year. Whenever there was any non-compliance with the random assignment, the minister intervened to ensure all the necessary corrections were made. Additional visits to verify the compliance of the assignment, during what is left of the school year, are covered with funds from EC-T1275.

IV. BUDGET

Table IV-1: Indicative Budget in US\$

Component/Activity	Description	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Measuring child development and learning	Application of learning outcome tests	400,000		400,000

V. EXECUTING AGENCY AND EXECUTION STRUCTURE

- 5.1 This TC will be Bank-executed. The Bank executed the TC that corresponds to the first year of this project (EC-T1236), and is currently executing the TC that supports the extension of the study (EC-T1275). The Bank has also been developing various activities related to a longitudinal study on child development. The Bank has thus developed a competitive advantage in this area.
- 5.2 The Bank will procure the goods, services and consulting services required by the Project in accordance with Bank policies contained in documents GN-2349-9 and GN-2350-9, respectively.

VI. PROJECT RISKS AND ISSUES

- 6.1 Implementation risks are considered low. We identified two risks. First, there is a risk that the completion of the fieldwork may become delayed. In this particular study, there is limited space for delays given that the data collection activities must finish at the end of the school year. Secondly, there is a risk that a few school principals/teachers/parents might not comply immediately with the random assignment. In those cases, the Ministry of Education has committed to mediate and correct any deviations from the assignment.

VII. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION

- 7.1 The ESG classification for this TC is “C”. There will be no potential negative environmental and/or social impacts associated to this TC.