

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	ECUADOR/CAN - Andean Group
▪ TC Name:	Sustainability of the IDB financed longitudinal randomized control trial “Closing Gaps”
▪ TC Number:	EC-T1582
▪ Team Leader/Members:	CRUZ AGUAYO, YYANNU (SCL/LMK) Team Leader; PEREZ VINCENT, SANTIAGO (IFD/ICS) Alternate Team Leader; HERNANDEZ MONTENEGRO DANIEL ALBERTO (SCL/LMK); KAPLAN, DAVID SCOTT (SCL/LMK); OLIVERI, MARIA LAURA (SCL/LMK); ARAUJO, MARIA CARIDAD (SCL/GDI); ELACQUA, GREGORY MICHAEL (SCL/EDU); CASTRO DE SOUZA MAROTTA, LUANA (SCL/EDU); VAN DER WERF CUADROS, CYNTHIA (SCL/MIG); ZANONI LOPEZ, WLADIMIR (CAN/CEC); LAGOS, FRANCISCO (SCL/GDI); ARGUETA JOYA NANCY ELIZABETH (SCL/LMK); GONZALEZ HERRERA, BEATRIZ MARIA (SCL/LMK); FERRIN GASTON (SCL/LMK); RIVERA HERRERA SERGIO ANDRES (SCL/LMK); CENTENO LAPPAS, MONICA CLARA ANGELICA (LEG/SGO)
▪ Taxonomy:	Research and Dissemination
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	13 September 2024
▪ Beneficiary:	Ecuador
▪ Executing Agency:	INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$300,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	US\$0.00
▪ Disbursement period:	36 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/LMK - Labor Markets
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/LMK - Labor Markets
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	Yes
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2024-2030:	Social inclusion and equality

II. Objective and Justification

2.1 Objective 1. To establish a systematic process to regularly update the contact information of the participants and their parents/guardians. One important challenge in longitudinal studies is participant retention, critical for minimizing biases and maintaining statistical power. According to the literature, effective retention strategies include maintaining regular and positive relationships with participants, consistent contact, incentives, and employing user-friendly data collection. This proposal aims to design, test, and establish a cost-effective process to maintain active contact with the participants, so that variables of interest, free of attrition bias, can be collected for the foreseeable future.

Objective 2. To collect new data on the following broad topics: labor market participation, education attainment, exposure/participation in crime, risky behaviors, national/international migration, domestic violence, and teen pregnancy. Under this objective, we also aim to cross information with administrative records, for instance, labor market and social security contribution data, medical records, crime records, and

national standardized tests, among others. The data collection modality and instruments to obtain new information will be determined by the specific kind of data that will be collected, and the social environmental factors in the country, such as the safety of accessing the participants' communities. Most of the currently available data have been collected in person through enumerators, nevertheless, we have also been successful collecting information via phone calls. Additionally, we will consider using other tools, such as virtual questionnaires. The access to administrative data from national entities in Ecuador will follow a memorandum of understanding (MoU). In 2021, an MoU agreement was signed between the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) and the Country Office of Ecuador. This agreement facilitates access to the integrated administrative data held by INEC.

Objective 3. To answer two critical questions about the impact of classroom quality on medium- and long-term outcomes. Under this proposal, we aim to understand: What is the effect of classroom quality on initial labor market conditions such as first job or initial wage? and, what is the effect of higher classroom quality on future crime exposure and involvement?

- 2.2 The Bank's project "Closing Gaps" (CG) is a unique longitudinal randomized control trial that randomly assigned children in public schools in Ecuador to their elementary classrooms for seven consecutive years, starting in their first year of formal education (kindergarten), and ending in 6th grade (the last year of the basic education cycle). The project has collected data on a total of approximately 28,000 participants, covering areas such as math and language achievement, executive function, behavioral issues, socio-demographics, and non-cognitive variables, among others. Moreover, the project has collected information on teachers (education and experience, in-classroom behaviors, IQ, personality traits, and socioeconomic variables), principals, and parents/guardians (including socioeconomic variables, expectations for the future, mental health variables, among others). To date, CG has been funded by a series of Technical Cooperations (TCs) and Economic and Social Work (ESWs), which have allowed the Bank to yearly collect information of the project participants from 2011 and until 2024.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component I: 1. System to ensure access to current contact information.** Design, test, and establish a cost-effective process to maintain current contact information of the participants of the project. The system will be designed and tested to ensure high effectiveness and compliance with best practices.
- 3.2 **Component II: 2. Data collection.** Collect data on labor force participation, participation in violent or criminal activities, risky behaviors (alcohol and drug use), educational attainment and standardized test scores, exposure to international/national migration, and health variables (specifically mental health, teen pregnancies). This component will also finance the merging of pertinent administrative records, such as social security contribution data, medical records, crime records, and standard national evaluations.
- 3.3 **Component III: 3. Data analysis and research.** Conduct data analysis and research focusing on areas including youth labor markets (first job, wage trends), and the impact of classroom and teacher quality, and other correlates, on involvement in criminal activities and gangs.

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Total Funding
1. System to ensure access to current contact information.	US\$150,000.00	US\$150,000.00
2. Data collection	US\$90,000.00	US\$90,000.00
3. Data analysis and research	US\$60,000.00	US\$60,000.00
Total	US\$300,000.00	US\$300,000.00

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 This TC will be Bank executed through the Labor Markets and Social Security Division in the Social Sector Department (SCL/LMK), in coordination with the Country Economist in Ecuador, IFD/ICS, SCL/EDU, SCL/GDI, and SCL/MIG.
- 5.2 This execution is justified given that: (i) The activities programmed for this TC need to be carried out in strict adherence with the existing methodology employed throughout the past 13 years of the project, in which the Bank has been the executing agency, using the same executing structure; (ii) administrative burdens will be reduced, particularly in the identification and contracting of international experts; and (iii) the Bank has proven having the necessary technical, operational, and institutional capacity to duly and timely execute the activities proposed under this TC.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 Specific implementation risks are considered low/medium for this TC. We identified the following common risks: (I) Some of the information to be collected may be considered sensitive, including contact information, and in turn the participants and/or parents/guardians might feel uneasy answering. To mitigate this risk, the contents of the survey will be piloted, adjusted, and presented to the participants along with the proper disclaimers on data confidentiality, and clearly communicating the benefits of participating in the project. (II) Potential delays in data collection, due to unforeseen events unrelated to the project (such as social unrest, natural disasters, etc.). The mitigation strategy is to establish a calendar of activities that takes into consideration potential delays, and to systematically review such calendar so that any adjustments are performed appropriately.

VII. Environmental and Social Aspects

- 7.1 This TC does not have applicable requirements of the Bank's Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF).