

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	BRAZIL/CSC - Southern Cone
▪ TC Name:	Using Behavioral Economics to Engage Parents and Improve Student Outcomes in Rio de Janeiro
▪ TC Number:	BR-T1384
▪ Team Leader/Members:	NASLUND-HADLEY, EMMA INGRID (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; ELACQUA, GREGORY MICHAEL (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; CONTRERAS GOMEZ, RAFAEL EDUARDO (SCL/EDU); CALDAS DE ANDRADE, FRANCISCO ANTONIO (IFD/ICS); BERGAMASCHI, ANDREA (SCL/EDU); SCANNONE CHAVEZ, RODOLFO ANDRES (SCL/EDU); DUENAS HERRERA, XIMENA (SCL/EDU); ESCHOYEZ, GUILLERMO ANTONIO (LEG/SGO)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	24 Apr 2018
▪ Beneficiary:	Ministerio de Educacion en Rio de Janeiro
▪ Executing Agency:	INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
▪ IDB funding requested:	\$ 180,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	\$ 0.00
▪ Disbursement period:	24 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	Social Sector
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 The overall objective of the proposed TC is to develop a model for using transparency to boost parental engagement in their children's school and education in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro. The specific objective is two-fold. First, we aim to collect evidence on the most effective medium for schools to communicate with parents (individual SMS, group chat, social media, etc.). Second, we will test which type of informational content works best to engage parents. In other words, we will test how to efficiently address behavioral constraints that impede parental involvement in schools (misplaced beliefs, cognitive load or parental constructs). The content tested will include child-specific performance information, simple tips for parents to support child learning at home, and school policy information to promote transparency and accountability.
- 2.2 Brazilian parents have a low level of engagement in their children's education and school life. According to the National Survey of School Health in Brazil (2015), one in two parents of grade 9 students had not checked if the child had completed homework during the previous month and one in four parents was unaware if the child had missed school. The core of the problem is incomplete information. Increasing transparency into what goes on within schools and with particular students, can increase parent engagement, which in turn can help hold schools accountable.

Specifically, improved parental insight into children's schooling has been found to: lower student absenteeism and missed assignments (Rogers, 2016; Bergman, 2012; Bergman, 2017; Cunha et al, 2017); improve student performance (York and Loeb, 2014; Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum, 2016); and increased parent attendance to school meetings (Cunha et al., 2017; York and Loeb, 2014; Kraft and Dougherty, 2013; Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum, 2016).

- 2.3 Similarly, improved parental insight into the quality of schooling inputs make parents more involved and effective in monitoring the schools' performance. School-based information campaigns have been found to be an effective accountability mechanism to reduce misuse of school funds and to improve school quality. In Uganda, for example, the publication of school financial data decreased the diversion of school funds and had a positive effect on school enrollment and student performance (Reinikka & Svensson 2003, 2005). The dissemination of report cards increased parental participation in school councils and in policy debates about school reforms in the Brazilian State of Paraná (Winkler, 2005) and school outcomes in Pakistan (Daas et al., 2017). In the Philippines, the publication of data on textbook distribution led to an estimated 40 percent increase the didactic materials that reached schools (Bruns et al., 2011). Also, in the Philippines, the initiative Checkmyschool uses ICT interfaces to facilitate the involvement of citizens and communities in the governance of public schools in the Philippines. Community volunteers are trained and assigned schools to visit, aiming to compare school facilities with the data released by the Department of Education, and if necessary communicate with school via SMS to address the discrepancy. This project has improved accountability of local and national governments in tandem with promoting social responsibility.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 In line with its objectives, this operation consists of two components: A component that seeks to develop and pilot a model for Parent Engagement through Transparency; and a component to evaluate the pilot through a randomized control trial.
- 3.2 **Component I: Component I – Parent Engagement through Transparency Pilot..** The TC will finance the design of three engagement campaigns to influence parent behavior; the first will emphasize agency, the second will emphasize information provision, and the third will emphasize accountability. Each information campaign will be designed to investigate the impact of a different emotional response on parent behavior. The information campaign will be implemented through a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro.
- 3.3 **Component II: Component II – Evaluation.** . The pilot will be evaluated through a RCT. Student-level data provided by the Ministry of Education will be used in both the baseline and endline analysis. Stratified randomization will be done at the school-level, based on income levels. The control groups for each RCT will receive the standard parent engagement activities the schools are accustomed to rolling out. The treatment groups will receive the interventions laid out in Component I.

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Component I – Parent Engagement through Transparency Pilot.	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 90,000.00
Component II – Evaluation.	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 90,000.00

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 The project will be Bank executed. A letter of expression of interest has been attained by the municipality of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, and a letter of non-objection will be attained.
- 5.2 The justification for the Bank's role as executing agency is two-fold. First, the Bank has an extensive research agenda and expertise in the area of behavioral economics. Second, the proposed TC forms part of a regional initiative to research what works to improve parents' involvement in their children's education. The Ministry of Education of Rio de Janeiro has therefore requested that the Bank to act as executing agency.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 Parent level projects are always at risk to meet challenges. This project is particularly ambitious in that we are providing a comparatively intangible treatment – information – through multiple ICT intensive treatment arms – SMS, Facebook, Whatsapp. This will require production of content that is easily understood by individuals with limited formal education, low levels of income and severe time constraint. The team is thoroughly conscious of these risks and will work with IDB education experts and local community members to ensure the content is culturally adapted to ease of understanding. Use of smartphones is ubiquitous in urban hubs, such as Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, the commitment of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro's team and secretary make the team confident that the proposed design is feasible, our government counterparts will ensure that the team has have access to the most up-to-date parent contact information, and personally introduce the project to school directors in order to ensure the highest level of cooperation at all levels.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

- 7.1 The ESG classification for this operation is "undefined".