

## TC Document

### I. Basic Information for TC

▪ Country/Region:	El Salvador
▪ TC Name:	Abandoned Children in the Northern Triangle: Education Policy Responses. Phase II
▪ TC Number:	ES-T1295
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Emma Näslund-Hadley, team leader, Greg Elacqua, co-team leader, Pablo Zoido, Eleno Castro Portillo; and Rodolfo Scannone (SCL/EDU); Samuel Berlinski (RES/RES); Florencia Lopez-Boo (SCL/SPH); Álvaro Sanmartín (LEG/SGO); and Laura Smaldone (BDA/ACP).
▪ Indicate if: Operational Support, Client Support, or Research & Dissemination	Client Support
▪ Date of TC Abstract authorization:	20 March 2019
▪ Beneficiary (countries or entities which are the recipient of the technical assistance):	El Salvador
▪ Executing Agency and contact name (Organization or entity responsible for executing the TC Program) {If Bank: Contracting entity} {If the same as Beneficiary, please indicate}	Inter-American Development Bank (SCL/EDU)
▪ Donors providing funding (amount and Fund's name):	OC Strategic Development Program for Social Development (SOC)-
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$ 600,000
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$60,000 in kind
▪ Disbursement period (which includes Execution period):	30 months
▪ Required start date:	5/15/2019
▪ Types of consultants (firm or individual consultants):	Firms and individuals
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/EDU
▪ TC Included in Country Strategy (y/n):	n/a
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	Yes
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality

### II. Objectives and Justification of the TC

- 2.1 Over the past several decades there's been a surge of Central American children who are fully or partially abandoned by their parents and often raised by their grandparents or other relatives. In Central America's Northern Triangle – El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – this tendency is particularly pronounced. Household survey data indicate that somewhere between a fifth and a quarter<sup>1</sup> of children in the 3 to 6-year age-group are raised by grandparents in the Northern Triangle, including skipped-generation households. Contrary to three-generation households with

<sup>1</sup> Approximately 18% in Guatemala, 25% in El Salvador and 29% in Honduras.

grandchildren, parents and grandparents – that often have a positive effect on child development ([DeLeire & Kalil, 2002](#); [Pong & Chen, 2010](#)) – children in skipped-generation households more often display developmental and cognitive delays. Children raised by their grandparents in skipped-generation households have more emotional and behavioral problems ([Smith and Palmieri 2007](#); [Goodman et al 2004](#)); complete fewer years of schooling and have more learning and school related problems ([Edwards & Mumford, 2005](#); [Sun, 2003](#); [DeLeire & Kalil 2002](#)).

- 2.2 Despite the education challenges faced by abandoned children, scant research has examined this important child development challenge ([Smith & Palmieri 2007](#)). In Latin America, no study has evaluated the impact of abandonment on child outcomes; and the motives behind this phenomenon have not been systematically documented. The only existing information are household surveys that indicate a raise in the proportion of children raised in this type of households.
- 2.3 There has been a call for research on whether it is sufficient to assist caregivers with social coping strategies (e.g. information about services) or whether more comprehensive programs are required that combine social coping strategies with training in parenting skills ([Smith et al 2015](#)). Innovative and scalable solutions are urgently needed to assist this group of children and their caretakers. The identification of a cost-effective treatment model will be an important input for policies that seeks to support this group of children, not only in El Salvador but also in Honduras and Guatemala. As is always the case for social sector interventions, when scaling the model in the Northern Triangle or beyond, any treatment model would need to be contextualized and validated in the area of implementation.
- 2.4 In 2018, the OC-SDP for Social Development approved the first phase of a project to address the growing problem of children in the Northern Triangle who are left behind when parents migrate to the United States and Canada ([Musalo et al 2015](#)), are recruited into gangs, incarcerated, or killed in violence ([Plotner 2016](#)). As part of Phase I (ES-T1282), a census has been completed in two of Central America's most violent municipalities, where IDB consultants have surveyed 24,835 households to identify beneficiaries for Phase II. Meanwhile, a separate consultancy has mapped existing social support structures and services in the municipalities; and develop two alternative models for supporting households with children left behind when parents migrate. In Phase II, the two models will be piloted through a Randomized Control Trial (RCT). The project runs on time and 89% of Phase I resources are committed. The Phase I products are being developed as planned: (i) the census in the municipalities of Soyapango and San Salvador has been completed and a database is currently being created with approximately 5,700 families with children in the one to six-year age-group; and (ii) child-development support models are being elaborated and will be validated by April 2019.
- 2.5 **Objective.** The overall objective is to examine childrearing practices in households with fully or partially abandoned children in the Northern Triangle; and analyze the effectiveness of caregiver training and social coping strategies on early learning outcomes in skipped-generation households. The specific objective of Phase II is to evaluate, through an RCT, the parental training and social coping strategy models developed under Phase I.
- 2.6 **Strategic Alignment.** At an institutional level, early education is a priority within the Bank's Sector Framework Document for Education and Early Childhood Development (GN-2708-5), the Strategy on Social Policy for Equity and Productivity (GN-2588-4),

the country Strategy with El Salvador 2015-2019 (GN-2828), and the Updated Institutional Strategy 2010-2020 (UIS) (AB-3008). The Sector Framework Document prioritizes high quality early childhood services as these not only help ensure that all students enter school ready to learn, but also help narrow the cognitive, socio-emotional, language and other developmental gaps often observed between children from rich and poor families. The country strategy with El Salvador prioritizes investment in education and childhood development, as well as the protection of children who are exposed to violent environments. The UIS prioritizes social inclusion and equity, two macro-level challenges addressed by this operation.

- 2.7 The operation is aligned and consistent with the objectives set in the Ordinary Capital Strategic Development Program for Social Development (GN-2819-1) particularly the second objective that is to strengthen public institutions' effort to become more effective and efficient in social programming. The operation is also aligned with auxiliary indicator number 2 of the Corporate Results framework 2016-2019 (GN-2727-6), which measures the number of "children receiving early childhood development services targeted to the poor." Investment in education and child development are also prioritized in the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle, which was developed jointly by the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

### III. Description of activities/components and budget

- 3.1 The beneficiary population consists of households with children who are 2 to 6 years of age and reside in Soyapango and San Salvador – two municipalities that are among those with Central America's highest levels of violence. To achieve its objective, the TC is structured around three components.
- 3.2 **Component I – Pilot.** 2,500 households will be assigned to one of three possible situations. First, a control group which will receive the status-quo access to goods and services that the Salvadorian government and the civil society provides for families with young children. Second, there will be a relatively low-cost treatment arm (Group I) where household will receive the Social Coping Strategy support in the form of information about what services are available for their children (e.g. preschool education options in the community; schedules and hours; eligibility and enrollment processes; and information on everyday activities that can support children's development) and what are best practices in parenting. Third, there will be a more expensive arm (Group II) where families will benefit from a child development Training Model. The training will include face-to-face training sessions in school Parent Places<sup>2</sup>, health centers, or alternative meeting spaces, in-home tutoring as well as self-learning activities. This treatment group would also receive the social coping strategy treatment in Group I.
- 3.3 **Component II – Evaluation.** Based on the census of 24,835 households that was undertaken in Phase I, the Project Team will place approximately 1,000 households in the low-cost intervention, 500 households in the high-cost intervention and 1,000 households in the control group. Additionally, we will pick a matched sample of 250 non-skipped generation households (Group III) to study how child development outcomes differ and evolve over time in different rearing environments of nuclear and extended family households. The instruments we will use in the RCT to measure the effect on households are: Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3); Peabody PVT

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<sup>2</sup> Existing meeting spaces for parents in some education centers.

Scale; HOME to assess child-adult interactions; Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL); and preschool versions of EGRA and EGMA<sup>3</sup> to measure pre-reading and math abilities in children. A small random subsample of households from each group will be included in a qualitative evaluation.

- 3.4 **Component III – Dissemination.** Resources from the operation will be used to finance the dissemination of the results in the Northern Triangle, including a regional and a national workshop and two videos. The IDB-MINED Project Team will also draft two documents: (i) based on the census data, a report about Children Left Behind due to Violence and Migration; and (ii) based on the RCT database and the qualitative evaluation, a report on the cost-effectiveness of the two child-development support models.
- 3.5 **Budget.** The total cost of this TC is US\$660,000 of which will be financed with resources from the OC-SDP for Social Development and US\$60,000 is local counterpart funding in kind by the Ministry of Education. The operation constitutes the second phase of the study (phase I was financed with resources from ES-T1282).

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	Description	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Component 1. Pilot	Firms	200,000	40,000	240,000
Component 2. Evaluation	Firms	390,000	20,000	410,000
Component 3. Dissemination	Consultants	10,000	0	10,000
<b>Total:</b>		<b><u>600,000</u></b>	<b><u>60,000</u></b>	<b><u>660,000</u></b>

- 3.6 Responsibilities for supervision and monitoring this operation will fall on SCL/EDU, including regular meetings with counterparts and consultants, as well as supervision missions. It is estimated that the project will have a duration of 30 months for execution and disbursements counted from the date of approval of this TC.
- 3.7 The monitoring arrangements are laid out in the [Monitoring & Evaluation Plan](#). The Team Leader is Emma Näslund-Hadley ([emman@iadb.org](mailto:emman@iadb.org)). In CID/CES, SCL/EDU Consultant Eleno Castro ([elenoc@iadb.org](mailto:elenoc@iadb.org)) provides support.

#### IV. Executing agency and execution structure

- 4.1 This operation will be executed by the Bank's Social Sector Department (SCL/EDU). The Bank successfully administered Phase I of the study (ES-T1282) and has the appropriate systems, administrative capacity and expertise in the area to be able to carry out the selection and hiring of quality consulting services. In line with Appendix 10 of the Operational Guidelines for Technical Cooperation Products (GN-2629-1), Bank execution of the TC is justified as contracting by the IDB enhances the independence of an experimental evaluation. Moreover, through its ongoing policy dialogue with the beneficiary country, civil society organizations in Central America,

<sup>3</sup> EGRA and EGMA were developed by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and have been used extensively in early grades throughout the developing world. The preschool versions were adapted by Innovation for Poverty Action (IPA) and have been validated and used in five countries in LAC.

and the ECD research community, the Bank is well placed to coordinate of all activities to be financed by this TC and to serve as the executing agency of this operation. As the executing agency of the TC, the Bank will be responsible for: (i) identifying the studies and technical work required for the execution of the TC; (ii) selecting and hiring consultants to provide the necessary services; (iii) supervise the consulting services that the beneficiary provides technical inputs to; and (iv) manage the execution and delivery of consulting services. The Ministry of Finance has submitted a letter of non-objection and requesting that the Bank will be responsible for all aspects of project management, including the administration of resources, and the contracting of specialized consulting services in accordance with Bank policies and procedures.

- 4.2 **Procurement.** The Bank will contract the services of individual consultants, consulting firms in accordance with the Policy for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firms for Bank-Executed Operational Work (GN-2765-1) and the Operational Guidelines (GN-2765-3). The direct contracting of IPA is foreseen for the evaluation; and the direct contracting of World Vision is foreseen for the implementation of the two treatment arms. In accordance with 3.10(a) of the Bank's policies for selection and contracting of consultants (GN-2350-9), single-source selection is allowed in cases where tasks represent a natural continuation of previous work carried out by the firm. Moreover, in accordance with 3.10(d) of the same policy, single-source selection is also allowed when only one firm is qualified or has experience of exceptional worth for the assignment. Following a competitive bidding process (ES-T1282), Innovation for Poverty Action (IPA) successfully conducted the census in the pilot communities. Similarly, following a competitive bidding process (ES-T1282), World Vision is successfully elaborating the two treatment models and the training trainers.

## **V. Major issues**

- 5.1 A pilot based on an experimental design in a context such as high-violence and low-income areas in El Salvador presents logistical challenges. The commitment of the Government to the study, and the Bank's extensive experience in implementing randomized control trials in the education sector, including parental interventions such as a recent parental training pilot in Jamaica (RG-T1094), make the Team confident that the proposed design is feasible. The change in administration brought about by the recent national elections bring about additional risks as the issue of abandoned children compete for political attention with other pressing challenges. CID/CES and SCL/EDU have initiated a dialogue with the transition team to ensure to ensure that the issue of abandoned children and other key education issues remain high on the national agenda. Moreover, the risks are reduced as no changes are foreseen in the composition of the Education Ministry's technical counterpart team.
- 5.2 The risks associated with this operation are reduced given that its products are produced through consultancies contracted by the Bank. The risk is further reduced thanks to the contracting of two firms that provided high quality services in Phase I.

## **VI. Exceptions to Bank policy**

- 6.1 No exceptions to Bank policy are foreseen.

## **VII. Environmental and Social Strategy**

- 7.1 The TC is not anticipated to have direct environmental or social impacts and has been classified as "C" according to B3 per the Environmental and Safeguard Compliance Policy OP-703 (see [Safeguard Policy Filter Report](#) and [Safeguard Screening Form](#)).

**Required Annexes:**

- [Letter of Non-objection Ministry of Finance](#)
- [Results Matrix](#)
- [Terms of Reference](#)
- [Procurement Plan](#)