

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	REGIONAL/CID - Isthmus & DR
▪ TC Name:	Supporting Vulnerable Students with a Distance Learning Program for Secondary Education Using Digital Platforms
▪ TC Number:	RG-T3837
▪ Team Leader/Members:	ZOIDO LOBATON, PABLO (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; FERNANDEZ COTO, RAQUEL AUXILIADORA (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; CHAVEZ ALZAMORA, JOSE CARLOS (SCL/EDU); SCANNONE CHAVEZ, RODOLFO ANDRES (SCL/EDU); HOLGUIN MADRINAN, ALEJANDRA (SCL/SCL); BARRAGAN CRESPO, ENRIQUE IGNACIO (LEG/SGO)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	05 Feb 2021
▪ Beneficiary:	Honduras and El Salvador
▪ Executing Agency:	SHOULDER TO SHOULDER INC
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$600,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	US\$100,000.00 (In Kind)
▪ Disbursement period:	36 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ 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 ; Productivity and innovation

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 To reduce learning gaps in secondary education vulnerable students (7th to 9th grade) in Honduras and El Salvador with a distance learning program using digital platforms, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.2 COVID-19 is the latest barrier to quality education for all of Mesoamerica's young people. Currently, schools are closed in 9 out of 10 countries in Mesoamerica due to COVID-19. As a result, it is estimated that over 23 million high school students have been affected, representing more than 95% of enrolled learners in the region.
- 2.3 In the medium term, the discontinuity of educational services will have a negative impact on dropout and student learning, particularly for those lacking economic resources, parental support, or access to effective distance-based learning programs (Cooc, McIntyre & Gomez, 2016). Based on the effects on education of previous economic crises, it is expected that close to 31,000 and 38,000 young students (10-18 years old) will not come back to school in Honduras and El Salvador, a number that represents a 6.1% and 16.8% increase in student dropout rates respectively (BID, 2020) . Preliminary analysis shows the crisis will disproportionately affect the most

vulnerable: 9 out of 10 young people not coming back in Honduras and El Salvador are poor or vulnerable middle class (BID, 2020) . Even for those who will return, preliminary estimates based on the effects of summer slowdown in the United States suggest students may lose 30% to 50% of learning in reading and mathematics compared to a typical school year (Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020).

- 2.4 In Honduras and El Salvador, the crisis unfolds in a particularly unfavorable context. The educational exclusion rates prior to COVID-19 are high and concentrated in the most vulnerable and lowest-income population. While the vast majority start secondary education, around half of the students do not finish (Ramirez and Viteri, 2020). Among those who complete their studies, only around 1 in 4 achieve the fundamental basic competences they need (Ramirez and Viteri 2020). This situation is even more serious for vulnerable youth, as only 1 out of 20 of the lowest income students who complete their studies achieve the fundamental basic competences they need. The COVID-19 crisis will only exacerbate the situation.
- 2.5 In this context it is essential to support vulnerable students who need to catch up with their peers and reduce the impact of the COVID- 19 pandemic. Previous experience in the region shows the potential of distance learning programs that use open source and low-cost digital platforms and require minimum-to-non-internet access to successfully bridge widening learning gaps on vulnerable students . None the less, Considering the new challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to execute fulltime innovative distance programs while schools remain closed, build strong evidence in the region and demonstrate how best to implement, operationalize, and expand experiences under such context in the short term or as part of an innovative hybrid model once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component I: Distance education program delivery** . This component has the objective of designing and implementing a distance education program using digital platforms to benefit 2,000 students (7th to 9th grade) in Honduras and El Salvador. This component will finance i) School targeting and prioritization, ii) Content adaptation and curriculum alignment, iii) Equipment acquisition (exclusively for Honduras), iv) Teacher and school staff training and support.
- 3.2 **Component II: Impact evaluation** . This component has the objective of conducting a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) aimed at evaluating the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of the digital platform to be implemented through this TC. This evaluation will use all gathered and available data to explore the effects of the digital platforms on the learning outcomes of young people, with a focus in young woman and indigenous population, when possible.
- 3.3 **Component III: Systematization and program transference** . This component has the objective of systematizing the educational resources, training materials and operational processes developed as part of this TC as well as the most important lessons and best practices to strengthen the Executing Agency and build capacity to transfer the experience to the Ministries of Education at the end of the implementation.
- 3.4 **Component IV: Management and audit** . The objective is to strengthen the Executing Agency's capacity to execute the program, oversee it's delivery, and provide complementary solutions to potential unexpected situations that may arise. Additionally, it will finance the execution of an external audit to guarantee transparency in funds execution.

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Distance education program delivery	US\$280,000.00	US\$70,000.00	US\$350,000.00
Impact evaluation	US\$220,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$220,000.00
Systematization and program transference	US\$50,000.00	US\$30,000.00	US\$80,000.00
Management and audit	US\$50,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$50,000.00
Total	US\$600,000.00	US\$100,000.00	US\$700,000.00

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 Executing Agency. Shoulder to Shoulder will act as the Executing Agency for the TC. Shoulder to Shoulder is an international NGO with over 30 years of experience in Honduras providing sustainable and accessible health, nutrition, and education services. Over the past 5 years they have developed a comprehensive Education program based on an open-source digital platform to provide high quality digital educational content to students from all grades (K-12). In those years they have worked in over 30 schools in the rural area of Intibucá, Honduras, benefiting 4,000 students and 100 teachers. As part of that experience, Shoulder to Shoulder has built a model to successfully use a digital platform in areas with limited access to internet. Additionally, they have developed and/or adjusted pedagogical content (live exercises and videos sourced from Khan Academy and various other public sources), building a digital library of over 1500 English and Spanish titles. Finally, they have created materials for robust teacher training, which was complemented with a technical and pedagogical support structure for teachers.
- 5.2 Execution Structure. To start execution and receive agreed disbursements, Shoulder to Shoulder will need to comply with the General Conditions Applicable to Non-reimbursable Technical Cooperations to the IDB's satisfaction. Additionally, Shoulder to Shoulder will need to submit the following reports: i) semi-annual progress reports within thirty (30) days of the end of each calendar semester, which must include technical and financial execution; ii) a final report, within six (6) months from the date of completion of the last activity, which should include a summary of findings and conclusions; and a final report on financial execution.
- 5.3 Responsibilities for supervision and monitoring this operation will fall on SCL/EDU, including regular meetings with Shoulder to Shoulder. The designated focal point is Pablo Zoido (pabloz@iadb.org), Sector Lead Specialist (SCL/EDU) and project team leader who will be responsible for project monitoring and supervision and Raquel Fernández (EDU/CHO), Education Sector Specialist in Honduras. IDB Country Offices will be informed about the progress of the TC on a regular basis. It is estimated that the project will have a duration of 24 months for execution and disbursements counted from the date of approval of this TC.
- 5.4 Shoulder to Shoulder has vast experience in Honduras and a very strong technical capacity. It has been operating in Honduras for over 30 years, working on creating and operating sustainable and accessible health, nutrition, and education services, in close coordination with the national government and local stakeholders. In education the organization has engaged in different programs to drive improvements in educational outcomes via the application of technology with emphasis on English and STEM. Over the past 5 years Shoulder to Shoulder has developed a comprehensive Education program based on an open-source digital platform called Kolibri to provide high quality digital educational content to students from all grades (K-12). In those years they have worked in over 30 schools in the rural area of Intibucá, Honduras, benefiting 4000 students and 100 teachers, which demonstrate they have the capacity of leading a

large scale educational program. As part of that experience, Shoulder to Shoulder has built a model to successfully use a digital platform in areas with limited access to internet over Wi-Fi or mobile data. Additionally, they have developed and adjusted pedagogical content (live exercises and videos sourced from Khan Academy and various other public sources) aligned with the Honduran curriculum, building a digital library of over 1500 English and Spanish titles. Finally, they have created materials for robust teacher training, which was complemented with a technical and pedagogical support structure for teachers.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 Due to the higher global demand of equipment (e.g. tablets or laptops) due to COVID-19 and broken chain of production and distribution, there is a risk of important delays in availability; consequently, delaying the TC implementation. Mitigation actions include permanent monitoring of suppliers and their stocks as well as close coordination with other procurement entities.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

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