

## TC Document/Appendice

### I. Basic Information for TC

✦ Country/Region:	REGIONAL
✦ TC Name:	ECD in the Northern Triangle during the COVID-19 pandemic
✦ TC Number:	RG-T3828
✦ Team Leader/Members:	Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; Morduchowicz, Alejandro (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; Blasco, Ivana (SCL/EDU); Hokonohara, Kenji (SCL/EDU); Holguin Madrinan, Alejandra (SCL/SCL); Lima De Moraes, Vitoria (ORP/REM); Mendoza Benavente, Horacio (LEG/SGO); Mendoza Centellas, Mariana Beatriz (ORP/GCM); Quintero Salleg, Claudia Patricia (SCL/EDU); Thompson, Jennelle (SCL/EDU)ORP/REM); Mendoza Benavente, Horacio (LEG/SGO); Mendoza Centellas, Mariana Beatriz (ORP/GCM); Quintero Salleg, Claudia Patricia (SCL/EDU); Thompson, Jennelle (SCL/EDU)
✦ Taxonomy:	Research and Dissemination
✦ Operation Supported by the TC:	N/A
✦ Date of TC Abstract authorization:	30 November 2020
✦ Beneficiary:	REGIONAL (Guatemala and El Salvador)
✦ Executing Agency and contact name:	Inter-American Development Bank
✦ Donors providing funding:	Cofinancing Special Grants(COF)
✦ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$203,184.00
✦ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$0
✦ Disbursement period (which includes Execution period):	24 months
✦ Required start date:	15 April 2021
✦ Types of consultants:	Consulting firms, individual consultants
✦ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU-Education
✦ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/EDU-Education
✦ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	yes
✦ TC included in CPD (y/n):	no
✦ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality

### II. Objectives and Justification of the TC

2.1 COVID-19 related school closures have revealed that distance learning is uniquely challenging for students of initial education and Early Childhood Development (ECD) services. The proposed TC will respond to this challenge by addressing two areas of ECD: (i) policies to transmit growth outcomes to young children; and (ii) policies to promote learning and development during prolonged periods of social distancing. The overall objective is twofold: (i) conduct a survey and behavioral economics pilot; and (ii) develop and pilot a model for growth mindset among caregivers and young children in vulnerable communities. The TC is regional in scope, benefitting two countries: El Salvador and Guatemala. Due to budget limitations, it is not possible to include additional countries in the TC, but the study could potentially be expanded in the future.

- 2.2 Remote Initial Education.** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a worldwide experiment in remote learning is unfolding. Throughout the world, education systems rushed to build distance learning models. So far, the experience revealed that it is uniquely difficult to provide for ECD students. This is because cognitive development in the ECD and preschool years is built through the senses of touch, vision, hearing, taste, and smell (Butcher and Plecher, 2016). Children in virtual ECD and preschool lose interest in a lesson after 15 to 20 minutes, drastically reducing the hours per day of supported learning during COVID-19-related school closures. They also lose interest if the group of children is too large (more than three to six toddlers, and six to ten preschoolers), giving them fewer opportunities for adult-child interaction (Szente, 2020). These child-teacher ratios, required for effective virtual instruction, are often lower than those in typical classrooms, complicate the shift to virtual ECD and preschool services challenging. In addition to learning challenges, school closures leave children without the critical services that schools provide, including socioemotional support, nutritional programs, counseling services, and playgrounds. Children kept at home as part of social-distancing strategies are also left without the important social interactions so essential for their development and well-being.
- 2.3 To explore the experiences that children and parents are having with emergency remote education, the ministries of education in El Salvador (MINED), Costa Rica (MEP), and Peru (MINEDU), and the Institute of Family Well-Being in Colombia (ICBF) joined forces with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to undertake a regional survey. The coalition of countries that joined forces originated from policy dialogue around how to respond to the closing of ECD services in the wake of the pandemic. Respondents from 62,837 households were asked about their experiences with emergency distance education and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic ([Näslund-Hadley et al, 2020](#)). In response to the findings of the survey, the participating governments have adjusted their remote learning packages for the ECD level, including resources for educators to support the mental wellbeing of children and caregivers.
- 2.4 As a complement to the regional survey, MINED, MEP, MINEDU, IPA and the IDB are undertaking regional behavioral economics pilot. The pilot is based on literature which shows that parents may fail to do the right investment in their kids due to lack of information and behavioral biases. In response to this challenge, caregivers receive a set of SMS messages with links to integrated virtual content and resources that combine parent education – about nutrition, stimulation and family health in times of the Coronavirus – with learning activities for children, to mitigate the effect of social distancing on child development outcomes.
- 2.5 Guatemala has accepted to join the regional study and behavioral economics pilot to provide a window into the crisis; how it is affecting the health of children and their caregivers and educators; the functioning of the ministry's ECD distance education model; and explore how information to parents can help in making effective decisions. The inputs from the survey and experimental pilot will provide an essential input in designing education and health policy responses.

- 2.6 Growth Mindset.** A person's mindset is defined by individual beliefs about qualities such as intelligence, personality, and talents, as well as how these qualities contribute to a person's perspective on the world and how he or she acts in different situations. In addition, people's mindset influences motivation to do things, and how he or she faces setbacks and failures. While people with a growth mindset tend to attribute their mistakes to a lack of effort, and seek to learn from these situations, people with fixed mindsets attribute their failures to a lack of skills ([Schoder et al., 2017](#)). Examples of positive qualities linked to growth mindset include conflict resolution and propensity for problem solving when faced with a challenge ([Kammrath & Dweck 2006](#)); and greater self-regulation and social adaptability (Tamir, Srivastava & Gross, 2007). Life outcomes linked to growth mindset compared with fixed mindset include higher levels of resilience (Kammrath & Dweck, 2012), higher academic performance (Blackwell et al, 2007; Hanson et al, 2016), greater self-esteem and mental health (Tamir, Srivastava & Gross, 2007), and lower levels of risky behaviors and criminality (Gerber and O'Connell, 2012).
- 2.7** Given the importance of mindset beliefs for life outcomes, research has focused on two areas. First, influencing mindset beliefs of adolescents and adults. Even basic interventions have been found to generate considerable changes in a person's mindset (O'Rourke et al., 2014; Blackwell et al., 2007; Paunesku et al., 2015; Yeager et al., 2016). Second, influencing parental mindset beliefs to improve child outcomes and mindsets. While the literature shows that child outcomes can improve by changing parental mindset beliefs (Rowe & Leech 2018; Andersen & Nielsen 2016), research has yet to investigate if it is possible to promote the development of growth mindsets in children by influencing parental mindset beliefs. Given the importance of mindsets for life outcomes, the identification of measures that change child mindsets by supporting parental mindset development would have important policy implications for the region and beyond.
- 2.8** In El Salvador, an IDB survey of vulnerable households with young children (EST1282; ES-T1295) found that most caregivers have a fixed mindset. Controlling for socioeconomic status, the study also finds that caregiver mindset is linked to the level of investment in young children, including time invested in their children (e.g., playing, reading, and singing) and types and quantities of toys. The next step is to explore if it is possible to promote a growth mindset among surveyed caregivers to improve child outcomes, behaviors, and foster growth mindset among young children.
- 2.9 Strategic Alignment.** At an institutional level, the operation is aligned with the Bank's prioritization of early childhood development as laid out in the Strategy on Social Policy for Equity and Productivity (GN-2588-4). The operation addresses the inequalities in early childhood that tend to persist into adulthood and amplify into persistent social exclusion and inequalities. The operation also addresses how the COVID-19 pandemic impact vulnerable populations to identify how different groups of children should be targeted by policies and programs to improve care and education that could prevent them from being left behind. This focus on social inclusion and equity aligns the operation with the IDB Group's Second Update to the Institutional Strategy (UIS) 2020-2023 (GN-2933-5). It is also aligned with the priorities of the country strategies with Guatemala 2017-2020 (GN-2899) and El Salvador 2015-2019 (GN-2828) to reduce access to quality education, including preschool education. The TC is also aligned with the Skills Development Sector Framework Document (GN3012-3), which promotes quality early childhood development services, and aims

to ensure that infants and young children develop the cognitive, language, motor, and socioemotional skills that will allow them to enter school ready to learn. Finally, the TC complements studies of learning and student wellbeing at other levels of education, such as Educacion Mesoamerica at the level of secondary education. **III.**

**Description of activities/components and budget**

**3.1 Component I: Guatemala's Participation in Regional Study of ECD Distance Learning (US\$87,000).**

The aim of the component is to include Guatemala in the regional survey about initial education in times of COVID-19, as well as in the ongoing regional behavioral economics pilot. To help parents make choices about activities to support child development and learning, the campaign will include the following elements: (i) Messages that aim to increase the quality and frequency of parent-child interactions; (ii) Messages focusing on mental and physical health management; and (iii) Messaging program with information on coronavirus prevention strategies and communication management with children. All messages will incorporate behavioral messages to elevate the probability that parents act on them (e.g. providing planning prompts or addressing present bias and false beliefs). The expected impacts include mitigation of the mental health effects of the social distancing, including on anxiety and depression; and the learning gap between resource-rich and resource-poor communities.

3.2 In line with data collection in other participating countries, two phone and online survey instruments will be used in the regional study to assess the situation of children during the pandemic. To measure children's reported wellbeing, we used an adaptation of the Children Behavior Checklist instrument (CBCL), which is a widely used clinical and research instrument for caregivers to identify behavioral and emotional problems in children (Achenbach, 1999). To evaluate whether the quality of care practices and household environments, we used the Family Care Indicators (FCI), an instrument that has been internationally validated to predict ECD (Kariger, et al., 2012). The FCI encompasses items that are likely to relate to children's cognitive and language development that are structured around five subscales: 'play activities,' 'varieties of play materials,' 'sources of play materials,' 'household books,' and 'magazines and newspapers.' The resources provided will be used to contract a firm to apply these instruments nationwide to a representative sample of the preschool population.

**3.3 Component II – Growth Mindset Study in El Salvador (US\$100,000).** The aim of the Component is to finance an experimental evaluation of Parent-child transmission of mindset attitudes. A firm will be contracted to apply two treatment arms: (i) one group will learn about growth versus fixed mindset theory through a video; and (ii) a second group will receive a more intense treatment with biweekly mentoring meetings with community educators over the course of 4-5 months. For this second treatment arm, a parental training curriculum in mindset theory will be developed; 10 community educators will be contracted and trained; and training materials will be developed and printed. The component will also finance data collection by phone and online questionnaires from 1,600 caregivers with children between 4-6 years of age in the municipalities of Soyapango and San Salvador, including data on children's cognitive and non-cognitive skills; as well as data on parental perceptions, expectations, and beliefs about the development of cognitive and non-cognitive skills, as well as rich data on families to allow for a heterogeneity analysis.

**3.4 Component III –Dissemination (US\$6,130).** TC resources will be used to finance the dissemination of the findings. Specifically, the dissemination activities will include the development of publications and a workshop, which aims to show the results on Guatemala of the regional survey about initial education in times of COVID-19; and the findings of the regional behavioral economics pilot; and the results of the experimental evaluation of Parent-child transmission of mindset attitudes in El Salvador. The workshop will take place once the evaluation of the pilot has been completed in late 2022. The contribution of the Bernard Van Leer Foundation will be recognized in any dissemination activities and products.

**Indicative Budget**

<b>Activity/Component</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>IDB/Fund Funding</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>
Component I. Guatemala's Participation in Regional Study of ECD Distance Learning	Consulting Firm	87,000	87,000
Component II. Growth Mindset Study in El Salvador	Consulting Firm	100,000	100,000
Component III. Dissemination	Individual Consultant	6,130	6,130
IDB Administration Fee (5%)		10,054	10,054
<b>Total</b>		<b>203,184</b>	<b>203,184</b>

**3.5** Bernard Van Leer Foundation expects to commit EUR 168,250 to this project, which is equivalent to US\$ 203,184 based on the exchange rate 1.21 as of January 18, 2021, as available from the Bank's Finance Department intranet website. Final resources in US dollars will be dependent on the exchange rate of the date when the resources are received by the Bank from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation in EUR and converted into US Dollars. If a significant adverse fluctuation in the exchange rate reduces the amount of US dollars in this budget and such amount cannot be covered by the contingency line, the project activities will be decreased appropriately and the budget will be adjusted accordingly by the project team.

**3.6** Resources of this project to be received from Bernard Van Leer Foundation will be provided to the Bank through a Project Specific Grant (PSG). A PSG is administered by the Bank according to the "Report on COFABS, Ad-Hocs and CLFGS and a Proposal to Unify Them as Project Specific Grants (PSGs)" (Document SC-114). As contemplated in these procedures, the commitment by Bernard Van Leer Foundation will be established through a separate Administration Agreement. Under such agreement, the resources for this project will be administered by the Bank and the Bank will charge a non-refundable administration fee of 5% of the contribution, which is identified in the budget of this project. The 5% administration fee will be charged upon the Bank's receipt of the contribution, after the contribution has been converted into US dollars.

#### **IV. Executing agency and execution structure**

- 4.1 The TC will be executed by the IDB in line with Appendix 10 of the Operational Guidelines for Technical Cooperation Products (GN-2629-1). Bank execution of the TC is justified in that this TC represents an initiative promoted by the Bank, and the products and activities envisaged will generate knowledge and strengthen the technical capacity of the Bank and its member countries. It is also justified as there is no entity in Guatemala and El Salvador that could assume the execution of the regional operation. As the executing agency of the TC, the Bank will be responsible for: (i) coordinating the actors involved in the activities; (ii) identify the studies and technical work necessary to carry out the TC; (iii) select and contract consultants to provide the necessary services; (iv) supervise the consulting services to which the beneficiary provides technical inputs; (v) manage the execution and provision of consulting services; and (vi) provide semiannual progress reports to the Bernard Van Leer Foundation.
- 4.2 **Execution and disbursement period.** The TC will be executed over a period of 24 months and disbursed over a period of 24 months as of the date of approval.
- 4.3 **Procurement.** The activities to be executed are included in the Procurement Plan (Annex) and the Bank will contract individual consultants, consulting firms and other services in accordance with current Bank procurement policies and procedures. The Bank will contract the services of individual consultants in accordance with Section AM-650 of the Administrative Manual “Complementary Workforce”, and consulting firms for services of intellectual nature in accordance with the Policy for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firms for Bank-Executed Operational Work (GN-27654) and its Operational Guidelines (OP-1155-4). For logistic services and other related services, the Corporate Procurement Policy (GN-2303-28) will apply.
- 4.4 **Single-source selection.** Direct contracting is foreseen of Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) in the amount of approximately US\$151,000 to undertake a regional survey that explores the experiences that children and parents are having with emergency remote education (Component I); and the experimental evaluations of the two randomized control trials (Components I and II). IPA is qualified and considered an agency with exceptional worth for the assignment in accordance with 4.1.3(d) of the Policy for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firms for Bank-executed Operational Work (GN-2765-4). This non-governmental organization has completed over 300 experimental impact evaluations across the globe and has another 300 RCTs ongoing. Some 50 of these experimental evaluations are in the education sector. The single source selection is also in line with 4.1.3(a) of the same policy, which allows for the continuation of previous work carried out by the firm. Following a competitive bidding process, IPA successfully conducted the data collection and external evaluation related to ES-T1282 and ES-T1295 (see paragraph 2.8 above). This recommendation is based on the need to ensure comparability and continuity with the previously explained data collection.
- 4.5 **Monitoring.** The Project Team will be responsible for the review of all technical and financial reporting. The Team Leader will be responsible for annual monitoring of activities in the field, and continuous progress meetings with the counterparts and consultants. The project team will be responsible for the preparation and submission to the donor of the project reporting, in compliance with the stipulations of the Administration Agreement.

## **V. Major issues**

5.1 The unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a challenge, mainly due to a high workload of the ministries of education in both El Salvador and Guatemala. Nevertheless, based on the experiences with the regional survey and behavioral economics pilot that was implemented in 2020 in El Salvador, Costa Rica, Colombia and Peru, the ministries are very committed to the study. In all four countries, the ministries participated in biweekly meetings to launch and monitor the studies.

## **VI. Environmental and Social Strategy**

6.1 The TC will not finance infrastructure or civil works and thus is not anticipated to have direct environmental or social impacts and has been classified as “C” according to the Safeguard Classification tool (see [Safeguard Policy Filter Report](#) and [Safeguard Screening Form](#)).

### **Required Annexes:**

- Non-objection from El Salvador
- Letter informing counterparts in Guatemala
- Results Matrix
- Terms of Reference for activities/components to be procured
- Procurement Plan