



Knowledge hub - Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Centralized teacher admission processes in Latin American

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Peru and Ecuador

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Inter-American Development Bank

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

teacher assignment, teacher preference, centralized assignment, teacher shortage, teacher incentives.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Centralized admission processes for teachers, such as the ones conducted in Peru and Ecuador, can improve transparency, efficiency, and equity in the assignment of teachers across schools. With respect to transparency, centralized admission processes can reduce discretion and corruption in teacher admission processes by ensuring equal access to information about rules and regulations, as well as by implementing objective mechanisms to define outcomes (e.g., assignment algorithms). With respect to efficiency and equity, in centralized processes, one can more easily identify areas of congestion (that is, more applicants than vacancies) and of shortage (vacancies without applicants), and design policies to attract teachers to hard-to-staff school. At the IDB, we have explored low-cost interventions in centralized teacher admission processes in Peru and Ecuador that proved to be successful at encouraging teachers to apply to more remote and disadvantaged vacancies, which often suffer from shortage of good professionals. See more information on: <https://publications.iadb.org/en/altruism-or-money-reducing-teacher-sorting-using-behavioral-strategies-in-peru> & <https://publications.iadb.org/en/order-effects-and-employment-decisions-experimental-evidence-nationwide-program>

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

Having an effective teacher can dramatically improve students' educational and long-term outcomes (Araujo et al., 2016; Chetty et al., 2014). However, teacher allocation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is unequal. Empirical evidence shows that high-performing teachers tend to be assigned to more advantaged students (Bertoni et al., 2018; Rosa, 2019). Moreover, disadvantaged students are more likely to experience the adverse effects of teacher shortages and turnover related to unequal teacher distributions across schools (Lankford et al., 2002; Boyd et al., 2005). In several LAC countries, the assignment of teachers to schools is also inefficient and not transparent. Only government officials know how the "black box" of the system works, and teacher assignment systems often do not provide teachers with enough information on the available vacancies to allow them to make informed decisions. Teachers are more likely to be dissatisfied with their assigned school if they do not have enough information about their options, which can impact their effectiveness in the classroom (Jackson, 2012). Moreover, lack of information about vacancies also creates imbalances in supply and demand for teaching staff. For example, in Peru, more than one quarter of vacancies remain unfilled after the teacher selection process and most of these vacancies are in disadvantaged schools. In our projects, we have implemented and tested the effectiveness of a number of low-cost interventions to increase transparency, efficiency, and equity in centralized teacher assignment processes in Peru and Ecuador.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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We have collaborated with the Ministries of Education in Peru and Ecuador to implement a series of low-cost interventions to reduce congestion in centralized teacher assignment processes and attract teachers to hard-to-staff schools. In Peru, we tested two behavioral strategies: one focused on motivating teachers to apply to disadvantaged schools by priming their altruistic identity; and another strategy that simplified and emphasized the information of an existing government monetary-incentive scheme rewarding teachers who work in underprivileged institutions. In Ecuador, we also tested a behavioral strategy by simply changing the order of teaching vacancies on the application platform and listing hard-to-staff schools first. Lastly, also in Ecuador, in order to reduce congestion in the admission process, we provided a personalized risk warning coupled for all teaching candidates and, for those with a risky application, we showed them a list of schools where they had greater chances of winning a vacancy. All interventions were financed with Technical Cooperation funds from the Inter-American Development Bank.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

The three interventions were assessed using either experimental or quasi-experimental methods. Using a randomized control trial (RCT), we tested the effectiveness of both behavioral strategies in Peru and found that they are successful in triggering teacher candidates to apply to hard-to-staff vacancies, as well as making them more likely to be assigned to a final in-person evaluation in a disadvantaged school. The effect among high-performing teachers was larger. In Ecuador, we found that, when hard-to-staff vacancies are listed first on the application platform, teachers were more likely to apply to these vacancies, to rank them as their highest priority, and to be assigned to a job vacancy in one of these hard-to-staff schools. Lastly, in Ecuador, we found that receiving the warning and recommendations of schools increased the probability of changing the choices of teacher candidates by 52% and the chances of being assigned to a teaching vacancy by 37%. Additionally, descriptive results suggest that the overall quality of teachers assigned to a vacancy improved after the intervention because high performing candidates who received the personalized report and changed their application were assigned to an unfilled vacancy or displaced lower score applicants with less risky applications.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

These recent evidence in Peru and Ecuador suggest that low-cost behavioral strategies and information interventions can be effective at attracting teachers to hard-to-staff schools, reducing the sorting of candidates in the teacher selection process, and enhancing the supply and quality of professionals willing to teach in high-need and rural areas. These experiences were transformative because, although they were low cost, they successfully address challenges related to teacher assignment using theoretical orientations from behavioral sciences and school choice. Considering that many education systems in the region are going through a fiscal crisis, and that more traditional policies to reduce teacher shortage (e.g., monetary incentives) are not being currently considered by governments, the implementation of centralized admission processes coupled with low-cost interventions have shown to be an effective way to promote transparency, efficiency, and equity in teacher assignment.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

Considering that teachers are an essential input of school systems, strengthening the selection and assignment of these professionals can have important implications for the quality of education. All these interventions can be easily scaled to other systems, and we are currently discussing the implementation of centralized teacher processes in other education systems in Latin America. Our challenges affecting teacher assignment as well as our interventions are well documented in the provided reports for anyone who is interested in adopting the best practices discussed in this proposal elsewhere. Moreover, our technical team is available to discuss in more depth our experiences and current projects.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

<https://publications.iadb.org/en/altruism-or-money-reducing-teacher-sorting-using-behavioral-strategies-in-peru>

<https://publications.iadb.org/en/order-effects-and-employment-decisions-experimental-evidence-nationwide-program>

<https://publications.iadb.org/es/seleccionar-y-asignar-docentes-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe-un-camino-para-la-calidad-y-equidad-en>

<https://publications.iadb.org/es/el-problema-de-la-escasez-de-docentes-en-latinoamerica-y-las-politicas-para-enfrentarlo>

<https://publications.iadb.org/en/teacher-hiring-instruments-and-teacher-value-added-evidence-peru>