



Fostering Youth Development in Ecuador

IMPAQ International is working with Young Potential Development Ecuador (YPDE) to evaluate a national youth development program in Ecuador. This ILAB-funded evaluation will assess to what extent the program is able to remove drop-out students from hazardous activities such as gang violence, drug trafficking, or prostitution and prepare them to obtain safe employment opportunities.

Despite inclusive economic growth and impressive poverty reduction over the past decade, approximately half of all adults in Ecuador still have not completed the *Educación General Básica* (education up to middle school level). A 2010 census reported that more than 35,000 youth between 15 and 21 years have not continued school after the basic primary level, making them prone to hazardous activities.¹



YPD students showing their completion diplomas

The US Department of Labor Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) selected IMPAQ to evaluate the Young Potential Development (YPD) program implemented by YPDE. This education program is designed to foster a dynamic learning environment and improve youth's self-efficacy, empathy, conflict resolution and soft skills. It is part of a large-scale effort by the Secretary of Education to reduce school dropouts, teen pregnancies, violence at home, gang activities, and substance abuse. This evaluation is part of a cross-country series of ILAB evaluations that IMPAQ is conducting in Malawi, Costa Rica, India, and Rwanda.

The Evaluation Method: At a Glance

- ▶ To detect the impact of the program, IMPAQ is using a randomized control trial (RCT), the gold standard of program evaluation.
- ▶ This method will provide rigorous evidence as to whether the YPD program has a measurable impact on student education, soft skills development and labor market outcomes.
- ▶ To detect the program effect, IMPAQ randomly assigned school classes into treatment classrooms (taught by a YPD-trained teacher) and control classrooms (taught by a non-YPD teacher).
- ▶ The randomization ensures that the students in the treatment and control groups have the same average socio-economic characteristics at the beginning of the program.
- ▶ After the intervention, any detected differences in education and labor market outcomes between the treatment and the control group can then be solely attributed to the program.

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¹ Secretaría de Educación, Recreación y Deporte. (2015). *Proyecto Modalidades de Inclusión Educativa*. Source: <http://www.educacion.quito.gob.ec/index.php/direcciones-metropolitanas/inclusion-educativa>, retrieved May 9, 2017.