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The Future of Literacy in Latin America: How Evidence from LAC Reads Can Help Close Early Reading Gaps

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The Future of Literacy in Latin America: How Evidence from LAC Reads Can Help Close Early Reading Gaps

WELCOMING REMARKS

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FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

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The Future of Literacy in Latin America: Evidence from LAC Reads

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February 25, 2021



Agenda

- LAC Reads evaluation objectives
- How and where we generated the evidence from promising reading interventions
- Findings
- Cost-effectiveness
- Key conclusions
- Recommendations

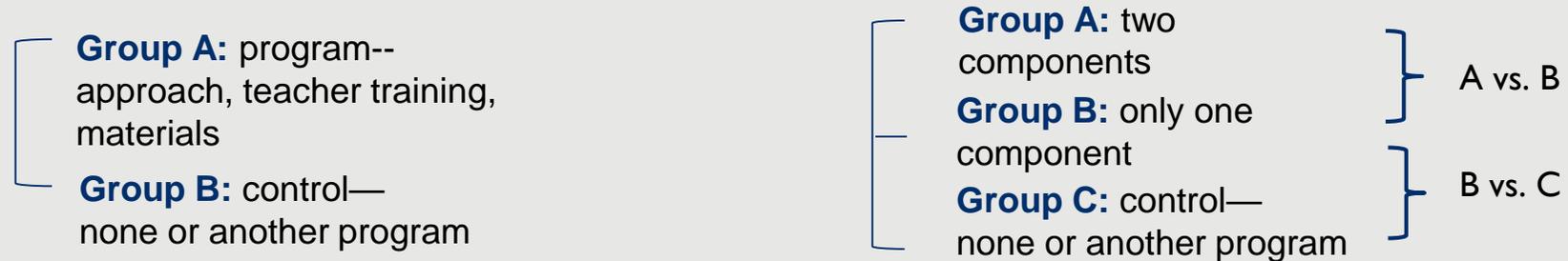


LAC Reads evaluation objectives

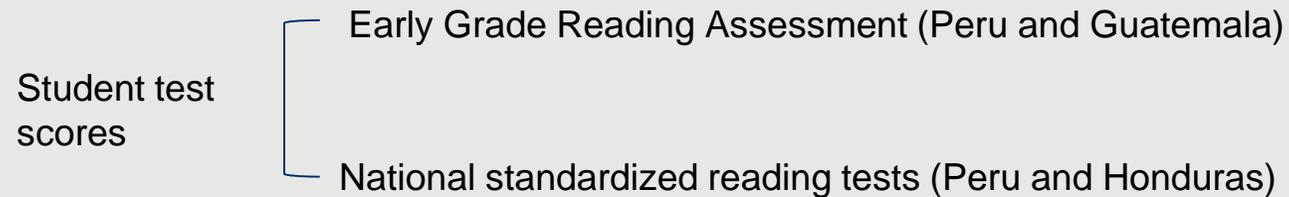
	<p>Generate rigorous evidence on impact and costs for decision-making about investments in early grade reading in Latin America and the Caribbean using Randomized Control Trials (RCTs)</p>
	<p>Build capacity in local researchers, program implementers, government and other local partners, USAID missions and other stakeholders to understand, support, and use the results of impact evaluations of early grade reading interventions</p>
	<p>Contribute to the knowledge base of what works and does not work to improve early grade reading in LAC countries</p>

Four randomized control trials conducted in Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua

- Two-arm and three-arm studies

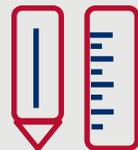


- Reading outcomes



- Mixed methods

Quantitative data



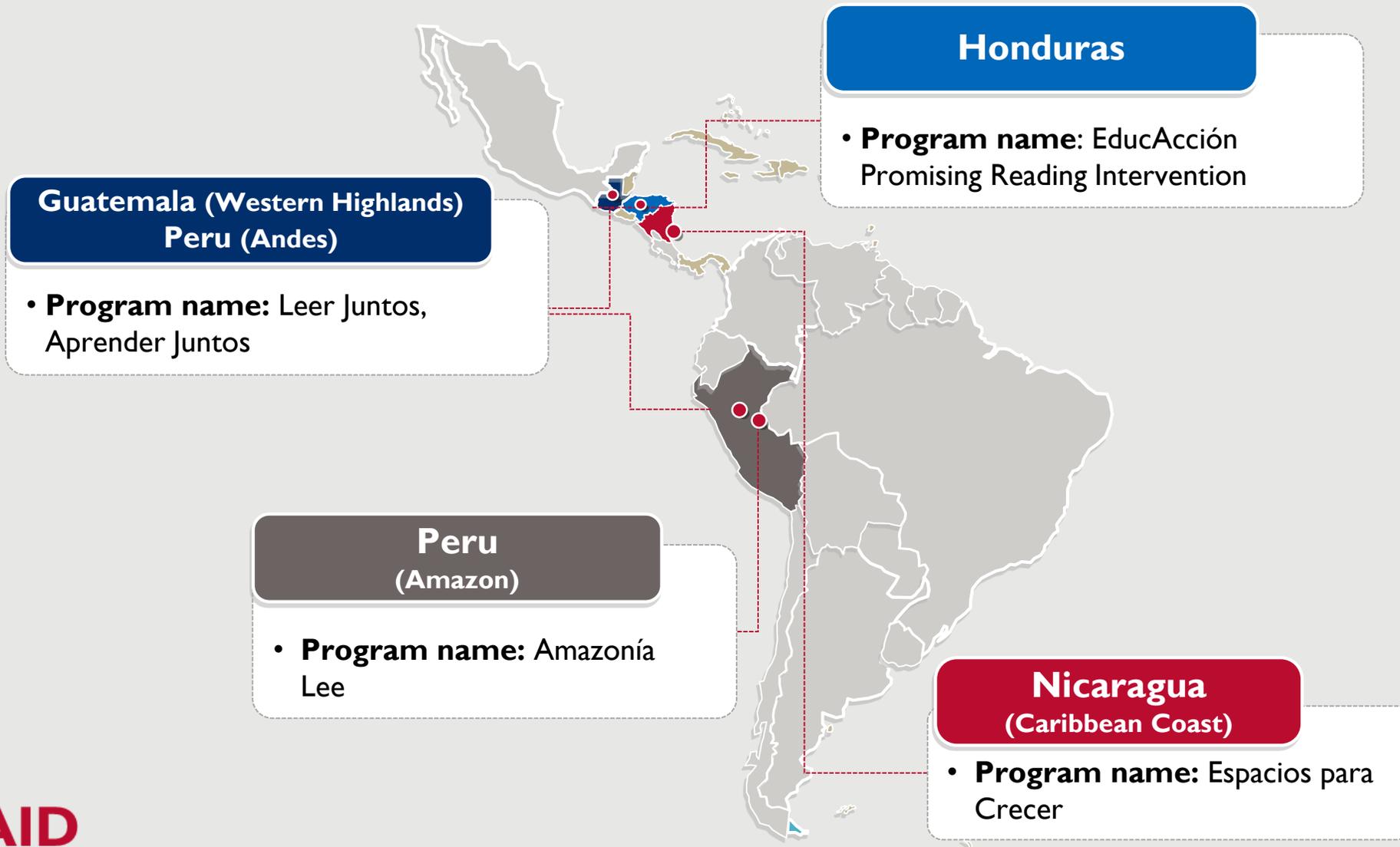
Quantify impacts

Qualitative information



Understand quantitative findings

Where the evidence comes from



Where the evidence comes from

Guatemala (Western Highlands) Peru (Andes)

- **Program name:** Leer Juntos, Aprender Juntos
- **Type:** Teacher training, coaching, materials, community reading activities
- **Geography/population:** Rural, mountainous region, bilingual communities
- **Implementer:** Save the Children, local NGOs
- **Language of instruction:** Mixed Spanish Quechua (Peru); Mixed Spanish K'iche (Guatemala)
- **Intervention period:** 2014–2016



Where the evidence comes from

Peru (Amazon)

- **Program name:** Amazonía Lee
- **Type:** Teacher training, coaching, and pedagogical materials
- **Geography/population:** Rural and peri-urban communities
- **Implementer:** Regional education services with technical assistance of local university (UPCH)
- **Language of instruction:** Spanish
- **Intervention period:** 2015–2016



Where the evidence comes from



Honduras

- **Program name:** EducAcción Promising Reading Intervention
- **Type:** Formative and end-of-grade assessments, teacher and principal training, improvement plans
- **Geography/population:** Large and small cities, rural
- **Implementer:** AIR's bilateral project EducAcción
- **Language of instruction:** Spanish
- **Intervention period:** 2015–2016

Where the evidence comes from



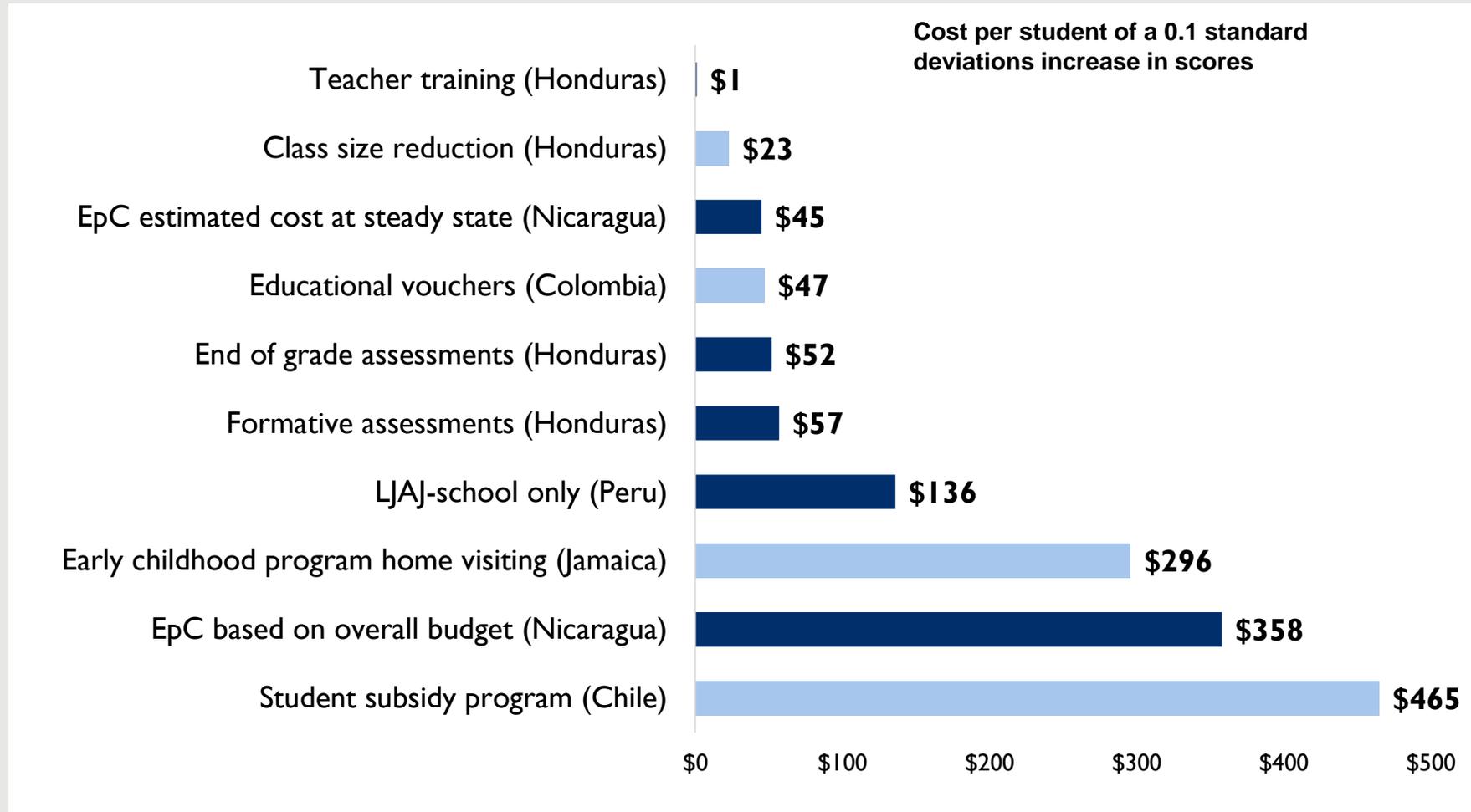
Nicaragua (Caribbean Coast)

- **Program name:** Espacios para Crecer
- **Type:** Afterschool enrichment
- **Geography/population:** Urban, rural coastal and island
- **Implementer:** Devtech Systems Inc. and local NGOs
- **Language of instruction:** Spanish, some Kriol, Miskitu, Ulwa
- **Intervention period:** 2011–2017

Findings

Program name	Amazonía Lee		Leer Juntos, Aprender Juntos		EducAcción Promising Reading Intervention	Espacios para Crecer
Country/Region	Ucayali	San Martin	Peru Andes	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua
Grade(s) ^{1/}	2		3		3	1 to 5
Positive impacts on reading skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoding • Familiar word reading • Reading comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoding and fluency accuracy score • Basic reading comprehension skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading test scores—comprehension, vocabulary, types of text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoding • Reading fluency • Reading comprehension
Range of effect sizes	0.15–0.27		0.19–0.32		0.11–0.38	0.10–0.16
Subgroup differences	No	No	No	No	E0G impacts larger in urban area; FA impacts larger in rural area	No

LAC Reads cost-effectiveness compared to similar programs



Key conclusions

- Evidence-based teacher training and coaching interventions can improve reading outcomes among children in low-resource contexts.
- Evaluating programs in a “steady state” generates the most reliable impact and cost estimates.
- Building deep capacity and understanding of the evaluation’s design and goals in the program implementation team pays dividends.
- The counterfactual matters. Impacts of early grade reading programs will differ depending on to what they are compared.
- Evaluating impacts for key subgroups yielded important information on program impacts.

Recommendations

- Policy makers and program implementers should consider testing innovative, lower cost ways to effectively deliver program elements such as in-person teacher training and coaching more efficiently.
- Take time and work inclusively with stakeholders to design impact evaluations prior to intervention role-out to ensure a robust randomized design.
- The counterfactual should be aligned to the policy or programmatic research question. *Does the program work compared to the status quo? Which of two programs works better? Which program is more cost effective?*
- Design multi-site, multi-contrast evaluations that consider key subgroups of interest to generate information on the context in which an intervention may generate impacts, and to provide more confidence in the generalizability of findings.

Thank you

For more information:

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Panel Discussion: Insights That Inform Improvement

Moderator: **Michael Lisman**, education team lead, Bureau for Latin America & the Caribbean, USAID

Juan Luis Cordova, regional director, LAC Reads Capacity Program, Juárez and Associates

Eric Eversmann, senior director for education, Save the Children

Ancell Scheker Mendoza, director of evaluation of educational quality, Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic

Mariela Isabel Zelada Ochoa, dean of education, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala

