

# EVALUATION MATTERS: HABLA INGLES (QUITO)

## The Program

In late 2019, U.S. Embassy Quito partnered with the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MoE) and implementing partner Experiment in International Living Ecuador (EIL) to design and implement Ecuador Habla Inglés (EHI), an English program that amplifies the reach of Public Diplomacy (PD) English programming by aiming to improve the competency of English teachers, with the ultimate goal of improving English ability of Ecuadoran students.

### ABOUT THE EVALUATION

**Why:** The evaluation was intended to provide evidence to inform programmatic decision-making to the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador and inform the design, implementation, and improvement of EHI going forward as well as offer insights for other Embassies interested in English teacher training programming.

**Who:** The MELI Unit contracted District Communications Group (DCG) to conduct the evaluation

**How:** DCG utilized a mixed methods approach including a literature review, a desk review of program records, interviews, focus groups, online surveys, vox pops, and classroom observations.

**When:** October 2021 – August 2023

**How Much:** \$476,693

### Key Findings and Conclusions

**Increases in English-language level among teachers.** English teacher participation in the EHI program leads to self-reported increases in English-language level. The survey among participating and non-participating teachers indicated participating teachers were twice as likely as non-participating teachers to report that over the past year, their abilities in English have increased “a lot.” Participating teachers nearly universally (98 percent) agreed that “the program was effective in increasing my English-language skills.” Likewise, 96 percent of participating teachers reported improvement of their English level in the last year, compared to 72 percent of non-participating teachers.

**Increased self-confidence in English-language teaching skills.** EHI participant teachers reported higher self-confidence in English teaching skills than non-participating peers. Seventy-one percent of participating teachers reported that over the past year their confidence in their abilities as a teacher increased “a lot.” Students of EHI teachers said they have greater confidence in their English (80 percent) and motivation to learn English (84 percent).

**Instilling a growth mindset.** Teachers absorbed best practices about lesson planning, technology literacy, and instilling a growth mindset in students from the EHI program. Evidence from numerous sources demonstrates that EHI participant teachers increased their commitment to educating and respect for their students. EHI teachers reported applying positive reinforcement in classrooms and students noted the teachers were more empathetic, did not criticize them for making mistakes, and encouraged them to actively participate in class.



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You can find the full evaluation report here:  
<https://eca.state.gov/impact/evaluation-eca/evaluation-initiative/completed-evaluations>

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

1. How has participation contributed to teachers' own skill development?
2. How (if at all) has teachers' participation in EHI contributed to improved student confidence and language skills in English?
3. What other emergent outcomes are there from the program?
4. What other factors contribute to teachers' and students' learning outcomes?
5. What improvements can be made to the EHI program to support its goals?

**Improved pedagogical practices.** Modeling of pedagogical best practices through the EHI curricula and teacher trainers had a positive effect on how participating teachers manage their own classrooms and teach English to students. EHI teachers reported higher levels of teaching skill including using more dynamic and engaging activities and a more collaborative approach with their students. Ninety-eight percent of EHI teachers supported the statement, "the program taught me new approaches to teaching English" and 89 percent of their students perceived an improvement in their teacher's skills.

**Contextual challenges and COVID-19.** The evaluation also provided evidence of the significant negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning, as well as on both students' and teachers' social support networks. Poor school infrastructure, limited resources, recent reductions in English-language instruction hours, community violence and insecurity, and competing demands on teachers' time all detract from potential higher-level gains made through EHI. This reinforces

that PD programs such as EHI operate in complex scenarios and often require multiple points of engagement over years, not weeks or months, to materialize.

**Positive outlook on the future.** EHI teachers felt empowered because of their improved skillsets and had a more positive outlook on the future. For teachers, EHI is contributing to increased optimism, hope for success and prosperity for the future in Ecuador.

## Integrated Recommendations

The embassy in Ecuador has adjusted its overarching procedures and practices stemming from this evaluation's recommendations:

**Continue to support positive outcomes and growth for EHI alumni** - In addition to the existing certificate for completion of the English proficiency level, the program added an in-person ceremony for participants who achieve B2.2 English level (the target for Habla participants).

**Continue to support positive outcomes and growth for EHI alumni** - The program has added a component in which EHI alumni can apply for competitive awards to develop community projects, aimed at community solutions to address social problems. Material support with the awards includes mini-grants and laptops. Many awards will incorporate mentoring of non-participants at the community level. The first cohort applied fall 2023, received training, and started in January 2024.

**Continue to hone the curricula and resources** - The program now incorporates native or fluent English speakers from other USG exchange programs into the EHI program, to help hone language skills. In particular, Peace Corps volunteers have been organizing weekly calls to practice English with EHI participants. In addition, some schools have Peace Corps volunteers who have been placed with EHI teachers, while planning has begun for Fulbright English Teaching Assistants to join classrooms in the near future. Regional English Language Officers are also exploring options to offer English classes (virtual or in-person).