

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Experimental Evaluation of Heal to Grow

Colombia
CO-T1678

Technical Cooperation Number]

[Web link to approved document]

Heal to Grow: Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health in Early Childhood

1. Background and Justification

- 1.1 It is imperative to understand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the mental health of students, caregivers, and teachers, and identify solutions to support young children. Against this background, the objective of the proposed TC is to design and evaluate a program to support the mental and emotional health of young children.
- 1.2 **Background.** The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented changes and challenges into the lives of people. Households throughout the world are suffering from the socio-economic impact of decreased or lost livelihoods, the loss of loved ones, and a decrease in social interactions which can all have a detrimental effect on mental health and well-being. For those involved in education, whether it be as students, teachers, or caregivers; the pandemic has been significantly challenging. The world changed overnight, and everyone was forced to adapt their learning environments and worry about each other's health and safety.
- 1.3 These quick changes to students' and families' daily lives took a toll on their mental health and well-being. A study by [Vaillancourt \(2021a\)](#) in the United States, shows that parents had significantly worse mental health than other adults. Additionally, since the pandemic began, research has shown that teachers have shown an increase in psychological symptoms, such as stress, anxiety, and depression ([Ozamiz-Extebarria et al., 2021](#)). The well-being of caregivers and teachers can also affect the well-being and academic performance of students. An IDB regional survey, including Colombia and other countries, finds that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated social distancing measures have substantially affected the mental health and well-being of young children and their caregivers. A vast majority of caregivers (85%) reported at least one symptom of deteriorated mental health during the pandemic. Findings show troubling gender gaps in reported deterioration of mental health outcomes with mothers of young children being more affected by the pandemic than fathers, including gender gaps in sadness (26.1%), lack of appetite (27.7%), overall distress (20.1%), fear (16.3%), exhaustion (18.4%), and insomnia (15.9%). Child distress was found to increase in tandem with caregiver distress. Caregivers reported increased symptoms of distress during the pandemic, with 61% of children displaying at least one symptom of mental distress ([Näslund-Hadley et al, 2020](#)). In response to this mental health challenge of young children, the IDB has supported the development and testing of socio-emotional learning and mental wellbeing models for preschoolers. In Nicaragua, an caregiver application to foster socioemotional learning and mental health of young children has been developed and is being experimentally evaluated (NI-T1294). In El Salvador, the Tuchan model to support child development and socioemotional learning was designed and experimentally evaluated (ES-T1295, EST1282). In Guatemala, a behavioral intervention has been designed and evaluated (RG-T2838). In Colombia, the Government has tested an international model, Think Equal, for fostering socio-emotional skills (CO-T1524).
- 1.4 **Think Equal.** The socioemotional learning program Think Equal targets Colombian 4–5-year-old children, fostering socioemotional learning. The model was evaluated through an experimental

evaluation (IPA, 2022) to assess its impact on children's competencies in empathy, inclusion, compassion, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, emotional regulation, generosity, and advocating and caring for others. The experimental evaluation showed that the Think Equal program had positive effects on children's prosocial behavior, emotional autoregulation, self-awareness, and cognitive learning. Treated children have higher cognitive development than their peers in the control group (0.15 standard deviations) and treated caregivers experience fewer negative emotions than controls (0.24 standard deviations). The program also improved mental health outcomes of caregivers (0.14 standard deviations) with effects being particularly elevated among caregivers with incomplete secondary education (0.22 standard deviations) (IPA, 2022).

- 1.5 **Heal to Grow.** Based on the positive results from Think Equal on social emotional skills, the Government of Colombia has designed a program called Heal to Grow (Sanar para Crecer) which seeks to promote wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of young children and their caregivers. The program expands the Think Equal model by adding a second module to foster mental wellbeing. The program is implemented through the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing (ICBF) through a nationwide network of community households (HCB). HCBs are early care settings under the responsibility of a trained person for children from 6 months- 5 years of age. All the HCBs under ICBF serve about 1.7 million vulnerable children and their families nationwide. The program's goal is to promote the social emotional and mental health development of young children through strengthening the wellbeing of the HCB leads. The ICBF has contracted ten child psychologists who will lead the implementation of Heal to Grow, including the training of some 150 HCB educators.
- 1.6 Against this background, the IDB is looking to contract a consultancy firm to assist with the evaluation of the Heal to Grow program in Colombia and conduct a regional study.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objective of the proposed TC is to design and evaluate a program to support the mental and emotional health of young children; and conduct a comparative international study contrasting the results from Heal to Grow with regional initiatives that aim to foster mental health and socioemotional learning.

3. Scope of Services

- 3.1 The firm will develop an evaluation design of the program. The evaluation should encompass some 1,500 children. The regional study of mental health interventions should include at least three countries.

4. Key Activities

- 4.1. The consulting firm will carry out the following activities:
 - a. **Work Plan.** Create a Work Plan of the consultancy. The Plan must also include the elaboration and validation stages of the regional study, as well the experimental evaluation of Heal to Grow Program (it must contemplate and list the required elements for the different parts of the project).

- b. **Sample and randomization design.** Conduct the sampling and randomization.
- c. **IRB.** The approval of the trial by a certified Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human subject research.
- d. **Experimental evaluation.** Evaluate the Heal to Grow program randomizing Community Households (HCB). The experimental design will contrast any changes in wellbeing of children in the treatment group (Group I) with children from a group of comparison community households (Group II). The collection of quantitative baseline and endline data, using the Children Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and the Family Care Indicators (FCI) and instruments used in the assessment of children’s mental health used in the Think Equal evaluation and other countries.
- e. **Monitoring.** The firm must work closely with the IDB to maintain a detailed record on the implementation of pilot as well as the survey. Continuously meet with the IDB, to discuss the progress of the consultancy.
- f. **International Comparative Study:** Conduct an regional comparative study of socioemotional learning and mental wellbeing of interventions in the region.

5. Expected Outcome and Deliverables

- 5.1. The evaluation consultant will submit the following reports:
 - A detailed workplan
 - IRB
 - Sampling design
 - Randomization
 - A baseline report
 - A final experimental evaluation report, including database and codebook
 - International comparative study

6. Project Schedule and Milestones

- 6.1. The evaluation will take place between 2022 and 2025.
- 6.2. The international comparative study will be developed and disseminated between 2024 and 2025.

7. Reporting Requirements

- 7.1. Reports must be submitted in electronic files. The databases should be submitted in STATA and must include code books

8. Acceptance Criteria

8.1. Acceptance of consultancy products will be based on international practices for human subject research, and experimental evaluations.

8.2. The Bank will be responsible for reviewing and accepting the deliverables generated through the consultancy.

9. Other Requirements

9.1. *None*

10. Supervision and Reporting

10.1. The consultancy firm will report to Emma Näslund-Hadley (emman@iadb.org), including regular meetings with the IDB.

11. Schedule of Payments

11.1. Payment terms will be based on project milestones or deliverables. The Bank does not expect to make advance payments under consulting contracts unless a significant amount of travel is required. The Bank wishes to receive the most competitive cost proposal for the services described herein.

11.2. The IDB Official Exchange Rate indicated in the RFP will be applied for necessary conversions of local currency payments.

Payment Schedule	
<i>Deliverable</i>	%
1. <i>Work Plan</i>	10%
2. <i>IRB, sampling design and randomization</i>	30%
3. <i>Baseline report</i>	20%
4. <i>Final experimental evaluación report</i>	20%
5. <i>International comparative study</i>	20%
TOTAL	100%

Job Title: [Education Division](#) Research Consultant for experimental data analysis and drafting of paper (CO-T1678)

Background of this search:

The objective of the consultancy is to provide research support, including data analysis and drafting of an academic paper.

The team’s mission: [The Social Sector \(SCL\)](#) is a multidisciplinary team convinced that investing in people is the way to improve lives and overcome the development challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean. Jointly with the countries in the region, the Social Sector formulates public policy solutions to reduce poverty and improve the delivery of education, work, social protection, and health services. The objective is to advance a more productive region, with equal opportunities for men and women, and greater inclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

The IDB Group helps Latin American and Caribbean countries promote skills development and lifelong learning as a strategy to ensure that citizens can contribute productively to society, improve their well-being, and be good citizens. To this end, it works with the countries of the region in [five lines of action](#):

- (i) ensure that people have equitable access to relevant, high-quality learning opportunities throughout their lives;
- (ii) strengthen quality and relevance assurance mechanisms;
- (iii) consolidate and develop better financing and co-financing mechanisms to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and coverage of skills development opportunities;
- (iv) take advantage of the use of technology to increase equity and access to skills development opportunities and improve the efficiency of skills development systems; and
- (v) actively promote the generation and use of evidence to inform decisions about skills development.

What you’ll do:

The consultant shall collaborate with the IDB Team in the following activities for the Heal to Grow technical cooperation (CO-T1678):

- (i) Conduct statistical analysis of the experimental data and analyzing results. This will include drawing on the intensity of treatment research to help interpret the quantitative findings. (40 days);
- (ii) Help draft an academic paper, including literature review of related studies, methodology, treatment description, and quantitative and qualitative findings, and incorporate feedback into subsequent versions of the analysis throughout the publication process (20 days);
- (iii) Review edits and Spanish Translation of paper (2 days).

Deliverables and Payment Timelines:

Work to be performed	Expected Deliverable	% Total of Contract
Payment 1. Upon signing of contract and approval of workplan	Signed contract and approved workplan	10%
Payment 2. Upon completion of the statistical analysis	Statistical analysis document	25%

Payment 3. Upon completion of the academic paper	Draft Paper	50%
Payment 4. Upon completion of review of edits and translations	Draft Note	15%

What you'll need:

Citizenship: You are a citizen of one of our 48-member countries. We may offer assistance with relocation and visa applications for you and your eligible dependents.

Consanguinity: You have no family members (up to fourth degree of consanguinity and second degree of affinity, including spouse) working at the IDB Group.

Education: Master's degree or equivalent, in economics, education, or similar field.

Experience: A minimum of five (5) years of relevant professional experience or the equivalent combination of education and experience

Languages: Fluent in English and Spanish

Core and Technical Competencies: Knowledge of data analysis and project management. Excellent writing skills in English; Spanish is also desirable.

Opportunity Summary:

Type of contract: PEC

Length of contract: 6 months

Starting date: February 15, 2024

Location: IDB Headquarters, Washington D.C.,

Responsible person: Emma Naslund-Hadley, Education Lead Specialist (SCL/EDU) emman@iadb.org

Requirements: You must be a citizen of one of the IDB's 48 member countries and have no family members currently working at the IDB Group.

Our culture: Our people are committed and passionate about improving lives in Latin-America and the Caribbean, and they get to do what they love in a diverse, collaborative and stimulating work environment. We are the first Latin American and Caribbean development institution to be awarded the EDGE certification, recognizing our strong commitment to gender equality. As an employee you can be part of internal resource groups that connect our diverse community around common interests. Because we are committed to providing equal opportunities in employment, we embrace all diversity and encourage women, LGBTQ+, persons with disabilities, afro-descendants, and indigenous people to apply.

About us: At the IDB, we're committed to improving lives. Since 1959, we've been a leading source of long-term financing for economic, social, and institutional development in Latin America and the Caribbean. We do more than lending though. We partner with our 48-member countries to provide Latin America and the Caribbean with cutting-edge research about relevant development issues, policy advice to inform their decisions, and technical assistance to improve on the planning and execution of projects. For this, we need people who not only have the right skills, but also are passionate about improving lives.

Our team in Human Resources carefully reviews all applications.

