

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	BRAZIL/CSC - Southern Cone
▪ TC Name:	Delivering Parenting Interventions Via Group Meetings in Boa Vista.
▪ TC Number:	BR-T1389
▪ Team Leader/Members:	LOPEZ BOO, FLORENCIA (SCL/SPH) Team Leader; OCHOA, FRANCISCO JOSE (SCL/SPH); GUERRA, MARTHA M. (SCL/SPH); AVILA, KRYSLA A (LEG/SGO); OGLIALORO, CLAUDIA (ORP/GCM); GARCIA RINCON, MARIA FERNANDA (ORP/PTR)
▪ Taxonomy:	Research and Dissemination
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	23 Mar 2018
▪ Beneficiary:	Boa Vista Municipality
▪ Executing Agency:	Inter-American Development Bank
▪ IDB funding requested:	\$270,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	\$1,890,000.00
▪ Disbursement period:	36 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	Social Protection & Health
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	Social Sector
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 The main objective of this Technical Cooperation is to improve children's development by integrating parenting activities with existing group meetings in Brazil. The proposed delivery model implies the inclusion of a child stimulation package in group meetings. The target population are Bolsa Familia pregnant women from 21 weeks of pregnancy and children of up to 36 months of age who are Bolsa Familia beneficiaries. The project will be piloted and evaluated to examine its impacts on language and cognitive development. The theory of change behind this innovation is that the activities learned at the group meetings will improve parental knowledge and stimulate practices in the home and that this, in turn, will result in better child development outcomes. The proposed curriculum for this intervention has been proven to be highly cost-effective in small pilot programs (Hamadani et al., 2016) and has the potential to be replicated routinely and provide services to more than 370,000 pregnant women and to 5 million children between 0 and 3 years of age (Bolsa Familia beneficiaries). This project will then finance a major innovation: delivering the parental training activities without additional staff or mothers' time, by integrating the training into existing local group meetings. In addition, the impact evaluation will answer the question of whether this intervention model is cost-effective or not, which is an extremely policy relevant question given that Brazil has recently launched the national early childhood development (ECD) program, Criança Feliz, and they are looking for the most cost-effective approach.
- 2.2 The pilot program will be managed by the Municipality of Boa Vista, and it will occur within an existing group-meeting ECD program, the Família que Acolhe (FQA), a

program that benefits children from pregnancy to age six guaranteeing access to health, education and social development services . The proposed pilot program and evaluation can offer a less costly alternative to other models Brazil is implementing right now because it is focused on mothers and children during a shorter period of time (from the 21st week of pregnancy until the child reaches 36 months of age), it has an evidence-based curriculum (Hamadani et al., 2016). There is an urgent need to document that parenting programs can be implemented at scale and are cost-effective in countries like Brazil: large, decentralized, disperse, diverse, and facing budget constraints. In recent years, several municipal and state governments have implemented ECD programs that range from home visits to school based interventions to improve parenting skills and children's well-being. However, these are mostly small-scale programs and an expansion to the national level would require a massive financial investment (at least of 300 US\$ per child per year) and large operational capacity. The proposed pilot will help understand if group meetings are cost effective and can be scaled up to improve early childhood development.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component 1. Strengthening Parenting Skills in Group Meetings.** The proposed pilot program will offer parenting training through quarterly group meeting sessions (80 sessions) with demonstration of appropriate child development activities to the mothers, taking advantage of the group meetings of Familia que Acolhe Center in Boa Vista that take place every two weeks with a focus on improving psychosocial stimulation following the University of the West Indies (UWI) curriculum adapted for group settings.

Therefore, this component will fund a new curriculum development that seeks to improve the FQA one and other materials and resources (including consultants), translation, validation and testing and production of the center-based strategy materials (curriculum printing, toy production). Professionals will be trained accordingly. And, therefore, training session and consultant travel will also be funded under this component. Once validated all materials will be available for use in the whole country.

Component 2. Impact Evaluation on Children's Cognitive and Language Development. The proposed methodology to evaluate the impact of the project is a cluster randomized controlled trial whose details are described in Appendix 1. Given that the content delivered in two different strategies (home visits or group) is the same, the delivery strategy can be compared in terms of impact and costs. A survey will be conducted at baseline at enrollment and a follow-up round should be collected when the child is 36 months old. Power calculations are provided in Appendix 1.

One of the strengths of the proposed methodology is that we will be able to randomize census segments for the impact evaluation and the team has a very firm agreement with the city of Boa Vista, in Roraima about the proposed stepped wedge RCT evaluation. A possible limitation for this evaluation is the external validity of the study. Since Brazil is a big and diverse country, the conclusions of this experiment might not be immediately replicable in other regions and settings.

- 3.2 **Component I: Strengthening Parenting Skills in Group Meetings.** The proposed pilot program will offer parenting training through quarterly group meeting sessions (80 sessions) with demonstration of appropriate child development activities to the mothers, taking advantage of the group meetings of Familia que Acolhe Center in Boa Vista that take place every two weeks with a focus on improving psychosocial stimulation for group settings
- 3.3 **Component II: Impact Evaluation on Children's Cognitive and Language Development.** The proposed methodology is that we will be able to randomize census segments for the impact evaluation and the team has a very firm agreement with the city of Boa Vista, in Roraima about the proposed stepped wedge RCT evaluation. A possible limitation for this evaluation is the external validity of the study. Since Brazil is

a big and diverse country, the conclusions of this experiment might not be immediately replicable in other regions and settings.

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Strengthening Parenting Skills in Group Meetings.	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 1,890,000.00	\$ 1,990,000.00
Impact Evaluation on Children's Cognitive and Language Development.	\$ 170,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 170,000.00

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 As per section 4.5 of policy GN-2470-2, the project will be executed by the Bank (through the Brazil country office) .
- 5.2 The execution is organized as such because of the Bank's expertise in executing impact evaluations of ECD projects such as those with the Program Cresca com Seu Filho (BR-T1330, BR T1300, RG K1454) and the Nicaraguan program Amor (NI-L1059 and NI-T1226) as well as with Cuna Mas in Peru. The proposed TC activities are consistent with the IDBG's country strategy in Brazil (GN-2850) and Brazil's approval, through its Agência Brasileira de Cooperação – ABC, is being sought [to be attached as soon as obtained].

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 No major issues or risks have been identified at this stage. Close coordination between the Bank team and local counterparts (Boa Vista), as well as partners (FMCSV and Stiftung Auxilium) will be extremely important, especially in the initial phase of implementation of the pilot.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

- 7.1 The ESG classification for this operation is "C".