



# Manos que cuidan

Manos Que Cuidan (Healing Hands):  
A Two-Generation Approach for Migrant  
and Host Community Families in Ecuador

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To each one of the Venezuelan women who have offered early childhood care in community play and learning spaces, with the purpose of guaranteeing the protection and comprehensive development of boys and girls, establishing bonds of solidarity and trust with families, and becoming points of reference for protected and nurturing environments for children in their surroundings.

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A young girl with dark hair and a pink hair tie is sitting in a ball pit. She is wearing a white t-shirt with a purple floral pattern and purple pants. She is holding a small woven basket filled with colorful balls. The background is a soft, out-of-focus ball pit with many colorful balls. The entire image has a light blue-green tint.

**"I learned that being a mom is not just about taking care of the children, we also need to prioritize and love ourselves, because loving ourselves also helps us love others."**

*Reflections on the project by a mom, written in the travel notebook (a notebook that rotates among mothers attending the play space in which they share their reflections).*

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El juego ayuda a los niños a expresar sus emociones y a aprender sobre sí mismos y el mundo que les rodea. Monte Sinaí- Guayaquil, 2022.

#### Acronyms

<b>DYA</b>	Centro de Desarrollo y Autogestión
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>ERD</b>	Economic Recovery and Development
<b>FUDELA</b>	Fundación de las Américas para el Desarrollo
<b>GTRM</b>	Working Group for Refugees and Migrants
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
<b>MIES</b>	Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social
<b>PEERS</b>	Partnership for Equality and Results System
<b>PCA</b>	Partnership Capacity Analysis
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>VCR</b>	Venezuelan Crisis Response

# Executive Summary

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This executive report provides an overview of the Healing Hands project, funded by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and executed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Ecuador. The project took place from October 1, 2021, to April 30, 2023, with a focus on supporting the holistic development, care and protection of young migrant and host community children (aged 0 – 5 years) in the cities of Quito, Ibarra, Pimampiro, and Guayaquil.

The IRC, an international humanitarian aid organization founded in 1933, operates in over 40 countries. In South America, the IRC has played a crucial role in responding to the Venezuelan crisis, providing support to Venezuelan migrants who have left their country and settled in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, the United States, and other countries.

The IRC has been operational in Ecuador since 2021, establishing projects and strategic partnerships with local partners for program design and implementation, with a focus on providing quality healthcare, protection, economic recovery and development, and early childcare services for migrant and host community populations .

The project was divided into five distinct phases, including: needs assessment phase, planning phase, co-design phase, implementation phase, and exit phase. Each phase was crucial for the project's development and allowed for continuous adjustments and improvements based on the results and challenges encountered, to ensure the relevance and impact of interventions.

By incorporating flexible and adaptive approaches, the project supported income-generating strategies for parents, allowing them to earn a living while also investing in the well-being of their children. This approach recognized the importance of addressing both economic needs and caregiving responsibilities, ensuring that primary caregivers had the support and resources necessary to care for their families, both now, and in the future.

Another key aspect was the establishment of Community Play and Learning Spaces, which played a crucial role in providing quality care and education for children in crisis situations. Through training, equipment provision, and infrastructure improvements, the capacity and quality of care in these community spaces were strengthened.

The success of the Methodological Box and the Traveling Play and Learning Backpack was a highlight of the project. These tools provided clear guidelines and pedagogical resources for caregivers and educators, promoting effective practices in the care and development of children. Key findings included the delivery of 40 backpacks to community play and learning spaces, linking training to technical teams and educators on the didactic use of the materials. This initiative aimed to create engaging and interactive experiences for children through the use of puppets and theater, promoting the development of language skills among participants. The musical instruments included in the backpack have supported children's holistic development through engagement in music and movement for young children.

Throughout the project, the importance of clients having access to accurate and reliable information was prioritized, rooted in the understanding that knowledge is key to enhanced nurturing parenting practices, supporting children's holistic development. Access to trustworthy resources and information was promoted for caregivers, and the community at large, to encourage informed decision-making and the development of appropriate parenting skills.

The Healing Hands project has successfully concluded its implementation in Ecuador, thanks to the support of Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, collaboration with the IRC, and the commitment of implementing partners: the Center for Development and Self-Management (DYA), the Foundation of the Americas for Development (FUDELA), and the Fundación Alas de Colibrí. Through the implementation of various strategies and the strengthening of caregivers' capacities and child development centers, the project succeeded in improving the quality of life for children. The project has provided valuable lessons for future interventions in the field of early childhood care, local integration, and community well-being, whilst the adoption of Community Child Care Homes as a viable modality of early childhood care is currently under consideration by the MoES. This would represent a significant achievement in enhancing access to quality ECD services for children across the country.





# 01

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## **HEALING HANDS**

Background, Objectives  
and Co-Design

# Project Background

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Healing Hands project, implemented by the International Rescue Committee, and local partners Centro de Desarrollo y Autogestión and Fundación de las Américas para el Desarrollo en Ecuador in Ecuador, aimed to address the needs of the Venezuelan migrant population residing in the country. As of November 2022, there were over 502,000 Venezuelan migrants and refugees seeking refuge in Ecuador.

According to R4V, it is estimated that by the end of 2022, there were 803,000 Venezuelan individuals in Ecuador - 252,000 in transit, and 551,000 located within the country. Of this population, 51.2% are women, and according to the report by the Ministry of Government of Ecuador, 88,320 are children. Of these, 54,000 do not have access to early, primary, and secondary education, denying them of this basic right. Approximately 73% of the refugee and migrant population in Ecuador are undocumented, limiting their access to formal employment, socioeconomic integration, and financial inclusion opportunities.

At least 16% of women have experienced some form of economic violence limiting their financial autonomy and limiting their economic opportunities (INEC, 2019). Additionally, disproportionate childcare responsibilities further limit the possibility of generating income, resulting in many women engaging in informal activities to earn an income.

Herein addition, 27.2% of children under the age of 2 suffer from chronic infant malnutrition, making Ecuador, representing the second-highest rate of child malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean, and preventing children from reaching their full potential. 72% of children under the age of 3 do not attend early childhood development services, while 70% of children between the ages of 3 and 6 do not attend pre-primary and first grade education. In Ecuador, 51% of children aged 1 to 5 have experienced physical abuse, especially in rural areas, and 47.3% have experienced some form of psychological abuse (INEC, 2018).

These official statistics highlight the complex situation faced by children aged 0 to 5 in accessing their right to quality education, protection and opportunities, exacerbated by socio-economic limitations of the population affected by human mobility in Ecuador.

The average per capita income of Venezuelan families in Ecuador falls below the poverty line, with the majority earning less than USD 84 per month<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, many families live in extreme poverty, with a per capita income below USD 47.00<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://app.box.com/file/1199136967275>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://app.box.com/file/1199136967275>

To address the needs of affected migrant communities, the IRC proposed a multisectoral solution to support caregivers' sustainable livelihoods and economic resilience through training and micro-economic initiatives, as well as enhance children's access to safe and quality early childhood care. The integration of Venezuelan families into host communities and the creation of support networks involved the active participation of local Ecuadorian families throughout the project, with the aim of enhancing social cohesion and tolerance.

The IRC initiated the Start-Up Phase of the project, during which the Economic Recovery and Development (ERD) and Early Childhood Development (ECD) team of the IRC, in collaboration with partners Centro de Desarrollo y Autogestión (DYA) and Fundación de las Américas para el Desarrollo (FUDELA), carried out an information gathering process focused on two key areas: Early Childhood Development and Economic Recovery and Development.

The **ECD analysis** aimed to understand the specific needs of the Venezuelan population, particularly caregivers, in accessing early education services. The assessment also involved the participation of local and national actors to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the situation within the country. The goal was to use these findings to develop and implement evidence-based programs that enhance the socio-emotional skills of young children while supporting caregivers to provide nurturing care.

The **ERD assessment** focused on market analysis to identify gaps in livelihood services and develop innovative solutions to enable caregivers to generate sustainable livelihoods. The research involved collecting data on various economic activities in the intervention areas, as well as gathering feedback from local traders and caregivers.

The **ECD data collection** took place from November 15 to November 30, 2021, in **Ibarra-Pimampiro, Guayaquil, and Quito**. The evaluation aimed to identify the specific needs of migrant families with children aged 0 to 5 years, considering their developmental and educational risks.

The **key findings of the ECD assessment** confirmed initial survey findings that early childhood development and early education initiatives were crucial to children's holistic development. The assessment identified that many of these services had been suspended or disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting children's access to ECD. In addition, several factors negatively impacted the quality and availability of early childhood development services, including a lack of resources for self-management, limited coverage in rural and peri-urban areas, a lack of trained educators, and deteriorated conditions of childcare facilities due to insufficient resources for their maintenance and improvement.

The **ERD data collection** was conducted in December 2021 and January 2022 in **Ibarra, Guayaquil, and Quito**. The IRC, along with its partners FUDELA and DYA, worked on identifying service gaps, prioritizing needs, and jointly developing a tailored intervention for the target population. As part of the ERD analysis, a market assessment was conducted, revealing 245 available businesses in the study areas. These services included restaurants (36%), tailors (19%), beauty salons (16%), mechanics (13%), and other activities such as motorcycle taxis, florists, technical services, cobblers, and various health-related services like clinical laboratories, dental clinics, optometry, and natural medicine.

**A significant need for products and services was identified** in the intervention areas, which went beyond childcare. As a result, it was recommended to support a broader range of productive employment activities for project participants. The assessment also highlighted the precarious conditions faced by a majority of the migrant population in the intervention areas, including poor working conditions, low income and job insecurity. Many expressed their aspiration to engage in business activities that could generate income for their families, aligning with the proposed project support for entrepreneurship.

Based on the findings of the needs assessments conducted in November and December 2021, which included interviews and focus group discussions with individuals in a situation of human mobility, as well as key stakeholders, IRC Ecuador confirmed the importance of supporting early childhood development spaces, enhancing community-level response capacity, and promoting access to caregiver's relevant livelihood skills and opportunities through economic development interventions.

In response to the assessment findings, Healing Hands implements a two-generation model – which focuses on simultaneously increasing family income while promoting child development -. The project was developed to be adapted to the families' needs – through the provision of accessible, and safe spaces that enable children and their families to process their trauma, establish a sense of belonging and build confidence.



These services were implemented in three variations of play and learning spaces

**Services:**

**a. Community Spaces for Play and Learning:**

**i. Community based Child care homes:** These structures represent a community-based initiative, which emerged in response to the need to provide comprehensive, protective, and reliable care to young children who lack access to other forms of childcare. In the city of Guayaquil, a pilot program was implemented, offering daily, community-based childcare services. During this program, caregivers received training – to enhance their capacity to support the development and well-being of children attending the care homes, whilst play and learning opportunities, and meals and snacks were provided to the children. Facility refurbishments were also conducted, where necessary to ensure a safe and suitable environment for clients.

**ii. Mobile Early Childhood Play Spaces:** The staff team and play supplies/equipment have the ability to be transported to available local spaces, allowing for the implementation of fun activities and opportunities for free play in mobile play spaces. These mobile spaces are movable and reach urban and rural areas, including those where early childhood care programs are generally not present. These mobile spaces are adapted and equipped to provide high-quality play and learning experiences for young children.

**iii. Fixed Community Spaces for Play and Learning:** Through the project, these spaces were renovated, enhancing their ability to provide child-friendly play and learning opportunities, supporting their holistic development. Additionally in these spaces, training is provided to caregivers to enhance their knowledge and capacity to support their children's development. These spaces were equipped with equipment and materials needed to implement play activities, while meals and snacks were offered to ensure the well-being of the children. The fixed spaces are located in existing community spaces such as community centers, child care centers, or shelters, and have been adapted and equipped to create stimulating and safe environments to support children's development.

**b. Areas of synergy between Early Childhood and Livelihoods for Economic Recovery:**

**i. Early Childhood parenting trainings to build parents skills in providing nurturing care** – with a particular focus on responsive caregiving and opportunities for early learning

**ii. Capacity Strengthening** through training sessions on financial skills, soft skills, budget management, management of productive units, among others, to enhance caregivers economic well-being and resilience.

**iii. Seed Capital Support:** Healing Hands provided seed capital to support caregivers income-generating entrepreneurial initiatives. This intervention aimed to empower Venezuelan migrants to establish their own businesses and improve their economic stability.

**c. Access to Information:** Info Pa'Lante<sup>3</sup> was identified as a cross-cutting and complementary service, serving as a reliable and comprehensive source of information for caregivers - providing access to up-to-date and accurate information on various aspects such as legal rights, protection services, healthcare, education, livelihood opportunities, and more.

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<sup>3</sup> InfoPa'lante Ecuador is an information and protection service for people in human mobility and vulnerable groups. It is part of the global Signpost initiative (<https://www.signpost.ngo>) by the International Rescue Committee, aiming to provide up-to-date and accurate information.

These initiatives aimed to address the specific needs of the Venezuelan migrant population in Ecuador, ensuring that the provided services were responsive to the needs of the intended clients, accessible, inclusive, and conducive to the well-being and holistic development of boys and girls.

By offering safe and nurturing environments, along with economic opportunities, the Healing Hands project sought to support families in rebuilding their lives and creating optimal opportunities for the exercise of rights, as well as enhancing the development of their children.



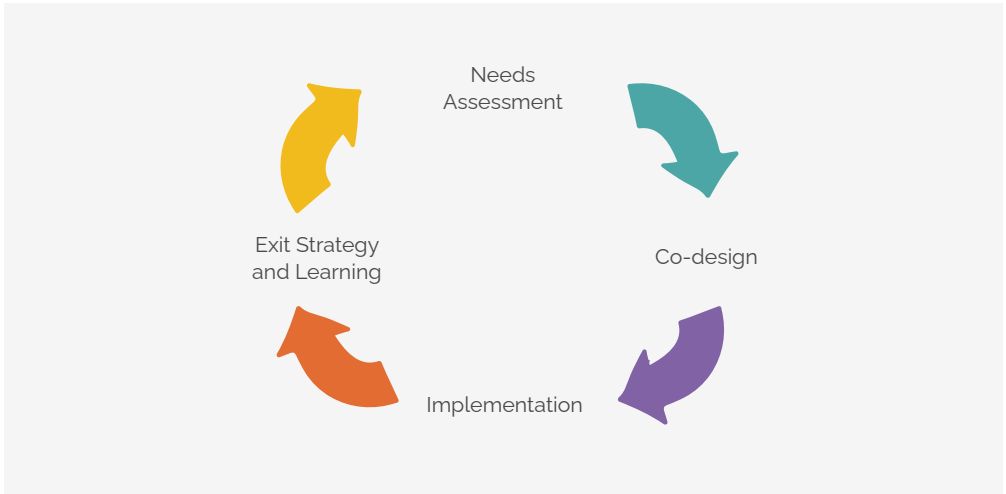
Community Play and Learning Spaces promote early childhood development and emotional bonding. Carapungo - Quito, 2023



Let's Read! At the Community Child Care Home. Monte Sinai - Guayaquil, 2022

# Co-Design with partners and families

The Healing Hands project followed a phased approach for its design and implementation. Here is a breakdown of each phase:



	<p><b>Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide migrant children and children from host communities, aged 0 to 5, and their primary caregivers with access to the necessary resources for their well-being, including quality early education and a sustainable family income.</li> </ul>
Phase 1	<p><b>Needs Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interviews and focus group studies conducted by the IRC, DYA, and FUDELA teams to analyze and systematize needs assessment.</li> <li>○ Analysis of information and consolidation of ECD and ERD needs assessment documents by IRC.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Co-Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Definition of eligibility criteria for project clients.</li> <li>○ Conducting five co-creation workshops with clients to select the project name and brand, and incorporate clients' interests and preferences.</li> <li>○ Study on "Games, Toys, and Lullabies for Migrant Early Childhood in Ecuador."</li> <li>○ Exchange of adaptation models and methodologies with partner technical teams, based on needs identification, co-creation workshop results, and the interview on games, toys, and lullabies.</li> <li>○ Approval of project design proposals by partners, unifying the pilot models to be implemented.</li> </ul>
Phase 2	

Phase 3

Implementation

- Design of measurement and verification instruments for indicators, with IRC's MEAL team strengthening partners' monitoring capacities.
- Implementation by partners with technical support by the IRC
- Submission of interim report to the Hilton Foundation.

Phase 4

Exit Strategy and Evaluation

- Support with brand manuals and visibility inputs for more sustainable small business.
- Articulation strategies with entities and organizations to refer primary caregivers to capacity strengthening programs on various topics.
- Traveling Play and Learning backpack.
- Methodological Toolbox: Collects and systematizes relevant information from interventions.
- Lessons learned workshops with partners and clients
- Implementation of an exit survey for primary caregivers who received seed capital and caregivers in community childcare homes.





# 02



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## **CLIENT PROFILES OF HEALING HANDS**

# Clients Profiles

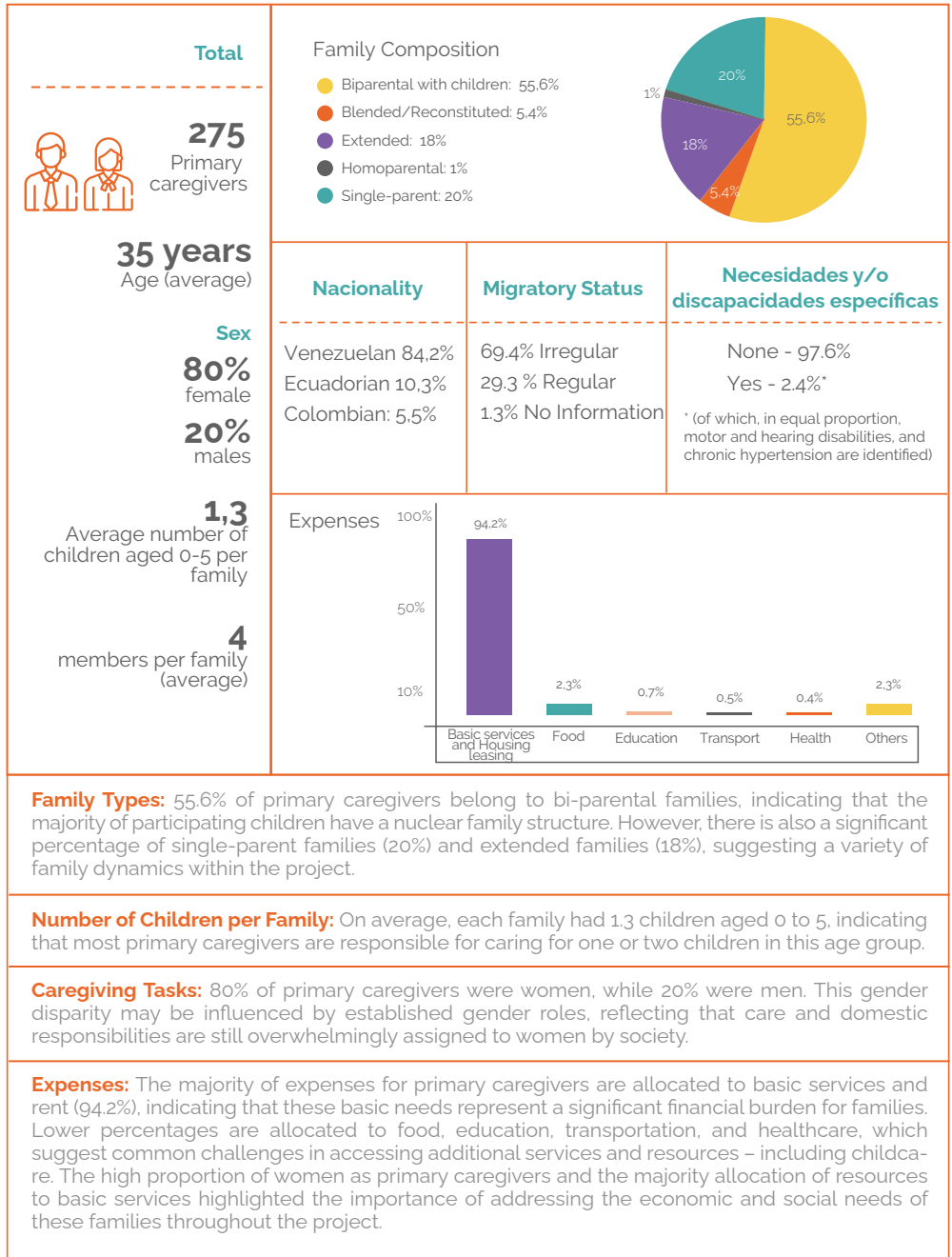
Among the participants, client profiles were identified, including both individuals from the host community in Ecuador (30%) and the Venezuelan population (70%). The following are the five main participant groups that were identified:

## 1. Participating Children:

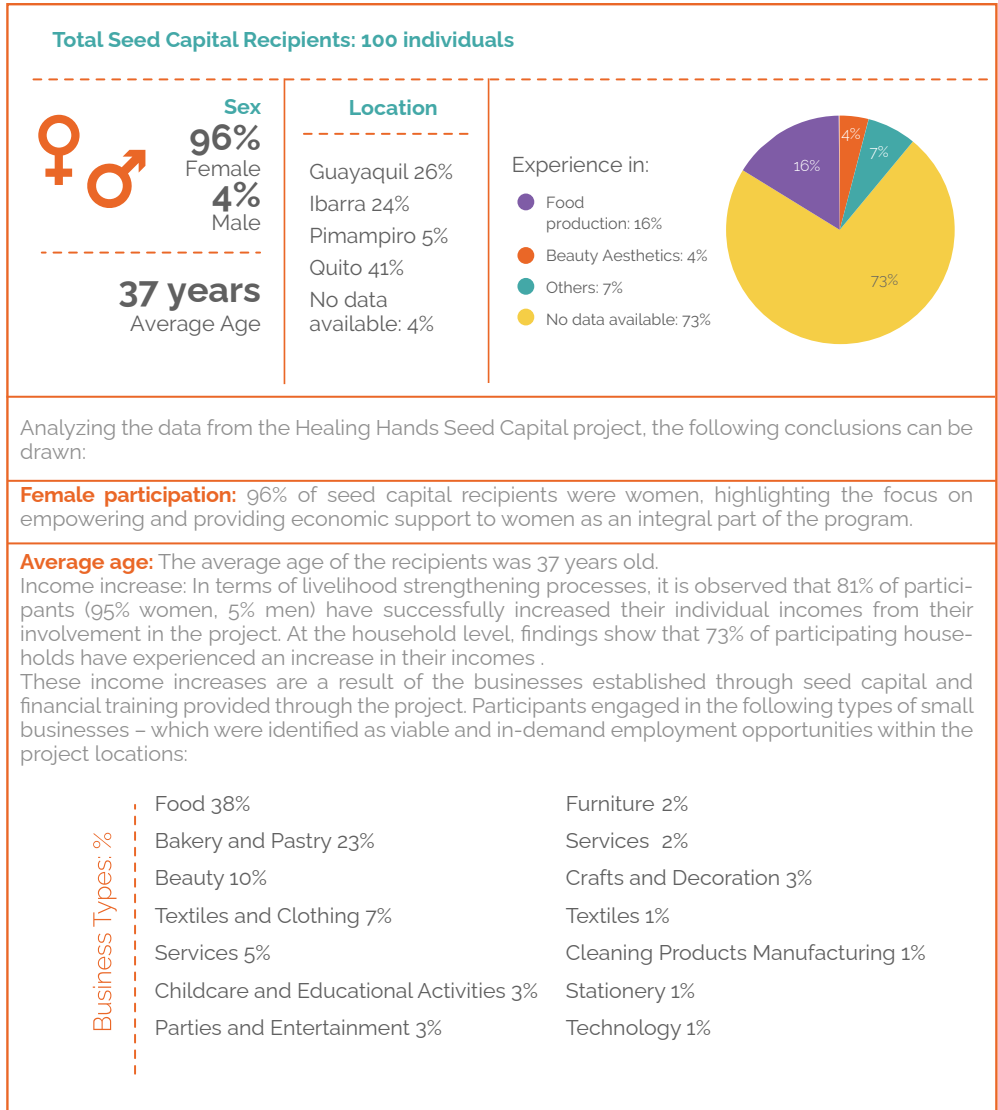
Total	Nacionality	Age	Specific needs and/or disabilities									
 <p><b>446</b> Children</p>	Ecuadorian: 64,51% Venezuelan: 28,13% Colombian: 6,25% Peruvian: 0,89% Chilean: 0,22 %	0 years - 3,7% 1 years - 12,5% 2 years - 23,3% 3 years - 24,3% 4 years - 17,6% 5 years - 11,7% 6 - 7 years: 6,9%	None - 97,3% Yes - 2,3%*  * (among which the following are highlighted in the same proportion: asthma, autism, motor and language deficiencies, hernias, microcephaly, visual problems, and rhinitis)									
 <p><b>53,1%</b> Girls <b>46,9%</b> Boys</p>												
¿Do the boys and girls participating in the project already belong to any form of childcare in Ecuador prior to Healing Hands?		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Start of the Project</th> <th>End of the Project</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Si</b></td> <td>52,63%</td> <td>76,32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>No</b></td> <td>47,47%</td> <td>23,68%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Start of the Project	End of the Project	<b>Si</b>	52,63%	76,32%	<b>No</b>	47,47%	23,68%
	Start of the Project	End of the Project										
<b>Si</b>	52,63%	76,32%										
<b>No</b>	47,47%	23,68%										
<p>The distribution of participating boys and girls shows that the highest concentration is in Quito (47.1%), followed by Guayaquil (27.2%), Ibarra (12.8%), and Pimampiro (12.9%). This distribution can be attributed to population density and the preference of families to migrate to the country's main cities in search of greater job opportunities. Most participants are in the age range of 0 to 5 years, with 3 years being the most prevalent age of children.</p>												



## 2. Primary Caregivers:



### 3. Seed Capital Recipients:



4 Family income is the sum of the income of all members of a household, including children and adults. It can be calculated by adding salary, pensions, rents, scholarships, social assistance, and any other source of income.

Individual income is the income that a person receives individually. It can be calculated by adding salary, pensions, rents, scholarships, social assistance, and any other source of income



Entrepreneur who, through capacity building and seed capital, successfully consolidated her pastry production unit, increased her income, and improved the care of her children. Quito, 2023



#### 4. Facilitators and Educators:

Through the project, ECD facilitators played a crucial role in providing training, guidance, and resources to primary caregivers, and in leading the Community based Spaces for Play and Learning. Their main objective was to strengthen childcare skills, promote holistic development, and foster positive parenting practices. Additionally, they worked directly with the children, offering activities that stimulate their cognitive, emotional, and social development.



"Play develops imagination, creativity, and socio-emotional learning. Cotocollao- Quito, 2023."

It is notable that the majority of facilitators/educators were women, suggesting a dominant female participation in caregiving and early childhood education roles. The difference in the proportion of Ecuadorian and Venezuelan facilitators may be attributed to various factors. Venezuelan's face difficulties in being hired due to lack of documentation. Although there were many professional primary caregivers in the project, they generally were unable to be hired due to issues with their legal documentation or access barriers due to xenophobia. It is important to note that partners DYA and FUDELA have Venezuelan nationals in their technical teams (out of a total of 10 people, 2 are Venezuelans)<sup>5</sup>


<sup>5</sup> It is necessary to consider that these numbers reflect the specific reality of the project locations, and may vary in different contexts.

## 5. Community Homes childcare providers:

The caregivers in the Community Home Childcare Centers are all of Venezuelan nationality, with an average age of 33 and an average previous experience of 5 years in childcare provision. There was an equal distribution between caregivers who have worked in childcare in Venezuela and those who have done so in Ecuador.

The main motivation for becoming caregivers in their own homes was the opportunity to generate income while taking care of their own children, providing them with flexibility and the opportunity to work from home and continue pursuing their vocation, whilst leveraging their previous experience. Parents chose to bring their children to the community homes due to the trust and security they found in these spaces, and given the lack of nearby alternatives for childcare in their communities. Most of the children who attended the community homes live nearby to the caregivers, allowing them to access care within an average distance of a 10-minute walk. Additionally, balanced and safe meals were provided to the children, as well as basic services such as clean water, electricity, and internet access.

Venezuelan caregivers have the capacity to provide care for an average of 11 children in their homes, receiving an average payment of \$18 USD per week per child<sup>6</sup>, which included a daily pedagogical routine, breakfast, lunch and snack in the afternoon, and continuous accompaniment in the development of skills through game corners, literature, arts and sensory activities. Most caregivers offered childcare between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, whilst some offered after hours care for families who work at night. Healing Hands provided training, technical support, educational materials, equipment, a traveling play and learning backpack, first aid kits, and medical equipment to all Venezuelan caregivers leaders who provided childcare services through the project.



**“The children who come to this home have parents from both Venezuela and Ecuador. They all have the need to take their child to a safe place while they fulfill their responsibilities. We try to be flexible with the schedule. The main thing is teamwork with the families. Each day of the week, I work on something different: motor skills, cognitive development, sensory activities, and emotional well-being. In the mornings, the children engage in free play or role-playing games throughout the area. Lunchtime comes, and they all sit down to eat, then we proceed to brushing teeth and naptime. In the afternoon, we engage in an organized activity.”**

Responsible for the Community Child Care Home in Guayaquil.

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<sup>6</sup> Other full-time childcare options, available until 6:00 p.m., with a cost of USD 160 per month, plus an additional USD 25 for meals. We have been informed that the prices vary based on different quintiles: south, north, and valleys. The variation is according to the specific region. (<https://www.ultimas-noticias.ec/noticias/9882-icualto-mismo-pago-por-la-guarder>)

The caregivers reported improvements in the children's health, such as weight and height gain -since within the daily routine complementary feeding was provided, and importance of breastfeeding was promoted - as well as improvements in motor skills and language development. Changes were also observed in the parenting practices of the primary caregivers, who began to follow the recommendations regarding routines, the importance of play, respectful and loving parenting practices.

### Profile of a Caregiver in a Community Child Care Homes



"The mothers and fathers like to leave their children under my care because it is a place of trust, they can go to work in peace, and their children are well taken care of."

Angie Rodriguez

30 years old

Venezuelan

Over 10 years of experience

She takes care of mostly Ecuadorian children.

Her daily work involves the use of 12 hours.

Additional Income as a caregiver: 50 USD per month.

Being part of Healing Hands has allowed access to training and technical support for the management of the Community Home. Likewise, they feel part of a network of care for early childhood, contributing to the community.



Let's Read! At Angie Rodriguez's Community Child Care Home. Monte Sinai - Guayaquil, 2022.



# 03

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## **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY- BUILDING**

## Partners role

To ensure alignment and cooperation, a collective team was formed under the project's umbrella, uniting the IRC and the partners around the common vision. Weekly check-in sessions were conducted between the team members, and the IRC facilitated exchanges between the partners to foster the sharing of insights and challenges across the various geographical areas of implementation.

## Intervention Through Partners

The implementation strategy of Healing Hands is based on the principles of the "Partnership Excellence for Equality and Results System" (PEERS) strategy<sup>7</sup>, which emphasizes the importance of collaborating with individuals and organizations closely linked to the crises. This approach recognizes that local civil society, government, and private sector actors play a crucial role in achieving the mission of the International Rescue Committee.

By partnering with local actors, the Healing Hands project sought to maximize its impact and scale, leading to more sustainable outcomes<sup>8</sup>. The project acknowledged that those closest to the crisis are the primary agents of response and recovery, and their involvement is essential for success.

In line with IRC's commitment to feminism, anti-racism, and the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion, the project advocated for and supported the leadership and actions of the communities in which it operated. This involved providing resources and funding to empower local organizations and individuals, enabling them to take ownership of initiatives and address the needs of vulnerable populations, especially those affected by Venezuelan migration routes within Ecuador.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/humentum-honors-irc-peers-development-team-2019-operational-excellence-award>

<sup>8</sup> By partnering with local actors, the results are more sustainable, following the guidelines of the PEERS strategy. This partnership helps achieve more sustainable outcomes for several reasons: cultural understanding, trust, and engagement by being part of the community. Local actors often enjoy a higher level of trust and rapport. Local partners possess knowledge of local resources, networks, and support systems, allowing them to quickly adapt to changing circumstances and emerging needs as they are present on the ground.

To ensure effective implementation, IRC VCR (Venezuela Crisis Response) conducted a mapping exercise in Ecuador in July 2021. This exercise identified potential partner organizations that have experience in managing international cooperation funds that have a track record of working with communities in Ecuador, experience in managing international cooperation funds, and developing education and livelihood projects. Within this framework, the partners Centro de Desarrollo y Autogestión and Fundación de las Américas para el Desarrollo were selected. These partners, already recognized and established in Ecuador, have the presence and reach necessary to effectively support the target population through their high-quality performance in the implementation and support of Healing Hands Project.

- o **DYA**, a Latin American non-governmental organization, which began its operations in Ecuador in July 1988, was a key implementing partner in the Healing Hands project. With notable experience working in 20 provinces of Ecuador, providing support to indigenous and peasant organizations, as well as priority care groups, DYA brought extensive experience and knowledge to the partnership.

- o **FUDELA**, an Ecuadorian non-profit organization with a distinguished 16-year track record, was also an implementing partner of the Healing Hands project. Fudela focuses on comprehensive human development initiatives aimed at transforming the lives of vulnerable children, adolescents, and youth. With the belief that young people are the key to a sustainable future, Fudela works to protect their rights, improve livelihood opportunities, and strengthen local capacities.

These organizations played a crucial role as co-design and implementation partners, contributing their expertise, knowledge, and resources to the development and implementation of Healing Hands initiatives.

Through the Healing Hands Project, DYA and FUDELA established collaboration agreements with the IRC for project implementation between October 1st 2021 to March 31st, 2023. Together, they committed to synchronizing efforts and knowledge to achieve the project's objectives, improving the well-being and resilience of children and families. This collaborative approach involved various actors, such as primary caregivers, community home caregivers, educators, and participating families, working collectively to create sustainable and impactful results for vulnerable populations. By promoting quality childcare, holistic child development, and improved living conditions, they worked to bring about positive and lasting change in the target communities.

Additionally, community leaders played a fundamental role in the implementation and development of activities. Community leaders included those who are part of the Network of Venezuelan Women Leaders in Quito, as well as the leaders of the Community Surveillance Network of Monte Sinai in Guayaquil. These leaders played an important role in community mobilization, needs identification, and actively participating in implementation of activities.



## Working with Strategic Partners

**“Among the valuable contributions from the ERD (Economic Recovery and Development) team at IRC for the success of the project, I can mention their sharing of specific formats and tools for the implementation of key processes, such as the delivery of seed capital. It was enriching to work together to adapt these tools through clear and fluid dialogue.”**

Luis Villón, Livelihoods Coordinator , Centro de Desarrollo y Autogestión.

Following the guidelines of the PEERS strategy, the importance of capacity exchange was recognized as a process of mutual learning, which empowers partners to expand the impact and scale of the response. It is a fundamental characteristic of strategic partnerships.

Capacity exchange should be based on assets and driven by the partners. It should focus on local knowledge and experience, and represent a two-way process, in which IRC learns from the partners, and vice versa. Within this framework, the IRC provided the following types of support to partners:

**Project Support:** Aimed to strengthen partners' capacity to achieve specific project results. It addressed capacity gaps that created material risks. This ensured that the project was technically sound and operationally safe, effective in programmatic terms, and compliant with IRC and donor requirements. This is often based on mutual reflection on the issues identified in the Partnership Capacity Analysis (PCA) process.

**Organizational Capacity Strengthening:** Enhance an organization's ability to finance, plan, manage, implement, and monitor short- and long-term programs.

**Personalized skills development plan** was designed to address identifiable areas that required further training.

A total of **60 individuals** received training in various areas within the project. Training was provided to 51 members of education and livelihood technical teams, 4 individuals participated in communication and life narrative workshops, and 5 individuals were trained in financial and supply chain areas. These training sessions helped strengthen the skills and knowledge necessary to perform effectively in their respective areas, contributing to the success and development of the project.

Strengthening Plan DYA and FUDELA	
Opportunity area	Objective of Support
Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Plan (MEAL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening the MEAL strategy according to IRC guidelines</li> <li>Toolkit for reporting</li> <li>Use of technology for data collection</li> <li>Capacity building and MEAL process development</li> <li>Development and implementation of KOBO TOOLBOX capabilities</li> </ul>
Financial Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each partner provided quarterly financial reports, and IRC offered ongoing support to assist with budget reconciliation and execution.</li> </ul>
Use of technology for data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and implementation of KOBOTOOLBOX capacities</li> </ul>
Safety Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for risk management procedures</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mitigation of security risks in the implementation area</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of security procedures for the delivery of seed capital</li> </ul>
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each partner provided quarterly financial reports and continuous support was offered to assist in their preparation.</li> </ul>
Economic Recovery and Development (ERD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client identification</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation and strengthening of livelihood interventions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of operational procedures for seed capital</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of a strategy to monitor businesses development</li> </ul>
Early Childhood Development (ECD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client identification</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human-centered approach co-design with a focus on child development</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange of IRC methodologies and content adaptations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essentials of early childhood</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training on the itinerant play and learning kit</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tools for systematization</li> </ul>
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the security perspective, support was provided for risk management procedures to mitigate security risks in the implementation area.</li> <li>Creation of a security procedure for the distribution of seed capital and training on risk management and crossfire situations.</li> <li>Supply Chain worked on improving the supply chain and procedures, supporting the recording of purchases.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness among staff on child protection and safeguarding</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capability to take anthropometric measurements and detect nutritional disorders along with guidance and referral recommendations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify incomplete vaccination schedules</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn pediatric first aid in cases of cardiac arrest, choking, or injuries.</li> </ul>

The IRC's provision of Technical Assistance allowed its partners to elevate the standards of quality in data collection, processing, and reporting. The identification and measurement of indicators, along with the rigor in the monitoring and evaluation process, were vital in the project. This rigorous approach aimed to ensure the effectiveness and impact of the implemented interventions. The identification of indicators allowed for the establishment of parameters and goals to assess the progress and outcomes of the project. Furthermore, the monitoring ensured systematic and accurate collection and analysis of information, providing a solid foundation for informed decision-making and continuous improvement, thus achieving early childhood care models in synergy with livelihoods for economic recovery that are highly scalable and can serve as benchmarks in multiple contexts.

The importance of local and strategic partnerships has been paramount to the success of this project and IRC's overall understanding of the context, and in the design of sustainable and durable solutions for Ecuadorian migrants and vulnerable families. Through collaborative partnerships, the IRC has been able to better inform design and support advocacy efforts accurately aligned with the challenges faced by families in communities and their integration processes.

The partner organization's expertise, knowledge and community trust have contributed to the success and relevance of the project: DYA's expertise in the local context has provided detailed insights into the specific needs, challenges, and inquiries of households. Building upon this knowledge, the IRC and partners have jointly provided interventions that are relevant to the direct needs of the targeted populations. The implementing partners hold legitimacy within the communities where projects are executed and have made strides in establishing connections. The IRC has learned to identify key actors and leverage local initiatives to sustain strategies. Collaborative efforts, supported by FUDELA's extensive network of community allies, have led to thriving community spaces that benefit children and their families. This reciprocal learning and amplification of impact through partnership have strengthened IRC's two-way approach, enhancing the ability to make a meaningful difference with Healing Hands.

By adopting a human-centered approach and fostering participatory inclusiveness, the IRC has embraced the perspectives and voices of partners and the communities they serve. Recognizing that sustainable change necessitates active engagement from all stakeholders, the IRC has cultivated an environment that promotes collaboration, dialogue, and collective decision-making. Engaging partners such as DYA, FUDELA, and Alas de Colibri have empowered community members to actively contribute to shaping solutions that directly impact their lives. This inclusive process has not only strengthened ownership and effectiveness of interventions but has also fostered a sense of empowerment and agency among community members. Embracing the human-centered approach has allowed the IRC to tap into the wealth of local knowledge and expertise, ensuring that strategies are contextually appropriate and responsive to the unique needs of each community.

# 04

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## **CO-CREATING CHANGE STORIES:**

partner implementation  
approaches

The Healing Hands project was developed around two fundamental pillars: early childhood development and livelihoods strengthening for economic recovery. The first pillar focused on promoting the well-being and holistic development of children in their early years, providing quality care and attention, early stimulation, access to adequate health and nutrition services, and strengthening the skills of primary caregivers. On the other hand, the livelihood pillar aimed to improve the socio-economic conditions of families by supporting productive enterprises, providing training in soft skills, and strengthening financial capacities. Both pillars were addressed comprehensively, aiming to generate a positive and sustainable impact in the project's target communities.

## Early Childhood Development: Design and Approach

Healing Hands focused on creating and implementing Community based Spaces for Play and Learning as robust alternatives for comprehensive early childhood care – where access to ECE was not available due to obstacles including a to lack of documentation, limited economic resources, lack of available spaces, or mistrust in leaving their children under the care of others at an early age.

The project also contributed to strengthening the capacities of existing Child Development Centers and the home-based care program of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social, and Economic Inclusion (MIES).

Healing Hands prioritized actions to strengthen childcare capacities through training, technical support, and equipment. Additionally, emphasis was placed on nurturing caregiving, promoting holistic development through play and learning spaces, and providing information and sensitization about available services and opportunities for social.



Nerely Marcano y su hijo los avances en el desarrollo infantil celebran, y tener un emprendimiento consolidado. Cotacollao- Quito, 2023.



To begin the process, partners defined their initial intervention proposals, which focused on:

<p>Intervention Areas</p>	<p>Guayaquil:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monte Sinai</li> <li>- Barrio Valle del Cerro Azul</li> <li>- Sergio Toral 1 y 3</li> <li>- Ciudad de Dios</li> <li>- Flor de Bastión</li> <li>- Los Vergeles</li> <li>- Sauces</li> <li>- Mapasingue.</li> <li>- Albergues "Un Techo para el Camino"</li> <li>- Fundación Social e Integral Refugio del Espíritu Santo.</li> </ul>
<p>Specific Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implementation of activities and methodologies at the geographic level aimed at the protection, care, and holistic development of girls and boys aged 0 to 5 in situations of human mobility.</li> <li>○ Strengthening the capacities of caregivers for the care and protection of children, promoting their development and learning, and provision training in entrepreneurship and commercial skills.</li> <li>○ Technical, methodological, and equipment support to 10 community homes for childcare and the development of play spaces for Venezuelan women.</li> <li>○ Technical support and seed capital to 28 Venezuelan caregivers in situations of human mobility for the development of product and service-based small businesses.</li> <li>○ Awareness-raising and dissemination of relevant information to the community.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activities Partner: DYA</b></p>	
<p>Intervention Areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Imbabura Province : Pimampiro and Ibarra.</li> <li>- Pichincha Province: Quito in Cotacollao, Carapungo y Chillotallo.</li> </ul>
<p>Specific Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enable and adapt community play and learning spaces that meet minimum quality standards.</li> <li>○ Enroll and achieve regular attendance of boys and girls in community play and learning spaces.</li> <li>○ Provide home-based support in health, education, and comprehensive care for children aged 0 to 5.</li> <li>○ Disseminate accurate and updated information on the protection of rights, as well as create informative spaces sensitive to the reality of each locality, addressing access to care services that promote the well-being and rights of children aged 0 to 5.</li> <li>○ Strengthen the livelihood capacities, entrepreneurial skills, and early childhood development of primary caregivers of children under 5.</li> <li>○ Enhance the businesses launched by grant recipients for the effective development of their small businesses.</li> </ul>

One of the main challenges focused on the detailed definition of the livelihood component, for which unified strategies were established for implementation:

## Economic Recovery

The livelihood training and capacity-building process was implemented through the project, resulting in 100 individuals receiving seed capital amounting to 800 \$USD to each of the 100 selected families. The amount was determined based on practices used by other organizations in market-based livelihood programs to ensure the impact of these interventions.

This standard operating procedure developed by the IRC and partners establishes the mechanism, responsibilities, and actions for delivering the Seed Fund for Enterprises to the participants of the economic recovery component. The partner is responsible for managing the allocated funds and ensuring accountability. Once the client list is validated and submitted to the IRC, selected participants are notified, and guidance is provided on the proper use of the funds.



**“There were many adjustments made by the entrepreneurs in their work modalities. The sessions became instances of mutual construction and cooperative learning. Additionally, a dynamic of group support was developed, where achievements were celebrated, and the needs of each other were taken care of.”**

**“Having their own and appropriate tools for the enterprises translated into an increase in their income, allowing them to improve the quality of life for all. Many were able to save and acquire more work tools, continuing to grow their businesses.”**

**“Having their own and appropriate tools for the enterprises translated into an increase in their income, allowing them to improve the quality of life for all. Many were able to save and acquire more work tools, continuing to grow their businesses.”**

Centro de Desarrollo y Autogestión

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<sup>9</sup> The amount given was based on what other similar programs were offering.

Los criterios de elegibilidad son los siguientes:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Socios: DYA and FUDELA	
Áreas de Oportunidad	Objetivo del Apoyo
Eligibility criteria for accessing capacity-building in entrepreneurship and business skills strengthening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Having a child aged 0 to 5 years old.</li> <li>b) Being in a situation of human mobility with a long-term intention.</li> <li>c) Host population in a vulnerable situation.</li> </ul>
Eligibility criteria for pitch presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Individuals who meet the project's profile:</b> Primary caregivers (mother, father, grandmothers, aunts, cousins) in a situation of human mobility or from the host community, with children aged 0 to 5 years old in the household, who engage in early childhood care activities.</li> <li>b) <b>Identity verification:</b> Presenting documents that prove the identity of the primary caregiver.</li> <li>c) Involvement of children under 5 years old in early childhood care activities.</li> <li>d) Completion of 80% of the entrepreneurship and childcare skills training.</li> <li>e) Completion of 80% of the deliverables for each training.</li> <li>f) Submission of a complete business plan and working on it during the training sessions.</li> <li>g) Exclusion criteria are established to avoid duplication of seed capital disbursement, such as being a participant of similar programs in the last year or presenting fraudulent documentation. The eligibility assessment is conducted by a technical team that verifies the needs and vulnerability situations of the clients.</li> </ul>
Eligibility criteria for seed capital disbursement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Individuals with higher scores in the evaluation rubric during the business plan presentation.</li> <li>b) Small businesses with a score equal to or higher than 50% of the total score.</li> </ul>

## Co-creation Workshops

During the project design stage, the importance of co-creating together, involving both partners and participating families, and developing integrated solutions was recognized. To achieve this objective, Brand Co-Design and Project Co-Design workshops were organized, where active participation of all stakeholders was encouraged. These workshops provided a collaborative space to exchange ideas, set goals, and establish a strong project identity. Through these gatherings, the aim was to enhance collective impact and ensure the project's alignment with the needs and perspectives of partners and families.

### Project Co-Creation Workshops

During the Healing Hands project, co-creation workshops were conducted to engage key stakeholders and partners in the development and design of the project. These participatory and collaborative sessions aimed to create a platform for sharing ideas, perspectives, and expertise, shaping the project's strategies, activities, and outcomes. Both DYA and FUDELA were responsible for designing the project's narrative proposals for implementation, following the framework, objectives, and intermediate outcomes of the Healing Hands project. The following activities were carried out at the workshops: Graphic analysis of DYA and FUDELA's narrative proposals, addressing any doubts or questions about the project, and reaching minimum agreements for project implementation. Next steps within the project execution were coordinated. During these workshops, it became clear that a national name for the project was needed. To achieve this, processes such as User-Centered Design, Participatory Design, and Design Thinking were carried out in collaboration between Duetto Design and the IRC.

### Community Participation Approach: Crafting "Our Narrative":

These workshops focused on co-creating the brand and aimed to provide partners with the necessary tools and knowledge in brand development. The purpose was to facilitate a collaborative process where ideas and inputs from all stakeholders were collected to ensure a unified and compelling project identity.

During the workshops, various activities were conducted to gather information and stimulate brainstorming sessions. Participants led discussions and creative exercises to explore different ideas and concepts related to the project's name and brand. Additionally, a color analysis was conducted to evaluate possible color palettes that could be incorporated into the project's visual identity.

These workshops provided participants with the opportunity to contribute their ideas, preferences, and expertise in creating the name and brand of the Healing Hands project.

By involving multiple perspectives and promoting collaborative discussions, the goal was to establish a strong and meaningful brand that accurately reflects the project's objectives and values.

Co-creating programs based on participants' preferences, contexts, and cultural articulations is vital as it facilitates accurate, impactful, sustainable interventions with a high sense of ownership. This collaborative approach ensures that the proposed solutions are suitable and relevant to the communities involved, thereby promoting the overall success and effectiveness of the project. By integrating the voices and perspectives of partners and participants in the design process, greater ownership and commitment to the implemented initiatives are fostered, generating positive and significant change in the lives of the intended participants.

The discovered approaches provide the theoretical and methodological framework for understanding needs and contexts, while the co-creation workshops offer the practical platform for collaboration and idea generation. Both complement and mutually reinforce each other.



**As the Healing Hands project progressed, approaches and methodologies were implemented, taking advantage of the pilot nature of the initiative. These findings enriched the understanding of the needs and challenges of the target populations, as well as the best practices to effectively address them. Now, in the next chapter, we will delve into the technical approaches adopted by the project, which are based on lessons learned and aim to maximize the impact and sustainability of interventions in early childhood development and livelihoods for economic recovery.**

# 05

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**EXPLORING THE  
IMPLEMENTED  
APPROACHES**

# Approaches

Healing Hands, being a pilot project, was a process of constant discovery and learning. As the project progressed, the importance of approaches such as the two-generational approach, people-centered approach, synergy between Early Childhood Development and Livelihoods for economic recovery, and a gender approach were recognized and built into project implementation. Through this process of discovery, Healing Hands evolved to become an innovative and evidence-based model which seeks to generate positive change in the communities where it is implemented.

## a. Two-Generation

The Healing Hands project focuses on the two-generation approach, which recognizes the importance of simultaneously addressing the needs and opportunities of both children and families. This comprehensive approach seeks to create an enabling environment for the holistic development of children while strengthening the capacities and opportunities of caregivers.

The two-generation approach is implemented through initiatives such as capacity strengthening in early childhood and the participation of caregivers with their children in Community Spaces for Play and Learning. These initiatives promote active family engagement in the education and nurturing of their children, whilst also providing support and resources for their own growth and development. This approach is also evident in the capacity strengthening plan for livelihoods and the provision of seed capital to participating families, as investing in the economic growth of families creates an enabling environment for the well-being of children, establishing a direct link between the current generation and future generations.

Investing in the economic development of families creates a conducive environment for the well-being of boys and girls, as follows:

**c Economic Growth of Families:** When families have access to resources and opportunities that promote economic growth, such as stable employment, adequate incomes, and access to financial services, they can improve their financial stability and overall well-being.

**c Facilitating Environment:** Improving the economic situation of families creates a facilitating environment where basic needs like food, housing, healthcare, and education can be more easily met. This environment supports the overall quality of life for family members, including children.

**c Children's Well-being:** As the family's economic situation improves, children experience direct benefits in terms of their well-being. They have better access to nutritious food, healthcare, and education, which are fundamental factors for their physical, cognitive, and emotional development.



**c Intergenerational Link:** The positive impact of economic growth on children's well-being establishes a direct link between the current generation (parents or caregivers) and future generations (the children and their descendants). When children grow up in an environment of improved well-being, they are more likely to lead successful and fulfilling lives as adults, positively contributing to their communities and society as a whole.

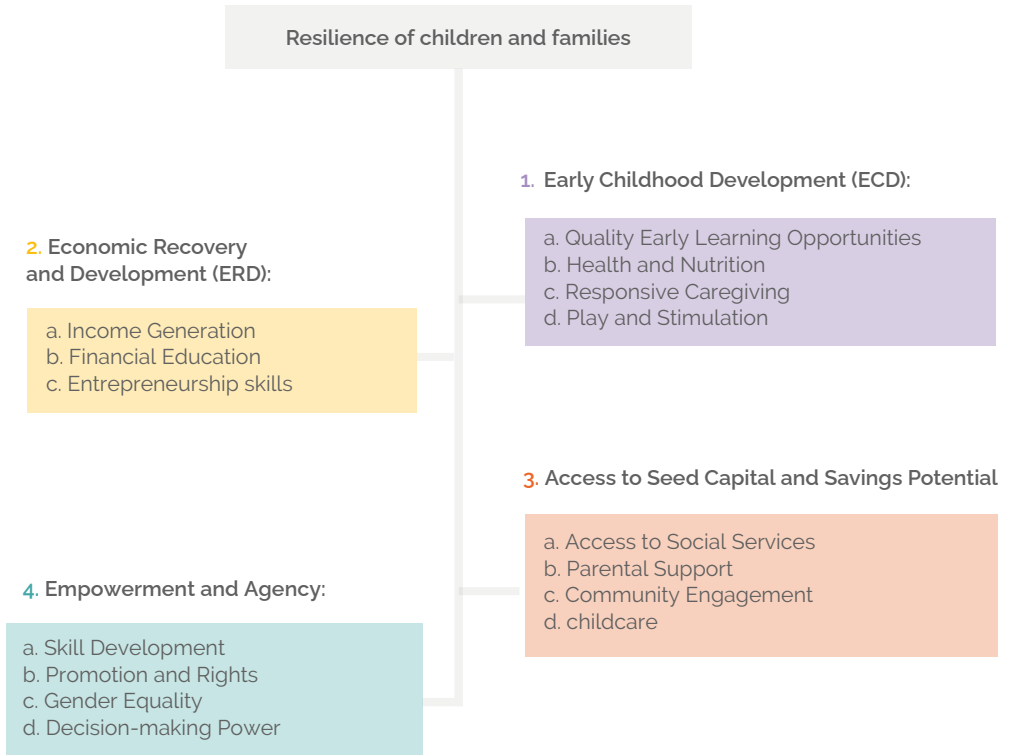
## **b. Synergy between ECD and ERD / Theory of Change**

The synergy between Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Economic Recovery and Development (ERD) in the Healing Hands project is manifested through various interventions and activities. The strategy focuses on providing primary caregivers with childcare options and free access to quality development spaces for children, allowing caregivers to strengthen their nurturing capabilities while promoting play, which is central to their children's development. The project also raised awareness about available public childcare services and the importance of ensuring fundamental rights in this vital stage, while providing additional options for active participation in economic activities. This was complemented by training in relevant marketable skills and the provision of start-up capital, creating an integrated approach that addresses barriers to childcare in work and investment.

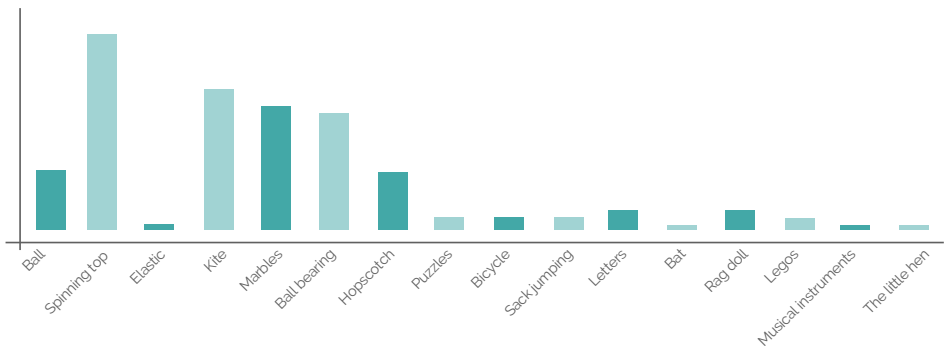
The Project's Theory of Change was based on the integration between interventions in Early Childhood Development and Economic Recovery and Development, recognizing the importance of working with families to strengthen and foster a healthy family environment that promotes play, learning and resilience in children. The hypothesis suggested that combining economic interventions and family strengthening, such as parental education and childcare, along with access to financial resources and skills, will strengthen the family unit and provide long term gains for families.

The integration of ECD and ERD was reflected in various activities within the project, such as the establishment and strengthening of 28 community spaces for play and learning, training facilitators and community caregivers to effectively lead activities in these spaces as well as through providing early childhood education training for primary caregivers, and livelihood training for family members. These interventions complement each other, providing cognitive, social, and emotional development opportunities for children while strengthening the economic skills and opportunities for primary caregivers.





What are the traditional toys of the region or community you come from?



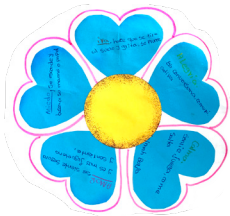
## c. Gender Approach

The Healing Hands project placed significant emphasis on addressing gender disparities and promoting gender equality. It recognized that gender roles and norms can influence access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power within families and communities. The project aimed to challenge and transform these gender inequalities by promoting women's empowerment, engaging men and children as agents of change, and ensuring gender-responsive interventions.

It recognized women as the primary caregivers responsible for early childhood education and nurturing. 80% of primary caregivers are women, highlighting their fundamental role in children's development and well-being. Additionally, the project provided economic support through seed capital, where 96% of recipients were women. This strategy directly benefited women by empowering them economically and promoting family investment.

These examples demonstrate the commitment of the Healing Hands project to promoting gender equality and empowering women in different roles and intervention areas.

Recognizing and strengthening the role of women in education, childcare, and entrepreneurship not only directly benefits women but also contributes to the holistic development of families and communities as a whole.



During the implementation of the Healing Hands project, various actions and activities were carried out to strengthen the care and holistic development of early childhood. Now, it is time to analyze and share the achievements and results obtained throughout this process. In this chapter, we will explain the positive impacts on the lives of children, communities, and participating caregivers. Additionally, we will examine key indicators that will allow us to evaluate the success of the interventions and how they have contributed to improving the well-being and quality of life of the individuals involved in the project.

# 06

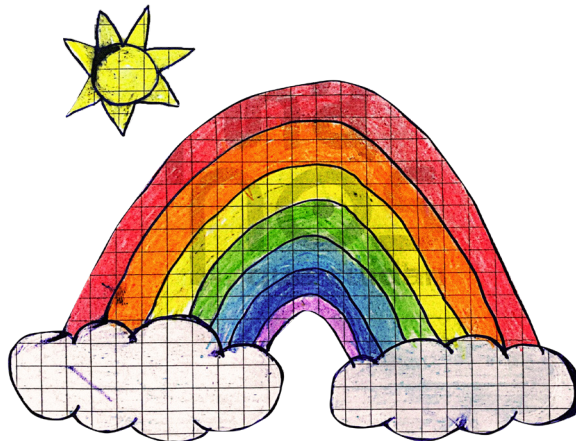
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**ACHIEVEMENTS  
AND RESULTS OF  
HEALING HANDS**

Looking back at the pilot results, lessons learned, and best practices of the Healing Hands project in collaboration with our partners and clients, we are pleased to present a summary of our significant achievements.

**“From my side, I want to thank you for allowing us to be part of this wonderful project, which has been a learning process for my child. They have guided him in his cognitive development, and I am very happy to see his progress. He has shown more interest in speaking, pronounces words more clearly, identifies objects, and some colors. There has been significant growth. For me as a mother, it has also been very beneficial as I have learned techniques that allow me to understand and recognize my children’s reactions, maintaining communication where they can express their emotions without being judged prematurely, and staying calm... putting into practice each piece of advice.”**

Yanetza Pinto, mother of Toprk Gomez.



# Project Results

- More than 4,000 families have participated in the different project strategies..
- 28 community spaces for play and learning have been utilized with the traveling play and learning backpack.
- The capacities of 51 community workers, teachers, and caregivers have been strengthened to lead play spaces and facilitate training for caregivers.
- 446 children aged 0 to 5 have participated in the community spaces for play and learning (exceeding the project's goal by 68%). These spaces have allowed them to improve their skills comprehensively. Here are the reported and identified improvements:

- Emotional: 33.3%

May involve enhancements in self-esteem, social skills, and emotional management..

- Language: 30.7%

Progress in children's communication and language skills, which are fundamental for their cognitive and social development.

- Physical Motor: 18.7%

Children have experienced advances in their physical development, such as gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and balance.

- Cognitive: 14.7%

Improvements in children's cognitive abilities, including attention, memory, problem-solving, and creative thinking.

- Health and Nutrition: 2.7%

These areas may require greater attention and focus in support and child development programs. Additionally, the development of indicators for measurement should be considered, given that the nutrition aspect has the lowest expenditure among participating families (2.3%)

- 275 primary caregivers have received training in nurturing care, play, nutrition, and early childhood health (exceeding the project's goal by 25%).

- According to surveys conducted before and after, 73% of caregivers have increased their knowledge and skills to provide responsive care and early learning at home. These are:

- Communication: 28.8%

- Patience: 11.5%

- Sharing daily life spaces: 16.3%

- Motor development: 4.8%

- Play: 9.6%

- Loving parenting: 6.9%

- Social development: 6.2%

- Psychosocial development: 1.9%

- Coexistence norms: 7.7%

- Respect: 3.8%

- 1,042 people have been sensitized to protection, rights, regularization, access to services, health, vaccination, infant nutrition, early childhood development, breastfeeding, and economic recovery.
- 3,896 people have received updated information through partner information channels and the IRC signaling platform. This includes topics such as regularization, health services, education, leisure spaces, nutrition, vaccination schedules, play and learning spaces, among others.
  - Strengthening of small businesses: 24.0%
  - Resource management and savings: 22.4%
  - Loving parenting and play: 14.1%
  - Health (including vaccination, first aid, others): 5.6%
  - Nutrition: 5.6%
  - Access to education: 4.2%
  - Document regularization: 2.8%
  - Others: 2.8%
- 230 primary caregivers have been trained in business and financial skills, and entrepreneurship to lead innovative initiatives, of which 63% have increased their knowledge and skills in these areas.
- 16 small businesses have been strengthened with a brand manual and market positioning
- 100 primary caregivers have obtained seed capital and gained management skills, of which 44% have increased their income by 50%..
- Out of the 28 supported community spaces for play and learning:
  - 5 community care centers continue to receive support from DYA and IRC.
  - 5 community homes are sustained independently with increased child care and remuneration for their primary caregivers, whose livelihoods and capacity to maintain the spaces have been strengthened thanks to the Healing Hands project.
  - 2 play spaces remain active in shelters and shelters for the migrant population.
- 8 play spaces have been linked to existing private foundations as part of the Ministry of Inclusion and Economic Social's home-based child care strategy, Creciendo con Nuestros Hijos. Additionally, the Casas Somos, which are community spaces in municipal parishes and other local entities, remain open to the community.
- Small businesses have generated diversified products for the market related to electricity, food, clothing, laundry services, financial counseling initiatives, sale of technological products, educational spaces for academic reinforcement, among others.



An entrepreneur who, through capacity building and seed capital, managed to consolidate her personalized fitness training and healthy nutrition line, increasing her income and improving the care of her children. Quito, 2023.

**“I learned to give them my time because I am a single mother. Before, I didn't think about spending time with them; I was more focused on the financial aspect. Now, I help them with their tantrums, provide understanding, discipline them properly, and praise them.”**

Mayra Gisela Puerres

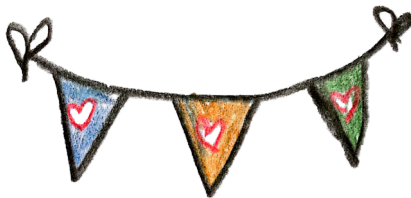
**“I have been able to share with them and involve them in my business, and it has been an incredible experience.”**

Lidia Patricia Juma





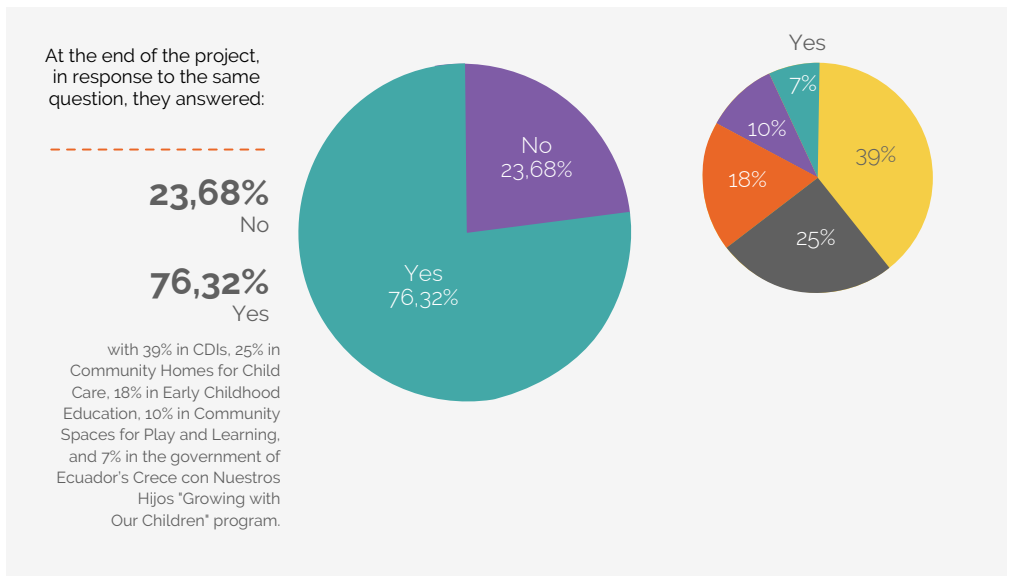
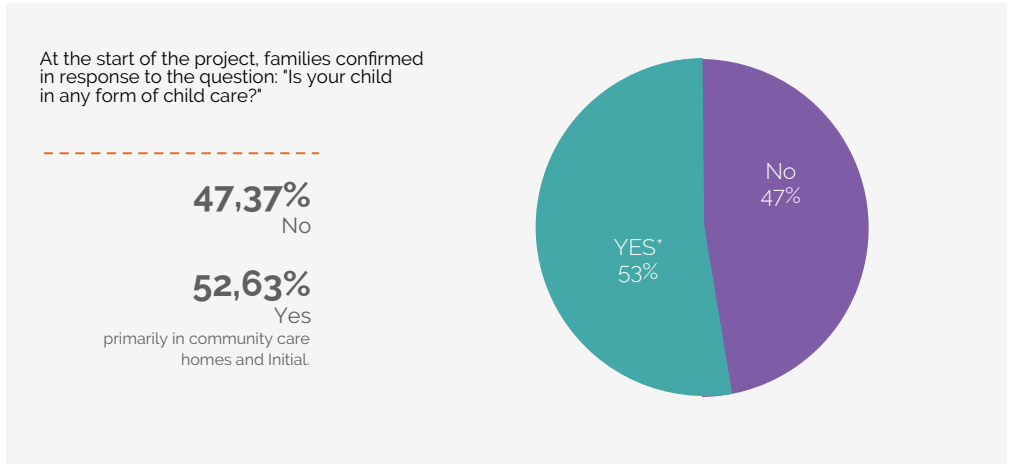
Flying with Laughter! When an adult plays with their daughter or son, they strengthen the emotional bond and build strong relationships. Cotacollao - Quito, 2023





# ECD Results Analysis

o Need for quality child care: There has been a high demand for quality child care services in the target communities. This has emphasized the importance of providing a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment for the holistic development of children, as well as supporting families in balancing work and family life.



This demonstrates how primary caregivers gained access to information to recognize the importance and channels to connect their children to care spaces. It also highlights how they regained confidence, managed new support networks, and entrusted the care of their children to others, allowing them to dedicate time to productive activities.

- o **Empowerment of families:** The need to empower participating families has been recognized, providing them with tools and resources to actively engage in the care and development of their children. This includes promoting positive parenting practices, strengthening parental skills, and involving them in decision-making related to childcare services.

In response to the question, "Do you feel that participating in the project has helped you learn and improve your caregiving practices towards your children?" 99% of primary caregivers responded yes, identifying specific learnings such as:

**"More empathy and tolerance towards their learning, treating them as individuals and respecting their rights and decisions."**

**"I learned to give them my time because I am a single mother. Before, I only focused on the economic aspect. Now I know how to handle their tantrums, provide understanding, and praise them."**

**"I have improved my discipline practices. I no longer resort to yelling. I also know how to establish a consistent bedtime routine and create habits in all aspects."**

**"Now we play a lot and spend quality time together. I always learn something from the children."**

- o **Caregiver behavioral shifts:** The following information reflects the positive change in primary caregivers' behaviors towards their children due to training and access to information on loving parenting and its benefits in children's development: increased communication and emotional understanding, strengthened emotional bonds between parents and children, promotion of cognitive and creative development, stimulation of imagination and artistic expression. There is a significant improvement in the quality time spent with their children engaging in various activities with 36% of caregivers answering they

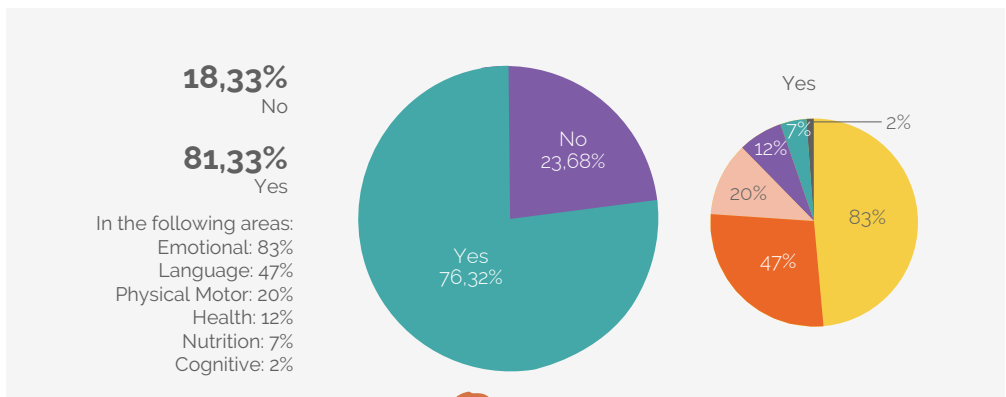
play 1-7 hours with their children compared to 11% at baseline. Additionally, 21% of families reported playing with their children 4-7 times a week compared to 7% at baseline.

Did you participate in drawing or doodling with your child last week?		
Disaggregation	Baseline	End-line
1-7 hours	11%	36%
Less than 1 hour	12%	23%
More than 7 hours	2%	3%
Never	74%	39%

How many times did you or a family member read a storybook to your children in the last 7 days?		
Disaggregation	Baseline	End-line
1-3 times	20%	42%
4 -7 times	7%	21%
More than 7 times	2%	4%
Never	72%	34%

- Comprehensive approach: The importance of adopting a holistic approach that addresses the needs of children, families, and communities as a whole empowered families in their ability to address needs and priorities. This involves implementing programs that promote health, education, nutrition, socio-emotional development, and overall well-being. It has been observed that as primary caregivers progress in managing their emotions to develop loving caregiving practices and allocate quality time for the children, they strengthen their primary skills.

Therefore, in response to the question, "Do you feel that the child made any progress in their development by participating in the project?" the caregivers responded as follows:



This indicates the significant impact of socio-emotional learning approaches which were embedded both in content and delivery of services, where the children showed considerable improvement in managing their emotions through play and the active role of their primary caregivers as agents of their development.



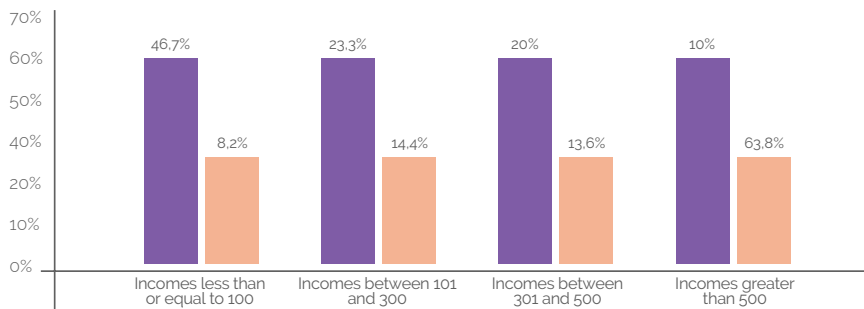
Community Play and Learning Spaces support children in overcoming the effects of migrations and crises. Monte Siná - Guayaquil, 2022

## ERD Results Analysis

Seed Capital:

100 primary caregivers have obtained seed capital, yielding the following notable outcomes:

To analyze the data of individual incomes before and after the seed capital, we can categorize the data into income ranges and calculate the corresponding percentages.



These findings highlight the importance of seed capital as an effective strategy for improving individual incomes and promoting entrepreneurship. However, it is necessary to consider that these results are based on a specific sample and do not necessarily represent the overall situation of all participants. To draw more robust conclusions, a more comprehensive analysis, an impact evaluation and consideration of other factors that may influence individual incomes are required.

o **Women-led economic recovery:** It has been observed along the project, and as observed in the previous chapters, that women who participated in the project's entrepreneurship initiatives have experienced greater economic recovery (96% seed capital recipients were women).

o **Increase in income:** The results demonstrate how the percentage of households reporting monthly incomes exceeding 500 USD increased from 10% at baseline to 63.8% in the final evaluation. The data analysis shows that after receiving seed capital, there was a significant increase in the proportion of participants with incomes greater than 500 USD. This suggests that those participants who had lower initial individual incomes benefited more from seed capital, as they experienced a substantial increase in their incomes.

These findings highlight the empowerment and resilience of women in income generation and improving their living conditions.



Participants of 'Caring Hands' who strengthened their financial skills and developed loving parenting. Quito, 2022

To correlate the information of seed capital with additional data on whether children attend a care facility, the following analysis is conducted:

**Participants whose children attend a care facility:**

64.29% of the participants indicated that their children attend a care facility.

**Among the participants whose children attend a care facility:**

78.57% experienced an increase in their individual incomes after receiving seed capital.

21.43% did not experience an increase in their individual incomes after receiving seed capital.

**Participants whose children DO NOT attend a care facility:**

35.71% of the participants indicated that their children DO NOT attend a care facility.

**Among the participants whose children do not attend a care facility:**

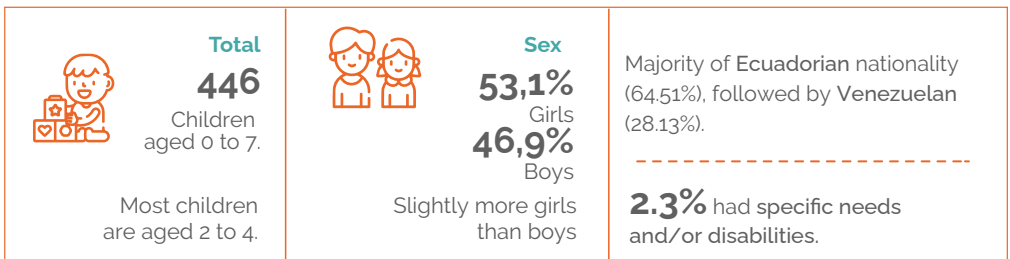
37.50% experienced an increase in their individual incomes after receiving seed capital.

62.50% did not experience an increase in their individual incomes after receiving seed capital.

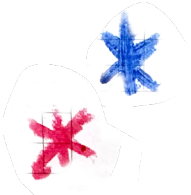
Based on the provided data, we can offer a possible explanation for why participants whose children attend a care facility experienced a greater increase in their individual incomes after receiving seed capital compared to those whose children do not attend a care facility. However, it is essential to note that this explanation is an interpretation based on available data, and a definitive causal relationship cannot be established without further detailed analysis and statistical testing.

A plausible explanation for this trend is that enrolling their children in care facilities affords participants enhanced opportunities and flexibility to allocate time and resources towards their entrepreneurial pursuits or income-generating ventures. With their children receiving proper care and supervision in a secure environment, participants can concentrate on their business initiatives or job responsibilities without frequent interruptions arising from childcare obligations.

**Participating Children:**



The above mentioned conclusions and analysis are presented to help us better identify areas for improvement in future business support programs:



- **Access to additional resources:** Participants not engaged in entrepreneurship may require greater access to complementary resources, such as opportunities for paid employment, labor networking, or specific skill development services. It is important to assess and address barriers that may exist in accessing these opportunities and seek ways to strengthen support in these areas.

- **Evaluation of individual needs:** Each participant has unique circumstances and needs, making it essential to conduct individualized assessments of their skills, interests, and available resources. This will enable personalized assistance that better aligns with their needs and increases their chances of success, whether through entrepreneurship or other job options.

- **Feedback and continuous monitoring:** Constant monitoring of participants, both those engaged in entrepreneurship and those opting for other sources of income, is crucial. This will help evaluate the impact of Seed Capital and support programs, identify potential challenges or gaps in the process, and adjust strategies accordingly. Direct feedback from participants can also provide valuable information about their needs and allow for continuous improvements in service delivery.


## Key achievements in providing technical assistance to local partners:

- The IRC's technical support has helped Fudela and DyA strengthen their internal processes and structures for quality interventions.

- Both partners have adapted global methodologies to the local context and have prioritized community participation and a customer-centric approach in project design. Furthermore, thanks to the experience of Healing Hands, they are now leading early childhood projects in the country.

- They have implemented monitoring and evaluation activities using tools developed with IRC support, which are now integrated into their standard procedures.

- FUDELA is undergoing restructuring, including the establishment of its first MEAL unit, as a result of the collaboration and technical assistance received through the project

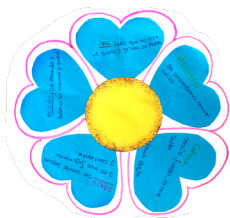


- DyA and FUDELA have improved their standards and procedures in supply chain management, financial management, security protocols, and risk management processes, and are currently leading pioneering projects in Ecuador that integrate early childhood development with livelihoods.

- o Both partners participated in a capacity strengthening workshop organized by the IRC, addressing relevant topics and facilitating networking and knowledge exchange among peers.
- o Venezuelan women in Guayaquil, with the support of DYA and technical assistance from IRC, strengthened a successful model of community childcare called "Community Child Care Homes."
- o Healing Hands has contributed to strengthening early education systems in Ecuador. Through the project, the IRC also provided technical assistance to Child Development Centers to improve child care through play-based approaches and nurturing care. Community spaces aligned with the Ministry of Inclusion and Economic Social's home-based child care strategy were also established.

Throughout the project, the IRC has been an active participant in coordination and collaboration spaces, including the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM).

The IRC is committed to promoting the participation of its local partners, DYA and FUDELA. Through its participation in key intervention forums, such as the Technical Table for Education in Emergencies, Child Protection, Socioeconomic Integration, and the Early Childhood Sub-Table, IRC seeks to foster a more efficient and coordinated national and local response. Additionally, IRC actively contributes to the circulation of relevant information, promoting collaboration among the involved actors, and advocating for the inclusion of perspectives and needs of the affected communities.



**We have witnessed how the Healing Hands pilot project initiatives have positively transformed the quality of life in the communities we serve. However, we also recognize that long-term sustainability of these practices is crucial to ensure lasting impact. In this regard, it is essential to develop effective exit strategies that allow us to transcend beyond our direct interventions and foster self-reliance and community empowerment. In the following, we will explain the different strategies that will enable us to maintain the legacy of Healing Hands, ensuring its continuity and maximizing its impact in the future.**



# 07

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## **SUSTAINABILITY:**

A Lasting Future

# Methodological Toolbox

Within the exit strategy and sustainability plan of the Healing Hands project, a Methodological Toolbox has been developed as a fundamental tool. This Methodological Toolbox aims to collect and systematize the intervention models implemented in the project – representing a valuable input to ensure the replicability and continuity of the project in the future.

The Methodological Toolbox is an accessible resource for all stakeholders involved in the project. It provides a set of components based on identified best practices and lessons learned during the implementation. These components include guides, manuals, protocols, and practical tools that facilitate the replication of successful interventions.

Below is a summary of each component aimed at promoting care, play, and early childhood learning:

- **Play, Toys, and Lullabies:** Recognizes play as a source of enjoyment, imagination, and socialization that promotes cultural appropriation and acts as a catalyst for emotions and social relationships. Play, toys, and lullabies not only provide entertainment but also facilitate learning, creativity, and the building of affectionate bonds in the migratory context.
- **Healing Hands, Hands that Care:** It is a program that establishes Community Homes of Childcare led by Venezuelan Community Caregivers. These caregivers provide physical, emotional, educational, and effective care to young children. The community homes offer safe spaces for care and protection in contexts of crisis and vulnerability, where families can engage in income-generating activities.
- **Healing Hands, Hands that Play:** Proposes the creation of fixed and itinerant Community Spaces for Play and Learning (CSPL). These spaces are designed to promote playful experiences and meaningful interactions among children, their primary caregivers. The CSPLs focus on play as a fundamental tool for the comprehensive development of early childhood and strengthen family and community affective bonds.
- **Let's Play! with the Traveling play and learning backpack:** It is an educational resource that enriches playful moments in the CSPLs. The kit contains a variety of games and materials for the psychomotor development of children, stimulating skills and abilities. It includes a user guide with practical recommendations and learning-generating activities.
- **Healing Hands, Hands that learn:** It is a guide aimed at facilitators working with primary caregivers. It seeks to provide knowledge, reflections, and practices for nurturing care during the first five years of life. It addresses topics such as health, psychosocial support, migration regularization, loving parenting, violence prevention, and strengthening cultural identity.

◦ **Healing Hands, Hands that undertake:** It is a guide that seeks to improve the livelihoods of migrant families. It promotes sustainable income-generating opportunities to ensure caring and sensitive care for children. It mitigates risks associated with unsafe or exploitative working conditions and fosters an environment conducive to child development.

◦ **Hands that Guide:** The systematization document summarizes two key strategies of the project: access to information and inter-institutional articulation, advocacy, and sustainability. These strategies aim to provide comprehensive support to the participating population and expand opportunities for accessing care services that promote their social, emotional, and economic integration.

Through the collection and systematization of intervention information, and with its accessibility to stakeholders involved, the aim is to ensure the continuity and replicability of best practices beyond the project duration, thereby maximizing the impact and effectiveness for the target communities.

## Info Pa'Lante



Let 's play! At the service and information fair with Info Pa' lante Ecuador. Quito, 2022.

Implemented by the Alas de Colibrí Foundation has been identified as a sustainability and exit strategy, focusing on the following points:

**Information Access Platform:** Info Pa'lante serves as a channel where individuals can access updated and accurate information on various aspects of the crisis. This includes information on legal rights, protection services, healthcare, education, livelihood opportunities, and more. By consolidating information from multiple sources, Info Pa'lante ensures that people have access to reliable information in one place.

Within the results of the information strategy provided, 95% indicated that they received adequate information to access services and opportunities, while 5% did not. The most recurring topics were:

- Loving caregiving and play
- Health (including vaccination, first aid, others)
- Nutrition
- Access to education
- Strengthening of enterprises
- Resource management and savings
- Document regularization.

**Empowerment in Decision-Making:** Access to reliable information empowers individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their lives. Info Pa'lante provides information about available services, programs, and resources, enabling people to evaluate their options and make decisions that best suit their needs. This promotes autonomy and self-determination among affected individuals and helps them address the challenges they face.

**Closing Information Gaps:** Info Pa'lante closes the information gap that often exists during crises and displacement. By providing information in a clear and accessible manner, the platform ensures that affected individuals are aware of their rights, entitlements, and available support. This helps address vulnerability and uncertainty that people may experience and facilitates access to necessary services and assistance.

**Promoting Participation:** Info Pa'lante promotes active participation of affected individuals by providing them with relevant and up-to-date information, through community activities and orientation points at service fairs. By having access to information about their rights and options, people can engage in decision-making processes that affect their lives and participate in building solutions to the challenges they face.

**Knowledge Transfer:** Info Pa'lante facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills to local communities. Through the platform, tools and resources are shared that enable communities to access essential information and learn how to effectively utilize it. This creates a strong foundation for communities to continue benefiting from the information and share that knowledge with others.

By establishing Info Pa'lante as an independent and accessible platform, long-term sustainability strategies are fostered. The initiative can continue to evolve and adapt as the community's needs change over time. Additionally, collaboration with other organizations and relevant actors is encouraged to ensure that the platform remains a reliable source of information even after the Healing Hands project has concluded. This initiative ensures that individuals affected by the Venezuelan crisis can continue to make informed decisions and actively participate in seeking solutions and rebuilding their lives even after the project has ended.

## Brand and Visibility Manuals

The implemented exit strategies also aim to continue strengthening the productive units of families, which is why support was provided with brand manuals and visibility materials for the most sustainable enterprises. The brand manuals provided clear and consistent guidelines on the visual identity, language, and values of the enterprises. These manuals help maintain a consistent and professional image, which contributes to building trust and appeal for customers and consumers.

Likewise, visibility materials such as promotional materials and communication tools allow enterprises to highlight and effectively promote their products and services.

The support with brand manuals and visibility materials aims to strengthen the capacity of enterprises to compete in the market, increase their visibility, and promote their sustainable growth. By providing these tools, Healing Hands sought to empower entrepreneurs and promote the sustainability of their businesses, thus contributing to their economic resilience and their ability to generate income and improve their families living conditions – including through supporting their children's access to early childhood care.



## Itinerant Play and Learning Kit



Child interacting with puppets from the Itinerant Play and Learning Kit at the Info Pa'lante Ecuador point. Quito, 2022

This is an educational resource created with the aim of strengthening and diversifying Community Play and Learning Spaces. Since free access to playful experiences and play environments is limited, the kit offers the possibility of being installed in different locations – including temporary play and learning spaces, bringing together children, caregivers, and the community around play.

Through this initiative, donations have been made to continue replicating spaces that promote novel and meaningful interactions through interactive activities, as well as socio-emotional learning. The itinerant play kit can be implemented in urban, rural, emergency, or other contexts, providing play and learning opportunities to those who would otherwise have limited access.

The traveling play and learning backpack has generated significant interest, with 10 requests from other local partners, child care centers, and municipal actors to use the tool in their spaces. It serves as an engaging method to introduce topics related to early learning, nurturing care, positive discipline, and nutrition.

This sustainability strategy seeks to ensure the continuity of the benefits of the Healing Hands project, allowing communities to continue enjoying enriching play and learning spaces. By bringing the itinerant kit to different locations, active participation of children, caregivers, and the community is encouraged, strengthening the importance of play and interaction in child and community development.

It is crucial to recognize the importance of addressing not only the implementation phase of a project but also the strategic planning of its exit and long-term sustainability. The Healing Hands project has demonstrated its positive impact on the community, but now is the time to reflect on how to ensure that this impact is sustained and expanded even after the direct intervention ends. In this regard, exit and sustainability strategies become crucial to ensure that the benefits endure and become ingrained in the community.

In this chapter, we explore a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening these strategies, with the goal of consolidating the achievements made and ensuring that the efforts made in the Healing Hands project have a lasting impact on the lives of children and families involved. These recommendations will address key aspects such as service continuity, training, community participation, and seeking strategic partnerships, with the purpose of establishing solid foundations and providing a framework that serves as a reference for future replication and guidance of the implemented model.

# 08

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Improvements and  
Future Actions



A series of recommendations are presented based on experience, inputs from project participants in focus groups, and feedback from implementing partners in lessons learned workshops during the project's closing phase.

These recommendations aim to enhance and strengthen various aspects of the Healing Hands model to maximize its impact and ensure sustainability. The provided recommendations are designed to address improvement opportunities and offer practical guidance for future implementations of the Healing Hands model.



**Flexibility in seed funding:** Tailoring the seed funding to the needs of each productive unit, promoting the diversity of small businesses. This was one of the recommendations given by the participants from the provinces of Pichincha and Imbabura, who suggested that for future interventions, the type of venture should be analyzed, and the amount of seed funding required by each individual should be evaluated and delivered differently according to the particularities of each case. Customizing the initial financing and training to specific businesses is crucial, as it recognizes the unique needs and challenges faced by each enterprise. By personalizing the support, we can address their specific requirements and increase the likelihood of their success.



**Strengthening face-to-face training:** Prioritizing in-person training to maximize learning and the impact of teachings. Taking into account that the participants from the provinces of Pichincha and Imbabura were located at a distance from each other, the training methodology was hybrid, with some sessions being held in-person and others virtually. Therefore, primary caregivers propose that face-to-face training should be prioritized, as these sessions highlight more experiential learning and collective sharing.



**Psychosocial support for mental health improvement:** Implementing tools and spaces for emotional management and addressing personal situations that families may face, and incorporating activities for emotional support and language therapy for the comprehensive development of children.



**Inclusive education approaches with an emphasis on specific needs:** In the processes of caring for children, the implementing partners had training spaces to make methodological adaptations according to specific needs arising from any disorders, deficits, or disabilities that some individuals in the groups may have, in order to achieve their active participation. However, it is recommended that this be further strengthened and continued with greater emphasis.

Specifically, the caregivers in the Community Child Care Homes suggest continuing training in pedagogy, such as the Montessori approach, learning more about Reach Up and Learn, Aulas que Sanan, and others, to expand their knowledge and skills. They also recommend receiving ongoing support and attention in child nutrition, considering its importance for their growth and development.

## Conclusion

The Healing Hands project has yielded significant and positive outcomes, as evident from its main findings and results. A total of 446 children aged 0 to 5 attended community spaces for play and learning, providing them with valuable educational experiences in their early years. Furthermore, 275 primary caregivers received training in nurturing care practices, play, and health to support the development of their children. This training empowered caregivers with the skills and knowledge to create nurturing environments that foster their children's holistic development, growth and well-being.

The project's impact extended beyond the immediate participants, as 1,042 individuals were sensitized about promoting early childhood rights, raising awareness about the importance of supporting and protecting young children through early learning opportunities. The capacity-building efforts were successful, with 73% of caregivers increasing their knowledge and skills in childcare and early learning, contributing to a positive and enriching environment for the children in their care.

Healing Hands also played a crucial role in providing access to essential information for the community. The project reached 3,896 people within the project locations with information on rights protection, access to health services, education, and the regularization of migratory status, among other important topics. This access to information empowered individuals to make informed decisions about their well-being and future.

The project's support extended to entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. 230 caregivers completed training in business and financial skills, with 62% of them increasing their knowledge as a result. In addition, 100 clients received seed capital and support in brand design and marketing products, enhancing the visibility and profitability of their microenterprises. The positive impact of these initiatives was evident, with 81% of the participants increasing their individual incomes, particularly benefiting women, who comprised 95% of the participants.

The technical support from IRC also proved invaluable in strengthening the processes and structures of partner organizations, such as the Centro de Desarrollo y Autogestión – DYA and the Fundación de las Américas para el Desarrollo – FUDELA, enabling them to be more effective in their efforts both during the project implementation period, and beyond.

Additionally, the innovative Traveling Play and Learning Backpack brought educational and recreational activities to different places and populations, fostering meaningful interactions and play-based learning experiences for children in remote areas.

As a cross-cutting effort, the project ensured accurate and reliable information dissemination through information points and Info Pa'lante Ecuador, actively participating in coordination spaces with other organizations and institutions to advocate for early childhood development and support families in human mobility.

The establishment of 18 community spaces for play and learning, including mobile and fixed spaces, along with 10 Community Child Care Homes, created comprehensive early childhood care modalities led by Venezuelan women who are leaders in their communities.

In conclusion, the Healing Hands project has showcased the effectiveness of a comprehensive and innovative approach to address the needs of vulnerable children and families. Through capacity-building, financial support, and creative initiatives, the project has positively impacted the lives of many individuals, promoting early childhood development and empowerment. The collaborative efforts with various local organizations have not only strengthened existing structures but have also laid the foundation for future initiatives aimed at creating lasting change in Ecuador's early childhood development landscape.



The Community Play and Learning Spaces strengthen the transition of children to Early Education. Chillogallo - Quito, 2022.



