

## **Background**

It is nearly impossible to know the total number of children living in the experience of homelessness or abandonment around the world. Estimates of street children in Latin America range from 8-50 million. In the past 10-years Peru's economy has grown to provide more opportunities for a large segment of the population. Unfortunately, the poorest of the poor have seen little trickle-down from the new prosperity, and children living in extreme poverty remain the most vulnerable to abandonment. Orphanages have seen a swelling in the number of children entering their programs. Critical to caring for children from traumatic, impoverished backgrounds is directing the right resources to support them at the right time in their development. In order to best utilize the resources available to them, orphanages must be able to properly track the diverse and complex needs of children in their care. This is where technology can make a huge difference in the lives of vulnerable children. With web-based, cloud computing resources, agencies and programs serving high-risk and vulnerable youth can monitor and identify needs from anywhere. This means the right resources and support can be applied for the right need at the right time.

## **Problem**

Estimates for the number of children living on the streets in the cities of Perú vary, with some sources identifying upwards of 500,000 children around the country. Government, not-for-profit, and faith-based organizations in Perú have been working with marginalized and street youth for many decades. A number of non-government organizations operate homes and orphanages in multiple locations around the country to help get children off the streets. One of the challenges that programs face is record keeping for the children in their care. There is currently no consolidated method for tracking the holistic needs (physical, mental, emotional, social, educational and spiritual needs) of children living in institutionalized settings and homes. This means that children who are most vulnerable, because of unmet health needs, academic and developmental challenges or behavioral health conditions, are not identified early and appropriately referred to services that match their unique needs.

## **Solution**

Developing a web-based electronic health monitoring system will allow programs and organizations that care for vulnerable children to identify and track unique challenges and needs, intervene at an appropriate time and ultimately empower vulnerable children to grow and thrive. A consolidated system for monitoring holistic needs is a critical key to strengthening the future for vulnerable children and assuring they have access to all of the services and supports they need during their crucial years of development.

Through the development, implementation, and evaluation of a Health Monitoring System (HMS) focused on the unique needs of multi-home, large population orphanages in marginalized communities – Health Bridges International is building an innovation system that will help to continuously monitor the holistic needs of children living in orphanages, group homes or shelters. The HMS will be linked to a content management system that will allow administrators and program managers to monitor trends, track needs, and target care resources and spending. Through web-based, cloud computing technology, the Girasoles Sanos Health

Monitoring System will provide programs and organizations with the tools they need to best care for and advocate with the children they serve.

Developing a web-based electronic Health Monitoring System is only the first step in assuring the system is capable of meeting the needs of the programs and organizations that will use the system. Through a partnership with the Fast Forward accelerator program, Health Bridges International (HBI) hopes to gain access to a team of technology and implementation experts who can help identify, evaluate and track the unique challenges of implementing the HMS in underserved child welfare settings. Our goal is to better understand how the Girasoles Sanos HMS system can be scaled to future environments and adopted by more programs.

## Evaluation

To measure the effectiveness and objective outcomes of the Girasoles Sanos Project, HBI will partner with a formative evaluation team at Linfield College in Portland, Oregon. Evaluators from Linfield College will help to establish a protocol for evaluating the project and defining outcomes. HBI's objectives for the Girasoles Sanos pilot-testing project are:

1. Structure and implement a system for Monitoring and tracking the unique holistic mental and physical, dental, educational, developmental, social and spiritual needs of institutionalized children to better structure services and supports.
2. Pilot test a beta version of an HMS that will allow administrators, program managers and providers to track the complex needs for multiple locations, monitor for health improvements and identify critical challenges before a child falls behind.
3. Pilot test the Girasoles Sanos model with vulnerable youth living in seven unique orphanages around Peru.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Girasoles Sanos Project and implementation of the HMS model for identifying vulnerable and at-risk children living in institutional settings
5. Consider implications and opportunities for scaling the Girasoles Sanos Project in collaboration with other government and non-governmental organizations and in other geographic locations.
6. Present the findings from the pilot testing of the Girasoles Sanos Project at an international conference and submit a manuscript of findings for publication in a peer review scientific journal.
7. Evaluate the long-range goal of linking the HMS with a cloud-based content hub to allow providers and administrators in services gain access to information and knowledge to advance services delivery.

## Partners

This one-time grant will support the development, implementation and pilot testing of the Girasoles Sanos Project. The Girasoles Sanos Project also receives funding and support from private donors and the following organizations:

- Intel – Through an Intel Corporation SEED grant, HBI received tablet computer devices to be used in the pilot testing of the Girasoles Sanos Project. Intel support will include subject matter expert consultation to help with the technological implementation of the project.
- Microsoft Corporation – HBI has received pro-bono programming and coding from an engineer at Microsoft to help with the initial stages of development for the Health Monitoring System.

- Union Biblica del Peru – Union Biblica del Peru will provide financial support for the pilot testing and initial rollout of the project. Union Biblica del Peru is a Peruvian faith-based non-governmental organization who has been working in Latin America for well over 50-years.
- Health Bridges International, Inc. – HBI currently funds the staffing to oversee the development of the Health Monitoring System and provides additional support to cover the Girasoles Sanos Project.
- Linfield College School of Nursing – HBI will receive evaluation support from formative evaluators at Linfield College in Portland, Oregon. The evaluation team will help to establish a protocol and structure for assessing the impact of the Girasoles Sanos Project.

We have also been privileged to partner with local transport providers, physical therapists, and physicians in specific situations to achieve improved outcomes for our patients. The following agents are involved with the Girasoles Sanos Project through the donation of services, equipment and other resources:

- CARITAS Peru – The social work arm of the Roman Catholic Church, and organization with nationwide scope and influence.
- MINSA – The Health Ministry of Peru, responsible for the care of the most impoverished groups in the country.
- Colegio Medico del Peru – The governing body for physicians in Peru
- Colegio de Enfermeros del Peru – The governing body for nurses in Peru

## **Accountability**

If approved for funding from the Giger Foundation, HBI will promptly execute the Girasoles Sanos Project. In addition, we are requesting a “lump sum” distribution of funds to support the project. HBI adheres to strict Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and works with Rainbow Tax and Accounting (Milwaukie, Oregon) to assure financial accountability. Rainbow Tax and Accounting is a certified public accountant agency with extensive experience supporting not-for-profits receiving foundation and federal grant funding.