

Building Critical Mass for Reach Up in LAC

Terms of Reference

1 February 2024

Introduction and context

Globally, the Reach Up and Learn programme (“Reach Up”) is seeking opportunities to sustainably expand its impact. Experience suggests that scaling up programs requires fostering an enabling ecosystem and engaging with government systems and stakeholders at all levels. Reach Up therefore intends to enhance its capacity to build demand; to support governments, NGOs, universities; and to use its network of resources to provide technical assistance within countries.

Reach Up aims to do this first by developing a “critical mass” of networked capacity in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region, the focus of the current consulting assignment. Simultaneously (but beyond the scope of this assignment) Reach Up will sustain support and engagement with partners in other regions too.

This consultancy will examine strategic options and initiate a plan for an ambitious strategy of building the regional critical mass to support Reach Up in LAC. The focus will be on interventions for children from birth to 4 years of age, with emphasis on effective scaling within existing systems (government and larger NGOs). Interventions would include those for parents and other caregivers in the home or group settings and child-care.

Building a Strategy for Reach up in LAC

Adaptations and implementations in the LAC region have included both full implementations of Reach Up (e.g. Guatemala, Brazil, Jamaica) as well as integration of Reach Up curriculum methods and activities to enhance existing government programs (e.g. Ecuador, Colombia). Innovations such as remote and hybrid delivery (e.g. Jamaica, Brazil, Ecuador) and Apps to support frontline workers and program monitoring (Panama, Brazil) have been developed and in some cases evaluated. The work in LAC has generated substantial new evidence and will continue to produce evidence relevant for scaling the program and other effective ECD interventions in the region and globally.

Following a meeting in 2019, an informal network of Reach Up researchers, trainers and implementers was established as the “Reach Up global community” with ad hoc sharing of new materials and knowledge goods, new implementations and innovations in delivery methods, evidence from impact and process evaluations and a biannual newsletter. We propose to build on this, initially in the LAC region, by developing a more proactive and engaged network that can support new implementations, provide more timely information sharing, address evidence gaps by engaging in evidence building, and contribute to the sustainability and scaling of Reach Up.

The first part of this assignment is to explore and map the existing people, relationships, implementations, resources and research that specifically apply to LAC. Our hypothesis is that existing capacity is the foundation for building critical mass, but that the region requires further capacity building in four areas:

1. **Knowledge management** - strengthening the capacity to know what has happened and is currently happening with regard to Reach Up implementation and research in countries across the region, so that knowledge gaps can be filled and shared learning takes place.
2. **Network building** - strengthening the capacity to proactively connect people working on Reach Up or interested in Reach Up.
3. **Technical capacity** - strengthening the capacity to provide policy level advice, implementation guidance, and trainer training within the region.
4. **Reach-out capacity** - building the capacity to reach out to governments and organisations in the region for whom Reach Up could be a relevant option, thus leading to greater scale and sustainability over time.

These four areas are interlinked. For example, reaching out to government partners in a new country might best be achieved through the networks of an existing partner/supporter. Such a reach-out will need technical capacity to advise the government, and should build upon knowledge gained (maybe in the form of a case study) from existing implementations in the region.

However, there is a challenge at play. There is always going to be limited funding for central infrastructure costs. Therefore, we need to consider multiple options and develop a plan for how the work can be sustained without creating an expensive central hub for the region. Indeed, while some central capacity will almost certainly be essential, the future should continue to draw on the network of people, partners and relationships that have underpinned its success to date.

The assignment

1. Explore and map the people, relationships, implementations, resources and research that specifically apply to Reach Up in LAC.
2. Develop a series of strategic options for how to strengthen capacity in regard to knowledge management, network building, technical capacity, and proactive reach-out for Reach Up in LAC. The options should include an analysis of both **what** is needed (including potential shorter-term opportunities) within the region, and **how** it could be delivered.
3. For the preferred strategic option, develop an implementation plan and supporting materials (eg. a funding proposal).

Timescales and resources

- Short proposals from interested consultants/organisations should be addressed to andrew.bollington@viaEd.net and received by Feb 23rd. The proposal should:
 - Show how the selected consultant/organisation will bring strong experience of a) Reach Up, b) the LAC region, c) strategy development, d) working in networks and with collaborative partnerships.
 - Outline a work plan for how the consultant will address the three parts of the assignment.
 - Include a budget (not to exceed \$USD 30,000 including expenses), timeline and outline of the approach to be used.
- Andrew will be happy to respond to questions/queries from anyone preparing a proposal.
- We anticipate that the work will be undertaken between 15th March and 31st May 2024.
- The consultant/organisation will work alongside a small project steering group made up of senior Reach Up stakeholders in the region.