

Washington, D.C., March 23rd, 2020

Mrs. Celina de Sola
Co-founder
Glasswing International
San Salvador, El Salvador

Ref.: Executive summary of results from the impact evaluation of *Sanando Heridas*

Dear Mrs., de Sola,

On behalf of the research team, I want to thank you for the opportunity to evaluate the impact of the program *Sanando Heridas* (Healing Wounds, HW) on recidivism of victims of interpersonal violence in El Salvador. The intervention aims to help victims of interpersonal violence to cope with the stress and trauma resulting from their exposure to a traumatic event.

The novelty of this intervention is its holistic approach: it combines the delivery of techniques to cope with trauma by an interventionist, follow-up phone calls, and a referral to a network of institutions that provide longer-term support to the victim based on his or her specific needs. The intervention evaluated was implemented in two public hospitals in San Salvador, where health personnel also received a training in the intervention.

The goal of the impact evaluation (IE) was to answer the research question “Do programs aimed at providing stress coping strategies impact beneficiaries violence recidivism?” In this sense, HW constituted a relevant opportunity not only for its holistic approach—which is the structure that has been proved to be more effective, but also because it was implemented in one of the most violent places in the world, where these interventions are of foremost importance.

To address the goal of the IE, a non-experimental approach of instrumental variables was applied. In coordination with your team, we collected and digitalized all registries from all patients attended at and all staff working in the two hospitals during the 2016-2019 period. To guarantee that we were following the international standards of ethics in research, we submitted the proposal to the IRB of the *Universidad Tecnologica de El Salvador*.

We estimated three main results. First, people who have been victims of violent acts - and who have been intervened by HW specialists - reduce their likelihood of being reinjured by up to 30%, compared to patients not receiving intervention. This may also suggest that patients increase their ability to protect themselves. Second, the training and awareness of health personnel in trauma management increases the reference rate of victims of violence to comprehensive trauma care up to 58%.

Finally, a back-to-the-envelope calculation using national statistics and the two previous results indicate that HW could prevent approximately 1,050 cases of interpersonal violence that require hospitalization in the country. This implies a reduction in the cost of medical, emotional and psychological care by 27.2% (\$3.3M USD). Therefore, a preliminary analysis of the cost-benefit of the intervention indicates that the net benefit of this program could be around \$2.45M USD.

Considering these important results, our team is keen to study the impact of HW on additional outcomes. As next steps, first, we plan to study if the intervention is also impacting participation of beneficiaries in the formal labor sector or their engagement in criminal activities. To this end, we are collecting data from the Social Security Office and National Police in El Salvador.

Moreover, all these results will be published at the World Bank Working Papers Series and in an academic journal, in order to contribute with rigorous evidence to the existing literature of psychological interventions and wellbeing.

We look forward to continuing working together with your organization.

Kind regards,



Lelys Dinarte
Research Economist
Development Research Group
The World Bank