



RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR A GLOBAL GRANT

Use this form to inform The Rotary Foundation of the results of your community needs assessment when applying for a global grant.

Assessing the strengths, weaknesses, needs and assets of the community you plan to help is a critical first step in designing an effective and sustainable global grant-funded project. See the [Community Needs Assessment Resources](#) for full instructions and useful tips.

This form will help you report the results of the community needs assessment, which is a requirement for grant applications for humanitarian projects or vocational training teams. Complete a separate form for each beneficiary community (e.g. school, health system, or population), using current and specific information for each. Remember that you cannot use global grant funds to cover the cost of this assessment, but you can use district grant funds.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Describe the characteristics (such as geographic information, main sources of income, population size and access to education/health services) of the specific community where this project will be implemented.

The project for the construction of a neurosensory classroom at the Instituto La Esperanza is located in the border area between Colombia and Venezuela, specifically in the city of Cúcuta in the department of Norte de Santander. Cúcuta, as the capital city, is characterised by a high population density and an economic dynamic based on commerce and the popular economy, with a high rate of unemployment and labour informality at the national level. According to the last DANE census, Norte de Santander has approximately 25,076 persons with disabilities, of which a significant proportion is concentrated in Cúcuta and its metropolitan area. When this information is disaggregated by life cycle, we find that 2667 are children under 13 years of age and 1195 adolescents and young people between 14 and 19 years of age. In addition to this, there is the mobility of the disabled population from neighbouring countries who, due to the lack of services, are forced to request access to the local institutional offer.

It is important to highlight that in the region there is no public policy of inclusion with a differential approach that ensures the protection of the rights and the development of the capacities of people with exceptional abilities.

In the city of Cúcuta there are establishments that offer traditional therapeutic services, however, there is no adequate space for the specific neurosensory needs to strengthen the neurodevelopment of both the neurotypical and neurodivergent population, easily accessible and adjustable to the economic limitations of the families.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA COLLECTION

When you conducted the assessment, who did you talk to in the community? At least two different community representatives and beneficiaries who are not involved in Rotary (such as teachers, doctors or community leaders) should be included in the discussions.

The idea of launching this initiative arose from the needs identified after reading the context of the population and the perceptions of the guardians or parents of children and adolescents with disabilities, recipients of the current offer of the Instituto La Esperanza, who have said "we long for our children to be able to advance every day", "it would be wonderful to have a classroom that stimulates their abilities, a classroom that we can use without being discriminated against", "we cannot give up in the battle to ensure that our children with exceptional abilities can learn and be part of society". Likewise, the opinion of the community leaders has been a fundamental input to know the characteristics of the population and to delimit the strategic objectives of the neurosensory classroom to be built, they have expressed the need to respond to the needs of the population since there is no support, especially when the families have very low purchasing power.

At what point last year did the talks take place?

The Instituto La Esperanza holds a monthly working group with the guardians of the children and adolescents to whom it currently offers its social service. Discussions to define the project began in June 2023 and have been held periodically to design a proposal that integrates the opinion of all key actors in the inclusion process.

What methods did you use to collect information from community members (such as community meetings, interviews or focus groups)?

Using a qualitative methodology, working groups were held with caregivers of people with disabilities and focus groups with community leaders. Using the problem tree tool, the needs of the population and possible improvement strategies were prioritised in order to mitigate the effects of the central problem: lack of supply to strengthen the neurosensory capacities of the population with disabilities.

TARGET POPULATION

Who will benefit directly from the project? Indicate the groups that will benefit (such as schools, hospitals, vocational training centres, cooperatives or villages).

The project has a direct beneficiary population of 118 people with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities and deafblindness. Of which around 82% are minors, 61% have unfortunately been abandoned by their families or are orphans at birth and 39% belong to families of strata 0 and 1 with marked economic limitations that affect the absence of a healthy diet, access to decent housing, exclusion from the education system and social stigmatisation.

Due to the nature of the project, the sensorineural classroom will be available to the general population with disabilities residing in the Department, as well as those moving in the border area.

It is necessary to specify that this initiative will also be of benefit to children who do not have disabilities but learning difficulties or to all children whose families wish to strengthen their neurodevelopmental level. Therefore, educational institutions, training centres and kindergartens are the direct beneficiaries of the project in its implementation. In the Department there are 245 official schools and an average of 190 private schools.

The impact of the initiative will have significant effects on children and adolescents with disabilities as the target population, as well as on their support networks and families.

Describes the process used to identify beneficiaries.

The targeting of beneficiaries begins with the 118 children, adolescents and adults with intellectual disabilities who are already users of the Instituto La Esperanza. Their identification is possible through the tools of characterisation and violation of rights developed by the interdisciplinary team that works in the foundation.

In addition, a geographical mapping of the educational institutions, training centres and kindergartens near the Institute was carried out, identifying those which, due to their strategic location, could be strategic beneficiaries of this project.

Finally, based on the available data, an estimate is made of the population with disabilities in the department that could benefit from a neurosensory classroom, considering the lack of similar spaces in the region.

STRENGTHS, NEEDS, COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND PROJECT DESIGN

Describe what community members said they cared about during the assessment.

Parents and community leaders have expressed great interest in the implementation of a neurosensory classroom, highlighting its benefits for children and adolescents with disabilities. According to them, this initiative will strengthen motor skills, stimulate language, improve emotional control and develop social skills. The community has expressed the need for a space like this, which favours cognitive development and provides opportunities for people with disabilities to showcase their talents.

As some of them put it: "such a classroom would be very important for children to have greater capacities", "stimulation is essential for children with disabilities to progress and interact with others" and "we need a space that favours the cognitive development of people with disabilities, projects that really see disability as an opportunity and make people with exceptional and diverse talents visible".

Describe the community's strengths and resources.

One of the strengths of this community is its openness to inclusive initiatives. The community has been actively involved in promoting inclusion, demonstrating a deep commitment to children's well-being. The proposal for a sensory classroom has been very well received, as members recognise its multiple benefits in improving the quality of life of children with disabilities. By stimulating the senses, movement and expression, the sensory classroom encourages the development of social, cognitive and motor skills. It also provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes learning and emotional well-being.

Describes challenges and gaps in community behaviours, skills and knowledge.

Instituto La Esperanza has played a key role in building a more inclusive society by promoting the rights of people with intellectual disabilities for 50 years. While significant progress has been made in terms of social awareness, challenges remain in terms of developing specialised technical skills to ensure quality inclusion. In this sense, it is necessary to continue strengthening the capacities of citizens, professionals and the institutions involved. A weakness in the national and departmental context is the absence of a differential public policy that supports caregivers and protects the rights of persons with disabilities in an assertive and forceful manner.

What problems will the project address and how does the community currently address these problems?

The main problem derived from the absence of neurosensory stimulation spaces lies in the limited autonomy and independence of people with disabilities or learning difficulties. This situation is largely due to a lack of specialised professionals in the area and a lack of updating in psycho-pedagogical methodologies. In addition, economic barriers make it difficult for people to access private services.

As a consequence of this lack, many people with disabilities face difficulties in accessing the labour market, participating actively in their community and building satisfactory life projects. This has a negative impact on their quality of life and integral development.

The community approaches the problem without the necessary technical tools, relying on perception or intuition. Likewise, the target population of this project does not receive neurosensory stimulation processes.

It provides specific details on the project design and how it will solve these problems.

The main focus of this project is the construction and equipping of a neurosensory classroom at the Instituto La Esperanza, intended to provide a space for sensory stimulation and integral development for people with intellectual disabilities and students with diverse educational needs. Through the creation of carefully designed sensory corners, the aim is to promote sensory integration and the cognitive, emotional and social development of the users.

General objective

To build and equip an inclusive neurosensory classroom to stimulate the senses and promote the integral development of people with intellectual disabilities or learning

Each of these is detailed below:

Stage 1. Adequacy of the physical space

To ensure an optimal environment for sensory stimulation, it is essential to consider the following aspects in the adaptation of the physical space:

1.1 Unification and enlargement of space

- Define the exact dimensions of the space to be fitted out.
- Consider the layout of sensory corners and circulation spaces.
- Assess the need to remove architectural barriers to ensure universal accessibility.

2.2 Air conditioning installation

- Select an efficient air-conditioning system to maintain a constant and comfortable temperature in the classroom.
- Consider installing a natural ventilation system to renew the air and improve environmental quality.

2.3 General lighting

- Use energy-efficient, dimmable LED lighting to create different lighting moods depending on the activity to be carried out.
- Install dimmers to control the light intensity and create relaxing or stimulating

- **Visual space**

Bubble tube
Mirror spheres with light reflector
Fibre-optic curtain
Circular visual effects table
Mirrors of different sizes and shapes.
Colour-changing LED lights.
Image and video projector
Hanging mobiles with reflective elements.

- **Auditory space**

Musical instruments
Natural sound recordings and acoustic amplifiers
Wireless microphone sound recorder

Stage 4. Accessibility and security

The main purpose of this stage is to ensure that the sensorineural classroom is a safe, inclusive and accessible environment for all users, regardless of their abilities or limitations.

The aim is to create a space where people with intellectual disabilities or learning difficulties can move freely, safely and fully enjoy sensory experiences. It is envisaged to establish protocols of action in case of incidents, emergency plans and first aid. Also, the use of furniture adaptable to the characteristics and needs of the users.

Stage 5. Ownership and capacity building

Describe the long-term plan for the project (such as monitoring, financial responsibilities and expected behavioural change) after the end of Rotary's involvement.

Under this premise, Instituto La Esperanza plans to consolidate strategic alliances for the sustainability of the initiative, carrying out a quarterly evaluation of the indicators of progress and significant achievements. Likewise, within the sustainability plan, a specialised marketing area will be established for the dissemination of the service. This will be part of a corporate social responsibility strategy.

On the other hand, the organisation will carry out accounting, administrative and fiscal management of the services offered under the principles of transparency and efficiency.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (FOR ALL PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE)

What are currently the greatest environmental threats to the local soil, air, water resources and ecosystem?

Indicates cultural practices relevant to the project (e.g. agricultural techniques or traditions).

What positive and negative environmental changes do you expect to result from the project?