

## Saúde Criança: Holistic Health Solutions for Families in Favelas

BrazilBrazil  
Vera Cordeiro





**Organization type:**

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:

Scaling

**Budget:**

\$1 million - \$5 million

Website:

<http://www.saudecrianca.org.br>

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

**Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.**

Childhood illnesses among the poor occur within a larger socioeconomic context in which the conditions of poverty serve to instigate and perpetuate the symptoms of disease. Saúde Criança aims to break this persistent cycle of poverty and suffering by providing holistic support to families to address their total well-being, not merely their disease. This is achieved through a multidimensional action plan that addresses all the components necessary to achieve sustainable good health for the entire family, including support in health, housing, income generation, education, and citizenship. By lifting families out of poverty, Saúde Criança's method represents true recovery for those who suffer.

About Project

**Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?**

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Saúde Criança works with families from some of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro and all over Brazil. The typical family assisted by the program comes from the favelas (slums) and is comprised of a single, African-Brazilian mother with about 3-4 children. Here, they live in abject poverty with little access to government resources and often they have grown accustomed to being marginalized and forgotten by those in power. As a result, they consider themselves to be hopeless and unable to escape from their surroundings. Their dreams of success become forgotten when it becomes a daily struggle just to survive. In this context, acute and chronic medical conditions have severe and long-lasting consequences on not only the family's health but its overall welfare as well. Frequently, the decision to buy medicine or continue treatment for a sick child means relinquishing dinner for the day or being unable to provide for other members of the family. Even if the expensive treatments are purchased, they are rendered ineffective when the child returns back to the dirty alleyways and cramped housing characteristic of most houses in a favela. Thus, families become poorer, both financially and in spirit, while their health conditions stagnate or even worsen.

**Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!**

The traditional perspective of medicine focuses largely on the biology and regards good health as simply the absence of disease. This approach ameliorates the immediate health problem but does not represent a long-term solution because it ignores the wider context in which the illness occurs. Poor children may be given medicine at the hospital to treat their diseases but if they return to an impoverished home in the favelas without the means to take care of themselves, they will frequently become sick yet again. This quickly devolves into a vicious cycle of poverty and suffering as the parents must then spend more money and time to tend to their child, further stretching their already meager resources and digging themselves deeper into a rut. In contrast, Saúde Criança espouses a model of healthcare that transcends the typical approach and addresses all aspects that contribute to total well-being, including biological, social, and psychological factors. With tailor-made family plans that address several different dimensions of health at once, Saúde Criança's methodology treats the root of the problem by bringing the family out of poverty. More than a mere donation, the assistance that Saúde Criança provides supports the family for the long-term by empowering them to become economically and socially self-sufficient. To our knowledge, this is the only systematic anti-poverty program developed and fully-run by members of civil society.

Impact: How does it Work

**Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.**

The key to Saúde Criança's methodology is the Family Action Plan, a 2-year blueprint made in conjunction with the family that outlines all of the major goals the family should aim to achieve in all five pillars of health. Fulfillment of the minimum standards of the plan enables families to become self-sufficient and is necessary for graduation from the program. The goals and strategies differ according to the areas they address: - Health: Saúde Criança provides specialized food, medicine, and technical support to ensure that the child's chronic or acute illness is well-managed. By the end, every member of the family should be in at least satisfactory condition, as defined by the hospital. - Housing: Homes in poor condition are repaired and refurbished using materials and labor provided by Saúde Criança to have access to basic amenities, such as water, sewage, painted walls, and a roof without leakages. - Income Generation: Family members (particularly mothers) are enrolled in professional training courses where they learn marketable skills that help ensure stable and higher incomes upon graduation. - Citizenship: Saúde Criança provides guidance and legal advice in obtaining official registration documentation, which permits access to government social service programs. - Education: Parents and teenagers attend educational lectures on issues such as nutrition, hygiene, violence and domestic abuse, infant development, family planning, STDs, AIDS, and basic care. In addition, Saúde Criança acts as an intermediary between children and their school counselors.

Sustainability

**Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

Saúde Criança is proud to have an official partnership with the municipality of Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais, which has adopted Saúde Criança's methodology (Family Action Plan) into its new health policy, "Família Cidadã: Cidade Solidária." Saúde Criança is currently working with the municipalities of Rio de Janeiro, R.J. and Florianópolis, S.C., on similar pilot programs. Because the Family Action Plan model is easily adaptable to poor communities all over, working at the federal level will allow Saúde Criança to impact the entire country of Brazil. Besides Saúde Criança's official partnership with the municipality of Belo Horizonte and with pilot programs in Rio de Janeiro and Florianópolis, it also supports and advises 23 other NGOs that have replicated its methodology. Both of these activities help spread and attest to the strength of its work. Moreover, Saúde Criança collaborates closely with the businesses with which it is partnered. For instance, it worked intimately with McKinsey to develop its data management system and with DM9 to organize its advertising campaign. These efforts have significantly strengthened the organization. Finally, Saúde Criança and Georgetown University have begun to work together to explore the long-term impact of the methodology on families.

About You

**Organization:**

Saúde Criança

About You

**First Name**

Hank

**Last Name**

Song

**Twitter**

**Facebook Profile**

## About Your Organization

### Organization Name

Saúde Criança

### Organization Phone

+55 21 2266-1446 r.31

### Organization Address

Rua Jardim Botânico, 86 – Jardim Botânico

### Organization Country

, RJ

### Country where this project is creating social impact

, RJ

### How long has your organization been operating?

More than 5 years

### Is the project that you are entering related to this organization?

Yes

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

## Innovation

### What stage is your project in?

Operating for more than 5 years

### Tell us about the community that you engage? eg. economic conditions, political structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with engagement efforts.

Saúde Criança works with families from some of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro and all over Brazil. The typical family assisted by the program comes from the favelas (slums) and is comprised of a single, African-Brazilian mother with about 3-4 children. Here, they live in abject poverty with little access to government resources and often they have grown accustomed to being marginalized and forgotten by those in power. As a result, they consider themselves to be hopeless and unable to escape from their surroundings. Their dreams of success become forgotten when it becomes a daily struggle just to survive.

In this context, acute and chronic medical conditions have severe and long-lasting consequences on not only the family's health but its overall welfare as well. Frequently, the decision to buy medicine or continue treatment for a sick child means relinquishing dinner for the day or being unable to provide for other members of the family. Even if the expensive treatments are purchased, they are rendered ineffective when the child returns back to the dirty alleyways and cramped housing characteristic of most houses in a favela. Thus, families become poorer, both financially and in spirit, while their health conditions stagnate or even worsen.

### Share the story of the founder and what inspired the founder to start this project

While working as a doctor in one of Rio de Janeiro's largest public hospitals, Dr. Vera Cordeiro began to notice that many of the children who were treated and released would often come back a month or two later in even worse condition, or, as occurred too often, would never return at all—even with the proper medicine, they would die. She realized that the problem was not the quality of medical treatment at the hospital but the social ills plaguing the child's family that rendered the treatments ineffective. Compelled to make a difference in her community, she founded the "Child Health Association" (Associação Saúde Criança) in 1991 to break this cycle of poverty, disease and death.

What began as a small, personal operation in which Dr. Cordeiro auctioned off her own set of bed sheets to buy the first supplies has since become an efficient institution that goes far beyond hospital walls to truly heal those in need. Her comprehensive approach engages health professionals to identify at-risk families and mobilizes a cadre of volunteers to work one-on-one with each family to take charge of transforming their lives. Through her work, Dr. Vera Cordeiro has gone above and beyond the role of a physician and has been recognized as one of the most influential social entrepreneurs of this generation.

## Social Impact

### Please describe how your project has been successful and how that success is measured

In order to measure the impact of the Family Action Plan, Saúde Criança partnered with McKinsey & Co. to develop a comprehensive review program that measures the social impact made in each of the five key areas of health addressed by the organization. The process begins when the families first arrive and information about their health background is recorded into the system. The database is then updated monthly when the families return for their regular check-ups. Before graduating from Saúde Criança, every family must have demonstrated improvement at every level and have surpassed a predetermined threshold in each indicator. As a result, it is guaranteed that families leaving the organization will have improved their health, general well-being, and self-esteem.

The results of this review program show significant results. Family income was found to increase by an average of 32% while the average number of days of hospitalization was reduced by more than 66%. Considering that the average cost of hospitalization is US \$500 per day, Saúde Criança's intervention result in vast savings for both patients and public hospitals. In addition, before Saúde Criança, only 28% of the children were

considered to be in good health, 48% in satisfactory health, and 24% in life-threatening conditions. After families were assisted by the organization, the numbers dramatically shifted to 52% in good health, 41% in satisfactory health, and only 7% in life-threatening conditions.

#### **How many people have been impacted by your project?**

More than 10,000

#### **How many people could be impacted by your project in the next three years?**

More than 10,000

#### **Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact**

Major advertising and rebranding campaign to disseminate Saúde Criança's name and message throughout Brazil and to make the organization synonymous with quality aid.

##### **Task 1**

Video and written testimonials from influential people from business, politics, and social development (Mohammed Yunus, Arminio Fraga, etc)

##### **Task 2**

Advertising campaign run pro-bono through DM9 (a top-design firm based in Brazil) for TV, magazines, internet, and other forms of media. Target audience is all of Brazil.

##### **Task 3**

A road show presentation to various companies all over Brazil to fundraise for the growth of Saúde Criança

#### **Identify your 12-month impact milestone**

The establishment of two additional franchises, one in São Paulo and one international.

##### **Task 1**

Supporting the São Paulo and international franchise teams by initiating communication with the local hospitals and contacting potential board members, sponsors, and volunteers.

##### **Task 2**

Broaden fundraising goals of all franchises. Every R\$4000,00 raised by each franchise will be matched by the main headquarters.

##### **Task 3**

Have all heads of Saúde Criança franchises participate in all capacity-building courses offered at Saúde Criança's main headquarters in Rio de Janeiro

#### **How will your project evolve over the next three years?**

Saúde Criança's fundamental goal of providing sustainable health solutions to families in need will stay the same. However, over the next three years, the organization aims to broaden its reach to stretch into federal public policy. Because the Family Action Plan model is easily adaptable to poor communities all over, working at the federal level will allow Saúde Criança to impact the entire country of Brazil. The organization also aims to strengthen all chapters of the franchise so that each one is able to offer active, robust, high-quality programs in all five areas of health. This will ensure that all assisted families receive excellent, individualized care.

#### **Sustainability**

#### **What barriers might hinder the success of your project and how do you plan to overcome them?**

The largest foreseeable problem is a lack of funds available to finance our various projects. Currently, the majority of funds derive from international corporate and individual donations, but to ensure the future sustainability of the organization, Saúde Criança has created a permanent trust fund, headed by Arminio Fraga, former president of the Central Bank of Brazil. The establishment of such an endowment is a first for any Brazilian NGO. To promote donations to the fund, Saúde Criança is exploring other forms of media, beginning with a major logo-rebranding campaign organized pro-bono by the advertising agency DM9 to increase visibility of the organization through TV, print, and internet. Saúde Criança also fundraises through sales of hand-crafted merchandise made by mothers in the program and will soon begin online sales of these products as well.

The other major obstacle is complications within the bureaucracy of Brazil. Saúde Criança aims ultimately to influence public policy, yet the unfortunate reality is that bureaucracy is slow and that internal contentions exist between departments that obstruct the development of programs. One of the major motivations for the upcoming marketing campaign is to garner greater public awareness and support for the organization. Because Saúde Criança already maintains friendly relations with influential people, including Arminio Fraga, Graça Machel, and Mohammed Yunus, it is hoped that more visibility will give the organization greater political clout and the ability to effect influential change.

#### **Tell us about your partnerships**

Saúde Criança works closely with the municipalities of Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, and Florianópolis, which have all adopted its methodology in various pilot health programs.

Belo Horizonte has already invested significantly in "Família Cidadã: Cidade Solidária" while Rio de Janeiro is initiating a similar pilot project (called "Carióquina Saudável") in the favelas of Cantagalo, Pavão, and Pavãozinho, and Florianópolis is researching the applicability of the methodology in communities around the area.

Saúde Criança also receives specific assistance through partnerships with various businesses, such as: McKinsey & Company (logistics), Skoll Foundation (supports growth of the network), Ursula Zindel Hilti Foundation (contributes with part of the staff's salaries and supports growth), Unimed (sponsors ~36% of medical supplies as well as professional development for staff), Instituto Kinder do Brasil (offers scholarships for

school-age family members), L'Oreal (offers technical support, professional training, and beauty school supplies), Queiroz Galvão (sponsors the house refurbishing program), Johnson & Johnson (sponsors educational lectures for mothers and teenagers, and reimburses transportation costs for the family), Praxair Foundation (contributes to the growth of the network and provides courses and equipment for vocational training courses), DM9 (advertising), and the Renner Institute (sponsors cooking courses).

Finally, because Saúde Criança understands the value of transparency and accountability, its accounts are audited annually by Deloitte.

### **Explain your selections**

Individuals, foundations, and businesses have several methods of supporting Saúde Criança. Businesses often provide in-kind donations, such as consultations, beauty products, housing repairs, and medical supplies. Saúde Criança also sells hand-crafted products made by mothers within the program at kiosks in retail areas and as social corporate gifts. There is also a "godfather/godmother" sponsorship program through which individuals in Brazil and abroad can sponsor a child or family throughout the entire course of their Family Action Plan. This initiative has proved to be very successful and Saúde Criança currently counts more than 302 godfathers and godmothers. Finally, to facilitate the process of international donations, Saúde Criança has an office based in New York under the name of "Brazil Child Health" that holds a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status.

To ensure more long-term sustainability, Saúde Criança founded a trust fund, entitled "Saúde Criança Forever," to which foundations and corporations may donate. The eventual goal is to increase the endowment to R\$20 million such that the interest alone could cover 80% of Saúde Criança's operating cost. Currently half of this goal has been reached.

### **How do you plan to strengthen your project in the next three years?**

Saúde Criança's principal priority within the next three years is to ensure the quality of its services. Therefore, alongside the formation of two additional franchises, the organization will focus its efforts on identifying any weaknesses within the program and working towards eliminating them. With this goal in mind, Saúde Criança has partnered with a research team from Georgetown University to investigate the long-term effects of its methodology. This third-party analysis will not only show whether the program has had a successful enduring impact on families but also measure the effectiveness of different aspects of the program. Based on these results, changes can be made to improve the organization's actions. Moreover, Saúde Criança's main headquarters organizes training sessions for heads of its franchise chapters in order to demonstrate and standardize the administrative processes for its various activities.

Significant growth will also occur with increased fundraising. The forthcoming marketing campaign, as well as the corporate road show, is designed to raise Saúde Criança's profile and to help spread its message. The objective of these efforts is to demonstrate the organization is responsible and capable. This will not only encourage donors to invest but will also allow Saúde Criança to become stronger within Brazil and eventually be able to spread internationally. The eventual goal is to have the majority of the general public not only aware of Saúde Criança as an aid organization but trust in the quality of its work as well.

### **Challenges**

#### **Which barriers to health and well-being does your innovation address?**

**Please select up to three in order of relevancy to your project.**

##### **PRIMARY**

##### **SECONDARY**

Limited access to preventative tools or resources

##### **TERTIARY**

Restrictive cultural norms

#### **Please describe how your innovation specifically tackles the barriers listed above.**

After making the Family Action Plan with Saúde Criança, families are provided with all of the medicinal, nutritional, and technical support necessary to take care of their sick children, all paid for and coordinated by the organization. This removes any financial or logistical barriers denying these services to families. Moreover, Saúde Criança offers a comprehensive care package that aims to lift the family out of poverty. Such holistic practice offers two main benefits: primarily, it represents true, sustainable preventive care as it addresses both the biological and socioeconomical roots of disease. Further, this approach increases the family members' self-confidence and self-respect, encouraging them to realize their potential and helping break the standard pattern of enduring poverty.

#### **How are you growing the impact of your organization or initiative?**

**Please select up to three potential pathways in order of relevancy to you.**

##### **PRIMARY**

##### **SECONDARY**

Influenced other organizations and institutions through the spread of best practices

##### **TERTIARY**

Grown geographic reach: Global

#### **Please describe which of your growth activities are current or planned for the immediate future.**

Since its foundation, Saúde Criança has transformed itself into a social franchise and established ten other chapters throughout Brazil. The organization is currently planning to form another chapter in São Paulo. In addition, the municipality of Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais has officially adopted Saúde Criança's methodology (Family Action Plan) into its new health policy, "Família Cidadã: Cidade Solidária." Saúde Criança is currently working with the municipalities of Rio de Janeiro, R.J. and Florianópolis, S.C., on similar pilot programs. Finally, because Saúde Criança's model of sustainable health is easily applicable to situations of poverty throughout the world, presently there are plans to expand into Colombia.

#### **Do you collaborate with any of the following: (Check all that apply)**

Government, NGOs/Nonprofits, For profit companies, Academia/universities.

**If yes, how have these collaborations helped your innovation to succeed?**

Besides Saúde Criança's official partnership with the municipality of Belo Horizonte and with pilot programs in Rio de Janeiro and Florianópolis, it also supports and advises 23 other NGOs that have replicated its methodology. Both of these activities help spread and attest to the strength of its work. Moreover, Saúde Criança collaborates closely with the businesses with which it is partnered. For instance, it worked intimately with McKinsey to develop its data management system and with DM9 to organize its advertising campaign. These efforts have significantly strengthened the organization. Finally, Saúde Criança and Georgetown University have begun to work together to explore the long-term impact of the methodology on families.

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