

M. Caridad Araujo, Inter-American Development Bank, Lead Economist

**Abstract:**

**Implementing Home Visiting At-Scale: the evaluation of Peru's Cuna Mas**

In 2012, the Government of Peru launched Cuna Mas, a national Home Visiting Program targeted to rural, disperse areas with high levels of poverty and malnutrition. In 2015, this Program reached close to 100,000 children, 0-3 years of age, with weekly home visits carried out by trained community workers who followed a structure curriculum based on the well-known and researched Jamaican pilot. The Program had an experimental impact evaluation embedded in its design. Using the gradual Program rollout, districts were randomly assigned into treatment and control groups that determined when they would start receiving the Program. // We explore what is the impact of a Home Visiting Program implemented at-scale on child development in the areas of fine and gross motor, cognition, communication, and personal-social. To our knowledge, this is the first experimental evaluation of a Program of this nature implemented at-scale. In addition we study what are the mechanisms through which the Program is affecting children's outcomes. Lastly, we empirically document what are key aspects of home visiting quality that are associated to better child outcomes. // At an annual per-child cost of around US\$ 300, we find that Cuna Mas had robust and significant impacts of 0.1 standard deviation on child development, in particular in the areas of cognitive development and communication. We also find that implementing a Home Visiting Program at such a large scale is complex and that Cuna Mas has ample room to consolidate its quality. For example, the Program is not yet reaching all the children who meet the eligibility criteria in the targeted communities. It also needs to ensure that all children receive home visits of the length and frequency proposed by the Program guidelines. We find that quality of home visits is key for their effectiveness. In particular, improving the training of home visitors so that they can successfully accomplish better maternal and child engagement seems to be a key area of Program improvement. //