



Vida Plena  
<https://vidaplena.global/>  
Founded 2022  
Seed grant: \$132,000  
2 person team

## The Need

The world is facing a mental health crisis. The WHO estimates that 5% of people in Latin America have depression, however, a lack of prioritization means that more than 3 out of 4 people in Latin America go untreated. Ecuador, in particular, has some of the highest rates of depression in the region, which causes 8.3% of the total years lived with disability (YLD).

The broader effects of poor mental health are numerous. Globally, it is estimated that:

- 12 billion productive days are lost each year due to depression causing absenteeism for both patients and their caregivers
- \$2.5 trillion is the annual cost of mental health illness due to the loss of economic productivity and the direct costs of treatment
- This cost is expected to grow to \$6.0 trillion per year by 2030

## Our Work

### Evidence-based Depression Treatment

Vida Plena trains local people to provide a structured, evidence-based model of counseling, called group Interpersonal Therapy (g-IPT), to empower individuals and communities to meet their own mental health needs.

## Our Approach

1. Community Training - Local community members are trained as support group facilitators.
2. Community Outreach - Refugees and at-risk Ecuadorians with depression are invited to join a small, neighborhood- based support group.
3. Community-lead Support Groups - Community facilitators guide people over the course of 9 weeks to learn new skills and support one another in their journeys to overcome depression.
4. Depression is Eliminated or Reduced - Having addressed many of the sources of depression, people experience significant improvements in their symptoms and day to day life.