

92.

REGIONAL INITIATIVE AMPS UP ITS EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF RESILIENT CITIES

The resilience approach to dealing with urban problems gains strength and encourages innovative solutions with triple bottom line impact that use resources efficiently and contribute to the circular economy.

93.

The Regional Initiative for Resilient Cities (IRCR) is an alliance between Fundación Avina, Resilient Cities Network, and IDB Lab, with support from the Citi Foundation. It aims to improve and strengthen urban resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean, involving the private, public, academic, and civil society sectors in the development and implementation of innovative solutions.

The IRCR promotes the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem with innovative business models geared toward solving social, economic, and environmental problems and strengthening the resilience of urban systems. It focuses on three main areas:

- **Strengthening the urban resilience ecosystem**
- **Fostering innovation through Urban Resilience Challenge competitions**
- **Creation of a community of practice**

Last year, we carried out a number of Urban Resilience Challenges, whose goal is to identify and support sustainable technological solutions to social, economic, and environmental problems that have the potential for scalability, promote circular economic practices, produce concrete positive impacts, and encourage participation and value generation by the private sector.

Why does Fundación Avina support this initiative?

The greatest rates of urban growth are taking place in Latin America and the Caribbean. This phenomenon, in combination with existing inequalities and other urban challenges, has left cities lagging behind in their long-term planning. They cannot keep up with the speed of the changes, and they face problems arising from overexploitation of natural resources and the impact of climate change.

Even in the face of these challenges, we believe cities can create a resilient future for residents. This is why we created a regional initiative to facilitate collaboration,

multi-sector co-investment, and the exchange of knowledge among different stakeholders that support urban resilience. We aim to involve the private sector, with its capacity for innovation, technology, and scale, to create a virtuous cycle, developing both economic value and public goods, reducing harm and vulnerability, and facilitating a transition to cities that are safe, sustainable, resilient, and inclusive.

What did Fundación Avina and its allies do?

We implemented the IRCR in 10 Latin American cities, identifying social and technological solutions with new business models that generate triple bottom line impact to benefit urban resilience.

Impact Achieved

Public Policies. The implementation of innovative business models, new enterprises, and solutions to make small and medium-sized businesses more efficient creates a pathway for influence on public policies. We coordinated with local governments to develop regulations, development plans, and strategies.

Markets. The enterprises that won the challenges operate with new business models that contribute to the circular economy, along with new models for production and consumption that can influence traditional markets. The recovery and reuse of different types of waste can become new products and businesses.

Technology and Innovation. The enterprises propose new forms of production, waste recovery and reuse, remanufacturing and recycling, digital solutions to improve industrial production, and technology to increase energy efficiency.

Conservation of Natural Resources. These innovative solutions contribute to the efficient use of natural resources.

94. “

The IRCR helps us contribute to urban resilience by catalyzing economic and social innovations that can demonstrate, through their own development process and the knowledge they produce, that it's possible to come up with business models that positively impact sustainable development in cities."

Marcela Mondino, Fundación Avina

"The Regional Initiative for Resilient Cities helped us strengthen our program to revive the chinampas [traditional floating islands for agriculture], where we worked with rural families to restore abandoned chinampas, making them productive again and creating employment. The crops harvested from these chinampas will be sold directly to the best restaurants in Mexico City."

Lucio Usobiaga, Founder of Arca Tierra, Mexico

"We've created a technological solution that drives collaborative and circular economic practices by promoting the exchange of underutilized goods and services and the utilization of waste to generate value and create new products, thereby contributing to urban resilience."

Patricio Ulloa, Director of the Conecta2 Project, Quito, Ecuador

"3C Construcciones developed a high-quality construction system using blocks manufactured from plastic waste. These

95.

blocks are produced at a very low cost, require minimal energy, and, most importantly, are created at the hands of people from vulnerable communities, who are the primary beneficiaries of their work and who, in the process, build new relationships that give their communities a sense of purpose."

Lucas Recalde and Juan Pablo Cmet, 3C Construcciones, Córdoba, Argentina

"At Citi Foundation, our objective is to develop programs that support the emergence of new ideas and invest in projects that help replicate or scale existing solutions to promote urban resilience. We believe that the formation of multi-sector alliances, like the Regional Initiative for Resilient Cities that we are part of with Fundación Avina, is a concrete way to come up with solutions to urban challenges and emergency situations like the one arising from the COVID-19 pandemic."

Melisa Pino, Director of Corporate Citizenship for Citi Latam, Citi Foundation

"Urban resilience is everyone's responsibility. The challenges that cities face are wide-ranging, including acute problems like natural disasters as well as chronic tensions like poor air quality, social exclusion, and violence. The IRCR has demonstrated the importance of having diverse stakeholders join forces to get behind shared causes. The success of this program is thanks to an alliance between the Resilient Cities Network, Fundación

96.

Avina, and IDB Lab to support small and medium-sized businesses that are inventing and reinventing the future of their cities to make them more just and resilient."

Eugene Zapata Garesche, Global Director for Strategic Partnerships and Head of Latin America and the Caribbean for Resilient Cities Network

Impact on Fundación Avina's Strategic Pillars
Just and Regenerative Economy

Impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



97.

Impact in Numbers

134
enterprises

and small businesses strengthened
in Quito's industrial zone

8 experiences were
systematized from the
challenges in **Buenos Aires,**
Córdoba, Mexico City, Quito,
Salvador da Bahia,
Montevideo, and Asunción

8 urban resilience
interventions
implemented in
Santiago (Chile), Lima
(Peru), Quito (Ecuador),
Bogotá (Colombia),
Córdoba (Argentina),
Montevideo (Uruguay),
Buenos Aires
(Argentina), Salvador da
Bahia (Brazil), and
Xochimilco (Mexico)

- **240** enterprises in Ecuador and Chile are receiving training and technical assistance to strengthen their business models
- Over **350** innovative proposals were submitted to the Urban Resilience Challenge competitions
- **44** winning enterprises were implemented
- **58** enterprises participated in the incubator program.
- **7** chambers of commerce and **31** small and medium-sized businesses implemented resource-efficient and circular solutions
- **1.296 m²** (about 13,950 sq. ft.) of public space was restored with community participation

Launch of a community of practice along with Resilient Cities
Network; **64 webinars delivered**

98.

Impact in Numbers

One book published

*La economía circular y la resiliencia de las ciudades.
Iniciativas innovadoras para una mejor calidad de vida*
(The Circular Economy and the Resilience of Cities:
Innovative initiatives to improve quality of life)

8 investigative journalism
pieces published in audiovisual
media outlets

Incidence on public policies:

- **Salvador de Bahía:** the circular economy agenda is growing in strength and the initiative is providing key input for a Municipal Law on Innovation
 - **Ecuador:** a Harmonization Plan was drafted to improve the relationship between industrial zones and urban planning and zoning policies in Quito
 - **Argentina:** the initiative contributed to the National Strategy for Sustainable Production and Consumption, working with the staff of the Office of Innovation in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
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Impact on the Components of the Collaborative Process

99.

 <p>Relevance</p>	<p>Latin America is the most urbanized region on the planet. This work is highly relevant when put in the context of the following data: 75% of Latin American cities are marked by a high level of inequality. Eight of the 20 most unequal countries in the world are located in Latin America. In Latin America, 2/3 of GDP comes from cities. Currently, 111 million Latin Americans live in underserved neighborhoods. 75% of greenhouse gases are produced in the region's cities.</p>
 <p>Tipping Point</p>	<p>The participation of the private sector and local governments represented a turning point for the solutions, both in terms of their scale and the creation of public policies that will institutionalize new practices in urban development.</p>
 <p>Scalability</p>	<p>The experience of 10 cities has generated knowledge that is shared in the community of practice to scale solutions.</p>
 <p>Social Capital</p>	<p>Alliances with the local governments, the private sector, academic institutions, and technical organizations that are active participants in implementing the roadmap. Alliances with grassroots organizations and business groups to develop solutions.</p>
 <p>Unifying Vision</p>	<p>Cities implement concrete solutions that contribute to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals related to urban inequality and resilience.</p>
 <p>Shared Action Agendas</p>	<p>The shared agenda is based on the concept of inclusive and resilient cities, with a focus on the Regional Initiative for Resilient Cities, the participation of the private sector, and building community through revitalized public spaces.</p>
 <p>Innovation</p>	<p>The private sector's involvement in the development and implementation of financially sustainable and scalable solutions that contribute to urban resilience.</p>
 <p>Incidence</p>	<p>Agreements with the private sector and governments to promote interventions that contribute to urban resilience and high-quality public spaces.</p>