

Asuncion
Green City
of the Americas
Pathways to Sustainability



BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON THE

PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY

NEIGHBORHOODS WITHOUT WASTE

AN INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE RECYCLING

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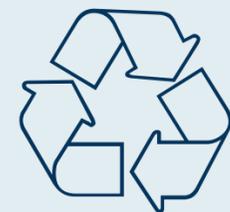
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FACING THE CHALLENGE

The first step to recover valuable waste is to sort it at the point of origin, separating recyclables from non-recyclables. However, the Municipality of Asunción does not yet provide a segregated waste collection service. This becomes not only an environmental challenge, but a social and economical one as well.

Urban recyclers rely on recyclable materials as their livelihoods, but often have to work in unsanitary conditions. Many businesses depend on recyclables for their production, others strive to reduce their carbon footprint.



FORMING A MULTISECTORAL ALLIANCE

Mi Barrio Sin Residuos (*My Neighborhood Without Waste*, in english), in its first stage, was an initiative that promoted recycling in Asunción, through a platform that connected households from 5 neighborhoods with a collective of urban recyclers, the San Francisco Neighborhood Recyclers Association, who offered their services to collect recyclable materials.

This innovative proposal aimed to bring about a more circular city, through a multisectoral alliance that included Coca Cola Paraguay, the Municipality of Asunción, The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES), and UNDP, all together within the framework of the *Asunción Green City of the Americas - Pathways to Sustainability* project.





ENGAGING THE NEIGHBORS

Through a simple digital platform, residents from the selected 5 neighborhoods had a two month period to sign up for the segregated collection service. Eligible households then participated in a series of online workshops to learn the correct methods to sort their waste at home. Once the collection service started, the participants would hand their recyclables to members of the San Francisco Recyclers Association, during their weekly visits to each home. In the first stage of the program, the segregated collection service was coordinated by the social company Soluciones Ecológicas, in collaboration with the San Francisco association, and with the support of Fundación Moisés Bertoni.

"I signed up for Mi Barrio Sin Residuos because I noticed that very few people are doing something to take care of the environment. I thought it was an innovative initiative that motivates people to recycle and care for our city"

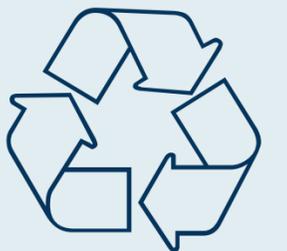
CAMILA CORREA

PARTICIPANT - MI BARRIO SIN RESIDUOS INITIATIVE



BOTTOM-UP INNOVATION

Plastics, cardboard, paper, aluminum, metals and tetrapak, are within the list of materials collected and sorted by the members of the association at their recycling workshop in the San Francisco neighborhood. They later sell these materials to local recycling companies, closing the circle and allowing these to be transformed into new products. Within the framework of the Asunción Green City project, a series of actions had already been under way, focused on strengthening and building capacity for the San Francisco Recyclers Association. This experience was the basis for an innovative collaboration with the UNDP Accelerator Lab.



AKNOWLEDGING THEIR NEEDS

From personal interviews to participatory workshops, we tried to learn about a day in the life of an urban recycler. This process resulted in a detailed mapping of their daily routes and collection points, and helped determine the challenges they face each day.

This information was the starting point to determine the area where the first pilot of Mi Barrio Sin Residuos should focus, in order to optimize recycling and enhance the work already done by the association. Logistical challenges were also addressed, in order to facilitate the collection process. An industrial scale was installed in the association's recycling workshop, allowing them to establish a baseline to measure the impact of the initiative.



"Working as a recycler I can support my family and, in addition, help take care of the environment. I am told that what I do can change the world. I don't know if that's true, but I find a lot of joy in it."

GRISELDA CANTERO

RECYCLER - MI BARRIO SIN RESIDUOS INITIATIVE



Griselda Cantero, a recycler from Mi Barrio Sin Residuos initiative.

IMPACT AND EVALUATION

More than 150 homes signed up to participate in the initiative in its first few months, providing enough recyclables to fill all 5 of the Associations' motorcars every week. In six months of operation, over 7,310 kg of recyclable materials have been recovered, resulting in an increase of approximately 20% of the recyclers's daily earnings.

To capitalize on all the lessons learned, the UNDP Accelerator Lab carried out an experimental impact evaluation of the initiative, with both participants and recyclers, to better asses their needs going forward and discover which areas can be improved.





MOVING FORWARD

SCALING UP THE INITIATIVE

Mi Barrio Sin Residuos leaves us with a clear lesson: when citizens are given the opportunity to contribute to making recycling possible, they will seize it. The impact evaluation shows that this initiative has the potential to change recycling habits, improve the working conditions of urban recyclers, and increase the recovery of recyclable materials.

Promoters have already scaled-up the initiative, launching the new phase of Mi Barrio Sin Residuos, which aims to recover 3.200 tons of recyclable materials this year.



Asuncion Green City of the Americas Pathways to Sustainability



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