

Barrick partners with Chilean NGOs to support housing, education and health initiatives



A landmark alliance recently signed between Barrick and three non-governmental organizations in Chile is hoping to alleviate the pockets of poverty in Atacama through targeted programs and initiatives. Called the Atacama Commitment, the focus of this unprecedented partnership is on housing, education, health and socioeconomic development.

Despite the Atacama region's wealth of natural resources and its unique beauty, the area is home to some of Chile's most impoverished and isolated communities. Thousands of residents live below the poverty line and are struggling with the basic necessities of life: education for their children, jobs to provide economic security, and affordable housing.

“The Atacama Commitment is a powerful alliance that brings together some of Chile's most respected organizations and Barrick in a concerted strategy to alleviate poverty in the region,” - Igor Gonzalez, president of Barrick South America.

The alliance brings Barrick together with *Teletón*, *Un Techo para Chile*, and *América Solidaria*. The first phase of the Atacama Commitment is expected to benefit more than 4,000 of the region's most underprivileged residents. The full implementation of these initiatives ranges from three to five years, with some projects already underway.

Key Programs:

New homes for families

Eliminating substandard housing and building new homes is one of the cornerstones of the Atacama Commitment. Barrick will be working with *Un Techo para Chile*, a volunteer-based organization that has already built thousands of homes across Chile. Under the leadership of *Un Techo para Chile*, the project will provide 700 families, an estimated 3,000 people, with new homes in safe neighbourhoods.

“Seven hundred families from the Atacama Region will finally leave the *campamentos* behind and move to houses in better neighbourhoods, where their children can grow and develop,” said *Un Techo para Chile* founder and chaplain Father Felipe Berrios.



Help for children with disabilities

Today, families living in the Atacama Region who have children with disabilities must travel to other areas in order to receive specialized medical assistance.

With Barrick's support, *Teletón* will be establishing a new centre in the city of Copiapo to serve the needs of these families. The centre will provide integrated medical, therapeutic, psychosocial and other services and assistance. Barrick has agreed to fund the management and operation of key programs at the centre for a five-year period. In addition to serving local families, the centre will also create jobs in the region.

Ximena Casarejos, *Teletón's* executive director, says local labour will be used for the construction and priority will be given to local professionals when filling health care and administrative jobs once the centre is open. "We hope that the Atacama Commitment, which will have a tremendous social impact in the region, will be replicated in other regions," Casarejos said.

Sustainable Development

One of the key steps to eradicating poverty in the long term is the creation of sustainable development programs. *América Solidaria* is committed to helping the Atacama region do just that.

With the support of Barrick, *América Solidaria* will send volunteers from Latin American countries to work with local residents to design and implement programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of the region.

Bringing technology to the classroom

The Atacama Commitment also incorporates the *Class 21* program, which is a collaborative educational partnership involving the *Fundación Cisneros*, Intel Corporation and Barrick.

The partnership began in June 2008 as a pilot project involving two rural schools in Chile's Huasco

Valley. Under the Atacama Commitment, the program will now be extended to 12 schools in the region over a three year period.

With support from existing partners and *Edu Innova*, a multi-disciplinary organization specializing in collaborative learning and technology, *Class 21* will provide more than 1,000 students with access to laptop computers, computer laboratories and an enhanced learning environment.