



Learning and skills for the future! 5 projects win the TPrize

Examples of [TPrize 2020's](#) winning projects include: a tool that **helps entrepreneurs to connect with their mentors**, a platform that **supports teachers in rural areas**, and a **virtual assistant for young people looking for work**.

The final of this call for **educational innovation**, launched by [Tec de Monterrey](#) and [University of Los Andes](#), was held virtually at the Tec's [7th International Conference on Educational Innovation](#).

The **5 winning TPrize projects** responded to the challenge to design educational tools for **lifelong skills-based learning**. These are:

[Lab4U](#) (Chile - Mexico) - A pocket lab

This platform **uses smartphone technology and sensors**, so that students have access to practical education in sciences such as physics or chemistry.

Lab4U's team also designs **experiments based on principles of curiosity**, to get students interested in science and to support theoretical learning.

*"We took smartphones with built-in **sensors, like camera microphones and accelerometers**, and we transformed them into measuring instruments, where students can have a lab in their pockets,"* explained Komal Dadlani, Lab4U co-founder.

MicroMentor (United States - Mexico) - Free mentoring for entrepreneurs

MicroMentor is a tool that works as a **social network to help new entrepreneurs** receive free personalized advice from business mentors.

The platform has **more than 69,000 entrepreneurs and 25,000 mentors from 179 countries**. To use it, you only need internet access and then create an account.

*“Mentoring not only offers entrepreneurs **access to social networks, financial resources, and new markets**, but also a resource to improve their self-confidence, motivation, and build resilience,”* said Tatiana Pérez, director of Global Programs at MicroMentor.

Ser Maestro (Peru) - Innovation platform for rural teachers

This project is made up of a network of innovators, who become **volunteer advisers to teachers** in **rural areas**, who're interested in innovation.

The Ser Maestro founders developed a **methodology called INNO**, which works as a **tool for designing and managing projects** easily.

*“We’ve managed to impact 1 million students; **15,000 teachers were trained as leaders who’ve succeeded in prototyping basic technology**, and we’ve managed to sustain 625 communities with learning, both face-to-face and virtual,”* said Jaime Montes, Ser Maestro founder.

ConHector (Colombia) - Job opportunity network for young people.

This is a **virtual assistant that informs young people of job opportunities** focused on their skills, as well as training that helps them access new opportunities.

The project also **offers advice and guidance on entering the job market**, through data analysis that in turn serves as feedback for employers and young people in the program.

*“This virtual assistant **connects people between the ages of 18 and 29 to job vacancies according to their skills**; it provides them with guidance through practical tools; and leads them to job placement,”* said Carolina Duarte, of ConHector.

Agricultural Biotechnology Academy (Chile) - Training for rural students

This is an educational program that -with expert advice- seeks to help young people develop projects to solve **local agricultural problems with sustainable and innovative ideas**.

It includes a number of **training sessions on biotechnology tools and scientific research project formulation**. These workshops include tools and theoretical and practical experience.

*“To date, we’ve impacted more than 75 people -65% of whom are women- and **we’ve generated more than 15 agricultural innovation projects**. In January 2021, we’re training our third generation of students,”* said Camila Martínez, founder of the project.

About TPrize

TPrize is an open innovation initiative by [Tec de Monterrey](#) and [University of Los Andes](#) that seeks to promote solutions to the **educational challenges** that exist in **Latin America and the Caribbean**.

It also has the backing of [MIT Solve](#), MIT's social projects area, which provided its platform for holding the contest.

*“This initiative **arose as part of the La Tríada alliance**, with an interest in contributing to the advancement and further promotion of educational innovation,” said **David Garza**, Tec de Monterrey's rector and executive president.*

Alejandro Gaviria, rector of Colombia's University of Los Andes, said, *“To have accomplished **these innovation project strengthening workshops in 11 cities, in 6 countries in the region**, reveals the interest and the importance of developing this area despite the borders, the distances that separate us, and the pandemic.”*

This year's challenge was how **disadvantaged communities can design and participate in lifelong skills-based learning opportunities**, to create productive and prosperous livelihoods in the 21st century.

*“Latin America is a region with significant challenges and deficiencies, and now with the pandemic, these can become exacerbated. Although this initiative began much earlier, **it's become more important** today in the current context,”* added the Tec's executive president.

Each finalist received 5,000 dollars, while the 5 winners obtained another 10,000 dollars and go through another 2-year follow-up phase in which **a community of leaders and experts will help them to achieve the maximum potential for their solutions**.

During the TPrize 2020 call, **304 projects were received from 37 countries**.

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