

Honorable Mention

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Healthy City: Fostering Entrepreneurship at the Base of the Pyramid. A Peruvian Experience

One morning in September 2013, Albina Ruiz, president of Healthy City, was waiting at the Jorge Chavez International Airport in Lima, Peru, for a flight to an Asian country. There she would meet the city council of one of the country's major cities to present a comprehensive solid waste management plan. Sitting in the waiting area, Ruiz thought about how it was getting harder for her to participate directly in training activities for recyclers and waste pickers in Peru. She was dividing her time among the non-governmental organization (NGO) Healthy City, the environmental consulting firm Peru Waste Innovation (PWI), and Healthy City International (HCI), a foundation that replicated the Healthy City model internationally.

Founded by Ruiz in 2002, Healthy City's waste management model has been recognized worldwide and received awards from various international organizations. Ruiz's model had been validated by government institutions in Peru, such as the Ministries of Environment, Health, and Education, and even the country's Congress. In 2009 the Peruvian Congress endorsed a proposal made by Healthy City and its partners, the Ministry of Environment, municipalities, and recyclers, to approve Law No. 29419. Law No. 29419 regulates recyclers' activities, promotes their formalization and association, and fosters the reuse of solid waste in the country. Thus Peru became the first country in the world with a national law regulating more than 108,000 solid waste collectors.

Ruiz was aware that both PWI and HCI were essential for Healthy City's economic sustainability and scalability. Both organizations provided financial resources to sustain Healthy City's world-class, multidisciplinary team. In addition, by replicating the model in other parts of the world, Healthy City could obtain international recognition from organizations, which in turn could help provide financing for environmental and social start-up projects. However, at the same time, Ruiz was very interested in maximizing the legal framework provided by Peruvian Law No. 29419. She especially wanted to work directly with waste pickers and recyclers. Before boarding her flight, Ruiz wondered what actions she should take to combine her work in the three organizations.



Peru and the Problem of Solid Waste

Although Peru's gross domestic product (GDP) only grew 0.9% in 2009 due to the global financial crisis, during the 2008–2012 period its GDP grew at an average annual rate of 6.5%. This growth was the result of macroeconomic and political stability, a



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