GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Cimientos is a non-profit founded on the belief that education is an essential tool to overcome vicious cycles of poverty and social exclusion.

Futuros Egresados is Cimientos’ main activity and founding program which aims to develop skills and abilities that favor school paths, helping low income children to stay and complete high school. Its innovative model empowers students by enabling their access the resources they need to achieve to achieve successful educational experiences, obtain their degree and build a better future.

It is a comprehensive program that has made a significant impact by providing personalized educational mentoring, financial help, opportunities for sharing experiences and the family and school support that children need in order to succeed. Through purposes and goals that stimulate and encourage a growing responsibility, mentors work with each student and family in developing educational and non educational resources as well as the sustainable use of the financial support to sustain schooling. Each meeting addresses topics concerning school performance and different activities are proposed leading to the development of skills and abilities such as study techniques, self-esteem, analytical skills, dialogue, decision making and time management. Students also participate in group meetings to encourage each other through team work.

Through this approach in a close partnering with schools, Futuros Egresados enables the students to obtain educational tools and life skills at the time it strengthens a supportive network to their education and future life projects.

- 9,780 kids participated in Futuros Egresados since 1998.
- More than 35,000 classmates and family members have become more actively comitted to education.
- 330 schools have been related with the program through its 15 years of work.
- Futuros Egresados already enabled 2,400 kids to complete high school.
- 12 NGOs are implementing the program in their communities for 700 students.
- 21 Argentine districts, Montevideo (Uruguay) and 1 city in Brazil are reached by the program.
- 78 students are taking part in an online mentoring pilot program.

Futuros Egresados was declared of “special educational interest” by the National Ministry of Education. It’s under constant evaluation to ensure that its methodology is adapted to Argentina’s ever-changing educational situation.
TARGET GROUPS, BENEFICIARIES AND MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

Recipients belong to households with unmet basic needs; average family income is about $750 monthly. They are enrolled in public high schools, are committed to their studies and must have a family member who participates in Futuros Egresados. For each recipient, it is estimated that 4 family members or classmates adopt more positive attitudes towards education.

Partnering schools belong to the public education system that mostly receives children from low income families and are located in impoverished areas. Their performance indicators are lower than the national average and they confront problems such as addictions, violence and health. Most of them don’t have the appropriate resources and facilities to address their communities’ needs.

Futuros Egresados working method involves active commitment of civil society, the private and the public sector. Its interventions aim to raise social awareness and transformation in the public policies. Encouraging participation of main stakeholders in education implies pioneering a significant change, willing to reverse vulnerable children’s social exclusion by enabling them access to quality education.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

What especially makes Futuros Egresados an outstanding educational practice is its school-based personalized educational mentoring, unique to Cimientos among other conditional cash transfer programs. This approach has proved to be an innovative critical factor for the program’s effectiveness, making a real difference in children’s lives as it improves school paths and graduation possibilities in tough contexts.

Futuros Egresados has made a significant contribution for educational transformation with a sustainable social impact by supporting children in learning and experimenting the value of education. Mentoring builds trusting and reliable relationships. It’s based on the students own purposes to ensure that they progressively develop and appropriate useful abilities and skills that increase critical thinking and improve decision making. This empowers them both to enhance their educational experiences - improving school attendance, school year approval and graduation rates - as to develop their life projects after school.

Impact studies highlights that recipients had better attendance than their classmates and obtain more positive educational outcomes. Repetition and dropout rates in Futuros Egresados are lower than local statistics. Participants are more likely to graduate, to continue higher studies and to obtain more formal jobs than their peers.

Futuros Egresados operates within the recipient students’ schools. This is another outstanding characteristic of the program in transforming education since these schools belong to the public education system which is not easily open to work by partnering with NGOs. This not only means making use of its facilities but, more importantly, ensuring to raise awareness and involvement of school authorities and teachers in the students’ schooling.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Cimientos has an internal team dedicated to evaluate Futuros Egresados annually. It works by comparing the program aims with the results achieved and by analyzing its processes in order to determine aspects to be improved both in short and in long term.

The activities effectiveness is measured through dashboards. These tools track process and result indicators concerning participant’s performance both in school (subjects approval, attendance, repetition rates, graduation rates) and within the program (mentoring meetings attended, requirements compliance, suspensions, cessations and participation renewals).

Additionally, an external and independent evaluation team conducted an Impact Evaluation on SSP’s methodology in 2005 and another one took place during 2012 to inquire if it contributes and makes the difference for successful school paths. These last evaluation includes measuring the mentoring impact on the development of noncognitive skills that promote successful educational experiences and future projection.

Regular monitoring and evaluation allows Futuros Egresados coordination to analyze and reconsider improvements in order to better attend its recipients, respond to its assorted needs and enhance its achievements. Futuros Egresados is an innovative and evolving program that has been evaluating its methodology and adjusting it to the ever-changing educational context in Argentina and to scale-up its efforts.

Key findings about Futuros Egresados beneficiaries

- They have better attendance than their classmates and promote the school year without pending subjects in a greater proportion than their peers.

- They demonstrate they are highly committed to their studies and show improvements in the development of habits and study techniques.

- They obtain more positive educational outcomes than their classmates, even those who have scholarships based only on financial support.

- Once they complete high school, they owe less school subjects than their classmates (42% vs 64%); are more likely to graduate than their peers (66% vs 42%); continue with higher studies (53% vs 45%); and obtain more jobs (12% of participants is looking for jobs vs 36%).
**SUSTAINABILITY**

Futuros Egresados sustainability is evident as its budget has steadily increased since its origins, enabling it to consistently expand its impact while remains allocating only 10% of funds for overhead. The program began with just 16 annual scholarships and has grown to over 3000, demonstrating its capacity to grow sustainably.

In order to ensure its viability and sustainability Futuros Egresados is supported by diverse funding sources. International and national support to the program over the years had increasingly raised awareness on the difference that the program has made in transforming education and had demonstrated it is a sustainable investment. Its partners currently include more than 40 private companies and foundations, around 450 individuals and almost 50 associate media outlets. They have trusted Cimientos supporting and strengthening Futuros Egresados development through the years, committing conjointly to make its mission possible. Cimientos also works by a close articulation with the public sector and 12 NGOs that implement the program throughout the country.

The work is structured by guiding principles that make the organization sustainable and prestigious such as action-based educational programs; professionalism and high quality in implementation, emphasis on recipients, transparency, result reporting and accountability.

**SCALABILITY**

Futuros Egresados model has been scaled-up successfully and sustainably. Since 2005 Cimientos has advised different government agencies in applying mentoring for disadvantaged children served by their programs. It has also actively empowered partner NGOs by sharing its method, providing them with training and resources to effectively implement the program.

Cimientos Alliance Program promotes ownership of the program’s model and its local development by partner NGOs. It aims to empower NGOs and strengthen its commitment in promoting equal educational opportunities in their local areas. Partner NGOs gain progressive autonomy in managing the program, appropriate its methodology and adapts its implementation to address their particular working contexts. Together they build a network to promote mutual enrichment by sharing their experiences and knowledge, adding value to the work of each NGO and the community at large.

Through this processes, Cimientos is helping to local communities development and strengthening NGOs. Nowadays, 12 NGOs implement the program for more than 700 students involving numerous key local actors all over Argentina, Montevideo in Uruguay and one city in the area of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Cimientos’ interest in sharing Futuros Egresados model lies in the work with civil society and also in its articulation with the public sector. The experience with the Ministry of Social Development of Buenos Aires aimed to strengthen actions for youths reentry and permanence within the school. The project specifically articulated with Family Centers, the Program for Children at Social Vulnerability, Maternal Households and the Adolescent Program for implementing educational mentoring and support for children’s schooling.

Successful outcomes and continued growth in terms of impact through partner NGOs and coordination with the public sector, show Futuros Egresados scalability as an effective large-scale solution to improve education and increase opportunities for disadvantaged children.