

100,000 floors to play on



Habitat for Humanity and the Inter-American Cement Federation (FICEM) have jointly developed the initiative “100,000 floors to play on” as an extension of FICEM’s PISOS S³ program. The initiative aims to replace 100,000 dirt floors with concrete floors among Latin America and the Caribbean’s most vulnerable populations by 2028.

Depending on the needs of each household, the project will also offer solutions such as access to water and improved stoves to build a healthy, safe, and dignified environment for families’ sustainable and inclusive development.

Eradicating dirt floors in the region is a basic need. Dirt floors can become a breeding ground for parasites, bacteria, and insects that cause diarrhea and respiratory diseases, among other disease outbreaks. Children are most vulnerable when crawling and playing on the ground; hence our concept of “floors to play on.”

objectives

- Develop and implement a **sustainable regional model to replace dirt floors with concrete floors**, reducing the housing deficit in the region.
- **Contribute to reducing gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases** in families and **improving children’s growth and cognitive development**.
- **Develop technical capacities in local labor and skills in families.**



Jenny playing on the new concrete floor of her home in Guatemala.
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target population

Families from all over Latin America and the Caribbean who live in houses with dirt floors or floors in precarious conditions. We will focus on households led by women heads of household, with children under 6 years old, older adults, and people with disabilities.

expected results



Latin American reality

Approximately 11 million or 6% of households in Latin America have predominantly dirt floors, which cause serious health problems for their inhabitants, especially children, and older adults.

A study carried out in Mexico by the World Bank and the University of Berkeley, which analyzed data on household health improvement after replacing dirt floors with concrete floors, showed a 70% reduction in parasitic infections, 49% in diarrhea, and 81% in anemia in children, and an increase from 36% to 96% in cognitive development.

Adults showed a 59% increase in housing satisfaction, a 52% decrease in depression, and a 45% decrease in stress.

advantages of concrete floors

Concrete floors are healthy, safe, and sustainable:

- They improve the household's physical environment and hygiene.
- They improve families' quality of life.
- They reduce gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases.
- They help improve children's cognitive development.
- They provide more protection against floods.
- They are easy to install and are durable and resistant.
- Concrete is produced locally.
- They reduce the growth of viruses, bacteria, and parasites.
- They are washable and, therefore, more hygienic.



Melany, Silvia's daughter, painting on her house's floor in Guatemala.
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"Our house was so humid that my baby got very sick. She had diarrhea and coughed a lot. She was ill every 10 or 15 days. Now, she rarely gets sick with concrete floors."

says Silvia from San Juan Sacatepéquez, Guatemala.

Her home was selected in FICEM's Pisos S³ pilot program, developed in partnership with Habitat Guatemala, Cementos Progreso, the Guatemalan Cement and Concrete Institute, and the Indigenous Entrepreneurs Network.

Today, having concrete floors instead of dirt floors has improved her entire family's health and quality of life. "When we got the new floors, my baby got so much better that she no longer had diarrhea or coughing. What I like most about my new floors is that my house is cleaner and better. It can also be cleaned a lot faster," says Silvia.

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