



WWF

NEWS

JUL
2017



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WWF BOLIVIA AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF LA PAZ COLLABORATE TO PROMOTE A MORE SUSTAINABLE CITY

On Friday, July 14th, the Wak'a Quta-Ecolab for environmental education was inaugurated in La Paz. Implemented by WWF Bolivia, in coordination with the Secretariats of Environment, Education and Culture of the Municipality of La Paz, the center fosters teaching and learning on the impacts of climate change in cities and promotes adaptation, mitigation and climate resilience through eco-efficient practices. The overall goal of this ecolab is to promote a culture and citizenship that enables La Paz to be a more sustainable city.

Luis Revilla, Mayor of La Paz, visited the center joined by Luis Pabón, WWF Bolivia Country Representative, Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of the City of Bonn, Germany, and Rodrigo de Oliveira Perpetuo, Regional Director for South America of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). The participation of these institutions marks the beginning of a collaborative dialogue, on the role of cities in addressing climate change.

The EcoLab is the third environmental education center that WWF Bolivia implements in the country through its Forest for Children (BOSNI) program. The educational narrative centers on the "layqas", local indigenous characters - protectors of the air, energy, water, earth - who share their wisdom to help us understand and value the relationship of Bolivian indigenous cultures with the environment. During the tour, the audience will meet a figure from the future, Uma, a warrior who brings a message to the city: "water no longer exists in La Paz", challenging citizens to act, care and conserve water in the present.

The EcoLab has four interactive spaces; a showroom, a laboratory, a climate observatory and a classroom space to work exclusively with children from schools in La Paz, in order to motivate them to take on Uma's challenge and prepare to become warriors (agents of change) against the effects of climate change. The center provides visitors with experiential-learning, through reflection and critical analysis of the impacts of common day actions on the climate and the environment with the use of modern technology: augmented reality programs show the effects of climate change in cities; carbon footprint, air pollution and solar radiation models offer daily readings of the city of La Paz; sonographers collect the sounds of the city. The center promotes a collaborative approach amongst educators and civil society organizations.