The MIF is contributing to building the knowledge economy and promoting job creation by powering inclusive, tech-driven enterprise growth. The MIF generates opportunities for the poor and vulnerable through private sector innovation in LAC by strengthening the ecosystem for entrepreneurship and innovation; testing, investing in, and scaling tech-driven enterprises that solve social, economic, and environmental problems; and preparing a competitive workforce for 21st-century jobs.

**Supporting Startups Focused on the Poor**

The private sector has long overlooked the “base of the pyramid” as potential clients, suppliers, or distributors. In 2012, the MIF was among the first investors in Vox Capital, Brazil’s first impact investment fund focused on tech companies that engage with low-income populations. By supporting the development of affordable health care, financial services, housing, and education, Vox Capital is helping to close service gaps and boost incomes, while generating economic returns. Vox Capital is expected to invest $30-32M in startups and SMEs.

**Fostering Open Innovation**

Innovation is essential to a dynamic private sector, but Mexican SMEs have struggled to identify opportunities for growth. The MIF partnered with Mexico’s Nuevo Leon Institute for Innovation and Technology Transfer on a program for SMEs with high growth potential. This is the first attempt to introduce open innovation methodology to Mexican firms, and it is expected to create an innovation-focused network of organizations and businesses. 31 SMEs will participate in the two-year program.

**Boosting Social Entrepreneurship**

In Paraguay, there is growing interest in “social entrepreneurship,” or market-based models that address challenges of poverty, but there is an insufficient ecosystem to help such initiatives thrive. Koga Lab—Paraguay’s first social entrepreneurship laboratory—is training, accelerating, and financially supporting social entrepreneurs, as well as creating financial products geared toward them. With the MIF’s support, Koga Lab seeks to generate systemic impact and strengthen the overall entrepreneurial culture in Paraguay. The project expects to incubate 60 projects, train 300 entrepreneurs, accelerate 27 social enterprises, offer seed capital to 12 enterprises, and reach 13,800 people through events.

**Empowering Women in the High-Tech Workforce**

Despite the growing opportunities in Peru’s tech sector, there is a shortage of programmers, and women make up only 7% of that workforce. Laboratoria is a Peruvian social enterprise that recruits talented young women from low-income backgrounds, teaches them coding and other skills, and matches them with employers. With MIF support, Laboratoria is consolidating its model and developing a strategy to scale its operations in Chile, Mexico, and Peru. Laboratoria has the overarching goal of training 10,000 coders, quadrupling their incomes, and achieving self-sustainability.