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WeatherizersWithout Borders has launched a new pilot project that will improve the energy efficiency, health and safety of 100 homes in two low-income neighborhoods in Montevideo, Uruguay. The project, which is being financially supported by CAF – Development Bank of Latin America, will be the first state-sponsored weatherization program implemented outside of the United States.

The plan is being promoted by Uruguay's National Energy Directorate, part of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM). Project partners also include officials from other government departments, the national energy company and civil society.

“Sustentabilizar Hogares” is the Latin American adaption of the "Weatherization Assistance Program" (WAP) developed by the U.S. Department of Energy. Weatherization consists of home audits that measure energy losses as well as potential hazards such as lead-based paint, carbon monoxide or issues with electrical installation. Renovations range from simple caulking or window replacement to total replacement of electrical cables or a roof, depending on the most serious issues identified in each home's audit.



La Esperanza, one of the neighborhoods that will benefit from the project. Photo: MVOTMA

Uruguay

WeatherizersWithout Borders partners Argentina-based FOVISEE and Virginia-based Community Housing Partners (CHP) are in charge of transferring and adapting the program methodology and will provide field assistance and training. Uruguayan government representatives will take online courses in building science and safety through CHP's Energy Solutions Research and Training Center, which offers several courses in Spanish, and will also attend training sessions in Buenos Aires.

After successful implementation of the project to local characteristics and building stock, the Montevideo pilot project will be scaled up to benefit more homes and create more green jobs and energy savings. Weatherizers Without Borders and FOVISEE are also launching their first project in southern Argentina, in the Patagonian city of Bariloche, with plans for that pilot project to be eventually be scaled to 5,000 homes.