The U.S. Embassy-funded ecosiSTEAM initiative, completing its second year, explores and implements proven U.S. models and best practices from Harvard University’s School of Graduate Education and the innovative NUVU Academy to accelerate the development of STEAM competencies and abilities in young students. The ecosiSTEAM initiative is one of six framework proposals adopted by the U.S.-Chile Science, Technology, and Innovation Council (STIC).

Developed by Ana María Raad and Marcela Rentería (members of the STIC Education, Workforce Development and Science Culture Working Group) and selected as a priority initiative through a transparent ranking process, the initiative leverages interactive science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics education (STEAM) methodologies to strengthen education and foster critical skills in the next generation. The initiative enables the sharing of lessons learned, best practices, and experiences in the United States and Chile.

EcosiSTEAM promotes learning based on the powerful concept of STEAM and the development of inquiry, collaboration, and creativity among students. The program integrates interactive methodologies inside and outside of the classroom, including the establishment of Maker Spaces within a network of educational and cultural organizations.

During 2020, schools, education-related policy and practice groups, and leaders in the field worked to identify strategies and platforms to transition to virtual learning and teaching due to COVID-19 related restrictions. The ecosiSTEAM initiative responded with "Aprendo En Casa" (I Learn at Home), a pioneering digital tool that connects and supports educational communities throughout Latin America with content, resources, and training in digital platforms that enable virtual learning in science, technology, and art. To date, the platform has hosted 261,000 users, collaborates with 70 organizations, and has a presence in 8 countries.

The lessons learned from ecosiSTEAM and its partnerships with Harvard University and the NUVU Academy are strengthening and transforming learning for Chile’s citizens. The ecosiSTEAM is helping to reaffirm the relevance of STIC priorities for the U.S. Embassy, Chile’s Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge, and Innovation, and its Ministry of Education.
The Embassy regularly identifies emerging leaders, to include those from the science, technology, and innovation fields, for the Department of State’s flagship professional exchange, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). This year we have participants in programs on Cybersecurity and Empowering Women in STEM.

Another opportunity is the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI) Professional Fellows exchange for entrepreneurs. YLAI empowers entrepreneurs to strengthen their capacity to launch and advance their entrepreneurial ideas and effectively contribute to social and economic development. Following a professional exchange with a U.S. company, YLAI Fellows build networks, linkages, and partnerships to attract investment and support for their entrepreneurial ventures. Many Chilean YLAI Fellows’ businesses in S&T industries are bolstered by the YLAI Fellowship opportunity. The YLAI program is available to entrepreneurs throughout the hemisphere and provides free networking and professional development opportunities. For more information about how to apply and to join the YLAI Network visit: https://ylai.state.gov/fellowship/.

Members of the U.S. – Chile Science, Technology, and Innovation Council represent key networks in the Embassy’s efforts to ensure these and similar opportunities reach emerging talent and future leaders.