Thank you for inviting me to this event and for giving me the opportunity to talk about the challenges that are facing at-risk youth in our communities.

In Colombia alone, there are more than 380.000 registered indigenous students yet only 29% will finish high school, and only 5% access higher education,70% of those left behind are women. This is an issue mainly caused by language barriers as well of the lack of connectivity and accessible education. A reality that has been exalted (particularly for women) during this pandemic since more than 11 million girls worldwide may not go back to school after the Covid-19 crisis.

Growing up in the indigenous capital of Colombia, which is called La Guajira, I recognized that access to learning opportunities had been my best ally, and that it is the best weapon to fight against poverty and uphold sustainable development for our communities.

Last year in Colombia more than 100,000 students abandoned their studies due to the pandemic and in my region when a girl is out of school it affects whole communities, it looks like gender violence, forced marriages and teenage pregnancies.

I believe that overall the main barrier that indigenous youth face in realizing their right to education, is that education can be seen being unfairly available to, as well as designed for, a privileged majority; paving the way for at-risk children and youths to fall behind, and remain in oppressed situations that in turn propagate oppressive systems.

 We are tackling this issue by providing community-focused solutions, through our offline learning app O-Lab, which we are making accessible to schools and communities for youths living in vulnerable areas.

We tailored O-Lab to rural communities' needs, with a virtual tutor in their native language that promotes inclusivity and literacy.  It is adaptable, and produces clear results that track students' development and engagement with the courses.

By partnering with NGOs, local governments, universities and schools; we expect to provide access to inclusive and quality digital education working with local schools and empowering young leaders in countries of LATAM and the Global South.

 We expect O-Lab to be a global solution to inequality, laying the ground for oppressed groups to fashion stronger voices and uphold racial equity.
 I believe that working together we can bring Inclusive and empowering education which writes new paths to build back better.

Thank you.