

FIRST Impact Award - Team 1156

2025 - Team 1156
Team Number
1156
Team Nickname
Under Control
Team Location
Novo Hamburgo, RS - Brazil
Describe the impact of the <i>FIRST</i> program on team participants within the last 3 years. Think about percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, leadership skills, and serving as mentors/sponsors in <i>FIRST</i> programs.
FIRST reshapes our team members' futures. All our alumni entered college - 88% pursuing STEAM fields, exceeding the regional average of 17%. 100% remain engaged in FIRST, as team mentors - using peer-to-peer techniques for effective learning, and as volunteers, fueling FIRST's growth in Brazil. Our strong sponsor ties open doors for alumni, with 50% being hired right after high school. Also, one of our students founded a company while in high school & now sponsors our FTC teams.
Describe your community along with its unique opportunities and circumstances. Think about your geographic region, diversity of town/school, language barriers, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural expectations.
In Porto Alegre's metropolitan area, we're surrounded by technology companies & opportunities to create strong connections to improve STEM education, which, paradoxically, is scarce, w/ robotics almost nonexistent in our Title-1-equivalent public schools. In 2024, a major flood devastated our state, Rio Grande do Sul, leaving +600K people homeless & causing billions in damage. Entire homes were swallowed, infrastructure collapsed & the state's airport, 75% submerged, stayed closed for 170 days.
Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the <i>FIRST</i> Mission in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative.
To spread FIRST's mission, we launched ROBÔS QUE TRANSFORMAM, empowering 6 public school teachers to bring robotics to their classrooms. W/ double the schools expected next edition, the program grows sustainably. Additionally, we implemented robotics in all our school years & made it the 1st in Latin America to have FULL FIRST PROGRESSION. We integrated FLL into the curriculum, created a 2nd FTC team, and annually give robotics classes to 230+ students (ages 2-16), ensuring a lasting impact.
Describe your team's goals and the progress you have made towards them to fulfill <i>FIRST</i>'s Vision.
Driven by FIRST's Vision to inspire a world where science & technology are celebrated, 1156 embraced the goal of establishing FIRST in Brazil. Since 2018, our partnership w/ SESI has motivated initiatives of starting/mentoring teams. This goal also involved training volunteers & supporting events like 2022 & 2023 Off Season as well as 2023 & 2024 Brazil Regionals, contributing with 2.7K hours of volunteering & work on the organizing committee, securing a safe future for FIRST in our country.

What impact has your team seen from your efforts described in the above question? How does your team measure impact?
This year, for the first time, Brazil will host 2 Regionals, an achievement made possible by the success of the past 5 national events we supported. Opening new doors for Brazilian teams, 1156 feels like one of its biggest goals has been completed. In 2022, Brazil had only 9 official FRC teams. Today, there are +70. We believe impacting people means combining 2 things: sustainability & a genuine commitment to inspire change. How we approach each new challenge defines the lasting value we create.
Please provide specific examples of how your team and team members act as role models within the <i>FIRST</i> community with emphasis on the past 3 years. How do you share these best practices with other teams?
1156 leads by example through initiatives like the SINOS VALLEY CHALLENGE (SVC), a sustainable FTC scrimmage event we run since 2022, that helps ~10 FTC teams prepare for nationals w/ field practice, presentations, & detailed feedback from our volunteers annually. As role models, our members collaborate in projects like FIRST ROBOTICS GIRLS - fostering female leadership, volunteer at FLL/FTC regionals, & lead our DÉCOUVRIR/INNOVER courses, inspiring new students to enter FIRST.
Describe your team's initiatives to Assist, Mentor, and/or Start other <i>FIRST</i> teams with emphasis on activities within the past 3 years.
We mentored 28 rookie teams since 2022, 15 FRC through UNDER DEVELOPMENT - resulting in 6 awards -, + 13 FTC from Nigeria, partnering w/ their PDP. In 2024, we started FTC 15932, giving 15 kids the opportunity to join FIRST. By holding 13 mentor workshops w/ 91 participants, we assisted 12 teams & got +150k viewed hours on Youtube. By combining initiatives such as FRC WARM UP (w/ teams 4400&1868), SVC, workshops, online meetings & lending resources, we've assisted the total of 814 FIRST teams.
What other initiatives have you created, grown, sustained, or participated in (<i>FIRST</i> or otherwise) to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What outcomes have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?
Recognizing the lack of priority for STEM education in our city, we started a pilot program inside ROBÓTICA PARA TODOS with the City Hall in 2022. We created & ran a robotics class throughout 10 weeks at a public school, while training teachers to ensure the program's sustainability. Its success turned into ROBÔS QUE TRANSFORMAM, a yearly event run & developed by us that has already engaged kids (8-12) from 6 public schools, w/ a robotics challenge based on solving real-life community problems.
Describe the partnerships and relationships that you've created with other organizations (teams, sponsors, educational institutions, government, philanthropic entities, etc.) and what you have accomplished together, with emphasis on the past 3 years.
Our partnerships reflect our commitment to STEM education. W/ stemOS & Marista Pio XII, we ran & hosted 9 STEM events. We co-created the event ROBÔS QUE TRANSFORMAM w/ our local Rotary Club & our sponsor Domínio Tributário. While mentoring the rookies 9484, 9487 & 9617, we saw an opportunity to help them start one of their first outreach projects. So, we partnered w/ stemOS to supply them w/ 30 robotics kits while we developed guides, materials & recorded lessons, reaching +345 people.
Describe your team's efforts in the past 3 years to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within your team, <i>FIRST</i>, and your communities.
Our team has built an inclusive environment, fostering the participation of students w/ diverse learning needs & neurodivergence by adjusting tasks, breaking projects into steps & using tools like visual schedules. Also, our GIRLS IN CONTROL project, now in its 6th year, empowers women in FIRST, w/ 100% of alumni pursuing STEAM fields. We ensure female role models are present during key moments, such as classes & initial robotics experiences, inspiring new generations to thrive in STEAM.

Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will be sustainable.	
As the oldest active FRC team outside North America, we’ve never doubted we would be able to compete annually due to our understanding of sustainability, built on three pillars: community connection (what money can’t buy), resources (financial, workspace, materials), & people (student & mentor recruitment, retention, & experience). Besides that, our ROBÓTICA PARA TODOS project exemplifies sustainability, working for years w/ the philosophy of making robotics accessible to all.	
Highlight one area in which your team needs to improve and describe the steps actively being taken to make those improvements.	
1156 has ambitious goals & a big mission. Because of that, we often face challenges balancing multiple demands, causing communication issues & delays. To address this, we’ve formalized leadership within our team, valuing student contributions. Each subteam now has a leader, & we implemented structured schedules, including daily area meetings & leadership sessions w/ mentors. These student-led meetings are key for feedback & updates, while offering leadership guidance as we work toward success.	
Briefly describe other matters of interest to the <i>FIRST</i> Judges, including items that may not fit into the above topics. The judges are interested in learning about aspects of your team that may be unique, particularly noteworthy, or had a large impact.	
Amid the flood crisis, we played a vital role in supporting the victims in our community, by: Volunteering 2k hours at our school shelter, where we helped +200 people by organizing meals & donations; Creation of a pet shelter for +40 animals; Raising R\$70K, that we converted to donations to hundreds of families, teaming up w/ 1772&9305; Purchasing pressure washers & donating 173 pieces of furniture to 40+ families in partnership with a furniture company, helping them rebuild their homes faster.	
Judge Feedback	
	What is something we could improve in our presentation to make it stronger? An area the team has an opportunity to improve. Something that really impressed the judges.
Essay	
Inspiring generations through STEAM, building future leaders, and promoting values of professionalism, humanity & excellence - that’s what drives 1156! This essay isn’t just about what we do, but the difference we make. It highlights how our 16 students & 10 mentors keep everything Under Control while bringing this mission to life. Our impact starts inside. To recruit new members, we nurture a culture of inspiration, from veteran students to new ones. On average we reach +410 students (6th-12th grade) yearly, encouraging them to participate in 2 extracurricular STEAM courses, DÉCOUVIR (FTC) & INNOVER (FRC). Our student leaders develop & teach these courses, integrating students into the team before the next season’s kick-off. The MAKER course focuses on engineering skills, while MARKETING encourages the creation of outreach projects based on personal values aligned w/ 1156 guidance. In 2024, our rookies developed 4 social projects addressing volunteer work, financial education & more. Our GIRLS IN CONTROL project plays a crucial role in encouraging & inspiring girls to explore robotics w/ confidence. We highlight the achievements of our own female leaders during recruitment & organize girls-only social gatherings to strengthen bonds & build a sense of belonging, while empowering them to connect, share experiences & thrive in a welcoming environment. To make FIRST’s impact bigger in our school, we integrated FLL into the institution’s curriculum & run internal FLL tournaments, introducing 90 kids to the competition’s thrill yearly. Due to that, robotics is present in all grades, making our school the 1st in Latin America to achieve a FULL FIRST	

PROGRESSION. W/ this growing enthusiasm among younger students, we expanded our impact by starting an extra FTC team, 15392.

By engaging kids in FIRST programs, we embody a key aspect of our mission: INSPIRING GENERATIONS THROUGH STEAM.

As the oldest active FRC team outside North America, our long-lasting community bonds are one of our main pillars of success. Beyond having strong local supporters, we commit to making our community a better place. In 2024, our presence within the community became vital through the responsibilities we took on during the floods that hit our state. Family support is crucial to our team's success. Formed by a group of actively involved parents, the Booster Club is dedicated to running fundraising events. Since 2022, these events alone brought a total profit of +R\$150K. Their philosophy is: "When our kids join the team, we join together". Their faith in our work & FIRST's mission makes them our greatest supporters, allowing us to pursue bigger goals.

For years, we had to travel to the US to be able to compete, but we always believed Brazil deserved to be home to its own FIRST community, one that could inspire & empower local kids just as much. Our journey to establish FIRST in Brazil began in 2018 when we pitched FTC & FRC to SESI representatives - now the official Brazilian FIRST operator. We started w/ FTC, supporting the growth of the category since its initial implementation: in a matter of 6 years Brazil went from having 0 FTC presence to embracing +95 teams in almost every state in the country. Since 2018, we have actively supported all the Brazil FTC national events. Our members have taken on key roles, such as FTA's & in-room & in-field judges, dedicating 1.5k volunteer hours in the past 3 years. For FRC, in 2019, we ran the 1st Brazilian event in 11 years, alongside 1772. Its' success encouraged SESI & 1156 to focus on expanding FRC in Brazil. This marked the beginning of a new wave of events we supported: 2021 FRC Off-Season: gathering 23 teams, 15 of which were unregistered; 2022 FRC Off-Season: the 1st event in 14 years w/ an official game field, w/ 28 teams - including pre-rookies -, half of them mentored by us previously; And finally, the return of the official Brazil Regional in 2023 & its following editions. Since 2022, 98 1156 volunteers have been involved in FRC events. These efforts contributed to the exponential growth of the FIRST community in our country!

On top of providing structure to great events, we put efforts in structuring our robotics community w/ starting, mentoring & assisting teams through initiatives where we:

Developed the SINOS VALLEY CHALLENGE (SVC), a sustainable & friendly FTC scrimmage event, ran & hosted alongside FTC 14391 & stemOS. Now in its 4th edition, it offers teams a valuable opportunity to prepare for the National Championship, covering both in-field & in-room activities. Through its editions, the event has assisted 20 participating FTC teams. We also provide a special space for local FRC teams to collaborate & create bonds. Since SVC happens during our build season, we support teams w/ a training field, mechanical design & coding. Ran CADATHON, a 2-day event focused on CAD, gathering 33 FIRST teams for an immersive experience in design & engineering, to support our culture in robot design. It featured CAD workshops, offering expert lectures & opportunities for 98 participants to enhance their skills & guide their teams to success. Created the UNDER DEVELOPMENT project to provide personal, high-quality mentorship to 15 rookie teams since 2023, cultivating meaningful connections while guiding teams. In 2024, to help 3 of the mentored teams create one of their 1st projects, we donated 30 robotics kits & support materials developed by us, positively impacting +345 people through STEAM-related activities. Ran & hosted the 1st edition of our MENTOR'S WORKSHOP, reuniting 23 years of experience in 13 talks by 16 1156 alumni. The talk topics included all competition aspects, in addition to 1156's history of success. Beyond mentors, moms of our Booster Club also shared their involvement.

By dedicating our efforts to impactful initiatives, we bring our mission to life by BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS.

In 2022, we partnered w/ our City Hall to launch ROBÓTICA PARA TODOS, a pilot program aimed at bringing robotics to our public schools. Rotary Club NH 25 de Julho had previously donated robotics kits to 12 schools, but they remained unused due to a lack of trained teachers. To change this scenario, our 1st step was running a 12-

student class over 10 weeks while training teachers to ensure the program's sustainability. We were proud to take this 1st step toward transforming robotics in our city, but we knew we could do more. To inspire students & encourage the use of the robotics kits, we started to develop the event ROBÔS QUE TRANSFORMAM.

Sadly, we were interrupted by the biggest catastrophe in our history, the floods in Rio Grande do Sul.

W/ 66 volunteers - including students, mentors, & relatives - we worked a total of 2,101 hours (~31 hours per person) in 6 days at the shelter set up in our school, which received +200 victims. We organized meals, sorted donations, & welcomed people on the 1st day, who often brought their pets along. However, these pets didn't have a dedicated space, so we built a shelter for +40 animals, using wood, tools & banners from our lab to protect them from the rain. Also, we ensured they were healthy & quickly reunited w/ their families. In the meantime, we launched a fundraising campaign to convert the proceeds into donations & invited local teams 1772 & 9305 to expand our efforts. In total, we raised +R\$70k, w/ contributions coming from all over the country. It enabled us to buy +10k items, including hygiene & cleaning kits, food baskets & clothing to support hundreds of families. We established a distribution center at our sponsor, stemOS, since our school was being used as a shelter. For a week, we worked 847 more hours assembling & delivering kits to independent, non-government funded shelters. We had a dedicated team responsible for contacting them & supplying their most urgent needs. Meanwhile, we supported local shelters for 466 extra hours. While some families had the chance to return home, our efforts changed: we bought power washers to assist w/ house cleaning & partnered w/ a furniture company to help 42 families rebuild their homes w/ 173 pieces of furniture.

When conditions started to improve, we went back to ROBÔS QUE TRANSFORMAM (RQT), partnering w/ Rotary Club NH 25 de Julho & a local sponsor that shared the same mission: to promote the growth of robotics in the city's public schools. This time, 6 public schools - all Title 1 equivalents - were involved. We ensured the event was as accessible as possible for schools by providing free meals & transportation. Competitors were given 2 challenges + surprise tasks on the event's day. However, the main challenge of RQT was to inspire students to become leaders & problem solvers. Using materials from the robotics kits, teams identified community specific issues & worked together to design & build innovative solutions. This cooperative process encouraged students to think critically, develop technical skills & take ownership of real-world problems. Raimundo, a participating teacher, said: "The pedagogic impact allowed our students to broaden their horizons [...] It was wonderful because it required them to shift their usual thinking & explore new possibilities for problem-solving. This was very positive for us & had a huge impact on our students."

These actions reflect the guiding values of our mission: PROFESSIONALISM, HUMANITY & EXCELLENCE.

Even in the face of unexpected challenges, 1156 firmly follows its mission, committing to be a role model & bringing out the best in & out of its community. Briefly, in the last 3 years, we: Started 1, Mentored 28 & assisted 814 FIRST TEAMS; Supported/ran 31 STEAM/FIRST EVENTS; Connected w/ 41 local institutions; Volunteered +2.9k hours in OFFICIAL FIRST EVENTS; Worked a total of 3.4k hours SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY during the floods. We are in a position to make a difference & we'll always make the most of it. No matter what happens, we will always have it Under Control!;

