The 2019 Pan American Games gold medallist, Mariana Arceo of Mexico, has launched a campaign to help people affected by COVID-19 – after recovering from the Coronavirus herself.

Mariana, 26, contracted the virus in February and her story attracted a lot of publicity as she was one of the first people in Mexico – and one of the first members of the global UIPM community – to be directly affected by the pandemic.

Now the athlete, who also won gold at the UIPM 2019 Pentathlon World Championships alongside Mayan Oliver (MEX) in the Women’s Relay, is seeking to create something positive out of the publicity through the Mariana Arceo Foundation, which she had set up shortly before falling ill.

Originally conceived as a means of raising money for sports development, Arceo (MEX) is now using her foundation to channel donations towards the fight against COVID-19.
In this interview with UIPM she explains more about this wonderful initiative.
Q: Do you have partners working with you on this project?

A: Yes. Right now I am working with a group of entrepreneurs making donations, they are named Dale un respiro a México ... through promotion and donations during all their events. The purpose of this is to bring support to fund projects.

Q: Is it possible to make donations with international currencies? How many donations have you received so far?

A: Donations can be made from $1 MXN, and people can donate with international currencies too, from €1 and $1 US.

Up to now the foundation has collected a total of $20,000 MXN in donations. In terms of equipment, we received 50,000 face masks which is equivalent to $2.5m (€90,000; $100,000 US).

In January the foundation had received a total of 23 hectares of land in San Ignacio Municipality (San Ignacio Cerro Gordo) in the Mexican State of Jalisco, dedicated to sports facilities.

Q: How do you measure the situation in Mexico? Do you feel a sense of panic? Is there great solidarity between individuals?

A: Mexico suffered an increase in cases and deaths linked to the Coronavirus pandemic. A lot of people started to worry ... 3. But of course many have been very supportive to each other, especially to the ones who struggle with unemployment.

Q: Through your Foundation do you hope to encourage similar actions in other countries?

A: Yes, for sure. Nobody expected to endure a virus of this scale, hospitals were not able to be ready in time upon ... been stuck without job opportunities. This kind of projects is meant to support people who are facing these situations.

Q: How do you measure the situation in Mexico?

A: I created the foundation in January 2020, initially with the purpose to bring amateur and professional sports to a broader level, through the creation of sports events and meetings to allow more people to know and familiarize with sports.

There are many places in Mexico where people do not have access to sports facilities and this is why one of the main ... This project will allow us to operate training camps and welcome scholarship athletic students from several countries.

Q: What will be your next move? Something linked to this project?

A: We are already working on the construction of a sports complex, which will be built up step by step. The first step ... a swimming pool, then a running track, followed by other projects so that the complex can host most sporting disciplines.

Q: How are you preparing for Tokyo 2020 in summer 2021?

A: I will start preparing myself from home. Until Stage 3 ends it will be difficult to train, and health is the most ... I understood that many people would find themselves in challenging situations, this experience opened my eyes even more.

The CONADE National Commission for Physical Culture and sports will help me to get the necessary equipment at home so I can train as best as possible.

Q: What did it mean to you when you won gold at the Pan American Games 2019 in Lima?

A: It was an unforgettable moment, because I knew then that it marked the beginning of my dream to go to the one event every athlete is dreaming of, and for which I have been training for the last several years - the Olympic Games.

Q: It's been a great few years for Pentathlon in Mexico. Do you feel the sport is becoming more popular?

A: Mexico has a long history when it comes to men's sports, and right now women are performing and succeeding well. ... been ahead and made this a priority in my country, and we are making progress and getting closer to the top of the world.