

Latin America Social Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Presented at 2012 World Economic Forum on Latin America

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[Español](#)

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- The Schwab Foundation today announced the winners of the Latin America Social Entrepreneur of the Year awards at the World Economic Forum on Latin America in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.
- Honourees working in Brazil, Central America, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela are among 25 Social Entrepreneurs from around the world taking part in the meeting to provide an on-the-ground perspective on sustainability and social innovation.
- Learn more about the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship at www.schwabfound.org.

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, 17 April 2012 – Six Social Entrepreneurs were today named Latin America Social Entrepreneurs of the Year at the World Economic Forum on Latin America, taking place in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

The awards were conferred by Hilde Schwab, Chairperson and Co-Founder of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Switzerland, in the presence of President Felipe Calderón of Mexico; President Désiré Bouterse of the Republic of Suriname; and Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy Brey of Spain.

Social entrepreneurs are the driving force behind the innovations that improve the quality of life of individuals around the world, ” explained Mirjam Schöning, Senior Director and Head of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, based in Switzerland. “ The primary focus of Social Entrepreneurs is to make a specific change in one area – such as access to education or affordable housing. But in doing so, their innovative, scalable solutions create an even wider social impact and they truly become partners in transformation for governments and companies. ”

According to Schwab, “ In past years, we have uncovered some amazing social innovators that have gone on to become major role models. This year, in presenting the awards, we also want to highlight among the winners the next generation of individuals who are improving the state of the world. We call these people the Global Shapers: individuals aged between 20 and 30 who have demonstrated early potential for global leadership. We learned during the Forum ’ s Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters that nearly 40% of the Global Shapers consider themselves social entrepreneurs. ”

The following have been selected as the 2012 Latin America Social Entrepreneurs of the Year. They have been identified in their respective countries through a selection process involving the Foundation ’ s Partner organizations, Fundacion Venezuela Sin Limites; the International Labour Organization; El Mercurio; and Folha do São Paulo.

Greg Van Kirk, Community Enterprise Solutions

Rural communities face a profound and sustained lack of access to vital technologies, products and services that can improve the quality of life. The risks associated with providing entrepreneurial solutions in these conditions can deter some micro-entrepreneurs or drive others into deeper poverty.

Community Enterprise Solutions (CE Solutions) pioneered the MicroConsignment Model (MCM), which lowers risks for micro-entrepreneurs. Through consignment rather than loans, CE Solutions trains, equips and supports first-time entrepreneurs to sell basic products such as efficient cooking stoves and water filters in remote villages around the world.

Since 2004, CE Solutions has worked with 300 entrepreneurs to sell more than 75,000 products in the course of 3,000 village campaigns.

Philip Wilson, Ecofiltro

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people in the world lack access to a safe water source. Although several methods for water purification exist, such as boiling and chlorination, many solutions are not culturally acceptable or environmentally friendly.

Ecofiltro aims to solve the acute and growing water crisis in developing countries through the sale of simple and affordable in-home water filters made from locally sourced materials, like clay, sawdust and colloidal silver. The Ecofiltro is easy to use – the user pours water from any source into the clay filter, which then traps bacteria, parasitic cysts and faecal residue. Clean water passes through the filter and is free of odour, colour and contaminants.

Several universities, including MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA), have studied the effectiveness of the Ecofiltro. Field studies with 1,000 families have confirmed that using the Ecofiltro can lower the incidence of gastrointestinal disease by 50%. Since its start six years ago, Ecofiltro has distributed more than 96,000 filters throughout Guatemala.

Mois Cherem, ENOVA

In Mexico, only 25 of every 100 students who start elementary school will graduate from high school and just 13 will graduate from college. As the global economy and domestic labour market become more dependent on digital services and the Internet, access to computer literacy programmes and communications technology is increasingly important.

ENOVA provides access to modern learning infrastructure and content with a blended model of e-learning with facilitators and a deep, real-time analysis of the student's learning patterns. ENOVA has developed community centres, known as the Red de Innovación y Aprendizaje (RIA, or Learning and Innovation Network), in low-income areas, which provide access to e-learning modules and in-person facilitators.

Advanced technologies along with well-trained facilitators have permitted RIA to become the biggest network of digital centres in Mexico. With these 70 sites, ENOVA has approximately 235,000 registered members and 9,000 new students per month.

Martín Andrade, Fundación Mi Parque

During his time as a student of architecture, Martín Andrade observed that, in many low-income areas, public spaces were poorly maintained. He knew that if nothing were done to improve these public spaces, future generations born into such an environment would be more susceptible to drugs, alcohol and crime.

Fundación Mi Parque works to improve the lives of poor families by increasing access to green space. To overcome traditional shortcomings of public policy, Fundación Mi Parque uses a new approach to landscaping projects by engaging families and the private and public sectors.

Fundación Mi Parque collaborates with local families and individuals through the entirety of its work and, in the process, is empowering low-income communities to improve their environment. To date, Fundación Mi Parque has implemented 53 projects benefitting more than 150,000 people in Chile.

Gisela Solymos, Centro de Recuperação e Educação Nutricional (CREN)

Like many countries in Latin America, Brazil suffers from a high rate of child malnutrition or under-nutrition. Despite clear documentation of the problem, malnutrition persists and leads to serious public health issues, while

exacerbating the poverty of thousands of rural and urban families.

Centro de Recuperação e Educação Nutricional (CREN) fosters effective nutritional education and recovery of children and adolescents with slight, moderate or serious primary malnutrition. CREN has pioneered new methods for tackling widespread malnutrition and under-nutrition, initially in São Paulo and now throughout Brazil and other parts of Latin America.

CREN ' s activities have benefited over 50,000 children since its establishment in 1992. In the past year, CREN carried out more than 3,000 consultations, 7,000 outpatient consultations with children and their families and received over 6,000 hospitalized patients.

Tomas Sanabria, Maniapure

In remote regions of Venezuela, people live without access to modern medical treatment. Those in need of treatment beyond basic healthcare services have few options other than undertaking the expensive, long and difficult journey to medical centres in large cities.

Maniapure works with rural health practitioners to formalize partnerships between advanced medical facilities and local health organizations. To achieve such partnerships, Maniapure leverages the power of communications technology by helping rural clinics incorporate wireless technologies that allow rural health workers to connect with specialists in Caracas and other major cities for consultation and treatment options for rural patients.

To view descriptions of all Schwab Foundation Social Entrepreneurs taking part in the World Economic Forum on Latin America, please visit: www.weforum.org/pdf/schwabfound/SocialEntrepreneurs

About the Schwab Foundation

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship was co-founded by Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, and his wife, Hilde. Since its inception in 2000, the Foundation has been identifying the world ' s leading social entrepreneurs and involves the community of 200 award winners in advancing the field of social innovation in collaboration with corporate, government and academic stakeholders. Selected social entrepreneurs of the Schwab Foundation network participate in World Economic Forum events, thus providing unique opportunities for them to connect with business, political and media leaders. <http://www.schwabfound.org>.

Follow the Schwab Foundation on Twitter at www.twitter.com/schwabfound

Notes to Editors

For further information, contact Abigail Noble, Head, Latin America, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Tel.: +52 1 322 1044582; E-mail: Abigail.noble@weforum.org

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