

“Social Entrepreneur of the Year” Latin American winners 2009

Veronica Abud, Fundación La Fuente

Hybrid Non Profit

Chile



Most low-income families do not have books at home for their children. The institutions serving these children often do not have age-appropriate books at their disposal. The importance of age-appropriate books for the educational development of a child has been long established.

Veronica Abu's idea was much more than giving books to poor children; the children needed an integral plan inviting them to read. Fundación La Fuente, a 10-year-old organization, has developed a reading programme called “Creating Tomorrow's Readers”. The programme establishes school, public and mobile libraries directed at children and the community, and trains school teachers and librarians to provide stimulating reading activities including storytellers and cultural activities. La Fuente also entered a partnership with Chile's largest shopping mall to implement attractive libraries (Biblioteca VIVA) in six shopping malls. Together with an international bank, La Fuente has developed a financial education programme, which teaches children the benefits of saving, how to open a bank account and how to manage their own budget. With “Bibliomóviles”, little mobile libraries, La Fuente can reach the remote rural populations in Chile. The Foundation reaches close to one million children across the country.

Marta Arango, CINDE

Hybrid Non Profit

Colombia



Children living in poverty have few opportunities to develop their intellectual, emotional and physical capabilities before entering the public school system at age six. The economists of the Copenhagen Consensus established that each dollar invested in early childhood development yields a return of up to 20 times in the form of better health, fewer deaths and increased future earnings, making it the “world's best investment” in development.

Marta Arango was among the earliest pioneers when she founded CINDE in 1977 to revolutionize early childhood care and education. CINDE has a comprehensive approach targeting the key players in a child's development, particularly empowering families and communities, and strengthening institutions to provide an environment for healthy physical and psychological development. CINDE's approaches have been adapted in 27 countries, affecting more than 10 million families.

Andre Cavalcanti de Albuquerque, Terra Nova

Social Business

Brazil



About 12.4 million Brazilians live in 3.2 million informal dwellings without access to water, electricity and waste collection. In São Paulo alone, more than half of the favelas are located illegally on public land.

Terra Nova acts as an intermediary between the legal landowners and the land occupiers to find a win-win solution. Terra Nova was founded to resolve, in an amicable fashion, various conflicts that had dragged on in the courts for years. The land regularization process brings a final resolution to the conflict between landowners and occupants. Property rights are transferred to occupants after payment of an indemnity. The original property owner typically accepts the deal, even if depreciated, to avoid long court cases that hardly ever guarantee the return of the property. In all communities regularized by Terra Nova, the quality of low-income families improved. On the first signing of the title deeds, the local town hall supplies water, electricity, a postal code, basic sanitation and public transport to residents. The owners can take out bank loans and capitalize their property. More than 30,000 families in five Brazilian states have directly benefited from the negotiation process of Terra Nova.

Martín von Hildebrand, Gaia Amazonas (FGA)

Leveraged Non-Profit

Colombia



The Amazon region accounts for 45% of the world's rainforest. It is the world's third largest source of fresh water and a crucial factor in regulating global climate. Now deforestation in the Amazon region, which is rapidly happening in a large uncontrolled and illegal way, is the fourth largest source of carbon dioxide emissions globally.

FGA has ensured the protection of 24 million hectares of Amazon forest in Colombia through the establishment of protected areas which are self-administered by its indigenous inhabitants. These are the best guarantors for the preservation of the forest. FGA is an active facilitator to assist the indigenous communities in assuming and defending their land rights, conserving their territories and strengthening their traditional practices and technologies, while at the same time helping them develop their own health and education programmes. It currently works with more than 20,000 people or 50% of the Colombian indigenous population. It is a leader in sharing its successful approach with organizations in the Amazon region in the neighboring countries through the ARA network. Currently, FGA is working on a scheme at the international level to remunerate the inhabitants of the rainforest for their environmental services.