



ALAS IDB

EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

2012



ALAS-IDB Awards for Early Childhood Development 2012

The ALAS-IDB Awards arise from the need to recognize the dedication, innovation, and excellence of so many people who work in early childhood development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Presented jointly by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the ALAS Foundation of the international artist Shakira, awards are given in four categories, highlighting leading educators, centers, publications, and innovations in the region.

The aim was to award individuals and institutions that were not only committed to their students, but also generated a positive impact on children despite working under unfavorable and sometimes dangerous circumstances. In addition, the awards aim to recognize publications that address innovative and important issues in a way that can be understood and appreciated by children under six years of age.

More than seven hundred nominations were received in the different categories, demonstrating region-wide interest in early childhood development. However, there is still ample room for improvements in the provision of early childhood development services in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although school enrollment has increased gradually since the 1980s, important differences exist in terms of access and quality between countries and socioeconomic groups. For this reason, it is important to recognize high-quality work and offer incentives to provide quality early childhood development services to all children.

The four 2012 winners and finalists stand out for their commitment and achievements in helping vulnerable children. Some have excelled in extreme and difficult situations, and others are working on issues rarely addressed in region. All of these professionals and institutions strive daily to improve the lives of the region's children.



We thank our partners for their collaboration in this initiative and for the prizes they are donating to the winners in the four award categories: United Way, Dell, Haier, Microsoft, LEGO, Coca-Cola, Huggies, 3M, Cargill, and the Colombian American Association.



BEST EDUCATOR

Martha Ivette Rivera Alanis

In a community plagued by drug cartels and violence in Monterrey, Mexico, Martha Ivette Rivera Alanis, a preschool teacher, promotes positive and nonviolent behaviors among young children. She firmly believes that nonviolence has to be instilled at an early age and at various levels in community and society. She prevents bullying in her center and believes that zero tolerance for this behavior is a good starting point for the promotion of peaceful coexistence between children. In May 2011, overcoming her own fears, she managed to maintain the calm of fifteen 5- and 6-year-old students when a shooting erupted only one block from the school. Mimicking a play session, she had her students lie on the ground while singing a song so that they would not be afraid, limiting the impact of the violence. When asked how she and her students overcame this episode, she emphatically responded: "If my 5- and 6-year-old children are able to move forward, we can all move forward." Her commitment to the safety of her preschoolers and her capacity to provide high-quality early childhood development in a context of violence and drugs makes her worthy of this distinction.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

- The educator and pianist **Celeste Acevedo de Pinazzo** reminds us of the importance of incorporating music into early childhood education. In the Suzuki Music School in Paraguay, she uses music to stimulate the early development of boys and girls.
- **Doris Elena Montoya Cerrati** has a teaching trajectory of more than 20 years, promoting the rights of children through poems and play in the two early childhood development centers where she works: the Association for a Happy Childhood and the San Francisco Early Childhood Institute of Assisi Parish in Peru.
- After suffering an accident 30 years ago, **Judith de la Ossa** decided to overcome her own challenges by dedicating her life to the early development of vulnerable children. She established a school on her own that over the years has served more than a thousand young and vulnerable Colombian children.



BEST PUBLICATION

Antonia

Author: Paula Mejía

Illustrator: María Paula Dufour

Through the eyes of Antonia, an autistic girl, this book explains autism in simple terms that children and adults alike can comprehend. Its focus is a minimally addressed psychosocial vulnerability that is generally not dealt with in the region's education systems. It is accompanied by colorful and captivating illustrations for young children and questions that can be used as a guide for adults in their conversations with young children. This book is awarded Best Publication for creatively shedding light on autism, making it comprehensible for different ages.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

- **This Is What My Grandparents Tell Me (Así me dicen mis abuelos)**

Author: María Fernanda Ortega

Illustrators: Diego Aldo, Darío Guerrero, D. Vera Primavera (Messklan),

Isadora Siammes and Jaime Villarroel

This Is What My Grandparents Tell Me is a multilingual text—Spanish, Kichwa, Shuar, French, and English—that captures stories from indigenous oral tradition in Ecuador accompanied by beautiful illustrations. The publication promotes the value of different indigenous cultures, as well as community and intergenerational work.

- **Catalina and Agustino Know How to Take Care of Themselves (Catalina y Agustina se saben cuidar)**

Author: Yllari Briceño and Cecilia Miranda (Asociación Solidaridad Países Emergentes)

Illustrator: Nilton Olivera

Graphic Designer: Maritza Correa

Catalina and Agustino Know How to Take Care of Themselves addresses the complex and difficult issue of sexual abuse in minors. In simple language and through the eyes of two children, the publication teaches children prevention measures and how to get help if at risk of abuse.

- **Isapí, The Maiden Who Could Not Cry (Isapí, la doncella que no podía llorar)**

Author: Milagros Castillo Fuerman

Illustrators: Luis Caycho and Salamandra Eirl

Isapí, The Maiden Who Could Not Cry promotes reading by rescuing traditional Peruvian legends and accompanying them with colorful illustrations. This beautiful publication shows us that one can combine the teaching of early literacy with the teaching of culture.

BEST CENTER

Give Love Foundation

In a disenfranchised Colombian community, the Give Love Foundation (Fundamor) provides early childhood development services for 70 boys and girls who are HIV positive. Through a network of volunteers, the center provides health and education services, including physical therapy, nutrition, and health care. Fundamor also seeks to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS through information sessions with parents and community members. According to Guillermo Garrido, the foundation's director, "Children with few resources affected by HIV/AIDS suffer the triple discrimination of being children, being vulnerable, and having this illness. However, with treatment, education, and the affection that they need and deserve, they can live long and fulfilling lives."



HONORABLE MENTIONS

- **The Complementary Education Center N°801** (El Centro Educativo Complementario N°801) works with families and community members to educate young children in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Through art, health, and science workshops (among others), this institution supports vulnerable children, giving them a space to develop in a safe environment.
- **Golondrina Childhood Garden** (Jardín Infantil Golondrina), located in the region of Valparaiso, Chile, offers quality early childhood education to boys and girls from low-income families. Through innovative programs, it seeks to introduce young children to culture and science. In addition, the center works closely with families to promote reading, health, and nutrition.
- For the past six years, the **A Ray of Sunshine Integral Childhood Center** (Centro de Atención Integral Rayito de Sol) in Argentina has worked to advance equal opportunity in education. The center supports its community by offering high-quality education and developmental services to children from the most vulnerable segments of society, including very young children, helping them grow through good health, nutrition, recreation, and learning.

BEST INNOVATION

Child Health

The Brazilian nongovernmental organization Child Health (Saúde Criança) has developed a health-care model for young children that goes beyond treating diseases to address each child's well-being in an integral manner. Well-being is defined as having both a healthy body and mind. The foundation delivers individualized health services for vulnerable families from Rio de Janeiro. According to Child Health: "Today hospital treatments ignore the conditions in which families live. This does not work for those who live below the poverty line. Our methodology is a cost-effective way to reach those children and their families and provide them with high-quality services that often are out of their reach."

HONORABLE MENTIONS

- The Wawa Wasi project in Peru is internationally recognized for working in an integral manner with low-income boys and girls to promote their social mobility. Its program, **Wawa Wasi for Children with Special Needs**, goes beyond that, however. It works with boys and girls with physical disabilities, giving them a comprehensive education and supporting their full integration into society. The program has formed alliances with various organizations to reach disabled children that need both physical and socioemotional support in their early years.
- The rights of children are the fundamental motivation of the **Rural Youth Care Center** (Centro de Cuidado Infantil Rural) in Argentina, especially in abolishing child labor. The program has worked with NGOs, ministries, and private businesses to open two early childhood development centers for young children at harvest time, not only protecting their rights, but also intervening in schools, giving them a place where they can develop and be children.
- **Mother Guides (Madres Guías)** in Honduras is a program developed by the ChildFund, in which mothers are trained to be early childhood development guides to other vulnerable families from the same community. The guides provide advice on health, nutrition, and child development.

