Vicky Colbert, 2013 WISE Prize for Education Laureate

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, awarded the 2013 WISE Prize for Education to Ms. Vicky Colbert, Founder and Director of Fundación Escuela Nueva, during the Opening Ceremony of the 5th WISE Summit, held in Doha, October 29 - 31, 2013.

Fundación Escuela Nueva

In 2013, Fundación Escuela Nueva underwent a strategic reflection process to put in perspective its role of serving the national and international education community. FEN will lead and promote a global movement focused on changing the lives of the underserved through our collaborative education approach centered on the learner: the Escuela Nueva model.

Through a coalition of global multisector partners, FEN will extend the reach of the proven Escuela Nueva model and adapt it to meet the global needs of the underserved. Ultimately, the goal is to drive large scale social change through providing quality education to the underserved and creating a sustainable global community that supports continuous learning.
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Mission

We contribute to improve the quality, relevance and efficiency of education by rethinking the way we learn and promoting active, cooperative and personalized learning centered on the learner.

Vision

By 2018 we want to be a global technical reference for active, cooperative and personalized learning based on the Escuela Nueva model; and we want lead a global movement to improve the lives of the underserved through our educational model centered on the learner.
Fundación Escuela Nueva

Fundación Escuela Nueva, also known as FEN, is a Colombian NGO founded in 1987 by the authors of the Escuela Nueva pedagogical model and the core team that pioneered and developed the program.

For the past 26 years, we have improved the lives of children and their families through education that empowers and enables them as individuals. Through our educational model we seek to improve the quality, relevance and efficiency of education by focusing on the learner and rethinking the way we learn. Our approach promotes active, participatory, cooperative and personalized learning.

At FEN we have the audacious ambition of nurturing an ethos of peace and participation where children, teachers and communities are the main actors of change; we envision a future where children can achieve outstanding opportunities and outcomes, regardless of their context, through quality education. Through our work with students, teachers, educational administrators and communities we transform conventional, teacher-centered learning into child-centered, active, participatory and collaborative learning and empower them to be leaders and change agents.

Since our founding, our work and ideas have benefitted more than 5 million children across 16 Latin American countries, Vietnam, East Timor and, most recently, Zambia; and has earned us important recognitions. We have developed one of the longest running, bottom-up educational innovations of the developing world that has successfully impacted national policies.

The Escuela Nueva Model

Escuela Nueva is an educational model designed in Colombia in the mid-1970s by Vicky Colbert, Beryl Levinger, and Óscar Mogollón to improve the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the schools in the country. The program was initially aimed at rural multi-grade schools where one or two teachers simultaneously teach all grades. These schools typically exist in areas with a low population density in both developed and developing countries. Today, Escuela Nueva is a globally recognized and proven social innovation that improves the quality of education. It benefits children, teachers, administrators, families, and the community through four interrelated components: the curriculum and classroom, community, training, and management.
Our Work and Strategic Priorities

FEN is expanding its reach through projects to continue to be a technical reference in the proper implementation of Escuela Nueva Activa® (EN). Through key partners, FEN is helping spread and strengthen the EN model to new places like Puebla, Mexico; Turbo, Antioquia; Cundinamarca and Vichada in Colombia.

The goal is to drive large-scale social change through providing quality education and creating a sustainable global community that supports continuous learning. The following are our strategic priorities:

1. Partner Support and Technical Assistance
2. Community Connections
3. Research and Evaluation
4. Strategic Partnerships

Partner Support and Technical Assistance

Strengthening of EN Model with the Secretary of Education of the Municipality of Turbo - Antioquia, Colombia

Jointly with the Secretary of Education of the municipality of Turbo in the department of Antioquia, in March 2013 FEN strengthened the Escuela Nueva model in this municipality through the provision of our Escuela Nueva Activa® learning guides for students from Preschool to 7th grade and the development of training workshops for teachers of the municipality.

To advance this initiative, FEN collaborated with the educational local authority, which is committed to improving the quality of education of over 7,500 students. Furthermore, FEN donated learning guides for students in the areas of Technology and Ethics and Human Values.

Through this project, the municipality of Turbo contributed to its educational development goals and the schools, teachers and children will now be equipped with effective tools and strategies to improve pedagogical practices and learning outcomes.

Improving the Quality of Basic Education in Puebla - Mexico

Fundación Escuela Nueva, the Secretary of Education of Puebla (Mexico), Fundación Azteca and the Center for Educational Studies continued working on the project "Improving the Quality of Basic Education in Puebla". In addition to training, FEN helped establish microcenters for continued teacher support to help the local government with a comprehensive roll out of the EN model to the rural schools.
The Secretaries of Education of Cundinamarca and Vichada in Colombia integrated FEN’s learning guides for their rural population, as part of their regional strategy for improving the quality and relevance of basic education in their departments.

The materials provided to Cundinamarca will reach 4,252 students in 50 schools across 41 municipalities in the department. The collection consists of 52 learning guides ranging from preschool to fifth grade, covering the subjects of language, math, natural science, social science, ethics and human values, and technology. FEN also gave the department posters titled, “How to use our guides” for their classrooms, so teachers and students can adequately use the learning materials that are part of the Escuela Nueva Activa® model.

The Secretaries have recognized the important value added by the literacy and math learning guides for younger grades, which come with workbooks and guides for technology, ethics and human values.

Meanwhile, the materials provided to the department in Vichada will reach approximately 1,500 students in 70 schools in 3 municipalities. FEN will also train 60 teachers in the Escuela Nueva Activa® model, including how to properly use the learning guides. Additionally FEN will donate learning guides in technology and ethics to the schools in the department of Vichada. These guides, in addition to the training and monitoring and evaluation from FEN, are actively improving the state of basic education in Colombia’s rural communities.

The Secretary of Education of the Department of Antioquia reached out to FEN to help strengthen the quality of education in 117 rural municipalities with Fundación Escuela Nueva’s Learning Guides. This means that approximately 198,000 children will be using our guides in this Colombian region. It is a pleasure for us to announce that, after an evaluation process with teachers, the Governor’s Office of the Department of Antioquia decided that the materials produced by FEN are the best option. In order to ensure the effectiveness of these guides, FEN will also be reviewing a proposal from the Department regarding teacher training benefitting over 1,000 teachers in 34 municipalities in three regions (Oriente, Magdalena Medio y Bajo). Further, FEN has independently conducted research to determine a baseline for monitoring and evaluation to measure the impact of the EN model.
Expanding its work beyond the formal education system, FEN worked with Fundación Capital on their Classroom Financial Education Program using methodology of the Escuela Nueva model. FEN’s objective was to help design a program that could financially educate women who received conditional cash transfers from the government of El Salvador as part of the “Rural Communities of Solidarity” Program. In designing the program, FEN incorporated some of the existing implementation principles of Fundación Capital with new training strategies.

FEN focused on the following components in the analysis: Development of Materials, Training, Monitoring and Evaluation. From the existing contents of Fundación Capital in financial education and the approaches of the Escuela Nueva model, we jointly designed materials and proposed strategies for teaching and training, as well as tools to replicate and scale this project.

The pilot was launched in two municipalities reaching about 1,500 women.

Following FEN’s support, Fundación Capital expressed their gratitude and shared that this project “has had a major impact on national public policy and the results are being evaluated systematically to scale in the future.” Considering the success of the program, as over 100 women have already opened savings accounts and started saving at home, the El Salvadorian government has selected this project as one of the successes of the new President of the Republic Sánchez Cerén’s first 100 days.
As part of a national program to strengthen the quality and coverage of rural education in Colombia, the Ministry of Education aims to improve the classroom practice of rural teachers, focusing on student learning in Mathematics, Sciences and Citizenship.

A part of the program is the “Situated Professional Development (DPS)” strategy, which is aims to improve on-site pedagogical practices of teachers in rural areas by promoting the assessment of learning, encouraging the organization of learning circles and developing the process of learning by inquiry.

One of the responsibilities was to train a team of 102 tutors who will advise and train teachers in rural areas in applying the content of the educational materials delivered by the Ministry of Education.

FEN operated this strategy in the areas of primary and secondary math, primary and secondary science, citizenship and management, reaching schools from the municipalities of Boyacá, Nariño, Pasto, Tumaco, and Vichada, for a total of 1,151 teachers.
Vicky Colbert participated as Guest Speaker at the Education World Forum 2013. This annual summit for national Ministers of Education and their delegations is an internationally recognized forum for debating future practice in education. Fifty-five Ministers of Education and representatives from seventy countries attended this year's event. The forum was held in London (UK) between January 28th and 30th. The year's theme was "Policy-Making for Quantity, Quality and Impact".

FEN's executive director gave a presentation on the Escuela Nueva model as an innovative pedagogical practice. The model is recognized worldwide for its track record of impacting public policy in countries such as Colombia, Guatemala, Vietnam, and many others. Our model is, without a doubt, an impetus to public policy focused on increasing schooling and improving the quality of education with long-term social impact.

**Advancing Good Governance in International Development in Oxford**

The annual seminar, "Advancing Good Governance in International Development," brings together leaders from the academic, public and private sectors as well as key thinkers in the non-profit sector, donors, and social entrepreneurs.

The seminar was convened by the cross-industry collaboration of the Blavatnik School of Government, the non-profit organization Camfed, the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and the international law firm Linklaters to identify pressing issues in international development and how good governance addresses these issues.

This year's seminar was titled "Sustainability of Impact: For the Sector or the Client" and aimed to explore new technologies and business models to assist the international development community in empowering clients and recipients of development aid.

Vicky Colbert was invited to the seminar in Oxford and actively took part in the session, "Public Value Innovators: Making Governments Accountable," in which participants explored how governments, as regulators of the public good, have changed since many of their responsibilities have become privatized.

Throughout her two days in Oxford, Vicky Colbert took part in interesting and relevant sessions for our work in the educational sector, on fundraising, and on discussion about how to contribute to efforts in developing lasting public-private partnerships, processes which all require good governance and accountability.
In September 2013, Vicky Colbert was invited to speak at the Le Havre Forum “Movement for a Positive Economy,” speaking about FEN and the EN model. In the segment entitled “Education: Transforming Schools in Order to Change Society,” Colbert joined many world leaders and innovators in education including Salman Khan of Khan Academy.

This segment accompanied dozens of other conversations about how to move toward a positive economy in sectors including corporate social responsibility, the collaborative economy, global governance, market finance, energy, health and many more.

KEUCO Sporting Initiative

The German company KEUCO hosted two youth football teams from the school Gimnasio Santander from Tunja, Boyacá (Colombia). The kids received the official dress of the German football team Borussia Dortmund (BVB), which is considered to be one of the most successful teams in Europe at this time.

This event was supported by FEN, which established the contact between the German company and the school in Tunja. This contact set the base for the event on April 3rd in the office of KEUCO in Bogotá and future sports activities.

Others events attempted by Vicky Colbert

- International Conference in School Education April 2013, in Nepal.
- Roundtable Discussion with Nesta June 2015
- Advancing Good Governance in International Development in Oxford
- Henry Kravis Prize in California.
Community Connections

Our Volunteers

"I worked for Escuela Nueva during the summer of 2013. Overall it was an amazing experience, but there are two things that stand out which made the summer so great. The first was FEN's mission. It was a privilege to work for an organization that is doing so much good in the world. The second reason was the staff. It was a pleasure working with a team of such kind and caring individuals who did so much to welcome me into the FEN team and to Bogotá!"

-Ben Tillotson, from the US

"I volunteered for Escuela Nueva for four months in 2013 and had a unique and interesting experience. Working for an NGO with such a widespread impact in terms of education, with measurable positive output, is very inspiring and truly impressive. I helped in the areas of fundraising and public relations and was always supported by the amazing Escuela Nueva staff. Everybody was welcoming and warm. Happy times!"

-Sara Bauchmüller, from Germany

Fundraising

Besides having a space in our Web Portal for donations to support our work, during 2013 we received several contributions for two specific projects through the platform Global Giving: 1. A project to improve the quality of learning and to help break the cycle of poverty by decreasing the education gap between rural and urban areas for 198,000 Colombian children; and 2: A project to provide Learning Guides for post-primary students for the following subjects: Language, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, Technology and Ethics.

SOURCE OF DONATIONS

- Awards: 1%
- Private: 99%
FEN developed a “Peace Education” report that details how the work of FEN and the Escuela Nueva model help develop peace education. Positive peace is that which encourages and promotes the application of positive human values to daily life like justice, liberty, fairness and compassion. This report highlights how the Escuela Nueva model and FEN’s approach to Peace Education is helping bring society closer to peace. The report details the EN model’s structure, content, form and action as well as the consistency and integration among the components. Additionally, it shares some results from FEN’s work and a number of success stories.

Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF) and FEN Define Cognitive and Social Learning

The Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), led by UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics (UIS) and The Brookings Institution’s Center for Universal Education (CUE), brought together regional and local decision makers, educational experts, practitioners and researchers worldwide to analyze and discuss what type of learning is important on a global scale, how learning can be measured, and how metrics can help improve the quality of education.

Based on our experience, a team from FEN provided feedback and informed Phase I of the consultation, which identified the most relevant subjects and skills children should learn. The resulting framework was summarized into the report “Towards Universal Learning: What Every Child Should Learn,” and addresses seven learning domains, alongside literacy and numeracy.

Due to FEN’s experience developing and emphasizing the importance of non-cognitive skills as part of the learning equation, FEN provided valuable input into the non-cognitive domains.
In addition to the relationship between architecture and pedagogy, criteria for evaluating the proposals were the following: quality of design, technical and financial feasibility, relevance, scalability, innovation, and environmental and cultural sustainability.
Increased Presence in the Educational Field

In the year 2013, influential people all over the world were talking about FEN and the Escuela Nueva model. Vicky Colbert was invited to share the details of the EN model at conferences and award ceremonies in Qatar, England, France, Nepal, and the US to name a few countries. These forums provided a chance for global thinkers and influencers to discover the work of FEN and were a starting point for discussion about effective educational reform. This increased presence globally is a key step toward FEN’s goal of becoming a global leader in improving the quality of education worldwide.

Vicky Colbert, 2013 WISE Prize for Education Laureate

The 2013 WISE Prize for Education, the first distinction of its kind to recognize an individual or a team for an outstanding, world-class contribution to education, has been awarded to Ms. Vicky Colbert.

The WISE Prize for Education was established in 2011 to enhance the status of education by giving it similar prestige to other areas for which international prizes already exist, such as literature, peace and economics.

In congratulating the 2013 WISE Prize for Education Laureate, H.E. Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali Al-Thani, Ph.D., Chairman of WISE, said: “Vicky Colbert has dedicated her life to revitalizing education through effective and relevant student-centered pedagogical methods that involve families and entire communities as well as teachers in the process. Her work has had a significant impact in Latin America and beyond, greatly expanding access to affordable quality education for the less-privileged.”

Ms. Vicky Colbert said: “I am very honored and humbled to receive the 2013 WISE Prize for Education. This Prize recognizes that bringing education to all children and empowering them for lifelong learning is an important foundation for human development, and it is something that can be achieved when teachers and children are given the right tools to lead change.”
During 2013, of the total of the revenues registered by the FEN, the projects developed in Colombia represented 78.3%, being these the main sources of financing of our organization, compared to the international projects (4% of the total sources of income).

This income allowed FEN to strengthen its research programs and update its learning materials.

Resources obtained through international donations and recognitions, such as the WISE prize, accounted for 16.5%, as the second most important source of financing for this year.
In 2014 as a part of our strategic shift to becoming a leader in a global movement, we plan to expand our reach to an African country and even more Latin American countries. This expansion requires research and evaluation to best adapt the EN model to new contexts, cultures and students, including the development of relevant learning materials.

Other projects in the pipeline for 2014 include the implementation of the Escuela Activa Urbana® program in five urban schools, supporting research projects with various universities, the creation of an international expert network to support the transformation of postgraduate thesis research into relevant teaching practices, and fruitful partnerships between FEN and organizations in the US.
Thank-You Note

FEN wants to thank all persons who with their work and collaboration every day, allow us continue to reach more children and give them the education tools to improve their quality of lives and conditions. To teachers, principals, students and parents, without your support this work would not be possible.

Also we want to thank the entire team at Fundación Escuela Nueva for their dedication and commitment to achieving our vision. To all of them and their families, thank you. Also to our donors, volunteers and interns, we thank for their collaboration and we look forward to continue counting on their support.
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