

banner



Journal of the Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Volume 19, No.8 – February, 2003 / 159BE

LARGE PRINT / Standard Print.

International News

International News

Bahá'í-inspired educational system for the poor of the world honoured by the Club of Budapest



Students at FUNDAEC's SAT programme. SAT offers students a high school education that not only provides them with theoretical knowledge but also allows them to become independent and to serve their own communities.

FRANKFURT, 22 December, 2002 (Bahá'í World News Service)

The Club of Budapest has honoured FUNDAEC, a Bahá'í-inspired development organisation in Colombia, with a "Change the World – Best Practice Award" for its achievements in providing high school education and training to more than 50,000 people living in rural areas of Latin America. In his speech at the award ceremony, Peter Spiegel, the Secretary General of the Club of Budapest, characterised the project as "the most considerable revolution of education in the twentieth century."

FUNDAEC (Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences) was established in 1974 by a group of professors at the University of Valle in Colombia who were looking for new strategies to develop the capacities of people and to generate knowledge in isolated regions of the country.

"The genius of this new educational model," Mr Spiegel explained, "lies in the fact that it teaches people living in Third World Countries to take charge of their own development processes and begin to interact as equals with the rest of the world."

Known as SAT (for "Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, which means "System for Tutorial Learning" in Spanish), the tutorial learning programme is built around a series of highly interactive workbooks, which enable specially trained tutors, who may themselves have little formal education, to offer a high quality secondary educational programme in rural areas with minimal overhead cost.

The ceremony, held at the historic St Paul's Church in Frankfurt on 6th October, 2002, was attended by honorary members of the Club of Budapest Sir Peter Ustinov and Paulo Coelho, who were granted the Club's Planetary Consciousness Award. Also at the event was Istvan Hiller, personal assistant to the Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy, whose presence reinforced the support of the Hungarian government for the Club's efforts in promoting the emergence of planetary consciousness and supporting exemplary, likeminded projects. In all, some 1,000 people were present.

The Change the World – Best Practice Award was given to four international educational projects that aim at empowering people through learning and enabling them to take full control of their economic development.

Other "Change the World" recipients this year were Aguida Zanol, representing Reciclar-Institut in Brazil, which seeks to connect art, ecology and social development; Nina Kostina of the Frank Foundation which has sought to help orphans from former

countries of the Soviet Union; and Marcia Odell, representing the Women's Empowerment Programme in Nepal, which has developed an innovative approach to microfinance and the empowerment of women. The WEP programme has reached more than 130,000 women in Nepal and has also received considerable support from the Bahá'í community of Nepal.

Gustavo Correa, Director of FUNDAEC and one of the founders of the project, represented the Foundation at the ceremony. He said the award this was a big step towards recognition of the FUNDAEC programme. "Although our initial efforts started out very small and humble, as time went by, more experience and confidence were gained and in 1980 SAT, the Tutorial Learning System, was born," Dr Correa said. "While our first materials were developed and tested only in the North Cauca Region of Colombia, with the official recognition of the Ministry of Education in Colombia SAT has been implemented in other parts of South and Central America as well. At present the SAT programme is used for secondary education in Honduras, Guatemala, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, Costa Rica, Brazil, and Colombia. At the same time the first phases of the implementation of the programme have started in Zambia, too," said Dr Correa.

