

# INITIATIVES

Social and educational projects  
inspired by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo

*The initiatives described in this section are educational, social, and cultural activities brought forward by faithful of the Prelature and co-operators together with many other people, both Catholics and non-Catholics. Those who undertake and direct these activities (taking on full responsibility for them, including their financial aspects) are trying to respond to specific local needs without any discrimination*

*regarding race, religion, or social condition.*

*The Prelature of Opus Dei, through agreements with the organizers, or through the guidelines established by the statutes of each entity, contributes to the development of these social initiatives by providing Christian doctrinal and moral orientation, and priestly service, always with full respect for the freedom of people's consciences.*

## Social and Educational Projects Inspired by Bishop Alvaro del Portillo

“All of us, to the extent possible, need to get into contact with people who suffer, with the sick, the poor . . . the lonely, the abandoned.”

These words written by Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo in 1981 reflect his own personal experience. As a 19-year-old university student, he became involved in the activities of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and helped distribute gifts and food, taught catechism, and provided care for abandoned children in the poorest areas of Madrid. Encouraged by St. Josemaría, he continued providing this assistance with the help of the students at the DYA Academy, where Opus Dei had recently begun its apostolic activities.

During the years Msgr. del Portillo was at the head of the Work (1975–1994), he took advantage of his pastoral visits throughout the world to encourage the start of

many social and educational initiatives. His concern for the poor and sick led him “to urge forward and encourage others to take part in projects for the assistance of the needy, seeking to find a professional remedy for these human needs and many more.” When talking to those involved in organizing these activities, don Alvaro (as many people called him) encouraged them to have broad horizons and gave suggestions on how to make these activities more fruitful. He was always very happy to receive news about these initiatives and insisted that new projects had to be started, especially in places where peoples' needs were greater. He had an ardent desire to help people and to bring Christ's lovable and merciful face to everyone.

With the centenary of Don Alvaro's birth and his upcoming beatification, these pages offer informa-

tion about some of the social and educational initiatives that were encouraged by him or begun as a direct result of his intervention. May it be a way of thanking him for the spiritual and material good done to so many souls and also a spur to continue praying for his intercession for the people who benefit from these institutions.

## Junkabal Guatemala City

Junkabal is a training center for women. It started its activities in 1964 in a small rented house next to a municipal rubbish dump. A program of courses was started, directed to the needs of the impoverished people from the surrounding district. With the construction in 1978 of the second phase, classes in primary and secondary education were begun and also parenting courses. In 1992, with Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo's encouragement, new buildings were added and training courses were begun to help women set up small businesses in a variety of fields. The progress of these women is followed closely and refresher courses to help them keep up to date are available. Junkabal now incorporates a dental clinic and a program of nutrition classes for mothers and children. During these years more than 100,000 people have passed through Junkabal, many of whom have also taken part in the activities of spiritual formation offered there. [www.junkabal.edu.gt](http://www.junkabal.edu.gt)

## Valle Grande Institute for Technical Training Cañete, Peru

In 1965 Valle Grande Institute started technical training courses for agriculture workers. Beginning in 1992, technical courses in Agrarian Production were offered and the name was changed to the Valle Grande School of Agriculture. This course lasts three years with students alternating time in class with time spent working on small family farms. Thus the learning process is combined with the world of work and the family. Each year about thirty students graduate who usually quickly find employment. During the 1990's Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo followed the development of the school very closely and encouraged the directors to develop a wide range of training activities for the local farm people.

[www.irvg.org](http://www.irvg.org)

## Institute of Nursing Studies Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

During a visit to Congo in 1989, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo was struck by the great lack of reliable medical care in the country and suggested setting up a training school

for nurses. The *Institut Supérieur en Sciences Infirmières* (ISSI), which began in 1997, has now seen over 450 students graduate. A program leading to a Masters in Midwifery is offered as well, in order to help reduce the high rate of infant and maternal mortality. ISSI also offers training programs for people working in public hygiene throughout the country. Over 2000 people have benefited from these courses.

## Baytree Centre London

During the 80's, a group of women from a variety of professional backgrounds started educational activities in Brixton, an area in South London with a high percentage of immigrants. One of their first initiatives was to set up English classes, since the inability to express themselves in English was a frequent cause of isolation and conflict for the local women. Besides encouraging the project from the start, when he came to London in 1987, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo blessed the premises of Baytree. In 1992 the local government provided financial assistance to expand the buildings. Now, each week more than 500 women from nearly 50 countries attend the classes at Baytree. In addition, through the Homework Club about 900 girls are helped with their school work and overall education. While helping many mothers to gain the qualifications needed to

enter the workforce, the goal is that they themselves will be able to assist their children in their schoolwork.

[www.baytreecentre.org](http://www.baytreecentre.org)

## Pedreira Educational and Professional Center São Paulo, Brazil

Pedreira Educational and Professional Center (CEAP) began in 1985 as a result of an ideal shared by a group of professionals and students who wanted to set up a social project in São Paulo that would contribute to social development in a needy area in the city. They decided to start a school in the Pedreira district (located 30 km from the downtown), which had some of the worst social conditions in the city, with high rates of delinquency, violence, and drug use among young people. Currently, CEAP serves 580 students each year. In addition, it offers basic courses in vocational education in electricity and computing for students aged 10 to 14, as well as professional training courses in computer networks, business administration, and telecommunications for students aged between 15 and 17. The Center also offers members of the local community preparatory courses to bring future students up to admission-level requirements for its programs, along with medical care, which benefits approximately 7,000

people per year. Over 6,000 students have graduated from the Center.

[www.pedreira.org](http://www.pedreira.org)

## Monkole Medical Center Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Monkole Medical Centre was set up in Kinshasa following a trip by Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo to Congo in 1989. During his stay, Don Alvaro suggested that it would be a good idea if some members of Opus Dei started working on a medical center in response to a request made by Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, then President of the Bishops Conference of Congo. Monkole currently offers both medical assistance (in the areas of gynecology and obstetrics, surgery, internal medicine, and pediatrics) and hospitalization services, as well as providing classes in basic hygiene and health, particularly concerning prevention of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, sickle cell anemia, malaria, and tuberculosis. Three medical clinics connected to the hospital—Eliba, Moluka and Kimbondo—offer medical care in poor neighborhoods. Also affiliated with Monkole are a nursing school (ISSI), which graduates 50 new nurses every year, and a training center for doctors (CEFA).

Monkole and its affiliated institutions now have over 50,000 medical consultations each year

[www.monkole.ed](http://www.monkole.ed)

## Foundation for Family and Community Assistance Quito, Ecuador

The Foundation for Family and Community Assistance (AFAC) began in 1991 as a small dispensary in a poor district of Quito. It started in response to a request from Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo to help the sick and the needy. In 1995 the definitive building was inaugurated, with its installations for dentistry, ultrasound, X-ray, and laboratories. A number of specialized courses for women and children at risk are also offered. In 2008 the Center was transformed into a maternity clinic that has helped over 3500 women give birth. About 24,000 patients a year are currently given assistance there. The patients, in most cases young women, are often interested in questions related to living their faith, the upbringing of their children and their responsibilities as mothers.

## **Banilad Center for Professional Development Cebu, Philippines**

Banilad Center for Professional Development (BCPD) is a technical school offering two year courses in Catering and Hotel Services. It was born in response to Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo's petition, in a get-together with over a thousand people, during his visit to the Philippines in 1987. The then Prelate of Opus Dei asked his audience to set up projects to alleviate poverty and help needy people to have a more dignified and human life. Two years later the construction of Banilad began and was inaugurated in 1991. About 1500 young women have now completed the two year course. Another 2600 have attended short courses on how to set up small businesses.

[www.ptihphilippines.com/BANILAD](http://www.ptihphilippines.com/BANILAD)

## **Kinal Technical Training Center Guatemala City,**

Kinal Technical Training Center was founded in 1961, but it was only in 1985, due to the special encouragement of Don Alvaro, that it began construction of its new facilities. Kinal gives economically-disadvan-

taged youth the opportunity to obtain a high school diploma along with solid technical training, opening up the prospect of a better professional future. It also offers refresher courses and training for adults, mainly in the technical field. 1,200 young people between the ages of 12 and 19 are currently studying in Kinal, plus another 800 adults. Over the past 15 years, the school has on average graduated more than 200 students per year. [www.kinal.org.gt](http://www.kinal.org.gt)

## **Montemira School San Salvador, El Salvador**

Montemira School has offered primary education to girls from families of limited means since 1975. As the result of earthquakes in 1986 and again in 2001 the school has twice had to be rebuilt. With the rebuilding in 2001 a high school program was added, which in 2004 was expanded to include a diploma in hotel and catering services. This course, which integrates professional training and general education, was the first program in this specialty approved by the Ministry of Education, and is now a national model for new programs in this area. To date more than 750 girls have passed through the school. With his words of encouragement and the close interest with which he followed the first reconstruction of the

school after the 1986 earthquake, Msgr. del Portillo is part of the school's history.

## Seat of Wisdom International Eccle- siastical College Rome

The *Sedes Sapientiae* (Seat of Wisdom) International Ecclesiastical College is a seminary erected by the Holy See on January 9, 1991 that welcomes candidates for the priesthood from all across the globe. The project was initiated by Bishop del Portillo in response to a request from Blessed John Paul II. Since its inception, more than 400 of its seminarians have been ordained priests. Students are sent by their bishops from all over the world, and once they have completed their ecclesiastical studies they return to their dioceses. Currently the College has 90 seminarians from 31 different countries. Don Alvaro encouraged the governing board to foster an environment of trust and freedom, order and fraternity, along with an atmosphere of serious study and strong piety. [www.sedessapientiae.it](http://www.sedessapientiae.it)

## Ilomba Rural Center Bingerville, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

The aim of Ilomba Center is to provide health care for some of the most vulnerable sectors of the population (children, pregnant women, and the elderly) in an area of the Ivory Coast that has little provision for public health. Besides medical care, classes are offered on topics such as nutrition and hygiene. When he visited the country in October 1988, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo blessed the site on which Ilomba was to be built and expressed his joy at the progress being made. About 12,000 people in the area benefit from the Center's activities.

## Institute for Social Responsibility in Business Guatemala City

This center seeks to spread the principles of ethics and social responsibility in the business world. It was founded in 1991 in response to the interest shown by Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo to put into practice the teachings of Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Centessimus Annus*. In 2005 the Institute became part of the Istmo University. It has its own publications and organizes regular seminars and congresses.

[www.ipres.org](http://www.ipres.org)

## Family Cooperation Health Services Foundation Metro Manila

When Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo visited the Philippines in 1987, he encouraged many people to do what they could to help eradicate poverty. One of the results was the creation of the Family Cooperation Health Services Foundation (FAMCOHSEF). Through a network of health professionals in various communities, it offers training in basic family health, essential medical services, nutrition, and first aid. Many people with limited resources are being helped to avoid illnesses, better their hygiene, and in some cases eliminate malnourishment. The health personnel involved follow a five year part-time course that includes a program for the control of tuberculosis and another on essential nutrition. To date 530 people have taken this course.

## Iroto Rural Development Centre Ogun, Nigeria

Iroto Rural Development Centre (IRDC) started as an organization to provide domestic services for a conference center in the state of Ogun. It soon became clear that many women in the area needed supplementary education to help them find employment. In 1985 classes were begun in basic literacy, needlework, and crafts. Soon after-

wards courses in hospitality services were started for young girls. Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo's visit in 1989 gave a big impetus to this educational effort. During his stay at Iroto he expressed his desire for a school that would help many Nigerian women find worthwhile jobs. This intention became a reality in 2005 with the opening of Iroto School of Hotel and Catering.

## Center for Alternative Basic Education Lima, Peru

The Center for Alternative Basic Education (CEBA) was started in 1995. It offers educational opportunities to girls and women who have not had the possibility of finishing their schooling. The aim is to give them a good general education that allows them to better their opportunities for employment. The center has laboratories, computer rooms, a library, a cinema for audiovisual projections, and a music room. It also has installations for teaching cooking, pastry work, housekeeping, and home maintenance.

## Monterrey Children's City Guadalupe, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

The Children's City was founded in 1951 by Father Carlos Alvarez

Ortiz, who ran it until 1984. Initially it was an orphanage that gave shelter to 50 children, but in 1986 it became a Family Education Development Center. In 1987, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo encouraged a group of faithful of the Prelature to take responsibility for the moral and spiritual formation offered at the institution. Today, the operations of the Children's City, which has now graduated over 2,600 students, include a boys' school, a girls' school, a family education center, a church, and the Centennial Medical Clinic. The school presently caters to a total of 905 families through family education courses and has 1,330 students from kindergarten through the 12th grade. It provides 22,000 monthly breakfasts, devotes 16,500 hours annually to one-on-one tutoring, conducts 7,000 medical consultations every year in the clinic, and promotes four annual cancer-prevention campaigns. [www.ciudadelosninos.edu.mx](http://www.ciudadelosninos.edu.mx)

## Rome Bio-Medical Campus Rome, Italy

In 1988 Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo invited some doctors and university professors to set up a university polyclinic inspired by Christian principles to care for the sick and suffering. He met with this group of promoters several times to encourage them and give them advice. In

1993 the Rome Bio-Medical Campus began with courses of study in nursing, medicine and surgery. A little later the clinic opened in its first building with a hundred beds. Later an engineering faculty was started. In 2008 the current site was finished, with four hundred beds. There is also a research center and another for geriatric medicine. Rome's civil authorities have dedicated the road leading to the buildings to Bishop del Portillo. The university now offers courses in eight areas for over 1000 students and cares for thousands of patients annually. [www.unicampus.it](http://www.unicampus.it)

## Yarani Training School Abidjan, Ivory Coast

In 1989 Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo asked a person from the Ivory Coast about the possibility of setting up a social work to train young women and thus help them to find work. This conversation inspired the setting up of Yarani, which opened its doors in October 1990. Since then over 5,000 people have benefited from its activities. The school offers diplomas in four areas: starting a basic business; hospitality management; health care; and primary education.

[www.yarani.org](http://www.yarani.org)

## Utz Samaj Agricultural School Chimaltenango, Guatemala

A few months after the terrible earthquake that devastated Guatemala in February 1976, the Foundation for Integral Development (FUDI) was set up with the encouragement of Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo to take on the job of rebuilding Sajcavillá, a village inhabited mainly by indigenous people in the district of Sacatepéquez. In the early nineties, FUDI promoted the creation of Utz Samaj, a community development project in Tecpan in the district of Chimaltenango, another predominantly indigenous area in the western highlands of Guatemala. The goal of Utz Samaj is to give farm workers technical, business, and human training. Its Agricultural Training School turns out graduates with an entrepreneurial mindset who have gone on to set up small farms and businesses based on their expertise in agriculture, greenhouse management, and marketing, inspired by a vigorous work ethic. Over 50,000 families in the area now benefit from the training programs offered by Utz Samaj. Their main source of revenue is farm work.

[www.serviciosuniversitarios.org](http://www.serviciosuniversitarios.org)

## Development Agency for Women Volunteerism Metro Manila

The Development Agency for Women Volunteerism (DAWV) is an educational program begun in 1989 in order to foster a social concern in people with economic means and encourage them to help those in need, not only through material assistance but also through education and guidance. It is based on volunteers (housewives, doctors, business women, social leaders, students) who are given classes on the roots of poverty, the principles of social justice, and the social doctrine of the Church, and then asked to put this knowledge into practice. Through a network of 1500 young volunteers help is now being given to about 50,000 people in various parts of Manila.

## Uruguayan Association of Agricultural Family Schools

At the end of the 70's, a group of people working in the agricultural sector saw a need for training programs aimed at helping farm workers and their families. This led to the foundation of the Uruguayan Association of Agricultural Family Schools (AUEFA), which opened its first center in the town of

Juanico in 1980. In 1987, one of the directors of the AUEFA met with Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo in Rome, who reminded him of the importance for Uruguayan society of the work being done by their association, whose aim is to help farm workers improve their living conditions and those of their family. Currently, the first center to be opened has moved into a permanent facility and in addition to its professional development courses is providing basic education to 70 high school students. In March 1999, a second academic institution was set up, which today is providing training to over 50 young women. In its 32 years of operation, AUEFA has helped 485 farm workers to develop their own professional projects.

## Pontifical University of the Holy Cross Rome

The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross is a university-level center for ecclesiastical studies serving the whole Church. This project had been desired by the founder of Opus Dei and was launched by Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo. It currently has four schools (Philosophy, Theology, Canon Law, and Institutional Communications) and a Higher Institute of Religious Sciences. Some 6,000 graduates have now benefited from its programs. Academic activities started in 1984 under the title of the

Roman Academic Center of the Holy Cross, the forerunner of the present university, which was established as a pontifical institution by John Paul II on January 9, 1990. Many bishops from all over the world send priests and seminarians from their dioceses to receive academic instruction and spiritual formation at this university. Following the express wishes of Bishop del Portillo, the academic activities at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross are open to scholars and students from all fields working on questions concerning scientific, philosophical, economic, and social issues, with a view to encouraging an open dialogue between the faith and the world.

[www.pusc.it](http://www.pusc.it)

## Abidagba Health Centre Ogun, Nigeria

In 1980 a group of health professionals started providing health services for people in Ogun. They organized sessions in hygiene, child care and the diagnosis of malaria, typhoid, diarrhea, and infectious diseases. Over time it became clear that a medical center was needed which would benefit the whole population. When Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo visited Nigeria in 1989, he spurred forward this initiative and encouraged its becoming a stable center with a Christian focus. With the help of many benefactors, in 1996 the Abidagba Health Centre was inau-

gured, staffed by medical and laboratory personnel.

## **Guaymura University Center Tegucigalpa, Honduras**

In 1979 a group of young people wrote to Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo asking him if the Work could set up a center in Honduras. Two years later, in 1981, Guaymura University Center was begun. It offers Honduran students from all social backgrounds help to develop their spiritual and professional life. Among other things, the Center provides an environment to help students make good use of their time at the university (accommodation, study rooms and other services); academic courses and cultural activities to reinforce what is learned in the university; and opportunities for social service to the disadvantaged that strengthens their own social conscience.

[www.guaymura.org](http://www.guaymura.org)

## **Metro Achievement Center Chicago**

Metro Achievement Center opened its doors in 1985. It seeks to motivate and educate young women

who want to be better students and to grow in virtue. It offers a summer program and one that is ongoing throughout the school year. Since its start the Center has helped more than 5000 girls. About 500 girls between the ages of 8 and 18 take part in the program each year. The encouragement of Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo was decisive in setting up the Center.

[www.midtown-metro.org/metro](http://www.midtown-metro.org/metro)

## **Lamatepec School San Salvador**

Lamatepec opened its doors in 1981. Msgr. del Portillo followed its launching and the first years of its life very closely because of the civil war raging in El Salvador at the time. Some words of encouragement from Don Alvaro during a meeting in Rome with one of the couples sitting on Lamatepec's board of directors helped to keep the promoters of this project going through the tough years when they were trying to get it off the ground: "If you help look after the children of others, God will look after your own children." Lamatepec currently has 700 students. Twenty-four graduating classes have gone through the school, many of whom now work in social service projects in San Salvador. In addition, the school also runs 15 social programs for people in need. [www.lamatepec.edu.sv](http://www.lamatepec.edu.sv)

## Center for Industrial Technology and Enterprise Cebu, Philippines

When Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo visited the island of Cebu in 1987, he suggested that an institute to help needy people be set up. On returning to Rome he asked two specialists from Italian organizations for international cooperation to study the possibility of setting up a school there. Three years later, in 1990, the Center for Industrial Technology and Enterprise (CITE) opened its doors. The aim of the institute is to offer technical training, along with good work attitudes, to young people and their families from difficult socioeconomic backgrounds, thus helping the whole community in the Visayas and Mindanao areas. The CITE offers courses in mechanics, electricity and electronics. More than 3000 pupils have now gained internationally recognized certificates there, and the Center is recognized by the Philippine government as one of the best technical schools in the country.

[www.cite.edu.ph](http://www.cite.edu.ph)

## Sirama Center for Professional Training for Women San Salvador

The Sirama Center for Professional Training for Women began in

1972 in San Salvador. Courses offered include secretarial training, cosmetics, dress-making, local craftwork, baking and cookery. Basic skills needed to organize a mini-business are also taught. In 1986 the original Sirama building was destroyed in an earthquake. Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo encouraged the directive group to start building the new center, which opened two years later. Ten years later, on land belonging to the municipality of Soyapango, another center was started. More than 42,000 women have passed through these two centers.

[www.sirama.org](http://www.sirama.org)

## Kimlea Girls Technical Training Centre Limuru, Kenya

Kimlea, a school providing technical training for rural women, began in a prefabricated classroom in April 1989. That same year Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo visited Kenya and gave some suggestions for the future development of the school. In the following year, thanks to help from the European Union and the *Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria*, the building of the definitive site was started. To date about 12,000 people have benefited, most of them young girls working on the tea and coffee plantations. Kimlea offers technical training along with classes in human and spiritual development. The students go through a two year program that gives them access to various professions: cater-

ing and hospitality services, dress-making, and agriculture. Courses in basic literacy are also offered for women who have not been able to attend primary school.

[www.kimleatechnical.org](http://www.kimleatechnical.org)

## **HUMTEC School Comas, Lima, Peru**

HUMTEC (Humanities and Technology) School started in 1991 through the initiative of a professor at the University of Piura and a number of local businessmen. Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo closely followed the setting up of the school and its first stages. For the past twenty years the school has offered academic and technical training to impoverished young people north of Lima, along with education in human and spiritual values. The school receives support from a number of private and international institutions. 400 pupils are currently receiving instruction there. [www.humtec.edu.pe](http://www.humtec.edu.pe)

## **Aragua Center for Rural Development Zambrano, Honduras**

In 1987, with the encouragement of Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo and the help of national and international bodies, Aragua Center for Rural

Development began. Its aim is to further the human and social development of the local agricultural workers and their families. Training courses are offered for women in horticulture, conserving and preserving foods, baking, and embroidery. Classes are also given to help them discover the value of their work and the role it has in the development of the whole community. In addition, in 1988, the Aragua Medical Clinic started, which offers health care, vaccinations, preventative medicine, nutrition checks, and laboratory analysis. Attached to it is a pharmacy that dispenses essential medicines at low cost. About 4000 people are helped by the clinic annually.

## **Rosedale Center Bronx, New York,**

Rosedale Center started in 1978 thanks to the suggestion and close interest of Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo. Since then it has been offering an after-school program for girls living in one of most deprived areas of New York. During the summer holidays, Rosedale runs a program of daytime activities that includes both academics and sports. More than 300 schoolgirls make use of the Center every year. Over the past 25 years all the girls who have passed through Rosedale have finished high school and about 90% have gone on to college.

[www.rosedaleweb.wordpress.com](http://www.rosedaleweb.wordpress.com)

## A. C. Educate Ixtapaluca Valle de Chalco, Mexico

In 1983 in Jaltepec, Mexico, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo told a group of professionals and businessmen that there was a need for a major social service project in Mexico City. Six people took on responsibility for this project, and in 1991 started a school for boys and another one for girls in one of the poorest areas on the outskirts of Mexico City. The project attempts to address one of the country's most pressing social needs: high-quality education in low-income areas. Both schools offer programs at the pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school levels. Technical assistance and training is also provided to a large number of people. The schools currently serve 690 parents and 1600 students with a staff of 75 teachers.

[www.educar.org.mx](http://www.educar.org.mx)

## Kimbondo Technical and Professional School Kinshasa

The history of Kimbondo goes back to the mid eighties and a tiny school that gave professional training to about a dozen young girls coming from rural areas. In 1989 Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo got to know this school, then called Kibali. Besides meeting the pupils, he had

a meeting with the people running it and encouraged them to increase and consolidate the project. Two years later the school began to award diplomas in catering and hotel management, and received official recognition in 1994. In 2004 Kibali became Kimbondo Technical and Professional School. Over 350 pupils had now passed through the school. In 2006 it began offering training courses for people working in the hotel industry. To date 410 people have benefited from these courses.

## Los Valles Foundation Cali, Colombia

Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo encouraged a group of professionals to set up a medical and training center in the city of Cali. In 1994 Los Valles Foundation was set up with the aim of improving the quality of life of the mothers of families in the poorest areas of the city through human and spiritual assistance and job training. Courses are offered in manual arts, cookery, baking, hair-dressing, dress-making, doll-making, and woodcraft. Many of the women, encouraged by their own progress, have urged their children to finish school and go on to the university; others have found ways to keep their children out of violent gangs and the drug world. Some of them have even started their own small business, and all can now help contribute to the family income.

[www.fundacionlosvalles.org](http://www.fundacionlosvalles.org)

## **Bidasoa International Ecclesiastical College Pamplona, Spain**

Bidasoa International Ecclesiastical College is an international seminary run by the Prelature of Opus Dei. It was erected by the Holy See in 1988 at the request of Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo and is located in Pamplona (Spain). The students who attend this seminary are sent by their bishops to be trained for the priesthood to serve in their respective dioceses. In Bidasoa's first 23 years of operations, it has seen 512 of its seminarians ordained priests, coming from 160 different dioceses in 29 countries. Currently Bidasoa has 93 seminarians, from 46 different dioceses and 16 countries. Their philosophy and theology courses are given by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Navarra. [www.ceibidasoa.org](http://www.ceibidasoa.org)

## **Center of Assistance for Integral Development Montevideo, Uruguay**

In 1992, three years after a group of young women started assisting people in a poor area of Montevideo, the Center of Assistance for Integral Development (CADI) was inaugurated. The promoters received a lot of encouragement and

guidance from Bishop Alvaro del Portillo. CADI seeks to contribute to the development of families at risk through the education of women, offering them work training, and human and spiritual guidance. In conjunction with the nearby parish, preparation courses are run for Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. About 600 families are benefiting from the activities at CADI and altogether more than 7000 people have passed through its classrooms. [www.centrocadi.org](http://www.centrocadi.org)

## **Wavecrest College of Catering and Hospitality Management Lagos, Nigeria**

Wavecrest College started in the 80's with the aim of giving professional training for women working in hospitality services. The promoters were convinced that service-oriented professions have a deep influence on families and society. Wavecrest College is the first institution in Nigeria that offers training in this area and has received state recognition. The organizing entity, Women's Board Educational Cooperation Society, received detailed advice from Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo.

[www.wavecrestcollegeofhospitality.org](http://www.wavecrestcollegeofhospitality.org)

## Los Pinos School Quito, Ecuador

Los Pinos School has given rise to two initiatives for people without the resources needed to gain access to a good education. One is a night school in the same building as Los Pinos School in Quito and the second a school in Tumbaco. Both were helped in their beginnings by the advice and guidance of Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo. The evening school started in 1980, and offers courses leading to a diploma in commercial writing, accountancy, or health studies. In 1997 the Tumbaco site started offering a course in management in the service industries. In 2001 new classrooms were opened for 165 students. 162 young women study in the Quito night school, which has 24 teachers. The students also learn practical details about setting up a small business. On finishing evening school some pupils go on to the university, others find work in hotels and restaurants, and others decide to set up their own business.

[www.colegiolospinos.k12.ec](http://www.colegiolospinos.k12.ec)

## Niger Foundation Hospital and Diagnostic Center Enugu State, Nigeria

In 1989 Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo visited Nigeria. While there he realized that many people did not

have access to health care, and he suggested that something be done to meet this need. A year later a hospital was started in Enugu to offer family medical services: the Niger Foundation Hospital and Diagnostic Center (NFH). Today the hospital has departments in internal medicine, surgery, orthopedics, pediatrics, gynecology, and obstetrics. The hospital also has laboratories for clinical analysis and a radiology section. People without financial resources are especially helped through a program of rural visits that offers vaccinations and tests for various diseases, along with classes in basic health care. Free medical services are offered at its clinic in Aguobo Iwollo.

[www.nfh.org.ng](http://www.nfh.org.ng)

## Meyalli School Ixapaluca, Valle de Chalco, Mexico

Meyalli School arose from the concern of some business people who, encouraged by Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo, responded to John Paul II's challenge during his visit to the Valle de Chalco in 1990: "We cannot live and sleep tranquilly while thousands of our brothers and sister, very close to us, haven't the minimum needed to live with human dignity." The group decided to open a school in one of the neediest areas of the Valle de Mexico. Meyalli started in October 1991. It now has 700 girls studying at four levels:

kindergarten, primary, secondary, and pre-university. It also has a school for parents and a summer school program. Besides the solid academic training provided, students are also taught good study habits and hygiene, and are offered classes in human and Christian virtues.

[www.meyalli.com](http://www.meyalli.com)

## Montealto School Lima, Peru

Montealto was begun in 1993 by a group of families who wanted an educational center for their daughters that would offer them a complete education, including personal and spiritual development. Msgr. del Portillo followed the school in its first steps. When he died the members of the

organizing group, knowing his reputation for sanctity, went to his intercession asking that more pupils would be registered. Within a short time a good number of new pupils signed up, ensuring the school's future.



None of the initiatives described here would have been able to get off the ground without the generous assistance of many people from a wide variety of backgrounds, religions, races, and economic situations. Today they rely on the help of foundations, non-governmental agencies, and private organizations. Anyone who wants to know more about any of these initiatives or to offer a donation can visit the web address provided or contact the Opus Dei Information Office in the country concerned.