

Visionary Leadership Best Practices Recognition

Diana Nijboer

Education- LATAM Region

Congratulations!

The Frost & Sullivan Institute is proud to honor Diana Nijboer with this prestigious recognition for her exceptional foresight and innovative solutions to global Education challenges. Her visionary leadership continues to inspire transformative change and advance a more sustainable future for all.

David Frigstad

Chairman, Frost & Sullivan
Executive Director, Frost & Sullivan Institute

Why Us?

Frost & Sullivan Institute recognizes leaders who not only achieve commercial success but also drive meaningful change across environmental, social, and technological domains. Our evaluation is backed by decades of industry expertise, global research, and a commitment to fostering leadership that creates inclusive and sustainable futures.

Why Now?

Education systems across Latin America are at a critical inflection point, where access to schooling has improved, yet meaningful learning outcomes remain uneven and deeply stratified. In Brazil, children growing up in favelas encounter layered challenges that extend far beyond the classroom. Exposure to violence, chronic stress, and socio-economic instability significantly affects cognitive development and the ability to engage in structured learning. These conditions directly contribute to what global education discourse now defines as "learning poverty," where students may be enrolled in school but lack foundational competencies and future-ready skills. At the same time, the demands of a rapidly evolving digital economy are reshaping the purpose of education itself. Systems are no longer expected to deliver only literacy and numeracy, but also critical thinking, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and cross-cultural awareness. However, traditional public education models, particularly in resource-constrained environments, struggle to integrate these dimensions, creating a widening gap between schooling and real-world preparedness. Diana Nijboer's work emerges precisely at this intersection. Through EduMais, she addresses not only educational access but the underlying cognitive, emotional, and environmental constraints that prevent learning itself, positioning her approach as highly relevant to the current global education transition toward equity, resilience, and future-readiness.

About Frost & Sullivan Institute

The Frost & Sullivan Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to leveraging business practices to address global priorities. Our mission "Innovating to Zero" focuses on driving innovations that eliminate critical challenges such as carbon emissions, food and water scarcity, poor healthcare access, and digital exclusion.

Visionary Leadership

Diana's leadership is distinguished by her recognition that learning outcomes in vulnerable environments cannot be separated from lived experience. Rather than replicating traditional academic support models, she has built EduMais around a trauma-informed, behavior-centered learning framework, integrating methodologies such as Positive Discipline and UERÉ (designed for conflict-affected children).

Her leadership translates into a model that operates at three interconnected levels:

1. Psychological readiness to learn (addressing trauma and emotional regulation)
2. Skill-based education delivery (digital literacy, English, entrepreneurship)
3. Community integration (family engagement, local partnerships)

This perspective aligns closely with the Frost & Sullivan Institute's emphasis on rethinking education through a systems lens, where innovation lies not only in curriculum design but in redefining how learning ecosystems function. Nijboer's ability to combine psychological insight, community engagement, and structured program delivery reflects a form of leadership that is both adaptive and deeply contextual, enabling sustained impact in environments where conventional models often fail.

Recognition Criteria

- Innovation:** Through EduMais, Diana advances an integrated education model that combines socio-emotional learning with future-oriented skill development for children in vulnerable environments. By embedding trauma-informed methodologies such as Positive Discipline and the UERÉ approach, it addresses cognitive and behavioral barriers that directly impact learning readiness. Simultaneously, the inclusion of digital literacy, English language training, and creative disciplines such as web and game design aligns with evolving workforce demands. This dual approach responds to the growing need for education systems to cultivate critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and adaptability, ensuring that underserved students are equipped not only for academic success but also for long-term participation in a dynamic global economy.
- Implementation:** EduMais operates a community-embedded model within underserved favelas in Rio de Janeiro, including Pavão-Pavãozinho, Cantagalo, and Tabajaras, delivering structured programs five days a week. Supported by 15 to 25 active volunteers daily, the organization ensures consistent engagement and personalized learning support while maintaining a cost-efficient structure. Its programs are designed to complement formal schooling by addressing gaps in individualized attention, socio-emotional support, and skills development. Continuous monitoring of student progress enables adaptive program delivery and sustained effectiveness. This localized yet scalable approach demonstrates how community-driven models can expand access to quality education without reliance on heavy infrastructure investment.
- Impact:** Through EduMais, Diana reaches over 350 students weekly through six structured programs that integrate academic support, digital skills, and personal development, all provided free of charge to eliminate financial barriers. Its expansion across multiple favelas reflects growing accessibility and replicability. Beyond scale, the organization reports improvements in students' behavioral regulation, focus, and engagement, key factors linked to stronger learning outcomes. Research on Brazil's education system highlights the importance of socio-emotional support in improving attainment among disadvantaged students. EduMais contributes to long-term resilience, employability, and social mobility through holistic learning interventions.

Key Accomplishments

Holistic Education Model Development:

Established EduMais as a platform that integrates academic support, socio-emotional learning, and mentorship to address multiple dimensions of student development.

Expansion of Access to Quality Education:

Enabled underserved children and youth to access structured learning opportunities beyond formal schooling systems.

Community-Centered Approach:

Built strong engagement with families and local stakeholders, ensuring sustainability and cultural relevance of programs.

Youth Empowerment and Skill Development:

Equipped students with critical life skills, confidence, and adaptability needed for future academic and professional success.

Reduction in Educational Inequality:

Contributed to narrowing gaps in learning outcomes and opportunities for marginalized populations.

Scalable Program Design:

Developed adaptable education models that can be replicated across diverse regions and communities.

Focus on Socio-Emotional Learning:

Prioritized mental well-being, resilience, and personal growth as core components of education delivery.

Conclusion

At the Frost & Sullivan Institute, a central challenge we have identified within global education systems is the inability to translate access into meaningful, future-ready outcomes, particularly in high-risk, underserved environments. Diana's work through EduMais directly responds to this need by integrating trauma-informed learning with future-oriented skill development. Her model tackles both mental well-being and workforce readiness, while supporting diverse learning needs in underserved communities. Her approach stands out for unifying emotional resilience, skills training, and academic support into a scalable, community-based framework. EduMais demonstrates how holistic education models can operate effectively in resource-constrained environments while delivering measurable outcomes. This holistic approach addresses multiple Socratic questions simultaneously, demonstrating how education systems in underserved contexts can integrate trauma-informed care, mental health support, and workforce-aligned skill development to strengthen student well-being, resilience, and long-term economic mobility. In recognizing Diana as a Visionary Leader, we are not only acknowledging the impact of her work within Brazilian communities but also highlighting a model that is capable of informing the future direction of education systems worldwide.

"Diana Nijboer has reimagined education by recognizing that meaningful learning cannot be separated from emotional well-being and lived experience. Through a deeply human-centered approach, she has created pathways for resilience, future-ready skills, and long-term opportunity for children growing up in some of the most vulnerable environments."

- Samyuktha Nair, Research Analyst, Frost & Sullivan Institute

Innovation Focus

- Redefining Education through Holistic Learning Ecosystems:** She has advanced a shift from traditional, curriculum-bound education to a holistic model that integrates academic, emotional, and social development. By addressing multiple dimensions of learning, her approach enhances both educational outcomes and personal growth.
- Bridging Systemic Gaps through Community Engagement:** Through EduMais, she has demonstrated how community participation can strengthen education delivery, ensuring relevance, inclusivity, and sustainability. This aligns with Frost & Sullivan's emphasis on collaborative, ecosystem-driven innovation.
- Scaling Inclusive Education Models for Long-Term Impact:** Her work highlights the importance of scalable, adaptable frameworks that can be implemented across diverse contexts. By combining structured programming with local ownership, she has created a replicable model for advancing education equity in emerging markets.

