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This month's focus: Commemorative Issue



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- Sample Awards & Fellowships - Dr. Robledo Montecel

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Commemorative Issue

A Tribute to Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel - Crossing Borders with Faith, Courage, Insight & Persistence

by Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

This commemorative Issue of the IDRA newsletter celebrates the incredible work of IDRA President & CEO, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel as she is set to retire in January of 2019. Aurelio M. Montemayor's tribute to Cuca covers her life and work crossing borders and finding her place at familial, cultural, socioeconomic, educational, religious and professional crossroads.



Border crossing has permeated and strengthened Cuca's professional work. Research, policy and practice are usually kept separate and, when advocated by groups, are seen as domains that don't easily connect - not so under Cuca's leadership.

Upon Dr. José A. Cárdenas' retirement in 1992, Cuca merited the position and has been President & CEO of IDRA for over 26 years - a major border to cross. Her leadership has allowed IDRA to flourish as an organization, particularly in seven milestones: non-profit management, dropout prevention, attrition studies, fair school funding, systems change, families and communities, and English learner education. As she now crosses the border from president to president emeritus, she leaves an inspiring legacy.

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Commencement Address - Our Lady of the Lake University, May 7, 2015

by María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

This article is a reprinting of Dr. Robledo Montecel's commencement address to the 2015 graduating class of Our Lady of the Lake University. In it, she revisits some major milestones in her own life, crossing borders and eventually finding a sense of belonging.

As she states, "In fact, looking on it now, I would describe my life as standing at the intersection of ever-expanding circles of 'being home.' At any one time in the story of my life, I experience belonging in spaces that are known and those that are unknown, in the places where I am told that I belong and in the places where I am told that I do not."

She encourages the graduating students to always pursue their own sense of belonging, especially in spaces where they are told that they do not belong.



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Three Decades of Groundbreaking Dropout Research - Reflections by Dr. Robledo Montecel, An Excerpt

by Bricio Vasquez, Ph.D.

Dr. Vasquez collects highlights from Dr. Robledo Montecel's thoughts on IDRA's decades of research on attrition in Texas public schools. Dr. Robledo Montecel has had the benefit of overseeing IDRA's groundbreaking attrition study and the effects that actionable knowledge can have on an entire population.



IDRA's first dropout study broke ground in the state - it was unlike any other analysis published at the time and in its beginning stages, the study led to real attempts at change on the part of the state. The Texas legislature passed a measure specifically targeting the issue of attrition in House Bill 1010 that required dropout data be collected by school districts and reported to TEA.

The years after changed the conversation among Texas schools and leadership - toward a justification of the data rather than a utilization of it to actively help students succeed. Dr. Robledo Montecel concludes that, in the future, we must look at meeting the promises we make to children and meeting the promises that we make to each other as a country, about what we stand for in the work of enacting meaningful change in education that leaves no student behind.

[See the IDRA Texas Public School Attrition Study 2017-18](#)

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Dear colleagues, partners and friends: Greetings and abrazos -

A letter from Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel

by María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

Dr. Robledo Montecel directly addresses readers in this brief letter about her retirement and her thoughts on IDRA and the next stage of her professional life. The organization is in an excellent position to continue its mission to achieve equal educational opportunity for all students.

Cuca leaves her position as President & CEO of IDRA to Celina Moreno, J.D., in February of 2019, and she will continue to work so that IDRA leverages its national voice for action and change in ways that benefit all children and with initiatives that are well-funded and sustainable over time.



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Special Features

[The Quotable Dr. Robledo Montecel](#)

[A Collection of Thanks and Farewells](#)

[Sample Publications Written and Co-written by Dr. Robledo Montecel](#)

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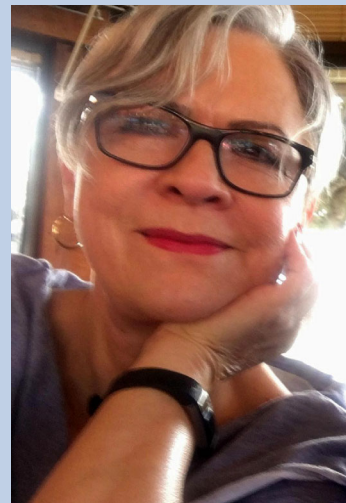
Dear Children - A Letter

by María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

We see you. We value you. We cherish you.

We promise to provide you an opportunity to learn in your own neighborhood with caring and qualified teachers. We promise you a curriculum that truly prepares you for college, in an environment that respects you and values you and your background. We promise to engage you - not only academically - but as an active part of the community and life of school. And we promise to support the commitment of your parents to high quality education.

We promise to your families and communities... unwaveringly, we stand with you. Together, we will work fiercely to assure that youth, families and communities are heard - not as problems - but as partners in creating strong and vibrant schools. We promise to work with teachers and principals and superintendents and school boards to prepare all students so that we can all



live in an America that keeps its promises to justice and opportunity. And we promise to tell the truth. We will share what we see honestly - to promote good and just public policy.

- María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.
Letter originally printed in the 2016 IDRA Annual Report

[SEE LETTER ONLINE](#)



See our video slideshow with photos from this commemorative issue of the IDRA Newsletter.

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Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute™



Save the Date: April 5, 2019!

Set your budget now to make sure your group of parents are able to join us!

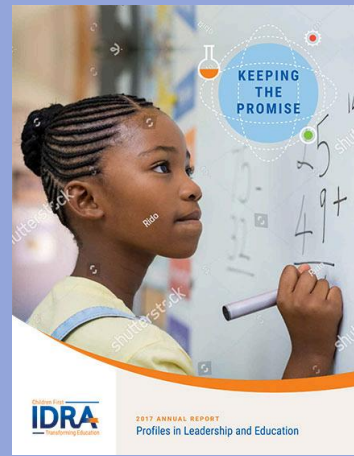
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IDRA Annual Report Available

Keeping the Promise - Profiles in Leadership and Education

IDRA's annual report for 2017, **Keeping the Promise: Profiles in Leadership and Education**, features leaders in education, family, community and youth - Jacquelyn Carter Thigpen; Alexander Yang; Gregory Rivers; Eva Carranza and her daughter Andrea; Linda Darling-Hammond; and Tery Medina.

The report tells how their commitment to keeping the promise of quality public education for all children has been woven into their paths and how they work with a community of partners and colleagues to keep this promise.



November-December 2018

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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.