



**The *Executive Seminar*
Defining the “Good Society”
Aspen Colorado
July 22-27, 2007**

The *Executive Seminar* Summary

The Central America Leadership Initiative – which is modeled after the Aspen Institute’s Henry Crown Fellowship Program and the Africa Leadership Initiative – is a joint venture between the Aspen Institute, INCAE of Costa Rica, FUNDEMAS of El Salvador and TechnoServe. Using the Aspen Institute’s text based approach and moderating methodology, its goal is to create a new generation of values-based leaders in the region. (See Attachment A for a description of the full program).

Just four months after their first seminar – *The Challenge of Leadership*, the second class of Central American Leadership Initiative Fellows, self named *Calidos* (a play on words meaning both warm blooded and CALI II), comprised of 20 highly accomplished leaders from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama, gathered for the second time for the second in a series of four seminars – *The Executive Seminar, Defining the “Good Society”* – from July 22-27, 2007 at the Aspen Institute in Aspen, Colorado. While the Initiative’s first seminar, held in March 2007, focused on the principles of effective, enlightened leadership, the *Executive Seminar* focused on the components that make up a “good society.”



This second meeting was moderated by Peter Reiling, Executive Vice President for International and Policy Programs at the Aspen Institute; Stace Lindsay, Former Vice President for the OTF Group and TechnoServe Board Member; Harry W. Strachan, a Founder of the Initiative, and Maria Eugenia Brizuela, president of Banco Salvadoreo. During this *Executive Seminar*, Fellows were prompted to consider those societal values they deem most important, and the trade-offs they are willing to make in seeking a good

and just society. Fellows read and engaged in animated dialogue on the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, William Graham Sumner, Friedrich Hayek, Ibn Khaldun, Milton Friedman, Thomas Jefferson, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Simon Bolivar, Harriet Taylor Mill, and Karl Marx, among others. They also performed *Antigone*, the classic tale of leadership and hubris by Sophocles. All members of the group returned for the second seminar, except for three who had extenuating medical or professional circumstances. Even so, the group maintained a good balance, which provided an opportunity for Fellows to deepen the bonds of trust they began to develop during the first seminar.

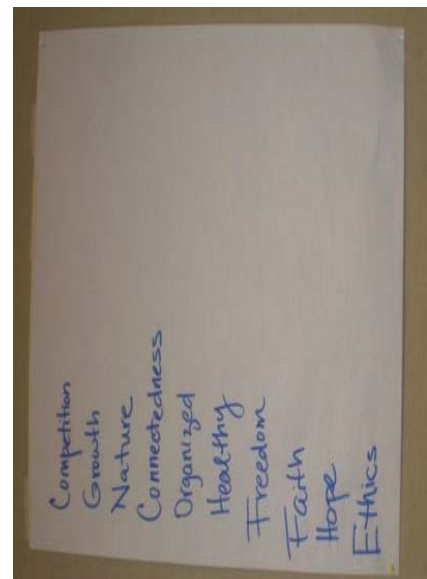
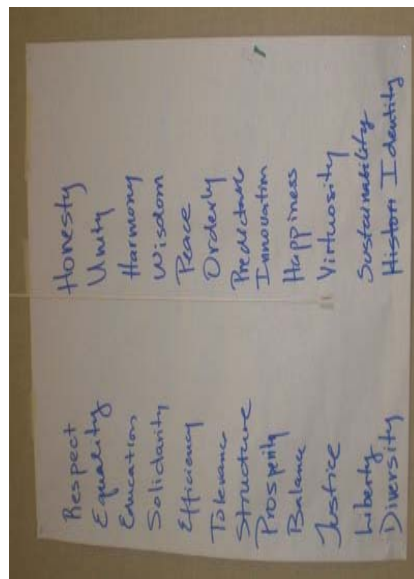
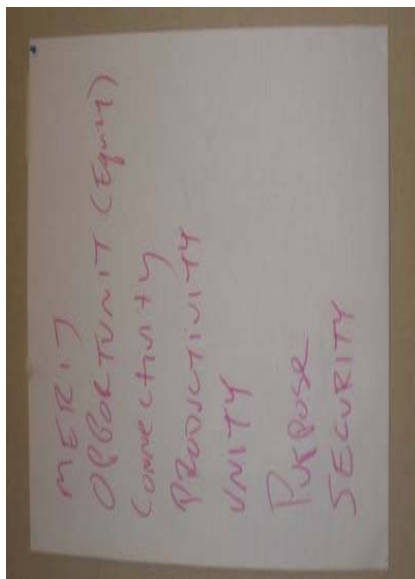
This second group of CALI Fellows is having a measurable and positive impact in the countries and communities where they live. Indeed many reported progress in their leadership commitments; most confessed they plan to make changes in their professional and/or personal lives as a direct result of the Executive Seminar; several have initiated their leadership projects ahead of schedule and are reporting progress; and they have all worked on more clearly articulating their vision of a good society.

CALI is a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network comprised of 600 Fellows from 26 countries. Fellows from all six Central American countries – Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama are represented in CALI. Fellows are already very successful entrepreneurial individuals from the business, non-profit/civil society and government sectors who are committed to civic involvement and values based leadership.

The Executive Seminar

Day I

Moderator Stace Lindsay launched discussion with a brainstorming session on what the Fellows consider to be elements of a good society and attributes of a good leader. The attributes they listed were: (See Attachment B for the full list).



Check-in

After Fellows voiced their aspirations for a good leader, the moderators moved to the “check-in” session – a tradition at each gathering in which the Fellows update the group on their personal and professional accomplishments and failures, and the progress and setbacks since the last meeting, including any actions taken as a result of the seminar. Several Fellows reported they started refocusing their energies on striking a balance between their professional and personal lives. A number of Fellows had already taken concrete steps towards a “good society”:

- One Fellow started to become more involved in charitable activities.
- Another Fellow is trying to embrace the lessons learned at the CALI seminars to apply them to the real world.
- Another Fellows started working with the new candidate for the Presidency of Honduras.
- One Fellow reported an internal change inspired by the first seminar. Before, a compulsive perfectionist, now she is trying to enjoy life more. She is more concentrated on the pursuing happiness, instead of being focused on the problems.
- One announced his candidacy for Mayor of Guatemala. He confessed that CALI has strengthened his capacity to choose what messages to sell, and how to communicate them.
- Another Fellows devised a strategy to make his boss understand that things needed to change in the company and that they needed new faces in strategic board positions.
- One Fellow is struggling with the idea of moving from success to significance, and is trying to find solutions to obstacles that the government places.
- A Fellow decided to take a new job opportunity at United Nation’s World Tourism Organization. While this meant leaving behind the company she had co-founded with her best friend, it also meant being able to make more direct contributions to her country.
- Worried about properly training her employees, one Fellow has worked hard to create a good team of skilled workers.
- Another Fellow had a complete change of heart as a direct result of the first seminar. She gathered all her employees and decided to share with them some of the benefits she enjoyed like social security, higher payments, and a vacation system.
- One Fellow reported launching new projects in the magazine she works for, including a social and education section. “*A society that thinks and continues to learn is the society of the future*”, she stated.
- One other Fellow has decided to be less selfish. Moving towards that direction, he has implemented the first year of funds in his company to give back incentives to his employees. “*I have learned that personal sacrifice is crucial to building the future of our country and our region*”, he declared. The same Fellow is now shopping for his first baby.
- Another Fellow is helping build the ideal community, with sustainable architecture and organic plants.

- A Fellow from Costa Rica is making an effort to help develop rural sectors in her country, by implementing cultural policies and sustainable strategies.
- One began an aggressive growing plan to expand his business and has already received three offers to buy his business. The same Fellow is working with a foundation that helps train communities in need to kick-start their own businesses.
- Another Fellow refocused his energies on spending more time with his family. He is also working on building a “talent factory”, sending 150 people from Guatemala to get their masters or doctorates abroad for one, and encouraging them to come back to their country to implement what they have learned.
- With his period as President of the Panama’s Chamber of Commerce ending, one Fellow is working hard to transition back to his family business, where he will assume the role of President. *“The good thing is that I now have more time to spend with my family”*, he stated.
- One Fellow is trying to connect more with the community: he is getting more involved with employees, and is starting to do more pro-bono work.
- Another Fellow has lowered his ratings as teacher for trying to juggle many things at once. His boss has also raised the bar at work and he is excited to tackle the challenge.
- One Fellow is trying to humanize his life by incorporating more passionate things into his routine.

Following the “check-in” session, President of the Aspen Institute, Walter Isaacson addressed the Fellows and invited them, not only to get involved in the problems of their region, but to become a part of the whole Aspen Global Leadership Network, composed of environmental committees, groups in Africa, cultural programs, among many others.

After his invitation the Fellows jumped right into the first session on *“The Good Life Well Lived”* with Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics and Rhetoric*. They debated Aristotle’s definition of happiness, the concept of honor and the idea of excellence. They concluded that to achieve happiness one must find their craft and perform it with wisdom.

Moderator Harry W. Strachan prompted discussion by inviting Fellow to consider Aristotle in terms of Christianity. *“To live a good life is to define what your art is and pursue it. Or maybe it is to find a balance between what is important and what is not as important”*, he said.

“Happiness is not as black and white. Happiness is a process of learning. And it is in that evolution itself that happiness is found”, summarized one Fellow. Another argued, *“The goal is to create a good society, one in which we all contribute in different ways according to the Aristotelian mean: all things in moderation.”*

“But there are trade offs”, moderator Stace Lindsay stated after the exercise. *“What is truly significant in building a good society is how to make the right choices, to pick and to choose.”*

The first day of seminar ended early, and Fellows were encouraged to use the afternoon

to get to know the town of Aspen. For dinner Fellows were invited to dinner at Catto Center at Toklat. Great locally cooked food, traditional hospitality, and a beautiful natural setting amid the woods accompanied attendees.

Day II

The first full day began with the moderator Peter Reiling's introduction of James O'Toole's *The Executive Compass*, which he explained is centered around four key elements: liberty, equality, community and efficiency, and the tensions and trade-offs that exist between them. These are the concepts that will be further analyzed and explored in detail throughout the seminar.

"The readings that will be examined ahead have a very explicit point of view", explained Reiling, "The texts are very radical. The thinkers are almost a caricature. But this seminar is really about moving within the spectrum and negotiating the concepts and ideas."

Liberty

Stace Lindsay then turned the attention to Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, asking Fellows the question, *"What is the natural condition of mankind according to Hobbes?"* *"To be competitive, greedy and selfish",* one Fellow summarized.

The Fellows then focused on Hobbes's concept of *"the basic equality of all men"*. Fellows agreed equality exists only when people are happy with what they have. *"The problem is that this state of felicity does not last long as humans start to desire what others have. And here is when true conflicts begins",* said one Fellow. It is as Hobbes himself explains, *"Every man is enemy to every man."* *"We are animals, and we act as animals. It is survival of the fittest at the end. We will fight to gain our territory, we will fight to defend it, and we will then fight to preserve it",* one Fellow described passionately.

In turn, Hobbes calls for a system of governance with rules and sanctions to keep men safe from each other.

Then, Lindsay asked Fellows the question, *"What is life like for the average man?"* One Fellow answered, *"It is the end of the world. It is to live in a war zone. The life of the average man is to lock his doors, and to live in constant state of lookout."* Another Fellow disagreed, *"It seems to me that Hobbes ignores that man's natural state is collaboration. That is why we have the United Nations."*

At the end, the Fellows concluded, that for Hobbes, the trade-off is one of freedom and liberty for security.

Next Fellows moved to John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government (b)*, Chapter V, which focuses on individual property and manifest destiny. For Locke, individuals are

entitled to own their private property as long as they work hard to earn it, and as long as they use only what they need.

But the author's assumption "*labor belongs to you*" and "*there is enough for everybody*", was contested by many. One Fellow inquired, "*What happens with corporations when other peoples labor becomes someone else's private property?*" The problem, Fellows concludes, is that now there is labor, capital and intellectual property, which complicate things.

One Fellow deeply concerned expressed, "*What happens in our region is that there is no good distribution of property, which in turn creates a massive gap – a class of entrepreneurs that fight to keep the monopoly and a resentful class of that feels that there are no limits to private property and that there is no equal distribution.*" Another Fellow confessed, "*We are being hipocrites. We have more clothes than we really need, we have more food than we really need, and we don't give it to others. And not only that but we would be outraged if someone else took it from us.*"

One Fellow questioned Locke's validity today by arguing, "*We have to deal with a Chavez that is appropriating land. Taking away private property to distribute to the "people". This changes everything.*"

Afterwards, Reiling began discussion of Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies*, perhaps one of the most encouraging debates of the seminar. Fellows were asked the question, "*What kind of leader do you need in the region?*" "*Someone who is willing to empower people from different sectors*", one Fellow answered. Another one addressed the question by stating, "*The problem is the issue of corruption. We need a leader who is honest and who will not stand for corruption.*" "*We need a visionary*", said a Fellow. Another answered, "*We need a leader that knows that government alone cannot function. Someone that recognizes that all sectors need to work together.*" "*We need a leader that invests more on education*" and "*We need someone who is a conciliator*", were among some of the answers.

Fellows then discussed Popper's perception that leaders are never above average and cannot be trusted, and thus institutions need to be strengthened to keep rulers in check. Fellows applied Popper's ideal society to the circumstances of the region:

"We need a system where there are counter institutions", "a strong private sector that can speak up", "a good constitution", "free press", "a constitutional court that guarantees rights", "a Judicial system, the Executive system and the Legislative system that works above corruption", "an educated population", "the willingness to do the right thing", and "the smallest government possible".

Fellows concluded that Popper's principle of preparing for the worst is certainly very expensive and complicated but it surely protects bad leaders from destroying countries. On the flip side, it also does not allow good leaders to do anything.

The next readings, Ibn Khaldun's *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* and Milton Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom*, both argue for economic liberalism. Both are concerned about economic and political freedom, and both agree government should not interfere with economic activity. Their argument is that the only way to create markets is to have people who can buy and produce.

Khaldun's piece, specifically, is about respect for private property. Fellows shared their own personal experiences having property expropriated from them. *"Rulers need poverty to rule. They don't live for the poor but from the poor. We are now leaving in an era of "extortion", where someone can eradicate your construction license if you don't give them a percentage of the earning"*, one Fellow shared.

Many Fellows aligned with Friedman's views on individual freedom, decentralization of power and a free market system. *"With economic and individual freedom there really is no discrimination"*, expressed one Fellow. But other Fellows worried if Friedman's message was a catalyst for anarchism. In defense, one Fellow argued, *"He [Friedman] is against government control but he is not against government all together. Government is needed for the preservation of freedom. Your right ends where the right of the other starts."* *"He is not an anarchist"*, voiced another Fellow, *"He is for government, but a very small very limiting government that steps in when monopoly or externalities occur."*

"If Friedman were alive today", one Fellow pondered, *"He would be against Panama's decision of giving \$35 dollars to impoverished families only if they send their children to school and get vaccinated."*

Moving ahead, Harry W. Strachan jumped started discussion of Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, which makes a case against economic planning. In Hayek's good society, the rule of law should do no more than provide guide posts for people to follow, not deliberately tell them which path to take. In addition, Hayek believes that government is not in a better position than the individual to create economic regulation laws, since they do not plan for long term. Fellows agreed with Hayek stating that laws that are made for specific parts of the population or a certain industry are simply wrong, especially when the umpire becomes beneficial of his decisions. This directly reminded them of Chavez and his regulation laws that are supposedly designed to better the poor and take away from the rich. Fellows expressed they disliking for such a way of ruling siding with Hayek's ideal society.

Moderator Mayu Brizuela then introduced William Graham Sumner's *The Challenge of Facts*, which view of a good society is one that promotes industry, self-sufficiency, conscientiousness and discretion, and where work is not a right but an obligation showing little remorse for those who cannot manage to work hard.

But many in the group rejected Sumner's argument, as one Fellow phrased it, *"In our countries 50% of children suffer from chronic malnutrition. How can we ask them to compete? They are already trapped in a circle of disadvantage."* *"And even if we all had equal access to capital"*, another Fellows added, *"There is still competition and scarcity*

of resources, and this is what creates the social problem.”

The criticisms continued, *“What happens in our countries is that not everyone can move ahead”*, one Fellow added. Another Fellow agreed, *“In our countries we are in a terrible situation with equality of law. Someone that has influence is better off”*. Or in the case of one Nicaraguan Fellow, *“There is the attitude of: “I will make profit from the government” and people abusing power.”* One Fellow pointed out, *“In Panama we have progress: Newspapers announcing that the richest bank in Panama is building a massive construction project. Yes, we are building progress, but what we don’t realize is that this progress is inflicting on the social space.”* In the end, Fellow’s agreed that Sumner’s arguments were too extreme and not feasible in the Central American region.

Equality

Shifting to the other way of the spectrum the Fellows studied Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*, whose basic premise is underlined by the question: Is it necessary to give up some liberty in order to enjoy security and equality? Rousseau’s prescribes a system in which every man is born free, yet every man wears chains. His basic framework for democracy is one in which each citizen must sacrifice a part of their individual right for the greater good.

“This is not a model that happens in any of our societies. Women are the head of the family, there are multiple fathers, and 20% of Panamanians are married. In our society women are responsible to take care of work and their children and men are just there to bring in monetary aid”, articulated a Panamanian Fellow.

One Fellow expressed her deep disliking for Rousseau’s depiction of the slave man, *“A lot of people are living in poverty and the thing we can do is remind them that there are other ways of living. Remind people that everyone is precious inside. For me, everyone is amazing inside. There is richness inside everybody. So for me Rousseau’s text was upsetting.”* But another Fellow explained, *“To be a slave is a mental condition and not a physical condition. You can be rich and still be a enslaved, immersed with the comforts around you and blind to the social realities of your time.”*

One Fellow questioned the effectiveness of Rousseau’s foundation of democracy, *“It is a bit utopian. In his perfect society, we all have to be perfect and we all have to agree to the social contract for it to work. It disregards human imperfection. Life is not like that.”*

Another Fellow defended Rousseau’s contract saying, *“It is against the monarchy, kings, and tyrants; against individualism, and slavery.”*

The theme of equality was also discussed in the frame of gender relations in Harriet Taylor Mill’s text, *The Enfranchisement of Women*. *“Today’s challenges for women focus on the liberty to chose. A woman can choose what is more relevant for her, whether it is business, family, or both. And in the same manner women have changed, men have changed also. There should be no judgement but more liberty to choose”*, expressed one

Fellow.

“I am well aware of the stereotypes attached to women in politics nowadays. I am conscious of the fact that I am often the only woman in meetings”, pointed out one Fellow politician.

And while Fellows expressed the importance of gender equality and equality of opportunity, one Fellow proclaimed, *“Spaces for women should not be given out for free, they should be earned. They must be granted not because we are women but because we deserve the position. This is the only way we will be respected.”*

And then, Fellows addressed the problem of gender relations in the Central America region. One Fellow pointed out, *“In Guatemala, the first problem with indigenous women is believing they can make it. Empowering them is the first fight.”* Another Fellow confessed that in Honduras, *“There are domestic violence laws that only apply to women and now men are being discriminated.”* Fellows agreed that the issue is not one of legal access but about how many models and social networks there are empowering and educating people. *“It is about affirmative action”,* one Fellow concluded.

Horace Mann’s *The Importance of Universal, Free, Public Education* followed, which highlights the inequality between capital and labor and the growth of urban centers. Mann also emphasizes the importance of education as an equalizer. An animated discussion of the text took place:

“As an environmentalist I have thought about the high population density. Overpopulation erodes democracy and prompts inequality.”

“I am not satisfied with the education system in our countries. Our challenge is the legal access. It is not just ability to enter, it is about the equality of experience and the equality of quality of education.” *“We need the initiative of the private sector to improve the quality of education”,* suggested one Fellow.

“What we should do is shape values. It is not enough to have all the schools and all the computers. Access is not what’s important. We must focus on integration and making sure people fit in and feel they belong.”

“I worry about Panama’s condition. There is zero political will to change the education system. We have a Minister of Education that doesn’t know how to talk, and a country bombarded by Colombians, Venezuelans, and real state developments. It is truly shameful.”

“There is an important transition step between high school and university, and there is a crucial role to be played by the private sector in this regard. They [the private sector] should indicate what they need and what they are looking for in order to create programs and build curriculums centered around these needs.”

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx stressed the importance of self-determination in a good society. The Fellows then set out to find key point in the text that represented problems that still hold true in the Central American region, such as the historic class struggles, the role of education, bringing people to the cities, the concern for sustainability and other long-term goals.

Fellows also argued that Marx's prescription of a good society goes against basic human nature and the need for incentives, adding, *"If you take away the rewards you create mediocrity. People need to feel shortages to do what is necessary for society."* Another pointed out another flaw with the Manifesto, *"The system doesn't allow individualism. It does not allow for individual ideas, goals, and beliefs."*

Another Fellow expressed his doubts about Marx's proposal, *"The Manifesto is irrelevant today. Now, we have public companies and stock option plans where everybody is an owner and everybody is a worker. Even giant corporations are owned by many, and their CEOs are also workers who gets hired and fired."*

One of the most liked readings of the bunch was Arthur M. Okun's *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*, for its promotion of equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome. Okun examines the various intellectual influences that have predisposed equality and efficiency, laying out wonderful metaphors for society, *"the world is a giant vending machine"*. He condemns what he calls inefficient rights, such as social security, public education, the police and fire department, environmental regulations, among others. And his formula for a good society is to let markets work alongside active government public policies, like progressive taxation, transfer programs and incentives.

Fellows aligned with Okun's text from the start. They said it brought them closer to the realities of today. *"It is not just efficient to have access to food and housing. You need access to get out of poverty, a network that helps you incorporate"*, expressed one Fellow.

Moderator Peter Reiling set of an experiment to discover how much leakage the Fellows were willing to accept in the bucket metaphor. While the majority of Fellows agreed they would tolerate up to a 60% leakage on their bucket, one Fellow surprised the group by confessing that she would be willing to accept a 99% leakage, *"As long as 1% gets used for good, it was worth it."* In defense, another Fellow ranted, *"If we all have the mentality of measuring how much money is going to leak, no one is going to donate anything."* Other Fellows disagreed with the idea of giving out money all together, *"The poor man gets used to being a beggar. I would be more willing to give if I knew we were also teaching them how to fish. We must create a more sustainable government, one that not only gives but teaches."*

Day III

Community

On the second day of the seminar, the Fellows moved to the topic of community, where they discussed Thomas Jefferson's *The Merits of Agriculture*, a promotion of an agrarian way of life. Fellows in favor of Jefferson's motto proclaimed that, "*I am in favor of agriculture because it stops urban migration and promotes self-sustainability.*" Another Fellow suggested, "*If a person works with nature, with his hands he is less tempted to be involved in corruption with the government.*"

But other Fellows questioned the effectiveness of Jefferson's model claiming that, "*Even though we have land reform in El Salvador. The reality is that there is not enough land for all the "campesinos". They have to move to the cities or move to the United States illegally.*" Another skeptic argued, "*It [the text] is very romantic. But it is very idealistic. People don't want to live in agriculture. Costa Ricans don't want to be in agriculture. Besides, it is a lot easier to get people access to education and health services if they are in the city.*" One other Fellow continued the idea, "*The trend for people all over the world is to move out of agriculture. People prefer to be in the cities. Jefferson's argument looks like communism. It goes against the global trends that are inevitable.*"

At the end, Fellows agreed that the way to address the problems with agriculture was to rethink the ways in which people relate and connect with the land. As one Fellow phrased it, "*Our challenge is to become efficient. When you respect the land, and when you become aware of the environment, that is when the market gets stronger.*"

Silent Spring, by Rachel Carson, warns against the perils of an efficiency-driven state in relation to the environment. The text also addresses the issue of the unintended consequences of man and science. "*This reading resonated so close to home*", one Fellow confessed. "*In Panama the issue of the environment is so strong. The government is unconcerned about it. And not only the government, but also the people who have power to do something about it are unconcerned. Nobody is really caring. Nobody is really doing anything about it.*"

But some Fellows disagreed. One stated, "*I think there is a lot more consciousness, a lot more activism in society, and a lot more people complaining and demonstrating that we have to do something about it.*" In support, another Fellow pointed out, "*Although there are many critics of the Al Gore documentary, the film has proven to be an effective mechanism to raise awareness. And that is the key to success, to find a way to communicate the issues, especially to a younger generation.*"

The discussion also centered on Carson's concern for the impact of pesticide on animals and plants. As one Fellow noted, "*We are truly changing the agriculture industry because we are providing a middle ground – using pesticides and organic products. We are reaching a middle ground.*"

In E.F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, the author takes part on the policy of economic growth and human greed. His argument: if everyone were to make do with less, there would be enough for everybody. One Fellow asserted,

“A materialistic, greedy, envious way of living does not bring happiness.”

But other Fellows objected Schumacher’s premise, claiming that, *“It is not possible to have enough for everybody. There is not enough to meet everyone’s greed, not need.”* The group then discussed the issue of needs, and the difficulties of drawing limits to these needs, *“When is it too much? When have we gone too far?”*

Other comments criticized the author’s disregard for a reward system. *“I am against Schumacher’s claim that all incentives are greedy. I don’t think an incentive to improve is greedy. This can be true at times, but it is not always the rule.”*

Through Plato’s creation of a hypothetical state, *The Republic* (Book II), Fellows examined his theories on justice and human nature in the context of efficiency. Plato is all for government leaders determining the efficiency and capacity of production of the population. Fellows discussed the type of leaders and guardians needed for a perfect State. *“But not anyone can be a good guardian”,* one Fellow said. *“Members of this class must be carefully selected, well trained. Not everyone can do this job.”*

“The problem is when these guardians start doing crazy things, like in the case of Chavez, and nobody does anything about it”, one Fellow added. Another pointed out, *“Or like what is happening in Darfur. Nobody cares. Or at least nobody is doing anything to stop it. And worse, we have a country like China financing it.”*

Indeed, Plato’s excerpts also makes an argument for the need to put in check one’s own needs, wants and desires as it is the excesses of these needs wants and desires what drive people to war. One Fellow pointed out, *“In our countries we do have these wars, which are prompted by progress and development without social awareness, and by a State that does not set limits on growth without consciousness.”*

Like Plato, Simon Bolivar believes a leader is the guardian of the State. And in *The Angostura Address* he proposes a system that allows for continuity and heredity – a senate house: a leader, a House of Lords that lead with a long term vision, and an additional institution that focuses on morality and civic education. Bolivar believes that a country’s future should not be in the hands of one leader but in the body of politics and the successor.

Prompted by Bolivar’s ideals, moderator Mayu Brizuela asked Fellows, *“How will you as leaders unite Central America?”* One Fellow commented, *“We all have the same necessities. We all have external debt. But there is selfishness and lack of trust in our countries that unable us to work together.”* In agreement, another Fellow pointed, *“Costa Rica has an exemplary education model. Panama can provide a great banking and financial sector regulatory framework. But there is a lack of interest from each country to stop in chapters they have already overcome.”*

This problem also happens in the private sector, Fellows concluded. *“Delegating responsibilities is a question of trust. As CEOs we don’t trust that others are going to do*

the job well.”

And in reference to Bolivar’s State system, one Fellow said, *“I am attracted to Bolivar’s proposal. I just don’t like that it is hereditary-based. But we can create and hand-pick this political elite.”* But other Fellows rejected the model stating that, *“It is easy to make a republic, it is hard to make republicans”*. Another commented, *“You really have to believe what Popper was saying, we have to believe that the worst leaders might be selected.”*

Following the discussion, Fellows entered a debate on Friedrich List’s *The National System of Political Economy*. List’s good society is one in which the State protects its people through the implementation of tariffs, and people are willing to make sacrifices for the well being of the State. The model is not being correctly applied in the region, Fellows argued, *“We tend to have, maybe because of lack of institutions, a short term view, a short vision.”* Close to home, one Fellow commented, *“I see the need to make a Universal Republic in our own countries with the negotiations of our Free Trade Agreement Treaties.”*

Another obstacle in the way of List’s ideal society is the big identity change going on in the region. *“We have a very high percentage of immigration coming from all over the world. The media is taking a lot of images and cultural contents from everywhere and change is happening really fast, so fast that we don’t know how to manage it.”* Another Fellow pointed out, *“The masses fear that they will lose their cultural identity by merging with the global markets. So there is a huge resistance going on.”* One Fellow added, *“I think the most relevant issues now are our new integration vehicles: the Internet, facebook, my space, blackberries, and e-mail. So it is unrealistic to think we can prepare people for the massive changes that are occurring.”*

It is as moderator Stace Lindsay phrased, *“We have community in our hearts but then we are faced with reality and we are forced to face efficiency. The question is how do you get the benefits of prosperity without losing national identity?”* The question remains, *“What do we do as a nation in a globalized country, in a globalized region?”*

Discussion moved on with Peter Drucker’s *A Century of Social Transformation – Emergence of Knowledge Society and The Coming of Entrepreneurial Society*, a piece on the extraordinary rise of the knowledgeable blue collar worker in the 20th Century, due largely in part to the GI education bill for veterans. Fellows addressed some of the key components that are critical in a knowledge society, some of them being: organization, decentralized and unplanned innovation, the need for knowledge and the necessity to keep learning.

This led to a discussion of other communities in the rising. *“EBay is an example: a virtual marketplace that makes it possible for a small retailer to compete in a large market. Now its feasible to be a world competitor and you can sell it from your garage if you have a good Internet connection. It is a success because it’s more dependant on what you have in your head and not so much on capital.”*

Wrapping up, the moderator inspired Fellows with his closing thought, “Drucker made me more hopeful. It is in us, not in government, to do something about it. Learning is critical. Continual learning is critical. Innovative learning is indispensable. We have to start getting ready for multiple careers and multiple earning salaries. But this also means that you might lose your loyal employer because they are getting ready for multiple careers too.”

At night, Aspen Trustee Arjun Gupta invited Fellows for a dinner reception at his home, where Fellows had the opportunity to meet other Aspen Institute Trustees and Fellows from other Henry Crown programs, in particular the Liberty Fellows.

Day IV

At 6 a.m. Fellows gathered at the Lobby of the Aspen Meadows to catch a bus to Marron Bells – Colorado’s best-loved mountain trail – for spectacular three-hour hike. The panoramic view, the beautiful Alpine lakes, the quaking Aspen groves and the wildflower-sprinkled meadows made the experience that much more worthwhile.

Leadership Projects Mentors & Executive Compass

The fourth day started with moderators introducing and explaining to Fellows their expectations and guidelines to follow for the individual leadership projects, an essential component of the Fellowship experience. They allowed Fellows to provide feedback on the mentorship programs. Fellows agreed they are looking for: “a mentor that listens and is trustworthy”, “a mentor that gives questions, not advice”, “a mentorship experience where there is mutual respect and good communication”, “a mentor that believes in you, believes in your work, talent and capacity”, and “a mentor relation that shares some common values”. A Fellow even suggested that, “We can have mentors among ourselves [among CALI Fellows]”.

Peter Reiling then returned to James O’Tooles’ *The Executive Compass*, but this time Fellows had to make their own personal assessment of where they belonged in the spectrum; not only where Fellows asked to evaluate where they felt they fell on the compass, they also had to pin point where they were before the seminar, and where they aspired to be plotted in the future.

Answers were marked all over the four quadrants of the compass, as Fellows stepped up to the challenge. At the end of the exercise, Fellows all agreed the assignment helped inform the various mentalities that exist in the region, and the difficulty of coexisting with these differences.



Efficiency

The Fellows continued on with Plato's *The Republic (Book VII)*, epitomized by the cave metaphor, which illustrates the human potential for good and evil, and the capacity to learn and teach. Moderator Stace Lindsay chose the architect in the group to help draw Plato's cave, but all Fellows jumped to the challenge assisting the Fellow in deciphering the cave visually.



In decoding Plato's cave, Fellows concluded that the road to enlightenment is not a pleasant experience, *"We reject the light because it disorients us, because it is painful. We reject it as delusion, because we would rather be in denial than step out of our comfort zone."* "And even if we accept the light and accommodate to the new truth" another Fellow pointed out, *"there is the responsibility to go back to the dark cave to teach others who are blind what has*

been learned." And one Fellow added, *"And the challenge of going back to the cave is that darkness won't embrace you."*

Plato is a metaphor but the Fellow's stories are journeys of enlightenment. Some of the experiences collected:

"Plato reminds me of the gift that I have, and how it is always important to come back and educate. At the risk of having other people not understand what you are about. But it is a risk I want to take. I want to get out of my comfort zone. I want to go back to the cave. It is my responsibility", said one Fellow.

Another Fellow confessed, *"I went to the segregated "barrios" of Caracas. This was for me like going to the shadows. But talking to these people really changed my life. I few days later I told my boss I was quitting. This experience was much more meaningful to me than anything I had done in my job before."*

"I see Honduras as the cave and CALI as the light. And I fear to go back to darkness."

But not all Fellows embraced Plato's model. As one Fellow argued, *"One of my beliefs is that nobody is the owner of the truth. It really bothers me when others try to project their truths on me. I don't like fundamentalists."* Another Fellow added, *"I feel uncomfortable with imposing the truth. I can't tell people: "I've been to CALI, I know how it works". I*

don't want to become intolerant. I believe in dialogue."

Following this discussion, the Fellows undertook a flagship component of the *Executive Seminar*, with their presentation of Sophocles' *Antigone*. With only a few hours to rehearse in the course of the week, the Fellows pulled off one of the most creative and heartfelt performances the Aspen Institute has seen, coupled with superb costumes and staging. Afterwards they discussed the key lessons learned and the takeaways of the play, including the importance of putting people where they have the skills, the dangers of rigid and inflexible leadership, the setbacks of egotism in teamwork, and how the play reflects the problem of nepotism in Central America. *"There was chaos, because we are all leaders and we all have our egos, but then we came together at the end"*, said one Fellow. Another confessed, *"Everyone here faced their own personal demons. I was scared to do it. But the fact was that we had a deadline and an obligation to fulfill."*



The final reading of the seminar was Mahfouz's *Zaabalawi*, a story of search for truth, search for God, and search for one's self, amidst the complexities and jumble of the present day. The search for *Zaabalawi* is not so much about the destination, but about the journey. It is a road map full of sidetracks and bumps, but also learning experiences and memories.

One Fellow pointed out, *"It [the text] speaks to me of the people we know. People who we admire who get bitter, get angry, and get burned out along the way. This is disillusionment. But there is still beauty in the quest."*

Or as another commented, *"For me Zaabalawi is about each people found along the way."*

Each one is a vital component of the greater puzzle of life. The journey actually never ends because we got to keep on looking for the pieces of reality.”

Culminating all reading discussions, Fellows regrouped at the Aspen Meadows restaurant for their final dinner of the seminar. Here moderator Mayu Brizuela encouraged all attendees to hold hands in prayer of thanks for the wonderful opportunity, the experience shared, and for the Fellow’s leadership initiatives.

Check-out

On last time, Fellows met at the seminar room, where they were asked to officially “check-out”. Each provided a personal statement of the lessons learned in the seminar and the specific actions they would be taking in the following months as a result of the experience. The following is a summary of the thoughts shared:

“I confessed failure in my check-in because I have focused too much on efficiency, and that will be my greatest challenge: to get out of the mundane world of my job and start moving towards significance.”

“This seminar has helped me clarify my social and public responsibility as candidate for Mayor of Guatemala. I have to learn to work in simultaneity with government and with the private sector to truly achieve success. My challenge will be, after working 17 years in the public arena, to do voluntary work.”

“In my company I will try to enforce the mentoring project, which I have started already. I will keep meeting new people, trying to understand their needs. I will also try to get more involved in the community.”

“I have to realize that if I ever aspire to be a leader, I will need to lead people that I don’t necessarily want to lead or that I consider don’t deserve to be led... In my personal life I am starting a journey to write a screenplay that will enable me to communicate my message and bring me freedom.”

“Looking back at where we are now at the end of the second seminar, I realize I was not ready for many things. This seminar has been very challenging, my convictions have been confronted, and I like that. But I must say that the seminar has also reaffirmed my values. I feel motivated to go back to work, and to start my project Kaleidoscopio, named after you, CALI II.”

“My daily goal is to incorporate more passionate things into routine. My work is too much about efficiency, so I need something to humanize my life.”

“My personal weakness is always to look at the ends and efficiency. This is a group of such strong minds and articulate individuals, an experience that I think has helped me decipher the importance of community in my work and the way I deal with things.”

“I think [before the seminar] I was pretty knowledgeable of what my path was and where I was going. Now I am confused... I find that I am so focused on being efficient and getting the whole deal perfectly, that I lose grip of the important things.”

“Phenomenal week together! I leave feeling fortunate and optimistic on the future of Central America. You have all been a great inspiration.”

“I will get involved in my country’s government transition. My goal is to convince the next government to keep at least three of the good Ministers we have right now. The only problem I am facing is that my mind is now more focused on this than in my business and this will cost me a lot of money [laughs].”

“We make a great team! I came here very confused and lost. I believed that when your personal life is not going well, your surroundings shake as well and takes you out of the road. But this second seminar has brought me back to the road and it has filled me with more energy and I am planning to go back on my feet. One of the things I have learned is that there is no such thing as a good or perfect society, but we are on our way to build the best one we can.”

“I came confused and I will return even more confused. I feel I am not alone, which is a great sensation. I feel part of a team with a common goal to integrate a region, which we can make happen.”

“On the personal level, I wonder if I have the stamina and energy to do this, my job and my family. But after all is over I am grateful that I have managed to jam everything in. I feel this has been a rich learning experience for me.”

“Another incredible week of intense learning, emotional stress, and teamwork... The compass and the way that each one of us applied it can be put into practice in all levels of our lives (work, family, etc.)... This is a constant recharging, I consider it priceless, and I consider all of you my mentors.”

“This seminar reaffirmed my concerns that we have a heavy burden to carry... Even more responsibility to the ones we already have. The challenge is to find more people with our vision to support us.”

“I think this group is perfect, because we are here, this is our reality, which is helping me grow as a person, and I am truly thankful for that. I feel I have started a journey to self-discovery. This implies that I have a lot of unanswered questions, but now I am also unafraid to ask them. I am truly excited to be in this process”

“This seminar has ratified that I am equipped to build a good society. There is lack of leadership in the environmental sector now, but at the same time there is an emerging class of passionate leaders, aware they can make a difference. This keeps me hopeful.”

“As a result of the seminar, I feel responsible to help the people that work in my

company. I don't want them to see me as their boss. I want to armed them with enough tools and skills so they can also emerge, like I have."

"I am still in the process of soul-searching. I have to allow myself to step back and revise what I have done, and what I am doing, to be able to move ahead. In the months to come I will continue designing my life, until I find the best way to make use of it."

"My check-in is: life is good; and is not only good but beautiful. My drive is the search for that perfect community... I want us to start dreaming together. Remind me of the power we have together. Lets write our dreams for Central America before we meet again for the third seminar."

"My goal in the next few months is to design a CALI magazine that integrates the entire Central American region."

The *Executive Seminar* ended on a high note, with Fellows already awaiting the next conference – *Leading in an Era of Globalization* – that will be held at INCAE in San Jose, Costa Rica in February of 2008.

Attachment A – Overview of the Central America Leadership Initiative

Having emerged from many years of civil war and unrest, Central American countries now have a momentous opportunity to build their private sectors, promote investment, and create sustained economic growth. These countries cannot afford to let this opportunity escape, for juxtaposed against it are social problems, which must be solved, including poverty, crime and corruption. As businesses grow and take advantage of new opportunities, they must also take responsibility and leadership in addressing their nations' social problems. This will involve working with both government and civil society.

For there to be progress, the next generation of leaders in all three sectors must come together:

- to identify and address their personal strengths and weaknesses as leaders,
- to share and refine their respective visions of the society they would like to live in, and
- to lead by example in building this society.

It is for this reason that The Central America Leadership Initiative has been conceived.

Background

The Aspen Institute, established in 1950, is a global forum for leveraging the power of leaders to improve the human condition. The Henry Crown Fellowship Program, established by the Institute in 1997, seeks to establish the next generation of community-spirited leaders, providing them with the tools necessary to meet the challenges of corporate and civic leadership in the 21st century.

In 1998, Peter Reiling, then President and CEO of TechnoServe, an international organization promoting market-led economic growth in Africa and Latin America since 1968, was named to the Millennium Class of Henry Crown Fellows. Like his classmates, he was asked to carry out a leadership project – designed to put into practice the principles of values-based leadership. Mr. Reiling decided that his project would be to bring the message of the Aspen Institute to Africa, a continent where he had worked for 20 years.

In 2000 and 2001, with the assistance of Keith Berwick, Executive Director of the Henry Crown Fellowship Program, TechnoServe sponsored pilot Executive Seminars for business, government and civil society leaders in Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique. The Executive Seminar, the flagship of the Aspen Institute seminar series, uses the writings of some of the world's greatest minds to prompt a dialogue on each participant's vision of "the good society".

By all accounts, these seminars were a success – proving that the Aspen methodology is

transferable to Africa and spurring serious discussion on the respective roles of business, government and civil society in economic and social development there. In 2002, TechnoServe, the Aspen Institute and four local partners launched the Africa Leadership Initiative, a four-year program modeled after the Henry Crown Fellowship Program. By year's end, 52 Fellows from five countries had been named. By September of 2003, this number had grown to 78 Fellows in six countries: Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique and South Africa. Sponsors of the Initiative include Barloworld, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the West Foundation and USAID.

In 2003, TechnoServe was approached by Roberto Murray, a leading Salvadoran businessman and President of FUNDEMAS (Enterprise Foundation for Social Action), to explore the replication of the Africa Leadership Initiative in Central America. To this end, TechnoServe, the Aspen Institute, and FUNDEMAS partnered with INCAE to lay the groundwork for a similar initiative in Central America. In May 2004, a pilot Executive Seminar was held on the INCAE campus in Costa Rica. Feedback from the 21 participants – leading businessmen and women from across the region – was extremely positive, and a decision was made to formalize a leadership initiative for the region.

The Initiative

Modeled after the highly acclaimed Henry Crown Fellowship Program of the Aspen Institute (<http://aspeninstitute.org/crown>), the Central America Leadership Initiative seeks to develop a new generation of community-spirited business leaders in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama.

In late 2004, an initial class of 24 Fellows between the ages of 25 and 40 was chosen from all six countries. These Fellows, nominated by recognized local business and community leaders, including many of those who attended the pilot Executive Seminar, are men and women who:

- have achieved significant success in their fields of endeavor;
- have demonstrated their potential for leadership at the highest levels of business, government or civic responsibility (at least half are from the business sector);
- possess a breadth of experience and level of maturity that will enable them to contribute effectively to the fellowship experience; and
- come from diverse backgrounds in terms of occupation, ethnicity and gender.

Beginning in January 2005, this class will participate in an 18-month program comprising four seminars and leadership development activities under the guidance of skilled moderators trained and certified by the Aspen Institute. The program will require a commitment by each Fellow of 18 days (four to five days each January and July) for seminar meetings plus the time allocated for individual leadership projects and periodic informal gatherings.

The four seminars are:

- **The Challenge of Leadership**, a seminar focusing on the qualities of leadership

necessary to master the forces of change.

- **The Executive Seminar**, a seminar focused on refining each Fellow's definition of "the good society" – including the roles of government and business in molding that society and the societal challenges of economic growth.
- **Leading in an Era of Globalization**, a seminar exploring the political, economic, cultural and ethical challenges of globalization and the skills necessary to meet them. Fellows will present prospectuses for their Leadership Projects.
- **The Promise of Leadership**, a seminar to review the Fellows' Leadership Projects and lay the groundwork for continuing interaction after the formal program is concluded.

The Vision

The aim of The Central America Leadership Initiative is to identify and motivate young business leaders to apply their energies, their skills and the resources of the institutions they lead to the foremost social challenges of their countries – and their times. The hope of its organizers is to institutionalize the Fellowship locally – recruiting successive classes and generating an ever-growing cadre of community- spirited young leaders.

Attachment B – Attributes of a Good Leader

Competition
Growth
Nature
Connectedness
Organized
Healthy
Freedom
Faith
Hope
Ethics
Respect
Equality
Education
Solidarity
Tolerance
Efficiency
Structure
Balance
Prosperity
Justice
Liberty
Diversity
Honesty
Unity
Harmony
Wisdom
Peace
Orderly
Prudence
Innovation
Happiness
Virtuosity
Sustainability
Identity
Security
Purpose
Productivity
Connectivity
Equal opportunity
Merit

Attachment C – Agenda

Fellows arrive the night of July 22nd

Monday, July 23

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 7:00 – 8:00 am | Breakfast
Aspen Meadows Restaurant |
| 8:00–9:30 am | “The Good Life Well Lived”
Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics and Rhetoric</i>
Defining the “Good Society”
Lauder Room (Koch Building) |
| 9:30 -9:45 am | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 9:45 – 11:45 am | Personal “Check-in”
Lauder Room (Koch Building) |
| 11:45 – 1:00 pm | Lunch
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

Free time/discover Aspen |
| 6:00 pm | Dinner – Off campus Toklat
Introduction to Group Exercise: Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i> |

Tuesday, July 24

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 7:00 – 8:00 | Breakfast
Aspen Meadows Restaurant |
| 8:15 – 10:15 am | Introduction to the Executive’s Compass
Liberty
Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i>
John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government (b)</i> ,

Chapter V
Karl Popper, <i>The Open Society and its Enemies</i>
Lauder Room (Koch Building) |
| 10:15 – 10:30 am | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 10:30 – 12:30 pm | Liberty
William Graham Sumner, <i>The Challenge of Facts</i> |

F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*
Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*
Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

12:30 – 1:45 pm Lunch
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

2:00 – 4:00pm **Equality**
Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*
Harriet Taylor Mill, *Enfranchisement of Women*
Horace Mann, *The Importance of Universal, Free, Public Education*
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

4: 00 –5:30 pm **Equality**
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Arthur M. Okun, *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

5:30 – 7:30 pm **Group Rehearsal: Antigone**

8:00 pm Dinner
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

Wednesday, July 25

7:00 – 8:00 am Breakfast
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

8:15 – 10:00 am **Community**
Thomas Jefferson, *The Merits of Agriculture*
Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*
E.F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

10:00 – 10:15 am Coffee/Tea Break

10:15 – 12:00 am **Efficiency**
Plato, *The Republic (Book II)*
Simon Bolivar, *The Angostura Address*
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

12:00 – 2:00 pm Lunch
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

2:00 – 3:30 pm **Efficiency**
 Friedrich List, *The National System of Political Economy*
 Peter Drucker, *A Century of Social Transformation – Emergence of Knowledge Society and The Coming of Entrepreneurial Society.*
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

3:45 – 5:45 pm **Group Rehearsal: Antigone**

6:30 pm Depart for reception at Aspen Trustee’s Arjun Gupta.

Thursday, July 26

7:00 – 9:00 am Breakfast
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

9:00 – 11:00am **Leadership Projects**
Mentors
The Executive’s Compass
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

11:00 – 11:15 am Break

11:15 – 12:30 pm Plato, *The Republic (Book VII)*
Lauder Room (Koch Building)

12:30 – 1:30 pm Lunch
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

1:30 – 4:30 pm **Group Rehearsal: Antigone**

4:30 – 6:30 pm **Presentation and Discussion of Antigone**

7:00 pm Dinner
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

8:30 pm Mahfouz, Zaabalawi
Personal “Check-out”

Friday, July 27

7:00 – 8:00 am

Breakfast
Aspen Meadows Restaurant

Depart for airport
Bag breakfast available for those leaving early.

