



CALI V – Seminar 1
The Challenge of Leadership
March 16-20, 2010
Alajuela, Costa Rica
INCAE Campus

A member of



Executive Summary

The Central America Leadership Initiative (CALI), which is modeled after the Aspen Institute's Henry Crown Fellowship Program, is a joint venture between the Aspen Institute, INCAE, FUNDEMAS of El Salvador and TechnoServe. Using the Aspen Institute's text based approach and Socratic dialogue methodology, its goal is to promote a new generation of values-based leaders in the region.

CALI Fellows also form part of a wider global network called the *Aspen Global Leadership Network* (AGLN), which seeks to strengthen the capacity of Fellows to make a bigger difference by connecting them with other Fellows from the twelve leadership initiatives in the U.S., Africa, India, and Central America, and soon to include the Middle East, China, and Central and Eastern Europe.

The Challenge of Leadership Seminar

From March 16 to March 20, 2010, the fifth class of Central America Leadership Initiative Foundation, self-named, CA-Libre, gathered at INCAE's Walter Kissling Gam Campus in Alajuela, Costa Rica, for The Challenge of Leadership Seminar (the first seminar of a series of four leadership seminars). This seminar is the beginning of a leadership development process and covers an extensive array of leadership issues. A requirement of the CALI Foundation is that each Fellow undertakes a project of his or her design, giving them an opportunity to apply their leadership skills on an issue they feel passionately about. Fellows are given the guidelines and expectations of these projects during this first seminar.

This class was a very heterogeneous group of twenty four Fellows in the business sector, civil society, government and non profit leaders between the ages of 30 and 45. These eight women and sixteen men are committed to attend four seminars within 18 months and undertake a leadership project of their own selection, designed to put their leadership ideals into action.

During those days, Fellows shared, as a group, their opinions about what they considered good leaders should perform. They also explored and studied a diversity of well known international leaders from different areas including Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, Lee Kwan Yew, Jean Monnet and Niccolo Machiavelli.



After reading, analyzing and discussing all these interesting characters, and guided by Aspen Institute senior moderator, Stace Lindsay, along with Harry Strachan, Aspen Institute trained moderator and Sylvia Gereda, moderator in training, Fellows began to understand their commitment as Central American Leaders. They were able to execute significant positive changes in order to live in a better society. They also spent time together working in small groups on personal leadership challenges and creating many strategies for developing their own leadership manuals.



The Fellows also met to discuss the most serious leadership issues in the

region, such as democracy, poverty, security and education. In these groups, they exchanged ideas on projects carried out in different countries of the region, allowing Fellows to listen to new options for each of their countries.



An example of the bond that was achieved in this class, is that on May 8th, a group of Fellows met in Costa Rica for the taking of office of Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica, invited by Adrian Chinchilla, CALI V Fellow, her brother.

These Fellows will come together again as a group for their second Seminar, *The Aspen Seminar*, from August 23 to August 28, INCAE's Francisco de Sola Campus in Managua, Nicaragua.

This class will have the great opportunity to become involved with other Fellows from the Aspen Global Leadership Network, for their third seminar, *Leading in an Era of Globalization*.

Impact

CALI V is a very particular Group due the diversity of its members. For example, this class has a soccer player, a psychologist, government officials from diverging ideologies, CEO's of companies, lawyers, among others. Maybe because of this diversity, the Fellows achieved a deep level of trust, which led the Fellows to ponder on their roles as leaders and how they can positively impact the region. They pledged to develop their leadership projects which are one of the most important objectives of this Foundation.



By analyzing the different texts, the Fellows developed their own ideas and interpretations of effective leadership and discussed how they could efficiently help to live in a better society. Here are some of their thoughts:

“I have learned I need to continuously work to be an effective leader, going back to basics getting feedback continuously.”

“Not only takes love and desire to make a better place, it also takes courage, authenticity and desire to change by taking actions. It is important to me that if we don’t know who we are, we don’t know what we are going to do.”

“I look at things with a larger perspective and a larger sense of responsibility, of action, to manage situations with determination and have a good sense of humor to have a life in balance.”

“I think I got lots of insights and I need to take this and think, but I do believe I’ve got thoughts and examples to become a better, effective leader.”

“I have learned that there are different leadership styles and I now know that I can choose the style that fits most in my personality. However, there are certain elements that are essential for positive leadership and I have cleared them with the readings, exercises, and discussions.”

“A leader has to be authentic, educated and willing to sacrifice a lot to really change things. He also has to have a clear vision of what he/she wants.”

As a result of the question: Have you been able to identify specific areas where you need to improve your leadership style? Eighteen Fellows from a total of twenty three Fellows answered “yes”, explaining:

“The seminar has helped me to see myself better; more clearly. It has presented examples worth evaluating and allowed us to break down the core elements. The knowledge and discussion is very helpful.”

“Authenticity – Who am I? What have I done to have a better life? Openness to hear and especially to take into account whatever my subordinated feel and think.”

“Patience –do not get angry, do not give up. Lateral thinking, there is always another way. Vision -- I should think more about vision.”

“Confront my fears, use the opportunities, acknowledge my mistakes and say I am sorry and live with no regrets.”

“Focus on the significance of my work rather than the success. Think about strategy; thus requires time to think, to meditate, to assess and explore ideas. Self-purification. Allow others to help me, use networks effectively.”

“Yes, I began to address my own internal chaos (time management, emotional life, money management), and address the pressing issues in my family and then be able to help address the issues in my country.”

Quotes from Fellows on the overall seminar experience:

“I was already a Fellow of many other programs, but CALI is the family that I have been looking for.”

“ We live in a world of paradigms. We are here to transcend and see things from a more analytic perspective. To learn and think differently. For me it was a lesson.”

“I have been scared. We have to go back to basics and rethink how you approach people and assume responsibilities. I have never run away from the challenge. I don’t think it’s going to be easy, I think we are going to trip a couple of times. I learned more than I expected.”

“I learned how to optimize and leverage the time and fully share and learn about people, which is very important. We are a team with a common purpose. We all want to get a goal! Team spirit in this group is so important. It touches my heart.”

“I am inspired. We haven’t known each other a long time, but we now know each other. I want to be like Monnet, take my time and step back from everything. This is my challenge.”

“This experience has been like a mirror for me. You have given me the keys to have the courage to know which doors do I have to open and which doors do I have to close.”

“I started with a wrong idea about CALI, without faith. I go with the certainty that the problems can be solved and I leave full and happy.”

“I am looking to develop other aspects of my life and to change them. CALI has made me reflect on deeper issues and helped me to identify what I need to improve and move forward.”

“CALI has been a gift that I really appreciate. This will help us change.”

“These days have been very challenging for me. I have faced myself and I'm inspired and clearly impressed by the quality of each person. I felt a lot of love and respect and a confidence that I never thought I would achieve.”