



A member of the



**Class 6: SIXnificance
“The Challenge of Leadership”
February 7th – 12th, 2011
La Reunión, Antigua, Guatemala**

A. Executive Summary

From February 7th – 12th, 2011 the sixth class of Central America Leadership Initiative (CALI) Fellows – a diverse group of 23 entrepreneurial business, government and non-profit leaders between the ages of 30 and 45, self-named *SIXnificance*– gathered at La Reunión in , Antigua, Guatemala, for the *Challenge of Leadership* seminar; their first in the series of four leadership seminars that comprise the Fellowship.

The CALI program, which is modeled after the Aspen Institute’s Henry Crown Fellowship Program, is a joint venture between the Aspen Institute, INCAE, FUNDEMAS and TechnoServe. Following 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.



B. The Challenge of Leadership

Guided by Senior moderator and Henry Crown Fellow Stace Lindsay, and CALI moderators



Margarita Herdocia (Henry Crown Fellow) and Sylvia Gereda (CALI I Fellow), Fellows explored the attributes of effective and enlightened leaders, gauged what effective leaders do and don’t do, examined their own challenges as leaders, and identified specific aspects of the their leadership to strengthen and improve over the coming years. Fellows discussed the leadership styles and attributes of a wide a variety of leaders including Gandhi and Steve Jobs ,Lee Kwan Yew, Jean Monnet, Margaret

Thatcher, Martin Luther King Jr., Niccolo Machiavelli and Jack Stack, among others.

- *“Millions of people around the world share similar values but rarely act upon them. Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were doers. I realize that that is what I am missing; I need to do something with the talents God has given me.”*
- *“Gandhi wasn’t just liberating India, he was searching for respect and peace for others, he was victorious because of his non-violence message. His message was about bringing change for everyone.”*

In addition, the Fellows participated in a number of team-building exercises aimed at building trust and breaking the ice among the Fellows, providing an opportunity for them to learn about each other and about themselves



- *“In a moment of fear I realized that my CALI Fellows are my support group.”*
- *“No matter how much you trust the group there is always be a degree of uncertainty.”*



During the week the Fellows also broke into small groups to discuss an actual personal leadership challenge they would face when they returned home or back to work. Some talked about business issues, or challenges they faced in their family or communities or balancing all three. The topics and specific problems discussed remained confidential, however Fellows reported back to their class on what they had learned from the exercise.

- *“I knew I couldn’t lie to them I felt safe though. There was no way around it, I knew they would hold me accountable.”*
- *“Various of us had an ‘aha’ moment and noticed mistakes we were making. This was a very powerful way to vent as well as get feedback and see things in a new light.”*

A flagship component of the CALI Foundation is that each Fellow undertakes a leadership project of his or her design giving them an opportunity to apply the principles of values-based leadership to an issue they feel passionate about while also tackling a real need or issue they see around them. An evening was spent setting the expectations and discussing the projects, and Carmen Irene Alas, Executive Director of the CALI Foundation gave Fellows a presentation on some of the main social, economic and political problems the region faces and then presented a series of already existing leadership projects that tackle the regions issues to set the standard and get each Fellow seriously thinking about their project. This class has already



submitted their project concepts to Carmen Irene and she has provided feedback to them, so they are off to a strong start.

C. Impact

This first seminar has been very effective in reaching its goal of creating a circle of trust among the Fellows, prompting them to think about leadership in general and their own leadership in new ways, and launching them on their way to making an impact through their leadership projects. Using what they learned from the texts and each other, the Fellows developed their own interpretations of effective, enlightened leadership and reflected on how they measure up against their ideals. Some Fellows expressed the seminar had motivated them to move from thought to action:



- *“I feel we have great responsibility. I used to be too comfortable with the way things were; now I no longer feel that way. I cannot spend the next ten years thinking of what to do. It is time to act.”*
- *“We cannot go back to being lukewarm. This week has committed us to never again be lukewarm.”*

Others mentioned how this seminar led them to reflect on their leadership styles and have committed to making changes in their personal and professional lives as a result.

- *“I will listen more, develop a support group, count on my CALI Fellows, and do all I can to be a better leader.”*
- *“I have been able to understand the attributes that are important for effective leadership, some which perhaps I was not paying much attention to before. I have also been able to compare those attributes against my own. I know which ones I have, and which ones I lack or need to improve.”*



- *“To me the best way to become a truly effective human being, including being a leader, is to know myself--my strengths and weaknesses - and work hard at overcoming my weaknesses. Many of the readings and discussions have helped me with this task.”*
- *“During this week I have discovered the type of leader I want to become. I have also discovered the tremendous leadership of my classmates.”*

D. Quotes from Fellows on the seminar experience:

- *“I feel very satisfied to have been selected to participate in this space. Here are all the right people at the right time. I have learned so much from you.”*

- *“Before I came here another Fellow told me that all I had to do was open my heart. At first I didn’t understand, but now I do. My heart is open to all of you and I’m sure your hearts are open to me.”*
- *“I am very grateful and I feel so lucky to have been selected. It is a great experience to be able to put ourselves in the position of a rabbi, an indigenous leader, politicians, businesspeople, etc. We all need to learn to be more tolerant with others so that we can be more tolerant with ourselves.”*
- *“A leader can make changes, but a group of leaders can change the whole world.”*
- *“CALI came at a difficult time in my life. There are so many things going on around me and I have such chaos in my head right now. However at no time have I felt that I’m not where I should be right now.”*



- *“I feel like I have been elevated to the 23rd power by my fellow classmates. We will all have to give back more than we have received and this week we have received so much.”*
- *“Central America has many great minds and hearts and CALI has done a great job at identifying them so that we are not alone in this endeavor.”*

E. What’s next

The group will meet again from July 25th – 31st in Alajuela, Costa Rica at INCAE’s Walter Kissling Gam campus for their second seminar titled *The Aspen Seminar*. In the mean time each Fellow will continue to refine their leadership Project Concepts and develop a Project Plan with input from Carmen Irene Alas. During the Aspen Seminar, the Fellows will explore the search for the “good society” determining where they stand in the different trade offs and tensions it takes to get to their unique vision of the good society. They will also have more opportunities to work on their projects and get feedback and suggestions from their peers in small groups and present the projects in plenary.



This class will then take their third seminar, “Leading in an Era of Globalization” together with Fellows from across the Aspen Global Leadership Network including the Henry Crown Fellowship (U.S and global), the Liberty Fellowship (South Carolina), The India Leadership Initiative, The Africa Leadership Initiative East Africa (Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya), and the Africa Leadership Initiative South Africa in a variety of locations around the world.. This seminar asks Fellows to look at the unique challenges and opportunities that globalization places at the doorstep of each of these leaders and covers a broad range of topics from health and the environment to finance and culture. The



“globalization” seminar provides a perfect opportunity to have a deep discussion about globalization with a diverse group of people bringing different first hand perspectives, as well as providing an introduction to the broader Network so the Fellows realize they are part of something bigger than their program, they are truly in a global community of like-minded leaders.

The fourth and final seminar, *the Promise of Leadership* will be held in at a location in Central America to be determined by the Fellows and the director July 23-27, 2012. In this seminar Fellows share the results and lessons learned from their Leadership Projects and explore issues of balancing work and family, community engagement and personal legacy. They are poised from here to engage in the next phase of their leadership and have begun their journey from success to significance.