

Seattle Welcomes 2011 Central American Fellows



SIF Executive Director Mauricio Vivero with iLEAP women Fellows from Central America.

with a local home stay family, participate in community events, and take part in various field site visits with other development organizations, NGOs and businesses to expand their networks and learn about interactions between civil society, government and the private sector in Washington state.

Six women grassroots leaders from Central America were awarded this opportunity, recognizing their hard work and dedication to women's leadership and sustainable social change throughout the region. They include:

- [Susana Barrera](#) of the El Salvador Solidarity Circle in El Salvador
- [Paola San Martin](#) of Mi Escuela Salduable SWASH+ in Honduras
- [Lidieth Alvarez Guzmán](#) of Genesis Group in Nicaragua
- [Lucy Luna Guzmán](#) of ASAPROSAR in El Salvador
- [Patricia González](#) of Esperanza International in Dominican Republic
- [Claudia Vanessa Siliezar](#) of GOJoven in Honduras

Claudia shared her excitement for learning opportunities in Seattle that can lead to social change back in Honduras. "I work with various civil society institutions and young women in my community. This program will allow me to strengthen my knowledge and practice. I will strengthen my abilities in handling issues such as communication, leadership and self-sustainability, tools that will be very useful for institutions and people I work with. I hope to pass on these tools and to develop the skills of my students and youth in my community."

Lucy also stressed the importance of capacity building and leadership training to strengthen local organizations in Central America. "With my participation in the iLEAP program, I will be more prepared intellectually with the practical tools necessary to help many children to be leaders in their communities, especially girls and women and the marginalized. I can share with them my varied experiences in development, and together create a vision of justice and dignity for all." Lucy works with SIF grantee [ASAPROSAR](#) to improve quality of life in El Salvador through healthcare, youth leadership training, environmental and nutritional education, micro-credit and community development. In its 25 years of operation, ASAPROSAR has served over 140,000 people in western El Salvador.

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The Seattle International Foundation recently hosted a meeting with [iLEAP's 2011 International Fellows](#), who are currently in Seattle for 10 weeks of intensive leadership training.

The International Fellowship implemented by [iLEAP: The Center for Critical Service](#) and supported by SIF empowers women grassroots leaders from around the world by providing them with the skills, professional networks, and global perspectives necessary to create change in their communities.

Fellows are hosted by an organization working in their area of expertise, allowing for a mutually beneficial professional exchange. Fellows also live

To read the fellows' profiles and learn more about their leadership in their home countries, visit iLEAP's [website](#) and the [International Fellowship blog](#). For information about last year's cohort, click [here](#). Stay tuned for upcoming blog posts to learn more about their experiences here in Seattle.