



ANNOUNCEMENT

Seattle International Foundation Announces Leadership Transition

SIF bids farewell to Arturo Aguilar and begins an executive leadership transition.

October 1, 2020

After two and a half years at the helm of Seattle International Foundation (SIF), Arturo Aguilar is stepping down from his role as Executive Director to pursue his next professional chapter.

Arturo joined the SIF team as Executive Director in February 2018. A Guatemalan human rights defender and internationally renowned political strategist, Arturo led an intensive process to refocus SIF's mission on championing good governance and equity in Central America through rule of law and a robust civil society.

Under Arturo's leadership, SIF strengthened and expanded important initiatives in the region, including SIF's key programs: The Central America Donors Forum (CADF), the Central America and Mexico Youth Fund (CAMY Fund) and the Centroamérica Adelante leadership program. He was essential in leading the team in the creation of innovative new programs such as the Independent Journalism Fund (IJF), the Anti-Impunity Fund (AIF) and the Central America in Washington, D.C. (CA in DC) initiative. A communications and marketing overhaul was also a top priority during his time, as he oversaw the creation of a new website, rebranding, and increased presence and engagement on social media platforms.

In addition to these programmatic developments, Arturo has also been key in establishing vital and strategic partnerships with government officials, civil society leaders, decision-makers, social organizations, think tanks, independent media and universities in Central America and the United States. He promoted discussion and increased visibility of the challenges and realities experienced in Central America through forums, face-to-face and virtual debates, convenings, conferences, and cultural exchanges.

Together, these initiatives and efforts have allowed SIF to strengthen and solidify its role in the international philanthropy sector with its deep knowledge and commitment to Central America.

While Arturo's leadership will be greatly missed, SIF is heartened by the fact that Arturo will continue his career as an advocate and ambassador for Central America. As of October, Arturo will assume a new exciting position at a US-based organization (to be announced shortly), thus continuing his work supporting the development of the Central American region. The SIF Board of Directors has already started a transition process to appoint Arturo's successor.



“These two and a half years have been an amazing experience. Under the strategic guidance of the SIF Board and side by side with every member of the staff, we were able to bring more attention to the most relevant and urgent topics in Central America. It has been a great honor to serve the needs of the most marginalized communities in the region and a great privilege to be able to do so at a great organization like SIF, for that I will always be grateful. I remain certain this transition with the hard work of SIF’s team will lead to a stronger and more committed CA partner,” Arturo said of his time at SIF.”

Tony Mestres, President SIF’s Board of Directors, expressed: “Arturo has been an invaluable leader for Seattle International Foundation and the philanthropic field more broadly in Central America. While SIF’s Board and team will miss Arturo greatly, we are excited for this new opportunity which will allow him to continue making an impact in the region.” Tony added, “We are grateful to Arturo for his excellent work leading the team and especially for his passion and dedication to promote human rights and justice across Central America.”

SIF is incredibly grateful for the footprint that Arturo has left during his time at the foundation, and the team and Board look forward to continued partnership with Arturo in his new leadership capacity. SIF is convinced that building a strong network of philanthropic leaders committed to driving development efforts in Central America is the best way to fight for prosperity, equity, rule of law, the leadership of women and youth, and a robust civil society.

SIF’s Board of Directors has already begun the process to identify and hire Arturo’s successor. The Board plans to engage SIF’s key partners, leadership, and the broader community about this search process over the next few months. In the interim, SIF will be led by three critical leaders at the organization: Katie Steffen, longtime Deputy Director; Julie Sponsler, Director of Finance; and Eric L. Olson, Director of Policy in DC.

For any questions about the leadership transition, please contact Katie Steffen, Deputy Director and key leader on SIF’s management team during this transition.

About Seattle International Foundation

Seattle International Foundation (SIF) champions good governance and equity in Central America through support for rule of law and the strengthening of civil society. Over the past ten years, SIF has supported 243 organizations in 81 countries and has contributed to the growth of 650 high-impact social change leaders. In addition to its grants portfolio, SIF implements key initiatives in the region, including the Central America Donors Forum, the Central American and Mexico Youth Fund, Centroamérica Adelante, the Independent Journalism Fund, the CA in DC initiative, and the Anti-Impunity Fund.