

Program **“Women Leaders: Engines of Economic and Social Change”**
in the United States

*Written by: Eli
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This activity began with a brief introduction on how the United States Department of State, through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and of Internal Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), helps to create a free, safe and successful world through the formulation, representation and execution of the president's external policy. In addition, encourage mutual understanding among United States and other countries through the educational exchanges, professional, labor, corporate and cultural rights at an international level.

The International Visitors Office manages and finances the IVLP program. Each year, the United States' embassy choose 4,500 participants coming from all over the world for traveling to this country and become part of the IVLP program. The principal aim of this project is to meet and exchange with other professional and leaders from other spaces and trainings. This year, the theme was “Women Leaders: Engines of Economic and Social Change” and was supported with the participation of 12 women coming from 8 countries from Latin America: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela and Guatemala.



During my participation and stay in United States, I had the opportunity to visit 4 states and 5 cities. Next, I describe the discussed topics and every one of these locations:

Washington D.C, Washington	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Madison, Wisconsin	San Antonio, Texas	Seattle, Washington
The federal government system in the United States.	Leadership and policies at the state level.	Programs of gender, women and leadership.	Women in the law and justice.	The increase of economic opportunities for women.
Public policies to improve the lives of women and girls.	Leadership for community revitalization.		Community health programs for women and girls.	The Community programs of corporate mentoring.
The history and political participation of women in the United States.	Education of the indigenous Americans.			The development and women's leadership.
The role of women in citizen security.				Social entrepreneurship.
International initiatives to promote the economic success of women.				
The government of Washington and economic development programs.				

In addition, during the visits and meetings, I had the opportunity to talk about the Abriendo Oportunidades program, aimed at adolescent girls in rural areas in Guatemala. The majority of responses were positive, and everyone congratulated the initiative of this program, because around the world there are several programs aimed to children, but not from the same approach as Abriendo Oportunidades in the sense of its methodology for intervention and its target population (adolescent indigenous girls living with poor families, with little access to the basic services).



United States from EE.UU Department: Washington D.C.

Promotes the advancement of women in business, economics, politics and sciences. Counseling to the president in the execution and formulation of external policy. The department makes permanent consultations with the American public, the Congress and some other departments, agencies and foreign governments. In the Human Rights Department, 10% of ambassadors are women.



Central Office of Alianza Global de Voces Vitales –Washington D.C.

Support to entrepreneur women and teach the best practices for the development of women leaders. It is also the forefront of international coalitions in the fight against the human trafficking and other forms of violence against the women and girls. Since 1997, Voces Vitales, its partners and some volunteers, have trained and mentored more than 14,000 emerging women leaders in more than 144 countries, including Guatemala.



Milwaukee – Wisconsin

The Escuela de la Comunidad Indígena is a middle school with almost 300 students, which works with an inclusive model. After the tour in this school, a socialization meeting took place with the board of directors, where they spoke about the leadership and vision for this school.

They receive girls and boys when they are 6 years old. The students receive classes in Mayan and English languages. They have a program for families. When they are 2 years old, children learn the colors. During the morning they stay in the school, later they prepare the lunch in order to share with other families.



San Antonio Texas

I had the opportunity to meet the Councilor Rebecca Viagran, a Latin-American woman from San Antonio City. She is the government adviser of the City Council, regarding to issues that impact women in topics about employment, education and social, civil and political participation in San Antonio Texas.

To achieve her position in politics, she faced barriers like men and women speaking bad about her and distrust her skills. Since the moment she started working in the government, she started to implement programs to strengthen women's skills, the same women that had spoken badly about her in the past. Her purpose was to involve more women leaders to increase women participation in politics.



Seattle, Washington.

A visit was done in order to know the work of the foundation. It is conformed by a restaurant in Seattle, Washington. It was created for homeless people and offers them refuge, job and food. One of its programs consist of training homeless people to become chefs and cooks. They receive training for two years, a diploma and later they identify secure and decent jobs to the people of this program.

I also had the opportunity to talk with some migrants from Guatemala, some of them live good and some other suffer because they are not well paid and work overtime. By the reality of Guatemala, they had to migrate to EE.UU.

During the activities I had time for coordinate time and participation of my partners.