



ALLSA

2nd Latin-American Socio-Environmental Leadership Academy

“Youth, Climate and Migration”

Guatemala, June 30 -July 8, 2018

The Call for Applications for the 2nd Latin American Academy of Socio-Environmental Leadership: Guatemala (2018) is available [here](#).

To apply, click [here](#).

Since 2011, the Global Diversity Foundation (GDF) has supported over 200 leaders around the world offering internationally recognized spaces that draw together inspiring changemakers with superb academic backgrounds and in-depth field experience to develop practical actions and strategies to tackle the most pressing social and environmental issues of our times. Building on prior programs' success, GDF has once again partnered with program leaders to deliver the region's 2nd Latin-American Socio-Environmental Academy. This time the focus is on Youth, Climate and Migration. Current partners includes alumni of the first Latin American academy (Dominican Republic, 2015) along with UNESCO Prize laureate SERES, a grassroots nonprofit working to cultivate and catalyze Central American youth leaders to build just and sustainable communities.

The purpose of this academy is to support the personal and professional development of emerging young leaders working at the nexus of these three cross-cutting themes to help them bring about more holistic and systemic transformation through their leadership and work. The desired outcomes of the academy are that participants build critical core competencies for effective sustainability leadership by:

- Learning new tools for both personal and societal transformation;
- Exploring different perspectives and learn new skills that will help them to build on their local initiatives.
- Strengthening their community by building connection and collaboration with other emerging leaders.

The academy will convene 35 participants, facilitators and regional experts over a period of 9 days in a residential workshop that enables exploratory and action-oriented learning, as well as dialogue. Focus areas include the following key components:

- a **Sustainability Nexus**, allowing participants to explore interconnected and interdependent sustainability challenges as they relate to each person's work;
- **Tools for Transformation**, teaching participants strategic questioning as a technique for helping communities tackle issues of peace, justice and ecology;
- **Systems Change**, providing participants with a framework to achieve greater systemic impact;
- **Deep Ecology**, strengthening participant's personal commitment and connection to their work with biocentric views that deepen the perspective of potential responses/solutions
- **Re-valuing Cultural and Spiritual Traditions**, invigorating cultural identities and reassessing ancient wisdom that is relevant to present challenges
- **Systems Thinking**, developing a critical and synthetic lens on game-changing solutions;
- **Organizing and Leadership Skills**, sharing skills for effective and impactful leadership.
- **Creative Pedagogies**, learning how to create spaces where participants are encouraged to fully express themselves through partaking in creative risks, increasing self-confidence, empathy, teamwork abilities and motivation.

In the design and location of our programs, we draw from critical pedagogies such as those of Paulo Freire. Also, we draw from socio-environmental pedagogies such as those of Joanna Macey, or those that inspired SERES theory of change and the Partners for Youth Empowerment (PYE) Creative Community Model.

We aim to gather participants around the theme of Youth, Climate and Migration because, according to UNICEF, climate change in the coming years will increasingly be the cause of large-scale migrations of people, which will be led in most cases by youth who are more willing to take risks. In Central America and the Caribbean region several countries rank amongst the top ten in the world for long-term climate risk, including three of the top five. In regions such as Central America's Northern Triangle and the Caribbean Greater Antilles – already plagued by overwhelming social, environmental, and economic issues – increased pressure from climate change places stability, peace and prosperity at great risk. This exacerbates the conditions that already cause many children and youth to migrate without official authorisation. This demographic is not insignificant. Over 50% of the world population is under 25 years of age. In Guatemala, for example, more than 70% of the population are under 30 years of age. More than one in five adolescents in Latin America as a whole are neither in school, nor employed.

As climate change worsens, this unique region of interwoven lives, economies, foodsheds and cultures will face ever-increasing challenges. Challenges such as gendered and youth migration, cross-border violence, resource extraction-related conflicts depopulation of rural areas, and loss of traditional knowledge bases, food security and sovereignty, have all been associated directly or indirectly with climate change. With global migration at record levels, the task remains to find ways to strengthen resilience in place, and also in the vibrant, transnational social and ecological networks that sustain all those who call the region home.

From research, we know that complex adaptive systems have the capacity to learn from experience and reshape the system to bring about better outcomes. In particular, critical mass theory suggests that for an innovation to take hold, often a small number of diverse and well connected capable agents are required first. They must adopt the innovation for the rate of adoption to be self-sustaining and grow in numbers in the rest of society. To that end, the identification and mobilization of key, highly capable agents of change is critical. Those are actors equipped with the capacity to trigger collective actions. They are strongly motivated individuals who are either well-connected to other influential actors or institutions, have access to needed resources for change, have access to a diversity of knowledge systems, or all of the above combined. Relatedly, youth are the least risk-averse members of our societies with high capacity for creative thinking. Thus, empowering engaged youth leaders to take creative risks to adopt innovative strategies may significantly enable the effective implementation of climate change interventions in their communities.

While climate migration is an inevitable and likely an effective adaptive approach in many locations, the mobilization of highly capable agents to manage effectively and peacefully such movements is crucial. As well, the development of effective adaptive climate change strategies in place for those who choose not to or cannot migrate will require capable youth agents too. Latin American and Caribbean youth leaders are needed to connect local and international networks to find adaptive solutions to the complex climate change challenges ahead.

Well-crafted, post-disciplinary co-learning spaces for youth seem paramount to be able to critically discuss and weave the complex threads of the multiple challenges associated with climate change. As such, we propose to engage these daunting challenges in this 2nd Latin-American Socio-Environmental Academy on the theme of Youth, Climate and Migration by convening committed, proven young emerging leaders into dialogue, to co-learn and strengthen leadership skills that advance practice and understanding for socio-ecological resilience.