

Testimonial

Participating in the ANDE Annual Conference

Thanks to the Ricardo Salinas Scholarship I was able to participate in the ANDE Annual Conference that took place in Washington between the 26th and the 28th of September 2016.

My name is Lucia Casanovas and I am the Administration and Development Manager at Fundación IES in Bolivia. IES (Innovation for Social Entrepreneurs) is a private non-profit institution that was created in 2010 and aims at contributing to the prosperity of the country by promoting and consolidating dynamic companies with social impact. Fundación IES is an interesting organization as it combines funds management, technical assistance and direct field work and, even if it is relatively small in relation to other Impact Investment Fund Managers, it has proven to be a pioneer in the development of innovative proposals.

I am in charge of the Development and Innovation Area, which aims to provide dynamic companies in Bolivia with access to information and knowledge so they can adopt better business practices that allow them to respond rapidly and effectively to market changes and, therefore, achieve greater economic and social impact.

Being able to participate in the Annual Conference has given me the opportunity to interact with people from all around the world, who are passionately working for the development of the SGBs sector. This interaction enlightens because participants are able to learn from what other institutions have done right and wrong. It also allows participants to have access to knowledge that is the “state of the art” in the sector. All this information will shorten the “learning curve” of the institution I work for and will be used as a valuable input for our Institutional Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021.

In this context, for the next five years in the Development and Innovation area, we are planning to work in strengthening the relationship of dynamic companies with their business’ ecosystem. The idea is to help companies gain better access to financing, knowledge and networks that will boost their abilities to respond to market opportunities rapidly and effectively. At the Conference I had the huge opportunity to be part of the group session about Funding Platforms, Mentorship and Supporting the Ecosystem, which beyond insights, information and experiences, gave me useful contacts that I will be using in the near future.

This year, as Fundación IES we also had the opportunity to participate in the Advisory Board Session, and presented a key issue that will determine the activities that will be implemented in the coming years. The feedback we got from the selected advisors was crucial and provided us with useful knowledge that will contribute to the design of our plan.

For all that was described above, I am very thankful for the opportunity that Ricardo Salinas Scholarship gave me to participate in the Annual Conference. I hope that Ricardo Salinas Foundation keeps on offering these scholarship funds to help increase Latin American participation in Aspen Institute Programs.