

SDGs 1+17 Spotlight: The Honourable Ricardo Miranda, MLA and Minister of Culture and Tourism

Interview by Heather McPherson, Alberta Council for Global Cooperation

Born in Managua, Nicaragua, Ricardo Miranda is a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta representing the electoral district of Calgary-Cross. In 2016, Miranda was appointed the Minister of Culture and Tourism. I chatted with Ricardo about the Alberta Government's Community Initiatives Program International (CIP International) Program, which offers grants that provide assistance to meet local needs in developing nations through support of sustainable community development projects.

Can you offer us a snapshot of the history of the CIP International projects and their impacts over the past 40 years?

For over 43 years, Alberta has supported non-profit organizations with funding to assist projects aimed at reducing poverty in developing nations. This includes thousands of projects ranging from providing food and shelter to at-risk youth, to the construction of schools and medical centres in remote communities, to international efforts to eradicate polio and Ebola, to emergency disaster relief. Through CIP International Development grants, we have established funding partnerships with numerous organizations that have carried out countless projects that have achieved lasting results around the world.

“We need to lead by example and to share with our peers and our children the importance — and the rewards — of getting involved and helping others.”

In 2016, after years of cuts, funding to CIP International was reinstated to \$1.5 million per year under your leadership. Why did you think this was important?

Our government knows the importance of the work these organizations are doing, and we heard how the previous cuts limited their ability to make positive change at home and abroad. Through their ongoing support for

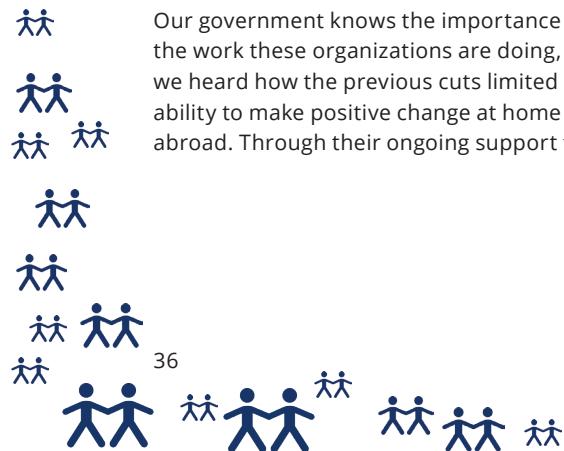


Kick-off to the Special Olympics Summer Games at the Alberta Legislature

organizations across the province, Albertans have made it clear to our government that support for humanitarian and sustainable development programs is important to them. Since 1974, when the program was introduced, Albertans have donated more than \$500 million to organizations that have received funding through the program. While the resources of government are limited, we will continue to support those efforts to the best of our ability.

With the support of CIP International, Albertans are able to undertake international development and solidarity work around the world that makes an enormous difference in the lives of many marginalized people. Can you describe the impacts you would like to see in the next five years as a result of this work?

International development is about helping the world's most marginalized people, saving lives, and driving the long-term change required for self-sustaining communities. We need to lead by example and to share with our peers and our children the importance — and the rewards — of getting involved and helping others. This is how we create a culture of compassion and a foundation for global citizenship.





Minister Miranda stuffing school bags with supplies on Telus Day of Giving, “We Give Where We Live”



Groundbreaking ceremony at the Calgary Zoo, preparing to welcome four giant pandas in 2018

What advice would you share with Albertans who are committed to promoting diversity and inclusivity in their everyday lives?

When people are personally engaged in an issue or with a community, barriers to action become opportunities for transformation. I have seen how the vast majority of Albertans live according to the values that we share every day — speaking out and rejecting attempts to divide.

“When people are personally engaged in an issue or with a community, barriers to action become opportunities for transformation.”

How do you see the work undertaken by CIP International and its partners contributing to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030?

The path to reaching the SDGs is a challenging one. But the success seen so far by the many projects funded through CIP International has shown that we are up for the challenge. These efforts have already made an enormous difference to thousands of communities and individuals across the globe. Together we are helping to build a brighter future and a better planet.

For more information on the CIP International Program visit culturetourism.alberta.ca.



Minister Miranda opens and speaks at the first Sudanese Cultural Centre in Calgary.