

Salvador Paiz, MBA '00

President, Fundación Sergio Paiz Andrade

- Provides classroom computers and teacher training in Guatemala
- Co-founder of Guatemala Visible, a public education project examining Guatemala's political nomination process
- Board member of Walmart Mexico and Central America

"We never expected the minister of education to believe in us."



Salvador Paiz speaks with certainty. He is message oriented, a must for a leader drawing attention and money to non-profit organizations.

But when he first arrived at MIT Sloan, Paiz was "nervous and uncomfortable about speaking in public." He credits a public speaking class with giving him his confidence.

Recently, Paiz gave a speech in Guatemala to a crowd of 3,400, including top politicians. He gives motivational speeches to any of the 30,000 employees of Walmart in Central America, where he was an executive and still sits on the board.

"It's an important skill that I'm now very grateful to have acquired," he said.

Like his father, Sergio Paiz Andrade, SF '86, who was killed in a 2002 plane crash, Paiz has proven an adept businessman with Guatemala's best interests in mind.

As president of Fundación Sergio Paiz Andrade (FunSEPA), Paiz—with his family and with corporate support—has put more than 11,000 computers in 700 Guatemalan schools in six years. The foundation has trained more than 45,000 teachers to use technology in the classroom.

As a co-founder of Guatemala Visible, he helps direct a nationwide government transparency movement, illuminating judicial nominations once marred by political corruption and fraud.

Paiz also sits on the board of Walmart Mexico and Central America. He uses contacts and influence to find funding for FunSEPA and to recruit support for Guatemala Visible.

A "symbiotic relationship" with Guatemala's minister of education helped FunSEPA. The government was able to pinpoint need in schools. FunSEPA handled the fundraising and resources.

"We never expected the minister of education to believe in us," Paiz said. "It was my mom and ourselves. No track record. Underfunded."

Money came slowly for FunSEPA, but it did eventually come, through Paiz's business life and his experience in the United States. Fundraising began with a "Leave Your Change for Education" program, encouraging customers to donate amounts of less than \$1 on each transaction at Walmart and other partners. Later, Microsoft became a benefactor.

"In the process, we've tried to be creative on raising funds," Paiz said. "You can imagine in a poor, third-world country, raising money for this sort of organization isn't easy."

Guatemala Visible was founded in a successful attempt to disrupt a Supreme Court nomination process Paiz believes was directed by corrupt businessmen and criminals. The group uploaded more than 2,000 résumés of judicial candidates to its website.

"One of the things that is concerning us as a country is our overall security and justice system," Paiz said.

"In a country like the U.S., that obviously gets a lot of attention. People understand the importance of the Supreme Court, the impact of the Supreme Court's decisions." But in Guatemala, he said, judicial appointments are a "black box, voodoo, hidden process that nobody really understood."

"We figured we would launch primarily a website, but really an education campaign to create awareness in Guatemala for the importance of institutions like the Supreme Court," he said.

"It turned out that a lot of these guys did have some very colorful records," Paiz said. "Of the original 13 (nominations), not one actually made it to the Supreme Court."