



News Release

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ARREY OBENSON RECRUITED TO LEAD INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ST. LOUIS AS ITS NEW PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Transformunity Co-Founder and CEO Recruited to Succeed Long-Time International Institute President and CEO Anna Crosslin

(ST. LOUIS) – Following a four-month national and local search producing more than 60 prospective candidates, International Institute of St. Louis (IISTL) Board Chair **Arindam Kar**, partner of Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP, announced today that **Arrey Obenson** has been selected to lead the International Institute as the organization’s next president and CEO, effective Feb. 1, 2021.

Obenson succeeds **Anna Crosslin**, who has led the International Institute as president and CEO since 1978. **Crosslin** transformed the International Institute into the key driver of the metropolitan area’s immigrant services and refugee resettlement programs. **Crosslin** announced in September, 2020 that she would retire in the early part of this new year. She will remain on board to provide for a seamless transition.

Obenson currently serves as co-founder and CEO of Transformunity, a firm that helps corporations and organizations harness opportunities to transform the world. Transformunity assists organizations in addressing complex challenges through strategy development, movement building, advocacy, and strategic events.

Prior to founding Transformunity, **Obenson** served as secretary general of Junior Chamber International (JCI), a global network of 150,000 young active citizens in more than 100 countries that empowers young people to create positive change in their communities. As JCI secretary general, **Obenson** was the chief administrative officer leading the implementation of the organization’s overall strategy and supervising a diverse and talented team in accomplishing the mission of the organization across the world. For 17 years, he led Junior Chamber International at various levels, including as director for Africa and the Middle East, executive director, and deputy secretary general.

Kar noted that the IISTL Board convened a Search Committee last September chaired by immediate Past Board Chair **Anh Pham-Nguyen**, managing director for Strategy & Innovation at Wells Fargo Advisors. The Committee’s work has been supported by search firm Kittleman & Associates of Chicago.

“**Arrey** is a visionary leader who is passionate about our mission and who has the expertise to ensure IISTL’s long-term impact as society and community needs rapidly change,” **Kar** said. “His career has been dedicated to empowering others to find solutions to the world’s biggest challenges. We are confident that his leadership, vision, and experience will inspire and strengthen us in building a more connected and productive society benefitting immigrants, their families, and the wider community. Moreover, **Arrey’s** leadership qualities and vision align with the comments, ideas, and thoughts that Kittleman & Associates and our Search Committee have received, both

informally and formally, from staff and stakeholders. This input was a critical component for the Position Guide and for the vetting of candidates during the search.”

“I am energized about the prospect of working with **Arindam Kar** and the entire Board of Directors, the accomplished International Institute staff and, of course, the highly-engaged International Institute volunteers,” **Obenson** noted. “I appreciate the opportunity to serve an organization that has performed so well as the region’s hub for immigrant services and community engagement.”

Obenson is a barrister of law, a member of the Cameroon Bar Association, and an inspiring speaker who has engaged audiences in nearly 100 countries. He moved to the U.S. in 2002 for a position at JCI and became a U.S. citizen in 2009.

Obenson holds a Master of Law degree from Washington University and resides in the St. Louis region with his wife, **Victorine**, and their two sons. **Obenson** is the author of the recently-published book, “Bridging the Opportunity Gap.”

About International Institute of St. Louis

The International Institute has provided resettlement and integration services for nearly every new immigrant population in the St. Louis region since 1919. Annually, more than 6,000 immigrants and refugees learn English, find jobs, become resettled and start businesses with our help. We build a strong, more global St. Louis by promoting the value of immigrants and multicultural inclusion. Learn more about us at www.iistl.org.

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