1. Bateys and marginalized communities with access to quality education

2. Increased social capital and economic opportunity

3. Systematic support for residents of bateys and other marginalized communities as they advocate and act for change

Our Vision

Yspaniola’s short-term goal is to create vertical access to quality education in Batey Libertad, from pre-K classes to university scholarships. Our long-term goal is to replicate these programs in other marginalized communities across the Dominican Republic, creating a network of individuals with access to social and economic capital who can advocate for themselves and their communities. To realize this vision, we will continue to facilitate service-learning trips and volunteer programs in order to strengthen the domestic and international coalitions that support civil and human rights in the country.

Values: Quality Education and Civic Participation

Programs

Pre-school
Learning Center
Teen Mentoring
Service Learning
Volunteer Programs
College Scholarships

Goals

1. Bateys and marginalized communities with access to quality education

2. Increased social capital and economic opportunity

3. Systematic support for residents of bateys and other marginalized communities as they advocate and act for change

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends,

My first year as the Executive Director of Yspaniola has been exciting, busy, and mind-opening. The educational need in Batey Libertad could not be more urgent, and at the same time, the enormous potential in the community is a powerful driving force. Providing educational opportunities to residents of Batey Libertad is at the heart of Yspaniola’s mission, and we have been inspired by progress this year thanks to our exceptional staff, volunteers, supporters from around the world, and dedicated students.

I am proud to announce that in 2016 we initiated an early childhood education classroom, allowing us to simultaneously provide instruction to multiple classes. We have expanded our local team and extended classroom hours. At the start of this 2016-2017 academic year, we welcomed 140 children to the Learning Center, more students than we have ever served before.

This year, we will continue to strengthen our relationship with the public schools, working in partnership with the Peace Corps. Many community schools are beginning to extend their school day to a full-day program, and we are adapting our Learning Center to this change. At the same time, we are growing our teacher-support program to help our teachers from Batey Libertad plan and execute effective instruction. With this ongoing initiative, we hope to continue building local capacity and increasing teacher agency in the classroom.

Our University Scholarship Program and Service Learning Program remain robust. This year, our third university scholar successfully graduated. All three graduates have found meaningful employment – see page 8 for more details about where they are now. Additionally, we hosted four week-long service-learning trips this year, and look forward to welcoming new trips in the coming year. Our trips are a great way to get involved in our work and learn about the importance of education in under-resourced communities.

With your support, we will continue to have an impact in Batey Libertad. We thank everyone whose contributions and donations sustain our work, and we welcome you to get directly involved. I look forward to a successful new year ahead of us.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your support!

Ani Yanachkova
Executive Director
The Learning Center

The Learning Center in Batey Libertad currently serves 140 students, split into 8 classes. This year, we have extended learning time, with students meeting for class Monday through Thursday and additional reading hours and homework assistance on Friday. For the first time, we are operating simultaneous classes in multiple classrooms, allowing for more literacy instruction. Our goals for the 2016-2017 academic year are to support our early childhood education programs, continue to increase student time on task, and train and support local teachers to take on more leadership roles and lesson planning within the Learning Center.

Students are learning to read earlier now than in 2014.

Early emerging readers are predominantly in 3rd and 4th grade, whereas in 2014 most of our students were learning to read in 4th and 5th grades.

Average student achievement has risen across every grade level since 2014.

Now, the average 6th grader in our Learning Center reads at a level that is a full year ahead of the average 6th grader in 2014.

Student attendance has increased across all classes.

Students attend the Learning Center voluntarily, so significant attendance improvement suggests students and families are satisfied with our programs.

Highlights from the 2015-2016 Academic Year

- Over 780 hours of classes and reading hours
- Enrollment of over 125 students, increasing to 140 students in 2016
- Additional classroom space for early childhood education programming
- Increased class time with an additional day of instruction each week, and fewer teacher development days
- Ongoing food program to provide healthy snacks to all students prior to class
- Regular in-house phonics assessments and Reading A-Z assessments
- Hiring an additional teacher, Mayra Rodriguez, who started in September, 2016

Monitoring and Evaluation

In 2014, we began a targeted reading intervention for students in first through seventh grade. Comparing our 2014 data to evaluations from 2016 allows us to see the impact that our programs have made in Batey Libertad.

There is a lot more work to be done to ensure students in Batey Libertad are achieving at the highest levels. Despite the impressive growth our students have made, the average 6th grader in Batey Libertad is still reading at only a 2nd grade level according to US standards. We are committed to closing the gap in the years to come, and credit the talent and hard work of our teachers and students for making huge strides toward this goal.
2016 Summer Camp

- Two and a half weeks of literacy, theater, art, sports, music, and health activities for 130 children aged 6-16
- New “Kinder” program focusing on early childhood education for children aged 6-7
- 40 local batey youth employed as camp teachers, counselors, and assistants
- 4 professional development and lesson planning workshops for 19 local teachers
- 3 days of pre-camp training for camp staff, including workshops in professionalism, teamwork, and behavior management strategies
- Daily meals to campers and staff, totaling 2,150 healthy lunches provided
- End of camp celebration and performance, with certificates and prizes for campers and staff

Community Census

This year, Yspaniola completed our first community census of Batey Libertad. Community leaders partnered with Yspaniola staff to develop questions that focused on demographics, education, and documentation. The census will allow Yspaniola to:

- Better tailor our education programs to meet community needs
- Give the community access to vital information for self-advocacy
- Measure baseline data to track community changes over time
- Provide useful information for multiple organizations working in the community

Look for an official census report in the coming year!

Service-Learning Trips

Yspaniola service-learning trips offer an opportunity to learn about Dominican-Haitian history and culture through homestays and activities in Batey Libertad, in-country travel, and workshops with local NGOs and activists. This year, Yspaniola hosted repeat trips from Yale University and the University of Delaware, and welcomed new trips from St. John’s University and Brookside Community Health Center. Additionally, Yspaniola hosted day-long trips from Global Glimpse, the City College of New York, and Santo Domingo-based Community for Learning High School. Highlights from 2016 include activities with community members to discuss issues of documentation, immigration, and education in the Batey, and structured time to process and reflect on daily experiences through journaling.

From our participants:

“The homestay helped me escape my comfort zone. For a few days [students] embrace what it means to live in a batey and focus on the important things in life such as building relationships and understanding how people live and communicate with each other.”

“This trip heavily influenced the way I want to approach my activism and service work in the future, to expand to a transnational level, and to do so in a sensitive and respectful way.”
Since the University Scholarship Program began in 2011, Yspaniola has supported three young adults from Batey Libertad to graduate from college. We are committed to ensuring that each of our scholars finds meaningful employment after graduation so that they can support themselves and their families and advocate for their community. Here is a glimpse of what our graduates have been up to since receiving their degrees.

**Julio Louis** graduated from UTESA in 2014 with a degree in Business Tourism Administration. He has since worked with multiple organizations, most recently for the Dream Project in Cabarete, supporting the ‘A Ganar’ program to give youth in under-resourced communities vocational training. One day he hopes to pursue a master’s degree in Operations Management, with the goal to develop sustainable socioeconomic programs to support bateys, in particular his hometown of Batey Libertad. Julio is also a talented musician, and has performed on several national television shows.

**Federico M. Charle** graduated from UTESA in July 2015 with a degree in Modern Languages. After graduation, he worked as a manager in several hotels. During the summer of 2016, he received a scholarship from the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education in Science and Technology (MESCyT) in order to pursue a one-year master’s program in Language and Literature from the University of Valencia in Spain. He arrived in Valencia in October and his studies are going well!

**Mayra Altagracia Rodriguez** graduated *cum laude* from UTESA in July 2016 with a degree in Education in Natural Sciences. With multiple job offers after graduation, she accepted a position in September as our newest teacher in the Batey Libertad Learning Center. Mayra has always wanted to work with Yspaniola, but did not expect the opportunity to present so quickly. She is excited about her new role, and hopes to inspire her students to love their studies as she did growing up.

**Ramón Leonardo Sánchez Gómez** has been studying medicine at the Technological University of Santiago (UTESA) with an Yspaniola scholarship since 2012. With two years of study remaining, he hopes to specialize in surgery. Outside of school, Ramón enjoys studying languages, dedicating many hours to learning English during the past academic year. He is motivated by a desire to help his family and community. We can’t wait for Batey Libertad to welcome Ramón as its first trilingual surgeon!

**María Fernanda Liranzo Nunes**, known as Dariana, studies primary education at the Mao campus of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD). After learning about Yspaniola while working on a community initiative to help mothers in 2012, she applied for a scholarship and began her studies in September 2014. Her family has also become involved with Yspaniola, hosting service-learning students. Dariana’s commitment and enthusiasm will pay off when she completes her degree in 2018.

**Federico M. Charle** graduated from UTESA in July 2015 with a degree in Modern Languages. After graduation, he worked as a manager in several hotels. During the summer of 2016, he received a scholarship from the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education in Science and Technology (MESCyT) in order to pursue a one-year master’s program in Language and Literature from the University of Valencia in Spain. He arrived in Valencia in October and his studies are going well!
Thank you to our donors and supporters! Our work would not be possible without your generosity.

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2015 - 2016 Finances

Income $218,017

Donations: $58,784 (27%)
Service-Learning + Internship fees: $50,231 (23%)
Foundation grants: $95,021 (44%)
Expenses: $15,911 (6%)

Expenses $215,327

(a) Learning Center: 100,073
(b) Service-Learning and Internship Programs: $45,528
(c) University Scholarship Programs: $24,105
(d) Administrative costs: $16,695
(e) Fundraising: $15,324
(f) Summer Camp and Community Projects: $14,402

From October 1, 2015, through September 30, 2016

All fundraising and administrative costs are supported by board contributions and grants for these specific expenses. 100% of donations to Yspaniola go toward programming.
At Yspaniola, we are always looking for ways to get people involved. If you are interested in learning more or have any questions or suggestions, we would love to hear from you! Contact us at info@yspaniola.org

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