EDUCATION ACROSS BORDERS

ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016

Transforming Communities Through Relationship
Dear Friends,

EAB proudly presents you our 2015-2016 Annual Report. In these pages you will learn about the transformational work we do in partnership with extremely marginalized communities in the Dominican Republic-- work that also has a tremendous effect in the U.S. This year we have made significant investments in the future: moving to a new office, investing in Dominican staff, and increasing the reach and quality of our various programs. We built our 98th home project, congratulated our 62nd high school graduate and 9th college graduate, took our 53rd service immersion group to the DR, and began to develop new partnerships with organizations like Rotary and Peace Corps. With this new infusion of energy, we sense exciting new horizons. I hope you will share my pride in all that we have done-- all that your support has helped to make happen.

John McLaughlin
EAB Director and Co-Founder

EDUCATION ACROSS BORDERS

Education Across Borders (EAB) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a history of transforming communities-- and the individuals within them-- through holistic, partnership-based encounters and programs. Our organization emerged from humble roots, as young US adults sought to respond to the poverty and marginalization they witnessed in immersion experiences in the Dominican Republic (DR). Today, in that same spirit, and with a track record of long-term results, EAB works in partnership with marginalized communities in the Dominican Republic to co-create solutions to extreme poverty.

All of EAB’s work emerges out of a unique model that blends our emphasis on long-term relationships with a commitment to concrete results. Our approach is based in listening, collaboration, and subsidiarity (the notion that those closest to the problem often have the best ideas about its resolution). EAB has dedicated itself to ongoing partnerships with small rural communities in the DR; these communities have experienced dramatic, positive transformations in their physical environment, their quality of life, and especially in the expanded opportunities of their young people.

These accomplishments, and the programmatic decisions that guide them, all emerge from our ongoing dialogue with the Dominican communities. Rather than import pre-planned, foreign projects, EAB’s US-based founding Director and Board of Directors respond to and support the expressed needs of the DR-based Governance Committee, which is composed of long-time community leaders. In time, EAB’s programs evolved into a three-part, holistic response, in the areas of: Health, Education, and Service-Learning. As one of our community leaders once put it: “How can you get an education if you’re always sick? And what good is that education if it doesn’t serve your community?”

Jahayra
Jahayra is from Franco Bidó in the mountains of the DR. Jahayra worked hard to follow her dreams and her enthusiasm for learning helped her to secure a high school scholarship and then a college scholarship. She graduated from the University of Santiago in December 2015 - the first in her community to ever earn a college degree. And she has inspired others: her friend Yanira will follow in her footsteps - thanks to the support of our donors. Yanira began her studies at the University of Santiago in January 2016 and hopes to become a teacher. We are confident she will succeed.
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Like many of its neighbors in the Caribbean and Latin America, the DR experiences tremendous extremes of inequality and hardship. Despite having the largest overall economy of the Caribbean and Central America, 41% of its population lives in poverty. It also receives many migrants from Haiti, who are driven by extreme poverty and grave instability to seek a better life in the DR.

The communities with which EAB partners are microcosms of the complicated but rich reality of the DR:

FRANCO BIDÓ is a rural community in the Cordillera Central mountain range. Most of the 100 or so families earn a livelihood through coffee farming, and continue to maintain the agrarian campesino lifestyle so central to the Dominican experience. Economic downturns have forced residents of rural communities nationwide to migrate to urban areas or to other countries, and Franco Bidó feels these pressures too. Increasingly, Haitian migrants come to the community to fill the labor shortage on coffee farms.

BATEY LIBERTAD is a community of migrant farmworkers and their families. Like most bateyes, it was originally founded by the Dominican government to house Haitian laborers brought under duress to cut sugarcane. Once the government abandoned the region's sugar industry in the mid-1980s, residents turned to work in the rice plantations that arose in sugar's stead. Currently, Batey Libertad is home to Haitians, Dominicans of Haitian descent, and Dominicans forced to the margins of society: about 1000 permanent residents, and more seasonally. Many people in the community speak both Kreyol and Spanish. Two years ago we initiated our first formal projects in BATEY DOS, a neighboring community to Batey Libertad that shares many of its characteristics.

When students and other early supporters first came to know these communities in the 1990s and early 2000s, the afflictions of poverty were harsh: sanitation was rudimentary or non-existent, basic health care was difficult to access, and many families lacked decent housing. Many children and young people dropped out of school at an early age to work; few residents had graduated high school and none had ever attended college. Despite these hardships, community leaders in Franco Bidó and Batey Libertad were resourceful and visionary.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS – THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT

EDUCATION:
• Currently supporting 33 students at university, technical school, and secondary levels
• Graduates to date: 62 high school; 5 trade school; 9 college
• School supplies to 25 or more primary school students annually; adult literacy program; summer school camp led by current EAB scholarship recipients

HOUSING, BASIC HEALTH CARE, AND SANITATION:
• 98 new home projects; designs, skilled labor, and volunteer labor from Dominican communities; additional volunteer labor from visiting US service teams
• Free-access community clinics, providing basic healthcare and medicine
• 65 basic latrines and 28 composting latrines

CULTURE OF SERVICE:
• In 2015-16, EAB hosted 47 US volunteers who contributed 13,716 hours; 15 Dominican volunteers contributed 2,410 hours
• 53 student immersion groups since 1999
• For every dollar donated, EAB leverages $4 of in-kind services
STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

United States

John McLaughlin
Director and Co-Founder

Jo Jo Bromfield
Administrative Staff

David Lester
Immersion Program Staff

Genesee McCarthy
Immersion Program Staff

Dominican Republic

Felicia Puntiel Pichardo
Program Director and Co-Founder
Franco Bido, DR

William Poleýo José
Program Director and Co-Founder
Batey Libertad, DR

Yanlicio Munési Dusdal
Project Coordinator & Academic Mentor

VOLUNTEER LEADERS

Spring Fiesta Annual Event

Raquel Sanchez
Patricia Díaz-Kismarton
Sixta Morel
Patty Helberg-Smukowski
Robin Heil
Joan Packard
Katherine Logan

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