

# EDUCATION ACROSS BORDERS SERVICE-LEARNING IMMERSION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## *Two-Week Summer Program*

This program offers participants a unique opportunity to know and come into solidarity with people from a variety of backgrounds. We will journey to the Dominican Republic, immersing ourselves in its rich history and culture, and meet the poor—in their own communities, on their own terms—so as to understand their reality and the reality of most of our world. Participants will be challenged to grow intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually as they become intimately familiar with the life of coffee growers (and the impact of Direct Trade coffee), of city dwellers who work in the sweatshop industry, and of Haitian immigrants who harvest sugar cane and other crops. Participants will stay in the homes of Dominican families for part of this experience. The group will be invited to collaborate in on-going community development projects that address the roots and manifestations of poverty in this country. Reflection, in both individual and daily shared-prayer format, will form an integral part of our experience.

### PROGRAM ITINERARY

#### Day 1: **arrive in Santiago/Puerto Plata**

Orientation at retreat center; primers on realities of life in the DR  
Evening meal and prayer at retreat center

#### Day 2: **visit to Santiago/Puerto Plata;**

historical/cultural tour of city  
*La Raza Dominicana*: Tainos, Spaniards, and West Africans  
King Sugar: legacy of colonialism  
DR/US relations  
Option for the Poor: What does it mean, here and now?

#### Days 3-8: **visit to Franco Bidó, Juncalito**

Group stays with families in the community  
Collaboration in community project: *Construcción de casas* (home construction)  
Coffee Crisis: a community's perspective and response  
Focus on Education/Health/Youth (talks and/or exchange)  
Celebration of Eucharist; shared daily prayer

#### Day 8: **return from Franco Bidó to retreat center**

Talk about *el campo* (life in the country); processing, and preparing for the future  
Evening meal and shared prayer

#### Day 9: **visit to Santiago: Cien Fuegos and One Respe**

The hope of the city—fact or fiction?  
Life inside and out of the sweatshops  
The Church standing with the poor: conversation with a deacon in a Santiago neighborhood  
*Taller de Artesanía*: hand-made gifts and books that support a local non-profit

#### Days 10-12: **visit to Batey Libertad, Esperanza**

Immigrant life, including perspectives on racism  
Human Rights of “Invisible” Haitians  
Collaboration in community project: *Construcción de casas* (home construction)

#### Day 13: **closing rituals; return to US**

What's Your Response? What Will We Build?