

OYE el Cambio

Hear the Change...

"Thank you to everyone for your continued support of OYE. It is reflected in all of the work that we do, and with it we are able to carry forward."

-Ivelis Nieto, 16, OYE Scholar



OYE = Change in 2011

Looking back on 2011, OYE has accomplished a lot. From a massive COPA OYE sports tournament that involved over 1,500 youth, to environmental projects in El Progreso and Cayos Cochinos, to *Arte La Calle's* creation of new *Estilo OYE* bracelets, to capacity building classes, and to scholarships that enable 91 students to access local secondary and university education – just to name a few achievements – OYE has made a significant and positive impact on the youth in El Progreso.

Despite all of this progress, the reality that the youth of Honduras find themselves in remains grim. Young Hondurans are still dropping out of school by the tens of thousands. Unemployment levels combined with a lack of education, disintegrated families, frightened and distrustful communities, and a lack of recreation opportunities, among other variables, continue to draw too many youth to a more destructive life path that includes violence, drugs, and criminal involvement.

The obstacles these youth must overcome on a daily basis are immense. Fortunately, at OYE youth are committed to working towards making their country a better place. Change from within is never easy; if it were it would already be done. Real change – change you can touch and feel – happens only when you begin your journey with an open mind, unite with your peers, and strive to help one another grow. This is what we do at OYE. We support each other's dreams, we push our friends to be better and know that they are there to do the same in return.

It is with wide and hopeful eyes that OYE's youth are looking forward to 2012. Thank you for your continued support of OYE and for being a part of this monumental change.

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Did you know?

Honduras has the highest number of gang members in all of Central America?

OYE Program Highlights of 2011

OYE El Ritmo: A Learning Experience

“Hand-in-hand with having fun, the youth of the radio have had unforgettable experiences this year. At the same time, they have put their knowledge to practice. We are shooting for more in 2012.” –Yarli Yanes, Youth Coordinator

Revista Jóvenes: A More Unified Group

“We reached more youth than ever before, both by handing out our magazine to high schools and with the online version. We developed a more objective point of view through all of the capacity building classes we received and have carried out interviews with people throughout the community, including the municipality. We have also learned more about design, a skill we hope to continue developing in 2012.” –Fabiola Oro, Youth Coordinator

Arte La Calle: A Lesson in Resourcefulness

“We were able to bring art to the community, both in El Progreso and all the way to Cayos Cochinos. With each project, youth were able to express themselves through art, allowing people to understand how we feel through positive messages that seek to liberate the dreams we have.” –Gerald Velasquez, Youth Coordinator

COPA OYE: Becoming Champions

“COPA OYE was a beautiful and unique experience. There are no words to describe what it means to me – to see the participation of so many youth and their motivation to become champions.” –Iloany Ochoa, Youth Coordinator



Youth from *OYE El Ritmo* entertaining kids on the National Day of the Child.

National Day of the Child

Our goal on the Day of the Child was to spend time with kids from different communities in El Progreso, Yoro. Nearly all OYE youth split up and arrived to seven different locations. Some were very poor schools in former banana plantation fields, some were schools for kids with special needs, and others were schools and kindergartens in the area. We brought piñatas, which we made at OYE and donated. Some OYE youth shared cake and drinks with the communities. *OYE El Ritmo* entertained hundreds of kids with games, improvised theatrical performances, and dance competitions. Overall, it was a memorable day that allowed youth with very little support to feel good about themselves.

–Gerald Velasquez

Meet Rosa Sevilla Yorleni, OYE Youth

Find out how one young woman has grown during her time at OYE.



studies and choose a career focus. I chose information technology, and in my classes I met Sandra Fiallos, who told me about an organization that provides youth with capacity building on topics like the Honduran reality, academic scholarships, and fun activities in the arts and sports. What initially drew my attention to OYE were the radio program and [English classes](#). Later, I decided to visit the organization, where OYE's staff explained to me what I needed to do to win a scholarship. After handing in my application, OYE called me to tell me that I was a *becada*. I was so happy.

After becoming a *becada*, I took part in the capacity building classes on the National Reality, Self-Esteem, and Leadership. Thanks to our director, who taught us how to create and run projects, I started working in the [La Calle](#) art program where I work with my friends to paint murals, make lots of bracelets out of recycled soda tabs, and improve my artistic abilities.

Through all of the capacity classes that empower us as OYE scholars, we are motivated to set goals for ourselves to become leaders, to feel more confident, and to set examples for others. Ever since I joined OYE, I have changed the way I think, and it's now much easier for me to express my ideas since I'm not as shy as I used to be.

At OYE, I participate in so many projects, including ones that benefit the environment. I am trying to have as much of a positive impact as possible since OYE has impacted me in so many ways.

Name: Rosa Sevilla Yorleni

Age: 18

Major: Business Administration

Family: 2 Parents and 7 brothers and sisters

Thanks to my family, I was able to reach one of my biggest goals in life - graduating from high school - but the road wasn't always easy.

In my final months of high school were very difficult times for my family. Aside from our economic problems, the death of my brother was a huge blow to us all. Those things actually stopped me from studying, and my parents told me that it was better that I find a job instead of studying since it didn't seem worth it to have a daughter in school. At the time, I felt so bad because I wanted to continue studying, but I couldn't.

Thankfully, over time we were able to escape those problems, which meant I could continue my

Human Rights Defender Talks Diversity



OYE received a visit from Dunia Orellana, a 28-year-old human rights defender, film student, and journalist from [La Prensa](#) (Honduras's most widely read newspaper). Dunia came to speak with local youth about the topic of diversity in Honduras, with a focus on sexual diversity.

Dunia began the workshop with an icebreaker in which each of the participants split up by month of birth and shared their interests to the rest of the group. The icebreaker went to show how different each and every person was at the workshop and proved why diversity is such an important topic of conversation.

After a fun icebreaker, Dunia initiated the dialogue on sexual diversity by detailing certain relevant rights in the Honduran constitution, such as the right to the sanctity of life and the freedom of expression. Dunia mentioned that Honduras is an at-risk country for transgender people, since a disproportionate number of transgender individuals have been murdered over the past five years compared to homicide rates in other countries.

Participating youth launched into a conversation about a topic that received near daily media attention – the debate over whether or not to allow [Ricky Martin](#), an openly gay pop star, to enter the country to give his October concert in Tegucigalpa. The Evangelical Church submitted a request to the state to deny allowing Ricky to enter the country, arguing that his presence could have a negative impact on Honduran youth. The government has since stated that not allowing Ricky to perform would be "[an act of intolerance and a condemnable act of homophobia](#)."

Dunia helped participating youth analyze the issue from a constitutional perspective, using the freedom of expression to show that an artist does have the right to express his or herself freely in Honduras. Youth agreed, with some arguing that because Ricky Martin has been giving concerts around the world ever since he was a teenager (and well before he "came out") that it would be unfair to misconstrue his impact as an artist simply because he is now openly gay.

The dialogue shifted to other topics, including discrimination in schools, the failure of parents to have serious and adult discussions about sexuality with their children, and the beauty of diversity in varying contexts in Honduras and around the world.

Overall, the workshop was a fantastic opportunity to hear from a local and promising leader who fights on daily basis to make her country a more equal and more democratic place that respects the rights and liberties of all, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or any other social status. Many thanks to Dunia for coming to OYE and for providing the youth of El Progreso with such an enriching experience.



Magda Reyes

OYE scholar Magda Reyes has recently graduated Suma Cum Laude from the National Autonomous University of Honduras with a degree in pedagogy. Not only that, but she is the valedictorian of her graduating class.

In her own words, Magda decided to express her thanks to the OYE family for all they have done to support her.

"OYE was the critical piece that enabled me to complete my education and receive my degree in teaching and educational sciences. I would like to thank OYE from the bottom of my heart for the help you have provided me and for raising my self-esteem day after day. My thanks to all of you are infinite, and I hope that you will continue showing youth that they are the present of our country. You helped me discover the potential that I have as a leader. Please do all that you can to keep showing that to the youth of our country and, above all, our city.

"These four years that I have been a part of OYE have served me greatly, and my experience working with youth has served me to better value my two children and to understand their needs.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I leave OYE giving my thanks and hope to continue forward."

Become a part of the OYE family...make a change!

Your support has carried us through times of political turmoil to allowing us to grow our scholarship program. When we started, we only had the resources to provide 5 scholarships a year. But thanks to people who believed in the untapped potential of the youth of El Progreso, we have grown into a multi-faceted youth development organization that now supports 91 scholars per year.

By making a gift to OYE, you can have a tremendous impact on our ability to offer more scholarships and enhance our leadership development programs for Honduran youth.

Remember that your scholarship support is just the beginning. Each scholarship liberates OYE youth from the destructive path of gang involvement, violence, and drugs and allows them to focus on their education and development. The challenges that Honduran youth face today are not new, nor are they easily solved. However, OYE is helping develop a generation of leaders who are equipped with the tools and education necessary for making a difference. **Be a part of the change!**



To make a donation to OYE, checks can be made out to "Organization for Youth Empowerment" and sent to:

Organization for Youth Empowerment
3351 18th Street, Washington, DC 30010

You can also make secure online payments on our webpage at www.oyehonduras.org.

