



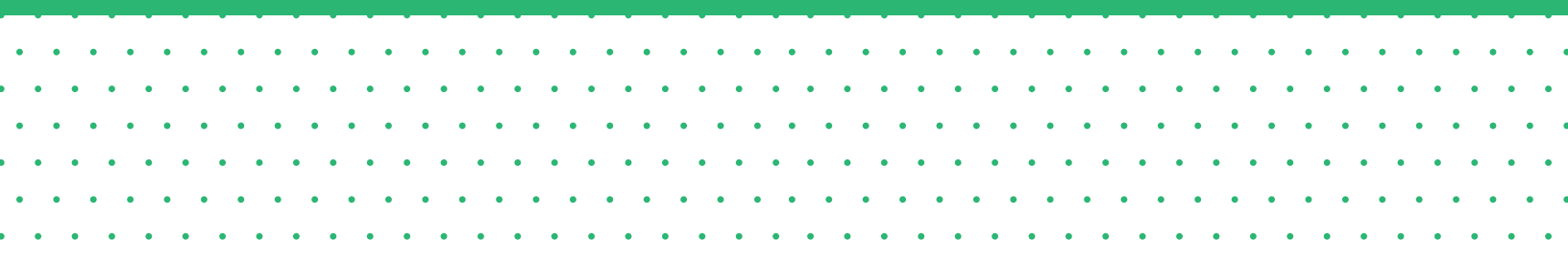
María and Cecerica



**YSPAN10LA**

— CELEBRATING 10 YEARS —

**Yspaniola 10th Anniversary *Special Edition* Annual Report**





## Dear Friend of Yspaniola,

It's an honor to write this note as Yspaniola enters its 10th year working with the enthusiastic children of Batey Libertad. Since 2009, Yspaniola has proudly watched as four talented individuals have graduated from our University Scholarship Program; today, we support five scholars studying subjects ranging from primary education to tourism and hotel management. Our younger students have grown and developed critical literacy skills in the Learning Center. As our successful Kinder program enters its second year, we are continuing to ensure that Yspaniola's youngest learners are fully prepared when they reach public school.

The integration of the full school day in the Dominican Republic has affected our programming, but our fantastic teaching team's flexible and dedicated approach has enabled us to adapt and foster the continued academic success of Batey Libertad's next generation.

Thank you for supporting these efforts!

**Amy Porter**  
*Executive Director*





# OUR VISION

# THE PROBLEM

Yspaniola envisions an inclusive Dominican Republic that provides access to high-quality education and promotes the human rights of all people.

Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic face systemic discrimination that prevents them from accessing basic civil and human rights. Because of this, opportunities for employment outside of the informal labor market are scarce, and many people are limited to living in underserved batey communities.

## OUR PILLARS

### High-Quality Literacy Education

The Dominican education system is consistently ranked as one of the worst in the world. Many students from bateys and other marginalized communities fall behind and are unable to master basic reading and writing skills. At Yspaniola, we strive to provide children with the best possible start to their education by offering literacy-focused curriculum to students ages four to seventeen.

### Right to Identity and Social Inclusion

We help protect students' right to reside in the country where they were born, and we work to reduce the threat of deportation. Since 2013, Yspaniola has run multiple documentation initiatives to help Batey Libertad residents access health care and travel without fear.

### University Scholarships

We offer scholarships to talented individuals whose families cannot afford a college education. Our programs aim to support students to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to advocate for themselves and their community. This allows them to participate more fully as members of Dominican society.

### Outreach and Advocacy

Cross-border solidarity and local outreach are at the core of Yspaniola's work. We partner with universities, high schools, and churches outside of the Dominican Republic and NGOs, civil society organizations, and volunteers in-country. Through these efforts, we establish support networks and collaborate with others to advocate for social justice.



Johnny and Yerlina



# Superstar Students

*Meet Paulino & Idelove*

**Paulino**, 17, was born and raised in Batey Libertad with his two brothers and four sisters.

“In school, all of my friends knew how to read at least a little in Spanish but not me. The teacher would make us present in class but I couldn’t do it because I couldn’t read or write,” he said.

At age seven, Paulino began attending Yspaniola’s Learning Center. Through years of dedicated attendance, he has gained important academic knowledge that will pave the way for a professional career unattainable for many batey youth.

“The biggest obstacles in this community [are] that there are lots of young people who have graduated high school and cannot enter a good profession because of a lack of funds or legal identity documents. They try to find work in stores, auto repair shops, or agricultural plants to earn money, get some ID documentation and pay for their studies to become professionals.”

“With these skills, I have more options for what I do for work. Learning to read and write in Spanish has changed my life,” he said. Paulino hopes to become a Spanish or social science teacher in the future.

**Idelove**, 16, also grew up in Batey Libertad, with her mom, stepfather and two younger siblings.

Idelove only spoke Creole until the age of five, when her stepfather taught her Spanish. She began attending Yspaniola’s Learning Center in 2009 and rapidly progressed academically. She skipped Yspaniola’s class 4 because she was so advanced and reached the highest reading level quickly. She now tutors a younger peer through our mentoring initiative.

“I like being a mentor because I like teaching another person everything that I have learned.”

Idelove has many goals for her life, including moving outside the batey, graduating from university, learning many languages, and getting to know more people.

“I want to surround myself with people who bring out the best in me and challenge me to be the ideal version of myself.”

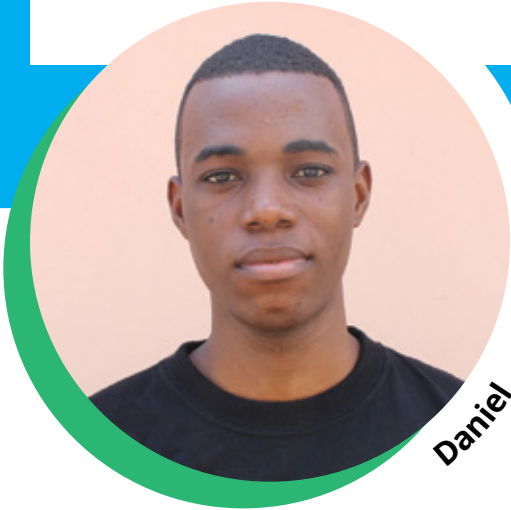


# University Scholarship Program

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Yspaniola currently has five accomplished students in our University Scholarship Program. Scholars receive full academic funding and professional development opportunities.

We aim to support the scholars holistically so that they can succeed in school and become leaders in their community.



Daniel

“When I finish my studies, I want to stay involved with this wonderful team and help my family and community, especially the young people who don’t have access to higher education.”

“It’s important to have more university students in the batey because the majority of older residents, like my mother, haven’t finished their studies or started professional careers. Through Yspaniola, we have opportunities that our parents never did. Now, people will know there are leaders here in Batey Libertad.”



Sofia

“When I found out that I was chosen as a scholar, I was so happy to have help receiving my degree in modern languages. That night I was crying because I couldn’t believe it. The scholarship will be very impactful for me and my family because I’ll be able to contribute to the development of youth in Batey Libertad.”



Rosa

# 10 MILE- STONES

Yale University students visit Batey Libertad and found Yspaniola as a student group.

| 2005

| 2009

| 2010

The Learning Center opens, providing a formal space for Yspaniola's supplementary education programs. The organization also purchases a local house and converts it into a preschool classroom.

| 2012

| 2013

María Fernanda Liranzo becomes the fifth university scholar.

| 2015

Yspaniola is officially incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Federico Charle and Mayra Rodríguez are chosen as the first participants of our University Scholarship Program.

Julio Louis and Ramón Sánchez are selected as our third and fourth university scholars.





Mayra and Likson

The full school day launches in Batey Libertad! Yspaniola pilots a brand-new Kinder class for four-year-olds, and our Learning Center teachers begin delivering classes in the public school.



YASC Volunteers and Leidy

**| 2017**

Yspaniola's sixth and seventh scholars, Sofía Jean and Daniel Joseph María, are announced.

**| 2018**

**| 2019**

The Yale Service Alumni Corps runs its first trip to Batey Libertad with over 50 participants, the biggest group Yspaniola has ever hosted!

**| 2019**

Rosalinda José and Samuel Joseph Deshommes are chosen as Yspaniola's newest university scholars.

*for* **10** **YEARS**





# Batey Libertad Learning Center

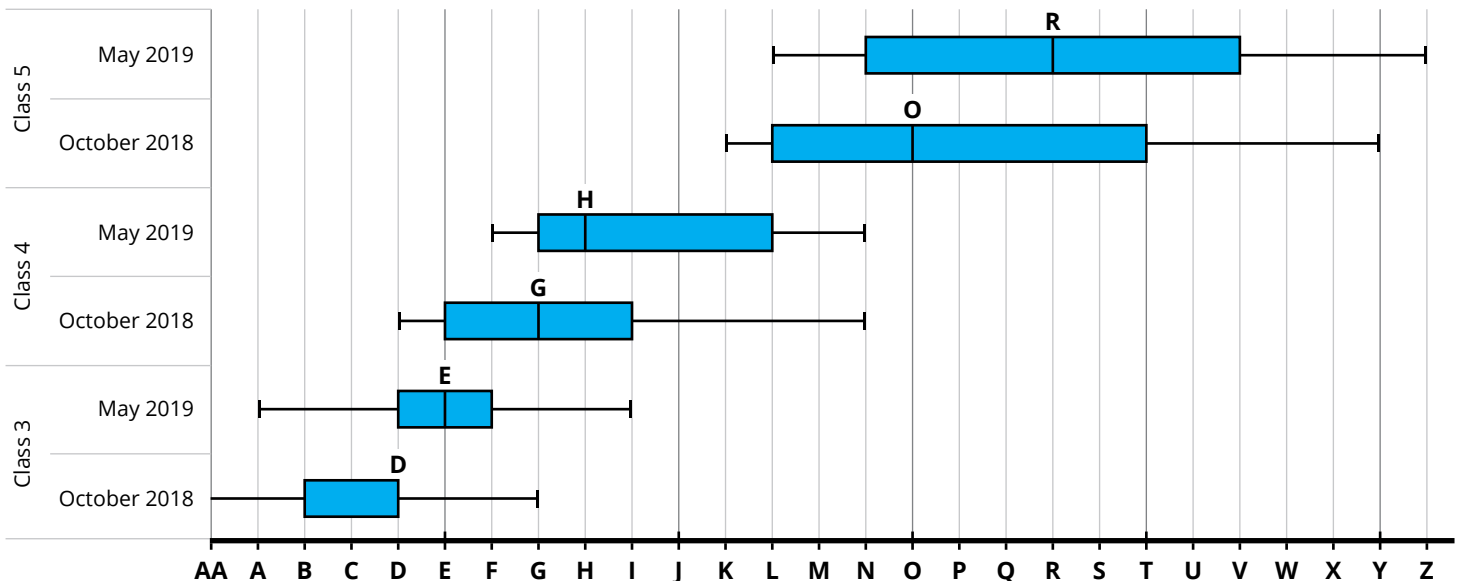
In 2011, the Dominican government announced its plan to extend public school hours to a full 8-hour school day, or *tanda extendida*. The change arrived in Batey Libertad in 2018, but the local school still lacks sufficient trained teachers and resources. Yspaniola now supports the public school by delivering our literacy-focused classes there in the afternoons and providing after-school sessions to students from grades 6 and above in the Learning Center.

The Dominican Republic's education system ranks 137th in quality out of 144 countries worldwide

- USAID, 2013

Berline

The A-Z Reading Level System uses reading evaluations to assess student progress on a scale from AA-Z. The graph below shows the progress made by students in classes 3-5. Highest and lowest scores are indicated by the black whiskers. The outer edges of the blue bars mark the lower and upper quartile values. The median letter scores are in black.





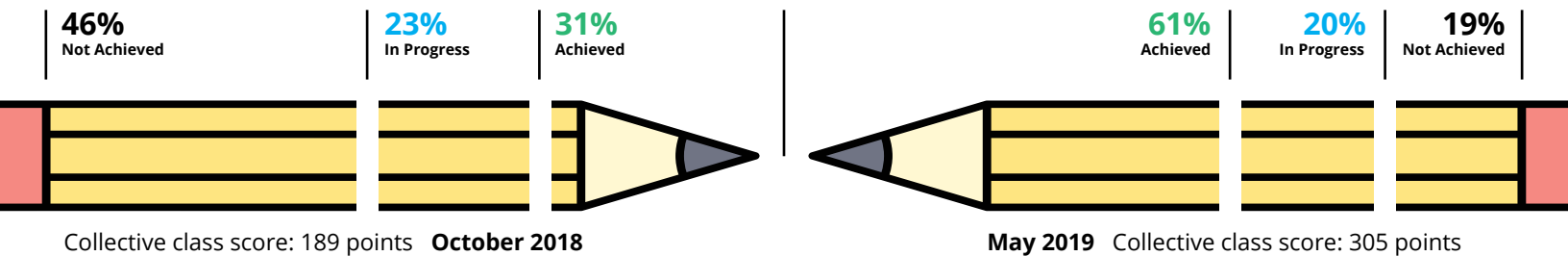


José Angel

# Focusing on Early Childhood Development: Our New Kinder Class

During the 2018-19 year, Yspaniola began offering classes to four-year-olds for the first time. Our Kinder class focuses on developing participants' fine motor skills and foundational academic comprehension. Students learn basic concepts such as their first and last names, the primary colors, and the names and sounds of vowels.

Our 16 Kinder students' progress was evaluated in October 2018, February 2019, and May 2019 on a 30-point scale.

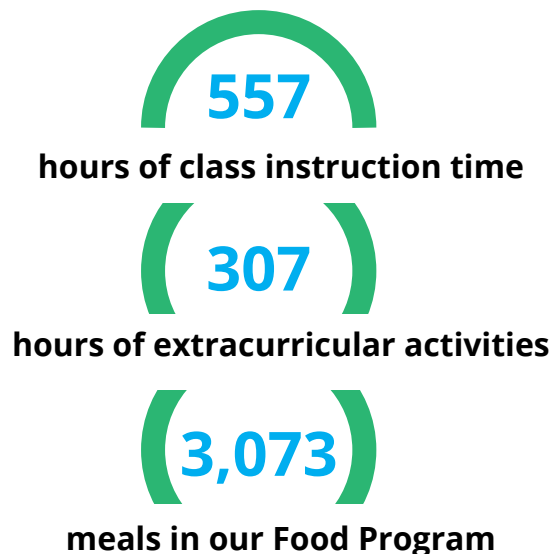


## After School: The Learning Goes On

In September 2018, we expanded Reading Hour to include more teaching time and comprehensive lesson plans. Now, students enjoy interactive videos, academic games, worksheets, and creative art projects that reinforce what they are learning in school.

Class 6 is a voluntary, twice-weekly class for students who have reached Z, our highest reading comprehension level. This year, there were 13 participants, which is the largest number of advanced readers we have ever had in our programs at one time! The majority of the students in class 6 volunteer as mentors for our emerging readers.

This year, Yspaniola provided:



Mylove



Yale Alumni Service Corps volunteers

# Service Learning Trips

In March, Yspaniola welcomed over 40 alumni and six student volunteers from Yale Alumni Service Corps! The group partnered with community members to build a new wall and paint two beautiful murals in our preschool. Classes and workshops that the participants delivered included: arts and crafts, baseball, coding and engineering, color theory, music, dance, business consulting, creative writing, and public health. Yspaniola is proud to continue our partnership with Yale University as we work for educational equity in the Dominican Republic.

We were also delighted to host 11 students from the University of Delaware Honors Program who engaged in discussions and cultural exchange with Batey Libertad residents. The group visited human rights organizations and an ethical textile factory in Santo Domingo.



Mia and Endi

# Summer Camp

Our 2019 Summer Camp was made possible thanks to the incredible support of our four international volunteers! Michael, Jimmie, Diego, and Ronin worked with Yspaniola's local staff and camp counselors to deliver fun programs in theater, technology, sports, arts, dance, and music to students four to 16 years old. Additionally, we were able to provide daily lunches for all participants. Thank you so much!



Michael and David





Julio Louis

## Documentation

An estimated 200,000 Dominicans of Haitian descent were left stateless and disenfranchised when a ruling by the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal revoked birthright citizenship in 2013. The steps required by the government for citizenship reacquisition are challenging and convoluted for individuals who face socioeconomic and linguistic barriers. Yspaniola's Operations Director, Julio Louis, identifies the widespread lack of access to legal identity documents as a key factor that prevents young adults from full citizenship rights. Julio has supported documentation efforts in Batey Libertad since 2015 and has worked to support Dominicans of Haitian descent in certifying their children's citizenship status since his appointment at Yspaniola in 2017. We hope to expand our documentation efforts in the future.

Since 2015, Yspaniola has supported the participation of **76** Dominicans of Haitian descent and **159** Haitian nationals in government initiatives to obtain documents that allow them to reside legally in the country.

Less than **10%** of those affected by the 2013 court ruling have had their nationality restored.

*(Center for Justice and International Law, 2019)*

Only **20%** of Dominicans born to immigrant parents possess a national identity card.

*(Dominican National Immigrant Survey, 2017)*

"In 2005, I was present in Batey Libertad when a violent raid took place in the community. Immigration officers burst into homes at 5am demanding documents and making arbitrary arrests of residents, many of whom were deported to Haiti. Among those arrested were young people and students, including Dominican citizens of Haitian descent who possessed Dominican ID cards. The fear of arrest, deportation and discrimination based on skin color affects every aspect of life in batey communities. Yspaniola was founded in

2009 to address these inequities, with a vision of enabling youth from bateys to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and have greater agency over their futures. Ten years after Yspaniola's foundation, we are proud to continue to stand with and advocate for our talented family of students, staff and scholars."



Cynthia So-Armah

*Yspaniola Board Chairwoman*



**We are thankful for your support  
over the last 10 years!**



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