

# ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

First of February 2011



## 1. Summary

- a. Cucuyo: Creative Exploration in the Dominican Republic, with seats in Athens, Georgia, USA and Bonao, Dominican Republic, works with Dominican youth who come from underserved social sectors and American teenagers from a multitude of social and economic backgrounds. Our program focuses on theatre and art instruction, with a wide variety of artistic mediums taught. We provide workshops that stimulate creativity and intellect, improve craftsmanship, foster peaceful cross-cultural human relations and understanding, and assist in the healthy mental development of teens.
- b. We hope to attract adolescents from uprooted or non-nuclear families, those lacking educational opportunities, those with low self-esteem, and youth with a desire to learn about the arts and share their cultures with others. Cucuyo works for the benefit of individuals and families who are socially and economically vulnerable and who lack or desire greater access to artistic programming.
- c. Cucuyo is a nonprofit organization duly registered under the law.

## 2. Our Vision

- a. To foster a sense of self-worth, ownership, and accomplishment among all participants within a safe, supportive, non-competitive environment.
- b. To provide free, accessible, high-quality art programming for Dominican youth, thereby enriching and supporting their community, the arts community, and the city of Bonao.
- c. To provide affordable, intercultural, high-quality art programming for American youth in a setting that encourages them to be global citizens.
- d. To provide a unique and stimulating cross-cultural arts experience to Dominican and American teens at an early age.
- e. To be sustainable and available to the community day after day, year after year.
- f. To be a model for future community intercultural art centers.

## 3. Documented Necessity

- a. **Poverty rates.** The Dominican Republic has a population of 9,615,000 habitants (UNICEF), about 2.4 million of whom are between 5 and 17 years old (Dominican secretary of infantile labor). In the Dominican Republic, the principal challenges for youth are to overcome inequality and poverty. The Dominican Republic is the 11th poorest country in Latin America, with a GDP per head of \$4,871 (blx.com). Forty-nine percent of youth between the ages of 13 and 18 years old live in poverty, and 220,000 youth ages 17 and younger are orphans (UNICEF).
- b. **Education and familial disintegration.** The quality and relevance of education are significant problems in the Dominican Republic. Only 50 percent of children who enroll in primary education complete the first four years, a mere 22 percent finish the full eight-year program of primary education, and only 10 percent of Dominican youth finish high school (savethechildren.org). Poverty affects whether children are able to complete their educations; many families are unable to afford the direct and indirect costs of school. In addition, domestic violence impacts many Dominican families by leading to family disintegration and a culture of violence. Infant and youth sexual exploitation, drug consumption, and gang violence are also alarming realities (UNICEF).
- c. **Increase in violence and drugs.** The Dominican Republic is currently a place where illicit drugs are trafficked from South America to the United States; as a result, increasing numbers of gangs, delinquents, arms contraband, and an increase in the rate of theft are linked (Georgetown University). The number of homicides in the Dominican Republic has also increased from years past. In 2005, the national police reported a homicide rate of 26.41 out of 100,000, a rate as high as other countries like Brazil (Brazilian Ministry of Health/ Ministerio Brasileño de Salud). This rate is double that of 2000. Additionally, an increasing number of youth are seduced by the power and status of gun ownership in their local communities in light of a society marked by profound social and economical inequalities. Crime among youth has become so serious in the Dominican Republic that every three hours an adolescent is presented to the judicial system for having committed a penal infraction. Also, the demographic that commits the most robberies in the country are adolescents. Between 2001 and 2004, adolescents were responsible for 45% of all registered robberies the Dominican Republic (Georgetown University).
- d. **Conclusion.** The establishment and gestation of a program such as Cucuyo would benefit exploited and forgotten youth. By helping youth develop their creative talents in a safe, encouraging environment, we intend to serve as a model project for the development of young people and as an alternative option in the community to violence, drug use and drug trafficking.

## 4. Values

- a. **Mutual understanding.** Promotion of unity, friendship, cooperation and solidarity between youth of different cultures.
- b. **Personal development.** An improved sense of self-esteem and achievement within youths based on their participation and accomplishments in the program; we aim to help them see their inherent "inner light."

- c. **Creativity.** Fostering of ingenuity and creative exploration and experimentation via theatre and the arts.
- d. **Universal opportunity.** Providing free or affordable access to artistic programming for Dominican and American youth.
- e. **Sustainability.** Working toward creating a sustainable, year-round program available to Dominican youth in Bonao.

## 5. Goals/Aims

- a. **Youth participants.** For the intercultural program involving Dominican and American participants, we invite 20 American students and 40 Dominican students so that class sizes are manageable for instructors. These students are ages 13-19 and must apply for the program. We also teach short morning workshops for youth ages 8-12 who are not old enough to be in the regular program.
- b. **Program artist instructors and volunteers.** We seek volunteers from a variety of vocational and artistic backgrounds who can contribute diverse and exciting pedagogy and teaching methods to the program. We seek volunteers who are interested in youth development and the arts; bilingualism in Spanish is not required, but we do have bilingual staff persons at each site location to help with interpretation.
- c. **Workshops and exhibitions.** We teach four workshops in different art subjects that change every year. Students attend one workshop for 2.5 hours in the morning, take an afternoon break, then return for 2.5 hours to attend another workshop. Throughout the course of the program, students concentrate on two subjects for the two weeks. At the end of the program, we facilitate a student art exhibition at each site location.

## 6. Programs and Activities

- a. Intercultural art program.
  - i. Dominican youth who want to participate in the program complete an application. They have the option of participating choosing two art subjects out of four offered to focus on. The type of art class depends on the offerings of the guest artist instructors who have been accepted into the program. The program is always free for Dominican participants.
  - ii. American youth who want to participate in the program complete an application and pay a small program fee (in 2011, \$1,800). They have the same class options as their Dominican counterparts. American students stay with host families during the course of the program.
  - iii. Language learning. Executive director Laura Vaughn teaches intensive Spanish language classes to American youth and volunteers.
- b. Classes for young children.
  - i. Short morning workshops will be offered to youth ages 8-12 who are too young to participate in the intercultural art program.
- c. Scholarship program.
  - i. One Dominican student who applies and submits an art portfolio will be given a scholarship of \$1,000.00 USD to pursue art classes at the local university in Bonao. This expense is estimated to cover two semesters of classes, textbooks and supplies, and transportation costs. This scholarship will be given every year. In exchange for the scholarship, the recipient will teach a monthly arts workshop to local children in Bonao and help Cucuyo with managing the program.

## 7. Physical Space Required.

- a. **Studio and theatre space.** To carry out its goals, Cucuyo uses adequate teaching, studio and rehearsal spaces for theatre and art classes. In these spaces, whenever possible, environmentally friendly practices are employed. The search for spaces is based on the conviction that the surrounding environment is an important source of inspiration and that youth need access to accessible, safe, and high-quality creative spaces. The physical structures of these spaces will need to include workshop and performance space, storage for materials, and office needs. Currently, Cucuyo uses local clubs in the Zona Sur and La Ceiba locations that are well known to youth participants and offer adequate size, location, and cost requirements. These clubs were rented to us for free from community leaders in Bonao.
- b. **Housing.** Cucuyo provides housing for all staff, volunteers, and American students in the program. All staff members, volunteers, and American participants are housed in homestays based on which club they are assigned to for workshops. Local Cucuyo staff in Bonao research, screen, and interview host families to ensure that they are adequate hosts and interested in participating in a cultural exchange with students. Homestay hosts are paid generously according to CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) rates, which are known worldwide to be very fair. Participants are placed in homestays so that they get the chance to get a glimpse into the everyday life of Dominicans, which enriches the cultural learning aspect of the overall experience. This is also a very affordable housing option for Cucuyo.

## 8. Antecedents. (Other organizations, staff experience)

- a. **Staff experience.**

As of 2011, Cucuyo's staff has the following cumulative experience:

  - i. Fifteen years in youth theatre.
  - ii. Applied experience in Latin American culture, history and language.
  - iii. Six years of experience living in different Latin American countries.
  - iv. Combined volunteer and professional experience in social justice and various art fields.
  - v. Direct experience with and knowledge about Dominican culture.



- vi. Research abroad on individual development methods that utilize theatre and the arts.
- vii. As an organization, individual donations and community support in both the United States and Bonao, Dominican Republic.

**b. Other Organizations.**

Here are a few art-based service organizations that have inspired us:

- i. Escuela de comedia y mima (The School of Comedy and Mimery)
- ii. Caja Lúdica (The Recreation Box)
- iii. TNT
- iv. Arte acción (Art Action)

**9. Board of Directors.**

Cucuyo's Board of Directors is composed of 4 individuals with the following functions:

- a. President: Sorrow Keeler  
Vice President: Jen Carter  
Secretary: Bianca Bidiuc  
Treasurer: Dave Delchamps
- b. Responsibilities of board of directors:
  - i. Plan and carry out a yearly fundraiser (*The Firefly Brew*).
  - ii. Review all program materials, including artist instructor applications, proposed expenses, and other issues related to the implementation of the program.
  - iii. Advise director and approve student and instructor selections.
  - iv. Review yearly financial expenses and attend quarterly board meetings.
  - v. Vote on proposed laws and organization changes and vote in board member replacements.

**10. Cucuyo Staff.**

- a. Executive Director: Laura Vaughn. Coordinates homestays, program dates, and other details of program. Maintains contact with Dominican volunteers and organizers.
- b. Executive Assistant: Bianca Bidiuc. Assists staff with research, social networking, and other needs.
- c. Development Associate: Lauren Stephenson. Updates organizational materials and helps with fundraising efforts.
- d. Dominican Coordinators: Orlando Muñoz and Ricardo Arias. Organize Dominican youth participation, homestays, and prepares program location.
- e. Youth Coordinator: Kyle Waites. Recruits American high schoolers to participate in program.
- f. Logistics Advisor: Byron Holcomb. Advises on the logistical details of maneuvering within the Dominican Republic.
- g. Intern: Amanda Morlas. Assists staff with research, social networking, and other needs.
- h. Guest Teachers: International guest artists and teachers selected yearly.
- i. Auxillary advisors: Parents of participants, donors, and non-profit administration advisors.

**11. Budget.**

- a. The funds necessary over the next two years appear in the following chart. Note that the program intends to be 50% self-sufficient by 2015.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
General operating costs	1,058.27	48.74	3,383.94	
Cash Donations	1,488.00	1,309.38	1,123.15	
Non-Cash Donations	30.00	4,407.00	5,535.00	
Merchandise Sales	0	4,023.00	2,790.15	
Scholarship Program Costs			1,000.00	
Additional Funds Needed			5,000.00	

**12. Sources of Income.**

- a. Individual donations.
- b. Sales of t-shirts and other goods.
- c. Grants.
- d. Firefly Brew—Cucuyo's yearly fundraiser held every November.
- e. American students' program fees. Cucuyo actively recruits high school participants who are interested in the Spanish language, the arts, and cultural exchange programs. We reach out using our website and give presentations about our program for students and their parents after coordinating with high school language teachers and administrators. Each American student pays \$1,800, which is an below market fee given the cost of similar cultural travel programs offered to American students.

**13. Possible Future Income Revenues.**

- a. Continued fundraisers and sale of t-shirts and other items.
- b. Larger individual donations and grants as the program takes hold, expands, and becomes available for more funding.
- c. Donations from local communities and businesses in the Dominican Republic.

**14. Future Evolution. (2011-2015)**

- a. **Activities.** Shows, tours, exchanges, volunteer tourism, cultural tourism.
  - i. In a few years, with continued participation of American students and growing funding for the program, we may be able to expand to invite tourists to participate in the program and learn more about the city



of Bonao and the Dominican Republic in general. We may also be able to do dance, theatre, or other shows and tours that generate modest income.

**b. Sustainability.**

- i. Financials.** Cucuyo will continue to fight to expand its impact and presence in the lives of the youth who participate in our program, which will assure future sponsorship and grants. Additionally, we will strive for artistic and theatrical excellence which could generate an increase in the income stemming from shows, exhibitions and art auctions. The volunteer program involving American students will continue to be a steady source of additional income.
- ii. Youth participation.** Very active youth participants (both American and Dominican) from previous programs will have the opportunity to take part in a lead group in later program sessions. Dominican participants will be invited to help attract new participants for the program and possibly even secure donations from local vendors and businesses. American students will help recruit potential participants from the United States and may also help with fundraising. Select youth leaders may have the opportunity to act as instructors under the guidance of current directors, artists, and guest teachers. These students must demonstrate certain artistic ability and maturity before they will be asked to help manage Cucuyo's program. The Dominican scholarship student will help teach workshops and manage local Dominican youth leaders who assist with the program.
- iii. Methods of evaluation.** At the end of each program session, Cucuyo asks students, guest artists, volunteers, and staff members to fill out evaluations of the program. We ask specific questions and also ask for general feedback—ideas for the future, etc. We stress to all individuals that this feedback is anonymous and that Cucuyo depends on this feedback on improving our program—so the more brutally honest, the better. Their feedback drives the evolution of Cucuyo's program. Then, the feedback is shared with the necessary individuals (teachers, staff members). Cucuyo discusses the results more specifically with its staff and also the board members so that we can make necessary changes to the program going forward.

