



in the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ARTIST HANDBOOK

Cucuyo encourages the teamwork of artists, staff, and artists in order to offer the quality of services our participants need and deserve. Artists contribute their valuable time and energy, and Cucuyo will ensure a worthwhile, fun, and positive experience for all involved.

Cucuyo would like to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of artists in the functioning of our organization. We need the input of artists for the constant improvement of our organization.

We can guarantee you a valuable experience and wonderful people. We welcome you and thank you for your commitment.

CUCUYO provides Dominican and American youth with creative guidance and instruction in order to facilitate exploration of one's own self and culture; engender, through collaborative projects, understanding, sensitivity and meaningful encounter between the two cultures; while simultaneously cultivating and refining the artistic abilities of each youth.

CUCUYO'S OBJECTIVES

To link and learn through art!

To foster a sense of self-worth, ownership, and accomplishment among all participants within a safe, supportive, non-competitive environment.

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.

To provide a unique and stimulating foundational experience to Dominican and American teens at an early age.

To be sustainable and available to the community day after day, year after year.

To be a model for future community intercultural art programs.

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

An Overview

History

The island of Hispaniola, of which the Dominican Republic forms the eastern two-thirds and Haiti the western one-third, has been a center of great political struggles since the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the West Indies in 1492. The island was first colonized by the Spanish, and by the end of the 17th century, Spain had ceded to France all rights to the western portion of the island.

In 1804, Toussaint L'Overture, the leader of a slave uprising in the French colony, declared the island "one and indivisible" under the new Republic of Haiti. At that time, what is now the Dominican Republic was occupied by Haitian troops. The Haitians conquered the entire island in 1822 and held it until 1844. In that year, Juan Pablo Duarte, the hero of Dominican independence, and his forces, drove out the Haitians and established the Dominican Republic as an independent state.

Since independence, the country's political stability has been shaky. Economic difficulties, the threat of European intervention, and ongoing internal disorders led to a U.S. occupation in 1916 and the establishment of a military government. The occupation ended in 1924 with a democratically elected Dominican government. From 1930 until his assassination in 1961, Army commander Rafael Trujillo ruled the country under a repressive dictatorship. The country then underwent a number of military coups as well as an occupation by U.S. military forces from 1965

During those years, several key political figures rose to power, including Joaquin Balaguer, leader of the Social Christian Reformist Party; and Juan Bosch, founder of the Dominican Liberation Party. In the more recent past, the country has experienced peaceful transitions of democratically elected governments. Hipolito Mejia was elected in 2000 for a four-year term. Former President Leonel Fernández won the 2004 election and was re-elected in 2008.

Although the Dominican Republic's relations with Haiti have been challenging, the two countries are intrinsically linked. A sizable number of Haitian migrants live in the Dominican Republic and many of them contribute to the Dominican economy.

The Dominican Republic has a close relationship with the United States despite the fact that America has occupied the country on two occasions. It is estimated that there are more than 1 million Dominicans living in the United States, the majority in New York City. An estimated 60,000 U.S. citizens live in the Dominican Republic.

Government

The Dominican Republic is a representative democracy whose national powers are divided among independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The president appoints the cabinet, executes laws passed by the legislative branch, and is commander in chief of the armed forces. The president and vice president run for office on the same ticket and are elected by direct vote for four-year terms. Legislative power is exercised by a bicameral National Congress, consisting of a Senate (30 members) and a Chamber of Deputies (149 members).

There are three major political parties: the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD), led by President Leonel Fernández; the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD); and the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC).

Economy

The Dominican Republic is a middle-income developing country. The economy is primarily dependent on services, especially tourism; remittances from the United States (which help support 30 percent of all Dominican families), construction, and agriculture. The service sector has overtaken agriculture as the leading employer of Dominicans, principally as a result of growth in tourism and free-trade zones. More than 1 million tourists visit the Dominican Republic each year, contributing close to \$1 billion (U.S.) to the economy.

The Dominican Republic's economic success of the 1990s has deteriorated significantly over the past few years, though it has begun to improve. Moreover, the costs of many basic goods (gas, food, utilities) have significantly increased. However, under President Fernández, the economic situation has stabilized and improved. Inflation stands at single-digit levels for 2006 and there is increasing economic growth. Additionally, the peso has been revalued and stabilized; the exchange rate is now approximately 32.50 pesos to \$1 (U.S.).

In spite of the significant rise in prices in 2003–2004, there was no corresponding increase in wages for the working population. An average agricultural day laborer still earns approximately 150 pesos per day (less than \$6 per day), and the unemployment rate is nearly 20 percent. The nation's \$7 billion foreign public debt represents nearly half of its GDP. Poverty incidence in the rural areas is three times higher than in urban areas, and it reaches extreme levels on the Haitian border and in the batey communities (work camps on the edge of sugar plantations in the east and along the border of the Dominican Republic and Haiti).

Severe energy shortages, with average daily blackouts of up to 12 hours, and a 60 percent increase in gas prices have had a domino effect on prices of general consumer goods and transportation. Additionally, the lack of access to potable water, inadequate access to basic preventive health services, and low pay in the service sector make it difficult for Dominicans to advance.

People and Culture

The Dominican population was 1 million in 1920; by 2007, it had grown to 9 million. The country has one of the highest population densities in the Western Hemisphere. The population is roughly 40 % rural and 60 % urban.

The Dominican people are a blend of Spanish, African, and indigenous Taino Indians. The Spanish arrived in 1492; by 1520 the indigenous population had been virtually eradicated by warfare, disease, and an unsuccessful attempt to enslave them to work in the country's fields and gold mines. As the indigenous population decreased, the labor shortage was filled by African slaves brought to Santo Domingo. The current population is largely mulatto. More recently, there has been a small influx of Japanese, Chinese, European Jews, Arabs, and other groups.

The Dominican culture reflects its Spanish, African, and indigenous Indian heritages. From the Spanish, Dominicans inherited their language, cuisine, Roman Catholicism, and the patriarchal family structure. From the African

and indigenous Indian cultures, they inherited their music (merengue), folklore, social activities, handicrafts, cuisine, and many of the names given to children. Spanish is the official language, although many indigenous words have been incorporated into Dominican Spanish. While Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion, Christian evangelical churches are becoming a more influential religious force in the country.

Environment

The Dominican Republic has some of the most varied and beautiful terrain in the hemisphere, including mountain ranges, tropical beaches, forests, and desert (found primarily in the southwest). It boasts the highest mountain in the Caribbean, Pico Duarte, which is surrounded by extremely productive farmland in the Cibao region. Sugarcane and rolling landscapes highlight the south and east of the island.

There is growing concern about the Dominican Republic's rapid rate of environmental degradation in both rural and urban areas. About 60 percent of the country's original forest cover still existed in the early 1900s. By the end of the 1980s, that figure had plunged to approximately 12 percent as a result of slash-and-burn agriculture, overgrazing, forest fires, and charcoal production. Degradation and silting in the Caribbean and Atlantic have also negatively affected the extremely rich coral reef environments found around the island.

BONAO, REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Bonao is a beautiful valley city surrounded by mountains with an artistic bent. Famous Dominican artist Candido Bidó founded a beautiful art school in the city center. The norm in transport is the small motorcycle.

Population: 247,103,273

Distance from capital: 47 mi

Topography: mountains, valleys, ridges

Average temperature: 88°F

Communities: La Ceiba & Zona Sur

The jam number A: LA CEIBA

- Rural
- About 12 minutes out of the city of Bonao by taxi
- Approximately 200 people in the community with 7-8 surrounding barrios of approximately 100 people each
- Not a lot of work in the community
- Weekly transportation to the city is often times too costly to take advantage of opportunities there.
- Moms desire personal development for their kids: there are no opportunities here, you just grow and then start working, get married.

CLUB JUAN PABLO DUARTE

- Gated and fenced structure with adjacent basketball court and small stage
- Youth live within walking distance of club
- There is little programming; club occasionally used for events on weekends

Persons you'll want to know

- Orlando , community member and university actor
- Micaela, mother and community organizer
- Rafael and Gregory, core of teen group

The jam number B: ZONA SUR

- Inner city
- Population of 60,000
- Heavily disadvantaged community
- Houses fill with water when it rains



Base 803019AI (C00722) 11-04

CLUB ZONA SUR

- 7 member director's board
- Small classroom and adjacent basketball court
- Youth live within walking distance of club
- Programming: Primary school literacy program, boxing and other occasional events
- Plans to add a technical school in some unknown future

Persons you'll want to know

- Ricardo Arias, Local journalist, activist and club director
- Styson, guitarist and lead youth

DAILY DOINGS

*A tentative daily schedule

8 – 8.45	Desayuno (breakfast)
9 - 9.45	Your daily dose of Español!
10 – 12.30	Taller (workshop) 1
12.45 – 2:45	Almuerzo (lunch) and siesta
3 – 5.30	Taller 2
6 – 7.30	Cena (lunch)

DOLLARS, PESOS & OTHER COINAGE

Exchange rate. Current rate publishing deadline: 36 RD pesos to every 1 US dollar.

Changing money

Bring \$100 smack-a-roos cash. We'll change it at the very beginning of the trip and you'll be ready to rock. Every bank can change money; most require passports. Changing in the street will probably get you a good rate, but you also may get counterfeit bills. Do it in a pinch. Bus stations, interestingly enough are good places to change money.

Credit and debit cards ATMs are available and as good of a place as any to get your pesos. When you withdraw, you'll be paid in pesos. Use your debit card so that you don't get screwed by your bank.

Tipping

Tipping may be expected in tourist locations but in other locales, it's optional. A 10-peso tip (30 cents) is sweet though, you know?

What we cover

Accommodations. Your hosts are paid well for your stay and meals so feel at ease about that. Though not required obviously, it could be neat to take your family a little gift. Some gift suggestions include knickknacks for the house; pictures, books, or calendars of American scenes; souvenirs from your area; hard candies that will not melt or spoil; or baseball cards or photos to give away.

Local transportation

Cucuyo pays for transportation within Bonao and to and from the capital. At the beginning of each week, you'll receive 550 pesos (15). If you end up doing more Cucuyo-related traveling, document the price and the to/from and we'll get you that money back in your pocket.

Materials

We recommend that you buy your materials here or get some donated. Art stores can write off their donations. We'll send them documentation and our tax-exempt status once the IRS leans down and blesses us with it. (Very soon and write-offs are retroactive). Keep your receipts from your purchases and Cucuyo will reimburse you up to \$100. If your materials will not fit in your personal luggage. Cucuyo will pay for 1 checked bag of materials. There are art stores in Bonao, but they're more expensive.

On you

Plane ticket. For the economically minded (and let's get real—we're artists) Cucuyo recommends Spirit Airlines

Supplementary medical/travel insurance

\$10 airport visa fee

Spending money

THE WALK & TALK

Dress

It's hot! However, we do not recommend shorts. The women around you will be wearing sandals, skirts, pants, jeans, and short sleeve shirts. The men will be wearing pants, leather shoes and light button-up short-sleeve shirts. It will all be clean. Establishing yourself as a professional technical resource in Bonao is a part of the overall challenge of adjusting to a new language and culture. Dressing as a professional will ease this process for you. Inappropriate dress may send unintended messages or invitations to co-workers and/or others in your community. However, don't worry too much about it!

Possible Issues for Females

Females should know that Dominican society has elements of machismo. Men often hiss and make comments to women walking by, and women must learn to deal with this by completely ignoring men who behave in this way. Most females from the U.S. never fully accept this sexual harassment, but, rather, develop a tolerance within which they are able to function effectively.

Possible Issues for Gays, Lesbians, or Bisexuals

Homosexuals or bisexuals are often not able to express their sexual orientation as openly as they may have in the United States because of cultural differences and machismo in the Dominican Republic. Because of prejudice against homosexuals in Dominican society, it is wise to know your community and co-workers well before disclosing your sexual orientation.

While there are certainly homosexuals in the Dominican Republic, they do not have the level of acceptance found in much of the United States. Although some Dominicans consider homosexuality immoral, their view of homosexuality among foreigners may be quite different from their view of homosexuality among nationals. Styles of hair and clothes and earrings on men may be considered inappropriate by Dominicans.

Possible Issues for Married Couples

Being a married couple has its advantages and its challenges. It helps to have someone by your side to share your experience with, but there are also cultural expectations that can cause stress in a marriage. It is important to remember that you are in a foreign country with new rules and you need to be open-minded about cultural differences. A couple may have to take on some new roles.

A married man may be encouraged by Dominicans to be the more dominant member in the relationship, be encouraged to make decisions independently of his spouse, or be ridiculed when he performs domestic tasks. A married woman may find herself in a less independent role than she is accustomed to or may be expected to perform “traditional” domestic chores such as cooking or cleaning. She may also experience a more limited social life in the community than Cucuyo’s single artists (since it may be assumed that she will be busy taking care of her husband). Competition within a couple may become a difficulty, especially if one spouse learns faster than the other (e.g., language skills, job skills). There also may be differences in job satisfaction and/or different needs between spouses. Younger Volunteers may look to couples for advice and support. Married couples also are likely to be treated with more respect because the community sees marriage as a responsibility. They may be asked when they will have children.

Learning the language

Get yourself a book and a friend. Find the book that best suits your learning style and sit down and love it at least twice a week starting now. Practice with a friend out loud. If you don’t have any friends—use a tape recorder. Or both! We ask that you screw up. Over and over and over again. And do it loudly.

Saddling up to the culture

Read a novel. I (Laura) HIGHLY recommend Junot Diaz’s *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. A highly entertaining and enlightening collection of shorts.

Watch a movie.

Ask questions.

Good luck.

Spanish-Learning Resources

http://www.byki.com/free_lang_software.pl

Free language learning software “Before You Know It” (BYKI) based on the flash-card system. The free version of the software contains 17 lists of words and phrases that include sample phrases for polite conversations, meeting and greeting, and food and beverages vocabulary.

<http://www.miscositas.com/>

Short stories, links and other exercises for learning Spanish, French, and English.

<http://mld.ursinus.edu/~jarana/Ejercicios/>

Spanish language exercises and materials for learners and teachers from Ursinus College.

Online Articles/Current News Sites About the Dominican Republic.

www.dr1.com

This site provides daily news summaries in English.

www.listin.com.do

Online edition of Listin Diario, a Dominican newspaper (in Spanish).

www.hoy.com.do

Online edition of Hoy, a Dominican newspaper (in Spanish).

www.dominicanrepublic.com/

Official Internet portal to the Dominican Republic with information on history, culture and arts, economy, business, politics, news, etc. (in Spanish and English).

PHONE & INTERNET

Phone. There is a possibility that your phone will yes operate in Bonao. However, the rate may be \$1.50/min. We recommend that you buy long distance cards locally from corner stores (colmados). You can use these cards with the Cucuyo cell phone or many Dominican homes have landlines and cell phones.

Internet. Internet cafes are available and cost a whopping 40 pesos (\$1) an hour. Cucuyo recommends leaving your computer at home as it has a chance of being rained on, sickened by the heat, borrowed by a thief or teletransported to another dimension.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Medical attention

Private clinics are available and affordable in the case that you may suffer from some ailment. If more intense, involved treatment is needed, there is a hospital in Bonao and in the capital.

Vaccines

Check with the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

H2O

Stick with boiled, filtered and bottled water. Water de la llave (from the tap) may not agree with you. You won't catch a Dominican doin' it either.

Theft & violence

Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment (oftentimes alone), having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well off are some of the factors that can put you at risk. You may experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon, and incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, but to a much lesser degree in Bonao than in the capital. At the same time, you are expected to take responsibility for your safety and well-being. This just means being proactive in avoiding dangerous situations.

You must be prepared to take on a large degree of responsibility for your own safety. Only you can make yourself less of a target and develop relations in your community that will make you an unlikely victim of crime. In coming to the Dominican Republic, do what you would do if you moved to a large city in the United States: Be cautious, check things out, ask questions, learn about your neighborhood, know where the more risky locations are, use common sense, and be aware. You can reduce your vulnerability to crime by integrating into your community, learning the local language, and acting responsibly.

You'll attract a lot of attention both in large cities and in Bonao, but you'll likely to receive more negative attention in highly populated centers. Whistles and exclamations are fairly common on the street, this behavior can be reduced if you dress conservatively, avoid eye contact, and do not respond to unwanted attention. Keep your money out of sight by using an undergarment money pouch, the kind that hangs around your neck and stays hidden under your shirt or inside your coat. Do not keep your money in outside pockets of backpacks, in coat pockets, or in fanny packs, and do not carry cell phones in visible places, as they are common targets of robbers. Always walk with a companion at night.

FOOD

The Dominican diet consists primarily of rice, beans, yuca (cassava), plantains, sweet potatoes, potatoes, and other vegetables, along with eggs, chicken, pork, beef, and some fish. The national dish is sancocho, a rich vegetable-and-meat stew served on special occasions. A typical Dominican meal, called la bandera, is a mix of rice, red beans, and meat. Yuca may be boiled, prepared as fritters, or baked into rounds of crisp cracker bread called casabe. Most dishes are not spicy. Locally grown, seasonal fruits include bananas, mangoes, papayas, pineapples, guavas, and avocados. Dominicans generally eat small quantities of meat at meals. Bacalau (dried fish; usually cod) can be found in several areas, but fresh fish is generally available only along the coast.

Vegetarians will be able to maintain their diet at home, but they will be offered—and most likely expected to accept—traditional foods, including meat, when visiting Dominican families. You will have to be open and flexible about sharing in the Dominican diet when necessary.

REWARDS & FRUSTRATIONS

Although the potential for job satisfaction in the Dominican Republic is quite high, you will encounter numerous frustrations. The pace of work and life is slower than what most Americans are accustomed to, and some people you work with may be hesitant to change practices and traditions that are centuries old. For these reasons, the Cucuyo experience of adapting to a new culture and environment will most likely be a series of emotional peaks and valleys.

You will be readily accepted by our host community and make lasting friendships. However, for many, constantly being asked personal questions, the lack of privacy, being considered a rich foreigner, and the need to be aware of different social mores can be trying. As in most Latin American countries, women in the Dominican Republic do not have the freedoms to which North American women are accustomed. A female's inability to adapt to this reality can make her less effective and possibly even affect her safety.

Creativity, initiative, flexibility, patience, and a high tolerance for ambiguity – which are characteristics you already possess -- are necessary attributes in confronting the challenges associated with facilitating change in a cultural setting different from the United States. Your dedication, however, can have real and lasting results. You're your tie with Cucuyo ends, you will have the deep satisfaction of having played a role in a grassroots development process that helped give Dominicans greater control of their future.

You will be given a high degree of responsibility and independence in your work. You will often find yourself in situations that require an ability to motivate yourself and your fellow teaching artists. You might work without seeing any visible impact from, or without receiving feedback on, your work. Most in your position leave the Dominican Republic feeling that they have gained much more than they gave during their service.

BENEFITS to be GAINED by ARTISTS

Increased knowledge, skills, and awareness of inner city issues, working with youth from different cultural backgrounds; and the honing of artistic skills in a variety of media.

Opportunity to create a work experience portfolio that may help in a current career or future job search.

Compensated stay in an extraordinary country!

Artists who exhibit dedication to duties and attendance may be considered for casual employment in future Cucuyo positions.

Sense of satisfaction and accrument of evidence that you are indeed a good human.

RIGHTS of our ARTISTS

To be treated with respect, appreciation, and consideration.

To be given the necessary assistance and direction by the staff with whom the artist is working.

To be informed about other activities of the organization and be encouraged to participate.

To be assigned a task that will provide a learning experience that is suitable to their skills and interest.

To decline any task that is not suited to the artist's interests, schedule or capacity.

RESPONSIBILITIES of our ARTISTS

To respect all individuals involved with Cucuyo.

To contact or leave a message with Cucuyo staff if unable to attend a session.

To understand Cucuyo's guidelines and then manipulate them.

To carry one's self in a largely professional (though not synonymous with serious) manner.

To maintain the integrity of Cucuyo with the public.

To voice any concerns or questions with the Artist Coordinator or Director.

Written reflection about your experience to be published on Cucuyo's website.

ARTIST'S DISCLAIMER

(that we went ahead and wrote for you)

Cucuyo recognizes its artists as partners of a working team, with all the organizational support and personal responsibilities this implies. However, artists are not paid employees and therefore should not be expected to take on the duties of a paid employee, so we won't bombard ya!

DISSIMAL OF ARTIST

Artists may be discharged if there is just cause. "Just cause" is defined as follows:

Falsification of records.

Illegal, violent, or unsafe acts.

Theft of property, materials and/or equipment.

Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while carrying out duties.

ARTIST COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES

The grievance policy is based on the fundamental values of fairness and respect for the individual. A grievance procedure exists so that artists of Cucuyo can air their problems and have an avenue to resolve them. Every effort will be made to achieve a speedy resolution at the lowest level of supervision. All complaints will be presented to the Artist Coordinator or the Executive Director.

Procedures to issue a grievance:

If the complaint involves another artist, staff, Board member, or participant the artist is encouraged to deal directly with the person involved.

If the artist is still dissatisfied, they may speak to the Artist Coordinator or the Executive Director who will help resolve and mediate the differences.

If the complaint is about the Artist Coordinator, the artist may speak to the Executive Director.

If the complaint is about the Executive Director, the artist may convey their complaint to the President of the Board who will determine the proper action.