

**What I learned from missionaries in the
Dominican Republic: Loosen the agenda, hold
onto the vision; cherchando¹ is an important part
of transformational development**

by

Sandra Yu

Submitted to the URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER IN CITY PLANNING

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

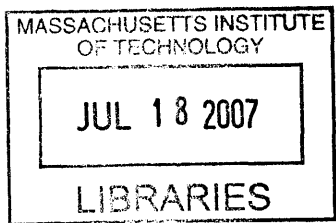
June 2007

© Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2007. All rights reserved.

Author
URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING
May 24, 2007

Certified by...
Bish Sanyal
Ford Professor of International Development
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by
Langley Keyes
Chair, MCP Committee



ROTCH

**What I learned from missionaries in the Dominican Republic:
Loosen the agenda, hold onto the vision; *cherchando*¹ is an
important part of transformational development**

by

Sandra Yu

Submitted to the URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING
on May 24, 2007, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
MASTER IN CITY PLANNING

Abstract

Missionaries go into the field with the desire to transform lives - not just spiritually and not just materially, but entirely, or in current lingo, holistically. Such an ambitious goal, combined with the burden of the long and varied legacy that follows the word "missionary," can create a lot of pressure to perform. As development experts can attest, the West feels a heavy responsibility to "do something" for the Rest. This paper is about Students International (SI), a Christian missionary organization that seeks to transform both the communities in which they work and the students who come to serve alongside their missionaries in occupational ministries. The focus on service opportunities based on occupations (education, art, construction, health, dental care, etc.) has value. However, as I began to write about SI as an organization, its goals, how it functions and how student participants evaluate their experiences, it seemed that, at least for the agricultural site, some of the most interesting insights, meaningful connections and transformative experiences happen outside of the planned activities, and are realized afterwards through reflection (follow-up surveys help). SI's goal of transforming lives may be best met through loosening that feeling of needing to "do something," and just hanging out more, or *cherchando*¹.

Thesis Supervisor: Bish Sanyal
Title: Ford Professor of International Development

¹Cherchar is a Dominicanism that means to hang out, have fun, gossip, chew the fat

Acknowledgments

My deepest agradecimientos to the people of Los Higos and the missionaries of Students International, who made all of this worth it.

My deepest gratitude to Bish, my thesis advisor, who gave me guidance and told me to make sure this thesis answered some of my own questions about life; to Cherie, my thesis reader, who encouraged me to write from the heart, and reminded me that not everyone can see everything that's floating around in my head; to Marty, my UROP advisor and first thesis advisor, who reminded me that there are professors who care about their students; to Judith, my temporary thesis advisor, who put up with a rather lost student and gave her tons of reading material; and to Bob, my academic advisor, who first encouraged me to make this paper interesting.

My deepest thanks to all the friends, family, pastors, mentors, classmates, roommate, dormmates, missionaries, and random strangers who took the time to listen and give me feedback about my research. What I have loved about this topic is that it involves thinking about issues and themes that are so...opposite of esoteric. I could talk about these ideas with anybody - how people communicate and receive information and ideas (especially across different cultures and backgrounds), how learning leads to change, the dilemmas of wanting to help yet not create dependency, problems of autonomy and control, being true to your values in a professional or academic world that challenges them, and the the search for vocation.

My heartfelt appreciation to Sohan, my floormate, who spent an entire day with me putting all of this into L^AT_EX. It helped so much with organization, my weakest point.

And finally, thank you, God, for taking me through a wild and exciting two years.

Contents

1	Introduction	13
1.1	Background	13
1.2	Purpose	16
1.3	Methodology	17
2	Students International	19
2.1	Organizational Structure	20
2.2	Financial Structure	21
2.3	The agricultural site	23
2.4	Organizational goals	24
2.5	Monitoring and Accountability	29
3	The Student Participants	33
3.1	Recruitment	33
3.2	Types of Participant Experience	35
3.3	Participant reflections	44
3.4	The importance of occupational ministry sites	46
3.5	What causes transformation?	46
4	The Community	51
4.1	Charity and Relief Legacies that SI must deal with	51
4.2	Information gathered through the map/census project	56
4.3	Vignettes	60

4.4	Los Higos personal dreams	67
5	Final Personal Thoughts	69
6	Appendices	75
6.1	Appendix A: 25 Tips for Peace Corps Volunteers	76
6.2	Appendix B: Survey sent to students who spent time in Los Higos . .	80
6.3	Appendix C: SI's Organizational Statement	81
6.4	Appendix D: Selected Participant Quotes	85
6.5	Appendix E: Images of the Map and Census	93

List of Figures

3-1	Here is the mapping group on the very first day. The boy in red and the tall one bringing up the rear are the two engineering students. The first two boys and the little one second to last are brothers; the third one in the white shirt is one of the students' host brothers. These four accompanied us almost every day, from mapping to censusing to marking houses.	37
3-2	A local young man is marking a house with an address number. . . .	42
3-3	Darlin's Garden	49
3-4	Arjenis,Randy and Jesse's garden.	49
4-1	"Chipo del todo el mundo," Maruca's 19-year-old son Antony called him, "El hijo mio." Most village children under three stay close to home. From observation, he could be a poor kid that the neighbors all recognized and took care of.	60
4-2	Chipo and his mother, Chelin	61
4-3	Edwin's sisters Yomairi and Vitmayra	63
4-4	Mery giving 4-year-old Harold a shot of penicillin	64
4-5	This picture was taken on a Friday in March. Heavy seasonal rains had flooded the intersection and made passage difficult for the motorbikes that everyone uses, and for the truck that comes through weekly with supplies for the colmado (seen in the center of the picture).	64
4-6	People had brought their own shovels and pickaxes, but there were more people than tools or space to work.	65

6-1	Partial Map of Los Higos	93
6-2	Terrain Map	94
6-3	Printout of the census at the mission base	95

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The Dominican Republic (DR) is a small country in the Caribbean, and is famous for filling American major leagues with talented ball players, being where Columbus landed in 1492, and sharing an island with Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The indigenous population was virtually wiped out within fifty years of European arrival, and the current population is a varied mixture of European colonial (mostly Spanish) and African slave heritage. The DR's political history includes 300 years of colonial rule followed by 22 years of Haitian occupation, 8 years of US occupation and 31 years of military dictatorship under Trujillo from 1931-1961. The DR has slowly moved toward representative democracy since the assassination of Trujillo, though many of those years were under one president who ended up serving seven terms (the first was a 'puppet presidency' under Trujillo). Throughout the late 1990s, the mining industry, free trade zones and the booming tourism industry fueled rapid growth in the economy. In 2003, a \$2.2 billion bank scandal and the collapse of the country's second largest bank contributed to a 2.8% economic decline. With the help of tourism, which continues to grow, DR has been recovering, although income stratification remains severe - the top ten percent gain 40 percent of the wealth. A national power crisis leaves the entire country regularly without electricity - *se fue la luz!* is a daily refrain; the well-to-do have individual generators and inverters to deal with the

outages. In 2004, the current president, Leonel Fernández, started construction of a massive metro system in Santo Domingo to deal with traffic congestion and pollution.

90 miles north of unbearably humid Santo Domingo and one hour from Santiago lies a quiet mountain town called Jarabacoa, known for its 'always springtime' weather - warm during the day and cool at night. Many wealthy Dominicans build their summer homes in Jarabacoa, and its famous peaks and waterfalls make it a popular tourist destination. Eight miles from town is Casa Tranquila, a place all the locals know. It is the mission base of Students International. About halfway between Casa Tranquila and the town center, a turn north will take you over hilly roads to a small rural mountain village called Los Higos. About 175 families, or 650 people, live in this village, mostly smallholders living on subsistence plots and wage labor. Two of Students International's missionaries are stationed in Los Higos, and it was through this organization that I first came to this village on a two-week mission trip.

A schoolmate and I spent 9am to 4pm in Los Higos for ten days in January, 2006. We did dug holes, sweat, held hands with little children as we walked from the clubhouse to the home where we ate lunch, and laughed nervously when the locals or the missionaries (both Dominican, with severely limited English) tried to talk to us in their impossible rapid Spanish. Somehow, despite the communication barrier, the trip made a huge impression on the both of us.

One of the last days we were there, one of the American directors came with us. He was meeting with some locals to check out some yucca grinding machinery that had been donated through post-Hurricane George relief funds from the Spanish government. The machinery had fallen into disrepair and sat unused for a year, and there was talk of lack of community ownership because the equipment had been donated fresh out of international development classes, my ears perked up. A possible thesis in the making? I had very foggy ideas about what the exact question was, but here was a topic that made my heart pound - missionaries and development.

When I returned as an intern for SI the following summer, I was kept busy with intern duties, but my eye was out for possible research questions. I came back with many scattered thoughts and observations, and the conviction that if I went back, I

would live in the village, not on the mission base or in town. My last two trips to the DR, I lived with families in Los Higos, and I spent my days hanging out, playing the kids, chatting on porches, visiting people, and anything anyone said to me went into a notebook or got typed up on my laptop. I wanted to know how people viewed life in the village (Tranquilo, Hay que luchar), how they viewed the missionaries (Hay misioneros? Ah, ellos - son buen amigos. Trabajan mucho), what concerned them (mud, employment, school, food prices). And at the root of it all, I wanted to know them, understand them and their reality. It has been quite difficult not to name these people who have become like family to me - all the names have been changed for privacy.

On my last trip, I almost took a GPS unit, water testing materials and a charcoal press with me, but none of them worked out. It was really disappointing at the time, but looking back - it was really for the best. I got so excited about all this technology I could bring to them. But I would have been too busy with my own agenda to have learned as much about the people as I did. Besides, marking property boundaries with the GPS unit might have stirred up unnecessary tension, I drank whatever anyone offered me and never got sick, and the charcoal press would have been useless in an area with so little sugarcane.

I started out by writing what I had learned about the community from observation and conversations, and from talking to the missionaries who have been working in Los Higos for some time. I had a census of the entire village we'd taken over the summer, and as you'll read about further on, it's almost comical how wildly inaccurate a picture it can paint in terms of age, income and wealth. But it does make for an interesting study on what people are willing to divulge about themselves and why, and a nice comparison of different ways of learning about people.

The GPS mapping and census project (see Appendix E for photos of the map) is described with a lot of detail here - this is because I wanted to give as real a picture as I could of the comedy of strange and unexpected things that happen when you try to bring technology - even as simple as GPS - and the idea of a map to a place like Los Higos, where even the 5-year-olds know where everyone lives. But every experience

is an opportunity to learn, though what you find out may not be what you expected to.

My thoughts and ideas have drawn from conversations with the villagers themselves, with SI, with fellow student volunteers, and many, many hapless friends, pastors, mentors, classmates and dormmates - anyone who would listen. My interpretation of these findings were shaped by a background in DUSP - ranging from gung-ho Gateway to more skeptical Targeting the Poor to technical Site Planning to the political Lawrence Practicum to pragmatic Planning Sensibilities - realizing that political is pragmatic, technical is gung-ho. And, learning how people learn, in two of my favorite classes - Urban Design Skills and Teacher Education. My approach was also shaped by my Christian background - a deep appreciation for genuine, loving friendships, the importance of trust in communication, faith that seemingly bad situations can have redeemable aspects, and that I am not just studying SI's work environment, but trying to understand real people who call me daughter, sister, friend.

So I hope that I have brought to this work a gung-ho commitment and loyalty to people I love (the missionaries at SI, the people in Los Higos, the student volunteers and fellow interns scattered throughout the US), tempered by literature about what tends to work and the need to seek out the complexities that lie under what merely appears to be.

1.2 Purpose

This paper seeks to explore realities how does Students International function, how do participants experience transformation, what is life like in Los Higos, and what does development' look like?

The more general finding is about how that first (and ongoing) step of learning happens in cross-cultural exchange. It's often overlooked, because as privileged westerners, we feel a strong responsibility to do something for poor people. But though they may not use the same terms or give it the same emphasis, missionaries, Peace Corps veterans (see Appendix A), development experts and anthropologists have at

some point all said basically the same thing: first we must understand the reality, and maybe that's the best we can do in two years. There's always pressure to show results and the problems may seem obvious. But centuries of charity, philanthropy, aid and development on all scales have shown that the obvious solutions rarely play out the way they're expected to.

The detail with which I share my stories stems from my belief that any lessons that can be drawn lie precisely in the details. It is the specifics that bring the larger ideas into focus. I also try to include as much about what happened as possible because although I may not see the significance of a small detail, others with different perspectives might. May the findings in this paper inspire lots more questions, because that is where learning begins.

Key Vocabulary: Ministry - The missionaries call their work sites ministry sites, and their work their ministries. Outreach - The trips (of varying lengths and types) are called outreaches.

1.3 Methodology

Most of my information was gathered over four trips to the Dominican Republic, once as a two-week volunteer, once as a ten-week summer intern, and twice more on my own for four weeks and one-and-a-half weeks. The first two trips I lived at the mission base and spent six hours in Los Higos five days a week. The second two trips I lived with families right in Los Higos.

During the summer, two other students and I spent five weeks mapping the village with GPS and taking a census. Eight of the local young men - ages 17 to 36 - came with us as translators and guides, and four of them worked with us nearly every day.

While living in Los Higos on my last two trips, I spent my days wandering around and chatting with people. I walked with the kids to school (a 15-20 minute walk), sat with people on porches, visited women in their homes.

Back in Massachusetts I emailed back and forth with SI missionaries and spent hours on skype with the missionaries and with friends from Los Higos. I also sent

online surveys and conducted face-to-face interviews with past student volunteers and interns. (See Appendix B for survey questions.)

I lived with a family for four weeks in January, and another family for a week and a half in March. During this time, I did not have a set agenda, but played with the children, walked to school with them, visited women in their homes and chatted with various people in colmados¹, on porches, and on the street. I explained to people that I was studying the work of the SI missionaries in the community to help them improve, and asked what they thought of it.

The information I have about Los Higos and Students International comes from all of these sources: observing life in Los Higos, talking with the villagers, talking with SI, working on the map and census, talking with student volunteers.

¹Colmado: a small, local convenience store, usually with a covered gallery. Sells everything from batteries to toilet paper to flipflops to bread to chicken to rice to candy to rum. Typically does not sell fresh produce.

Chapter 2

Students International

Students International was formed in 1993 by a staff member of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA². The original vision for was to take students "to a cross-cultural setting and give them an experience in their major" (Boyle 2007). In 2003, the founder resigned from the board, and SI did not have a new president until December 2005. During this time, the developed the current mission: "Bringing students and the poor together cross-culturally to encounter God, share the Good News, disciple and serve others in occupational ministries" and vision: "Seeing students and the poor transformed into the likeness of Christ and discover their true calling." The vision was "all about transformation, putting students in a situation where they experience the grace of God and it transforms them" (Boyle 2007). The director of SI in Jarabacoa, DR, was the owner of a successful carpeting and flooring company in small town in Indiana. Several years ago, he "thought he had more money than he knew what to do with" (Boyle 2007) and approached SI about starting a base in Jarabacoa, where he had some contacts. He, his wife and two daughters have been there for seven years now. Students International describes itself as a "twofold ministry: reaching out to the nationals with the good news of Christ, and providing students an opportunity to use their gifts in missions." Its international office is in Visalia, California. The six-person staff, which includes the president of the board of directors and his wife, in this

²IVCF USA is a campus mission that has chapters on 530 secular and Christian college campuses across the nation, with the goal of bringing the whole gospel for the whole campus to impact the whole world.

office provide "leadership, supervision and service in the areas of funds development, human resources, information technology, finance and administration, ministry and program development, and organizational marketing" (stint.com) to its three mission bases located in Guatemala, Dominican Republic and Costa Rica.

2.1 Organizational Structure

The field director, a businessman from Indiana, founded the SI base in DR with five Dominicans nationals in 2000, and is in charge of administrative duties. The associate field director, a former teacher also from Indiana, joined six years ago. His role is to provide pastoral staff support. The two of them split supervision of the ministry sites; the field director is in charge of construction, agriculture, health, dentistry, sports and art and physical therapy, while the pastoral director is in charge of education, special education, and social work.

The directors' wives manage all the preparation and finances dealing with meals. The wives also occasionally take part in the leadership team although they are not officially part of it because "there are certain things women understand better." Until August, SI has a provisional teams director, who directs participant orientation and is the primary contact for the outreach teams. Last summer, SI had another provisional teams director, a potential candidate for the permanent position who ended up not taking the job. Previously, the pastoral director had also filled the role of the teams director. The administrative assistant, a Dominican national who previously worked for the government in Santo Domingo and works part-time as a lawyer, acts as secretary during meetings and is in charge of finances, insurance and legal issues.

There are 21 other missionaries on staff, thirteen Dominican nationals, seven Americans and one Colombian. They include American volunteers (married couples as well as recent high school and college graduates), and professionals such as the artist, the dentist, and the young doctors (in their twenties), who are both from Santo Domingo. One is a highly needed gynecologist (there are no specialists in Jarabacoa); the other is serving with Students International to fulfill her mandatory

year of rural social service (required for all medical school graduates in DR). With support from SI, at least two of the national missionaries are still taking classes in university, and one of the doctors is taking seminary courses.

These missionaries are called site leaders, and they run the occupational ministry sites art, construction, dentistry, health care, physical therapy, special education, education, agriculture, sports, and social work. Throughout the year, a site may have a short-term student intern from the US or a longer-term local student intern/assistant.

Site leaders have two-year contracts, and directors have four-year contracts. Both directors have extended their contracts, and many of the Dominican staff have extended their contracts. American volunteers are less likely to extend their contracts. The administrative director admits that two years is very short and four years might be better. However, a four-year contract might deter potential applicants.

2.2 Financial Structure

SI's budget was \$1.6 million as of March 2007. All SI staff fundraise their own salaries. New American missionaries spend at least a year fundraising, preparing and receiving cross-cultural training in the States before they actually move to the base.

Various members of the organization take fundraising trips to the United States, visiting supporting churches to make presentations (the nationals when they can get a visa, the Americans on their holiday vacations). Last fall, the director went home to Indiana to hold a dinner to celebrate SI in the Dominican Republic. Five hundred people came, and they raised a bunch of money (Boyle 2007) for [the new base buildings.]

Participant Fees according to SI Website

Type of outreach	Cost
9-day outreach	\$850 plus airfare
13-day outreach	\$950 plus airfare
Couples and Men's outreaches	\$1,300 each, airfare included
Semester program	\$14,865, airfare included
Summer Intern	\$150/wk plus airfare

Special reduced fees	Cost
Team leader fee (team of 12+)	Waived
Team leader fee (team of less than 12)	\$350
Children 0-2 years	Waived
Children 3-13	\$350
Nanny	\$350

"The outreach fee covers room, board, ground transportation while in country, pre-field materials, weekend field trip, supervision, cultural orientation activities, outreach preparation, all ministry site expenses and general administration."

Use	Percentage of fee
Food, board and transportation	50%
Site support*, national staff support	45%
Administration (back to headquarters)	5%**

**Funds are pooled and distributed according to need. Preference is given to ministry sites for example, to buy child-sized chairs and snacks for the preschool.*

***This figure may change. Previously, administrative staff in Visalia also fundraised their own salaries. However, for tax reasons, SI is thinking about having them be paid employees.*

The organization sells souvenirs from their base to support their ministries trinkets and crafts they buy from beach vendors, homemade sweets made by local friends,

coffee bought in bulk from the local coffee factory, a cookbook made by local women who participate in the social work ministry, rubber band chains made by their blind groundskeeper, handmade postcards made by the art site missionary. They also host a Haitian man who brings handmade crafts during each outreach to sell to the students.

Most of the participants live in dorms at the mission base during their outreaches, and spend 9am to 4pm at the ministry sites; they eat breakfast and dinner at the base, and take bag lunches to the sites. When special teams come to do homestays with local community members, part of the fee goes to the families who host students. "Not only does that money cover the living expenses for the student, but it often doubles the family's income for that month" (Boyle 2007).

Interestingly, doubling the family income may not have been quite the windfall it was expected to be. They felt obligated to treat the American students with special food that they did not normally eat - more fruits, vegetables and meat, and soft drinks and juice. Although they may have ended up eating better food, they may not have normally used the extra money that way. The SI missionaries have raised the amount paid to the host families from 225 to 250 pesos per day, and paired up students in each home in light of this finding.

Finally, participants often bring large suitcases and boxes full of in-kind donations - medicines for the health care ministry; nail polish, beads and facial products for the social work site (which works with women only); crayons, scissors, glue and playdough for the education sites; Bibles for the agricultural site; peanut butter and Gatorade for the mission base. Last year, one student's father, a dentist, donated his own dental machinery.

2.3 The agricultural site

The January two-week trip to serve with Students International in Los Higos was my first glimpse into how different this site was from the others. With the possible exception of social work in El Callejon (I'm not actually sure), all of the other sites - education, sports, dentistry, physical therapy, health care, construction, art, etc. -

are much more defined by the particular activity - they teach in education, they scale teeth in dentistry, they work with children in physical therapy, etc. These sites are also much more confined to a particular location, whether the temporary clinic or the SI-owned school or the house being constructed.

The agricultural site tends to be much more defined by the community in which it is located. When the two-week outreaches are more structured, the student volunteers typically spend all of their time in the SI-owned clubhouse and land, only leaving to go to Meri's house for lunch. Yet even this is a departure from the norm, and one that is highly appreciated. Relationships, hospitality, homestay and prolonged interaction with community members, was mentioned 30 times by ten responders to survey questions sent to outreach participants about what was most memorable, satisfying and life-changing about their experiences in Los Higos.

2.4 Organizational goals

Here are some of the lines from SI's organizational statement (see Appendix C for the full organizational statement) that stood out to me in light of what I have observed of SI's activity in Los Higos.

- Students International will strive to work in a spirit of cooperation with the Christian church in all countries where we minister. Where possible and in keeping with our guidelines on the establishment of development projects, we seek to include the local church in our work in the community.
- One of the marks of Christianity is the way in which believers love each other. Because Christ has reconciled all believers to God through the cross, so we too, can be reconciled to each other and live as a community of brothers and sisters. Jesus said in John 17:21 that the world would be drawn to the Gospel by seeing how Christians are united.

Last summer, the long-term vision of Students International was described as working alongside local churches, having SI missionaries and volunteers support their

programs. Later on, the vision was more specifically described as training Dominican churches to follow a similar pattern of entering a poor community to provide services and start Bible studies. But there are churches already in the poor communities. In Los Higos, there is a Catholic church and a Pentecostal church. It is true that SI's Bible studies provided a space for people who didn't feel comfortable in either of the other two. However, may be misleading to use the term "local church" if it is referring to the larger town churches.

SI has taken steps to improve previously strained relationships the Pentecostal church. The SI-led youth group visited the Pentecostal church when a visiting preacher came to speak, and invited one of the youths at the Pentecostal church to come speak at their Bible study. Relations between SI and the Pentecostal church are improving.

- Our goal is to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ, stripped of our particular cultural overtones, so that people from all cultures may embrace it.

The community Bible studies and church services led by SI in Los Higos always start off with clapping, loud chant-singing, accompanied by a louder tambora (drum) and a loudest guira (metal tube with raised bumps that is scraped rhythmically with a stick), musical worship that sounds quite different from what is sung over at the mission base. The local participants enjoy this part very much. While no Bible study can be completely stripped of any cultural overtones, the participants experience a variety of styles from the Alice,* the American missionary, Alberto,* the Dominican missionary, and occasionally one of the locals themselves.

- Each ministry will seek to meet a real, felt need in the community. We seek to pioneer and participate in ministries that are responsive to the current problems and needs recognized by many within the community. Rather than solely implementing projects that our organization deems important, we seek to dialog with the poor and learn how we can best work together to meet the needs that are most pressing.

- Each ministry will seek to allow for a strong, integral student component. Student participation is an important element in each area of ministry and will not be conceived as an afterthought. There are many valid, important ministries with which to be involved. However, as a student training organization, we will only focus our resources on ministries that allow students - even with limited language ability - to work alongside our missionaries in a strong participatory role.
- Each ministry will value relationships. Students International seeks to impact people with the Gospel in word and action and give students an opportunity to befriend and touch the life of a national. We understand the important role of relationships in sharing the Gospel. They build trust, which opens hearts to receiving the Good News of Christ. Therefore we will focus on ministries that allow students to develop relationships.

These three objectives have proven difficult to reconcile neatly. There are clear examples of the site leaders seeking dialogue with the community members. Alberto sat in the middle of his kids in the clubhouse one afternoon, knee propped up and arm hanging over the back of another chair, discussing the club schedule with 8- to 13-year-olds. As summer was about to end, he asked them if they had enough time to finish their homework, whether they thought they were spending too much time in club. He listened very seriously to the children's responses, and accordingly adjusted club hours to leave more time for homework.

Alberto has also gathered about a dozen young men and women between 17 and 29 into youth group. The group wants to rescue the other young people in the village from los vicios , or vices, such as drugs, alcohol and gambling. I asked Alberto what his strategy was going to be; he responded with a laugh that he didn't know - that was why the group was meeting every other Thursday, to discuss how.

Alice has been thinking about working with the hog raisers for some time, because her family raised hogs back in Iowa and she "knows hogs." Between her various club duties and errands in Los Higos, she has slowly been meeting with some of the more

successful hog owners to discuss their methods, and how they could help the less successful hog owners.

Alberto's method seems to be to jump into ideas, but I think it is only after the idea has been quietly cooking for a long time in both his and local heads. When I look back at my daily notes, I saw that what looked like Alberto's pet ideas - teaching women to sew, a preschool, teaching the club kids musical instruments - had all been independently voiced by his various community friends. Did he plant the ideas in their heads or did it happen the other way around? Both support the idea so strongly that it is hard to tell.

Alice's method is to be cautious and move slowly. She has a strong sense of responsibility and duty and "very efficient with the finances." Alice likes to spend time chatting with community members, learning as much as she can about all sorts of random things.

Both Alberto and Alice like to work in ways that are sensitive and responsive to the community, but when students are coming, there is pressure to "have structure" and to "do something productive." That is not to say that Alberto and Alice do not enjoy having students at the site - in fact, they both connect very well with students. However, Alice's sense of duty tells her that everything must be planned out and well-prepared for the students to have a fruitful experience. Alberto feels the need to adjust the club activities to take full advantage of the students' particular gifts.

We threw everything under ag [(agriculture)]. Did we do it for Los Higos or did we do it for SI? I think we did it because SI needed an ag site and Los Higos seemed to be a good place for it. As we learned, we realized that ag may be not the biggest need. They're looking at economic stability, medical needs, educational needs. We threw everything under ag. Did we do it for Los Higos or did we do it for SI? I think we did it because SI needed an ag site and Los Higos seemed to be a good place for it. As we learned, we realized that ag may be not the biggest need. They're looking at economic stability, medical needs, educational needs. -
Field director

Recognizing the inappropriateness of the "agricultural site" title, SI is splitting the agricultural site into two, spinning off the kids' club into its own site and searching for a clear vision for the agricultural site. Last year, out of a total of 443 students, 19 went to agriculture. (While the six SPU students were living in Los Higos, SI did not bring other students to the agriculture site.) The agriculture site does not get many applicants. It is probably one of the least relevant to American high school and college students when advertised as a career-related ministry site - yet the students who do end up in Los Higos find it to be a hidden treasure. It is different from all the other sites because the site leaders have evolved their activities to be more oriented toward the general community than as a particular service. The official SI activity that the short-term outreach participants plug into is the kids' club. But the agricultural site leaders also lead four different Bible studies and church services on their own time, frequently spend the night in the community, occasionally take locals to the church in town, bring some of the girls home for a sleepover party, attend birthday parties, take people to the hospital, and so on. These are the activities that are building the crucial relationships. Yet the site leaders have less freedom and flexibility to do some of these things when the participants are at the site, and the participants miss out some of the most meaningful parts of missionary life.

Sometimes it is the occupational ministries that may hinder relationship-building. It depends on the nature of the task, however. Mapping and censusing involved a lot of walking around with locals, sometimes over long trails to get to the next house. This activity allowed for plenty of conversation with locals, when the Americans remembered to stop just talking to each other. Teaching in the kids' club helped the students connect with the children in the club, but students generally expressed desire to meet more people outside of the club. The students working with Jose on the fruit trees did a lot of manual labor in isolated areas, which made relationship-building more difficult. Luckily, these students were living in the community, and had evenings to connect with their host families and friends. The field director recognizes the risk of needing to do something:

Number one, we have to remember that what we're doing - relationship

has got to be number one. Our site and the work we do in the community is literally a bridge to get to the people and we don't want to stop on the bridge. We get confused with projects in the midst of development. Because we've got students over here, which is a good tension to us because it's part of our vision, we stop short of our vision and we stop on the bridge and get stuck on the project. - Field director

2.5 Monitoring and Accountability

Each missionary is responsible for sending out regular updates to their supporters, whether in the form of a video, a newsletter, or blog. These updates provide information about what the missionaries are doing, what results they have seen and what their intentions are. This mechanism of accountability requires trusting the missionaries to accurately represent themselves and their work. It would seem that the missionaries would have incentive to make their situation sound better than they are to encourage continued support. However, the missionaries also request prayer support for their difficulties, and so have incentive to include their struggles and disappointments as well.

A few of SI's ministry sites keep blogs to keep past participants updated on their activities and how the communities are doing. The agricultural site, special education site, the two education sites and the new base construction site keep blogs. The administrative and pastoral directors keep family blogs as well. The rate at which these blogs are updated is variable - some are updated every few weeks; others are not updated at all. The administrative director mentioned that they are working on moving one of their art site staff to multimedia, creating a new occupational ministry site. Students who come to work in this site would visit the various different sites, do interviews, get descriptions, photos. [Do a] two-minute interview with the site leader to share the vision. It's a huge job but it takes us to another level of where we want to go, awareness of who we are and what's going on.

Throughout the year, teams of student volunteers come for one, two, four and six

week trips. Some three hundred students go through SI's program, and every single one fills out an evaluation form the final night. This evaluation form consists of the following questions:

- What has been the highlight of your outreach?
- What one thing would you recommend that SI changes in order to improve the outreach? Why??
- What one or two things would you recommend that we NOT change? Why?
- Did you encounter God on this outreach? If you did, in what ways did you encounter Him?
- If you encountered God, are you different as a result of your encounter with Him? How so?

The teams director, who is in charge of orientation and all activities conducted at the missionary base, the administrative director, and the pastoral director see the evaluations, and then copies are mailed to SI headquarters in Visalia, California, with a few bogus evaluations slipped in to make sure they are read. About a week later, after the operations and curriculum directors at HQ see the evaluations, the individual missionaries, with whom the students worked in various communities, can access the evaluations.

SI has several reasons to be responsive to the evaluation forms. For one thing, the organization's mission is to serve both the local poor communities and American students, by enabling them to "discover how God might use them in their occupation," provide them an opportunity to be part of an ongoing ministry instead of just a short outreach that is hard to follow up on, and to understand the value of building relationships in accountability. In order to know whether SI is achieving these objectives, they must ask the students. Participant fees are a major source of their funding.

All our funding comes from the students who come. So we're accountable to the students because they tell each other about the program and come back. It brings another level of enthusiasm from the students - they're actually helping fund a ministry - not just paying for the two weeks, but helping fund the ministry for the year. I didn't think about it that way, but it really is - not to change us by taking us out of our vision, but we need to be accountable for what we say we're going to do and make sure it's happening. Because the students are our source of funding.

- Field Director

In order to get community feedback, the directors and the administrative assistant make quarterly visits to the sites. "We stop by to chat, drink coffee. Participants and non-participants. It's easy because of the culture. Because the culture here is so expressive, if something's going wrong, we always find out," says the administrative assistant. "This is great, because nothing's hidden. Helps things function better. La gente comunica. La informacion corre rapidamente. Not just bad things, but good things too." However, I have found that locals who are closer to the missionaries are more likely to say only positive things, while locals who are closer to me are more likely to include negative opinions, or particularly, confusion, whether their own or that of others.

If the community members - especially the ones who have built close relationships with the site leaders - don't understand that the directors are trying to help their ministry in Los Higos, and that the directors do personally care about the missionaries - these community members may try to protect them instead of saying exactly what they think.

Chapter 3

The Student Participants

3.1 Recruitment

Every three years since 1941, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship has hosted Urbana, a five-day nation-wide missions convention for students to "investigate God's call to world evangelization" (urbana.org). Tom Boyle, a member of SI's board of directors, calls Urbana one of SI's most important recruiting opportunities (Boyle 2007). The latest convention (in Dec. 2006) drew over 20,000 attendees. Students International was developed by a former InterVarsity staff member, and was one of the over 300 mission agencies, relief and development organizations and Christian schools represented at the convention. This year, SI had a total of 1100 spaces for students during all the outreaches from February to August. By the end of Urbana, they had 60 slots left unfilled (Boyle 1007).

SI's website states that "historically, SI recruiting efforts have been conducted by one individual based out of our International Office in Visalia, California. Each year, this individual meets with and/or communicates with about 50 strongly interested people each year, yielding approximately 30 teams (400 outreach participants), a couple new staff members and donors. At this time, outreach participants, staff and financial supporters involved on an annual basis with our field ministries represent approximately 50% of our capacity and goals.⁵ " They are pursuing an alternative

⁵This webpage was last modified 12/21/2006, before Urbana.

recruiting strategy that involves establishing official regional representatives to publicize SI's activities to increase the number of outreach participants, staff and financial supporters.

SI also maintains long-term relationships with churches and schools that send teams to DR every year. These include James Madison University, Boston University, churches in Indiana, Ohio and Connecticut, Jupiter Christian School in Florida, among others. Participants occasionally return in subsequent years, and they also pass the word along to other groups. MIT Intersity learned about Students International through BU and Harvard teams that had participated on outreaches in the past. A BU student gave a presentation to MIT's Intersity fellowships about her experience with Students International.

MIT's team leader says, I chose SI because it was a missions trip that allowed us to participate in ongoing work of long term missionaries. I didn't want us to go and create new things to do that will die once we leave. I wanted us to participate in the lives of long term missionaries so that we get to see what it is like to be in ministry for the long haul and support the on-going work. Short term missions can be, many times, about how many great programs we can create in a short amount of time. That would give us a false sense of what it means to care for people and can even do more damage than good. SI allowed us to participate in disciplines we were interested in for our future and engage with how we can use our academics to care for the poor.

Finally, as an organization that has been active in the area for several years, institutions in the United States and DR link up with Students International to serve in local communities. A local rehab center for American youth sent a team to work with the construction ministry in Los Higos. Goshen College* sent one of their study abroad students to live in Los Higos through SI. Seattle Pacific University* (SPU)'s short-term missions program Seattle Pacific Reachout International (SPRINT) has sent two student teams to spend a summer living in a Dominican village through Students International.

3.2 Types of Participant Experience

Program-to-program link; daytime service activity provided by SI; homestay

In Spring of 2006, a senior from Goshen College came to live with an elderly couple in Los Higos for four weeks through arrangements made by Students International. Goshen's study abroad program (Study-Service Term) website describes the student's service placement in Los Higos as "working with a program for youth involving athletics, agriculture and teaching." One of the SI missionaries described Tony's stay in Los Higos: "I think he basically hung out at the colmados playing dominos and cards all day." A local villager commented, "Tony was the most friendly person from Students International that came here. He was friendly with everyone everywhere. He was a humble person. Everyone knew him and loved him." Tony had indeed worked with the kids' club. He had also befriended the young adults and taught several card tricks to one of the local young men, who subsequently performed them for me when I came the following summer. Tony accompanied the Young People's Club on their trip to the beach. He is still remembered and often mentioned by members of the community.

Program to program link; daytime service activity determined by school; homestay

In summer of 2006, six SPU students came to live with six host families in Los Higos, a rural mountain village in the Cibao region, one hour from Santiago. Four of the students came through the regular SPRINT program, which describes itself in the following manner:

In recognition of the fundamental truth that God is at work everywhere and that our fellow human beings are in every way our equals, SPRINT's mission intentionally focuses more on what we have to learn from our hosts than it does on what services or lessons we can provide for them. The result is that our trips more closely resemble cross-cultural educational experiences than a traditional youth group mission to build a house across the border.

Two of the students (engineering majors) came through SPRINT's for-credit pro-

gram, which requires a faculty-advised student project to be completed over the trip. The students and their professor decided to map the community using GPS (Global Positioning System).

Despite SI's efforts to generate community ownership over the map project, our local partners ended up explaining to the villagers, the Americans are making a map so they can find our houses." I was interning for Students International, and was 4 weeks into my 10-week stay when the SPU students arrived. At the time, SI had three missionaries working in Los Higos - two students would work with each. One group would work with three farmers who had been loaned fruit trees, another group would work with the kids' club, and the third group would work on mapping the community. I was to work with the engineering students in the mapping group. Alice, the missionary that was to lead our group, broke her foot at this time and was unable to join us, though she did take part in the community meetings held to discuss the project.

We spent five weeks mapping the village with GPS and taking a census. Eight of the local young men - ages 17 to 36 - came with us as translators and guides, and four of them worked with us nearly every day. It was not that we needed so many, but it was summer and there was no school, and they enjoyed spending time with the Americans.

Alice and I thought it would be neat if some of the locals learned how to use the GPS unit with us as we mapped the community. It turns out that using a GPS unit to mark roads and buildings requires little more than pressing a button, and that most of the work is done after the information is uploaded to a computer. Besides, the students had only brought one unit, so this part of mapping took a long time.

Coming right out of Gateway, I had a vague but strong sense that there should be some community involvement in the process, to make the map project something that could benefit Los Higos. We weren't sure what that would look like or how it would happen. At this point, I had been in Jarabacoa for a total of four weeks, and Alice had been there for about four months. Looking back, it would have made sense to consult Alberto and Jose, who had been working in Los Higos for a few years, but it didn't



Figure 3-1: Here is the mapping group on the very first day. The boy in red and the tall one bringing up the rear are the two engineering students. The first two boys and the little one second to last are brothers; the third one in the white shirt is one of the students' host brothers. These four accompanied us almost every day, from mapping to censusing to marking houses.

occur to us at the time because the map project was "our responsibility." Anyway, Alice and I decided to begin by inviting the presidents of the various community associations to meet before the students came. We invited five men and one woman. Two of the original invitees - the presidents of the water association and the village council - showed up; the president of the young people's club sent three substitutes, the president of the San Rafael Association⁶ sent the treasurer in his place. The president of the Casabera⁷ did not show up. One man who wasn't officially invited, but often does odd jobs for SI, joined us. Four children hung around with us, and a fifth ran around making sure if invitees were coming. So one of the directors, Alice and I met with seven adults and five children. We told them about the SPU students and the map project, and explained that we wanted the community involved in the mapmaking: what did they think would be useful? We had them split into groups

⁶Alice and I are not sure what the purpose of this group is. This group includes middle aged and older adults. The secretary used to lead a road crew but does not anymore. All members bring some cash (about 100 pesos) to each meeting to go into a rotating pot.

⁷Casabe is a round flatbread made of ground yucca. 32 women and 5 men are in the casabe cooperative, called the Casabera Asociacion. They dress up and meet every Sunday morning in the casabe building (built by Indesco) to sing songs and discuss issues. They had \$1000 in the bank last May.

of two and draw their own maps of the community.⁸ During this activity, one group suggested creating an address system to mark the houses.

They were generally positive about the map, although it was unclear what it might be used for. Once mentioned that he had talked to one of the SI missionaries about the lack of a preschool here for children under five. Another said that illiteracy was an important issue. Two of them argued about why people didn't show up to help spread the rocks for the road when the truck came. One said that the baseball field needed lights and that the road needed to be repaired. He also said that sure there are people who value education, but others who didn't care, and when there's no desire, there's nothing.

In the first map meeting with both community leaders and the SPU students, I suggested that a map might be useful in marking which houses were not paying the electricity bill or deciding where to place a school or a clinic or another well or prioritizing roads to repair. The villagers thought these were good ideas, and said it was important to have a census. When we asked them what questions they wanted on the census, there was general confusion. Finally in the end, the villager who spoke English said, Look, what do you want on the census? It was very difficult to try to transfer ownership of the information-gathering. It was understandable with the map - everyone, including very small children, knew where everyone else lived. With the census, which the villagers at the meeting insisted on, it was harder to understand why they were reluctant to help form the questions.

We noticed that when we did introductions at the beginning of each meeting, people would tell us their name and say, "And I'm at your service" - "A su orden." It's the response people often give when you thank them. We held six meetings to discuss the map over the six weeks, always had one to three locals with us as we

⁸I wish I had those maps to show here. One was very diagrammatic and showed the principle road as a vertical line down the middle, with all the businesses and community buildings and structures lining either side in the order that one passes them. This is the only one that referred to the two zones and various barrios into which the village is divided. Another map was very realistic, capturing the major curves and turns, and marking buildings roughly where they might actually be. The third map was a mixture of both. The children also drew a map, which included elaborate drawings of the basketball court and the cafeteria. All of the maps started at the top of the hill and ended with the river; we based our final map's extent on these boundaries.

marked houses - but it was always "the Americans' map so they can find our houses." One of the local young men noted at one of the meetings that the map and census would go out of date immediately, as people were always building new houses or getting married and moving out or having new children.

The excel file of the census was left with the one family that owned a computer in Los Higos, but they didn't have Microsoft Office - only Windows. The next time I came, I brought them an Office CD so they could actually open the file. The primary user in the family is 12-year-old Deuris, who draws pictures on MSPaint and plays with the clipart library in MSWord. A JPEG of the map was also put on the computer. However, it would be difficult to modify in that form. Technology could make mapping easier. GPS made it very simple to mark houses and upload the information to see the map without having to survey or measure distances. I wanted to use GIS, which makes it easy to attach the census information with the geographic information. Then we could look at spatial patterns in age, income, education distribution, and so on. We could add information about water and electricity connections, road conditions. It could be a way to learn about the community and teach locals some computer skills. However, the student who brought the GPS unit, used a program called Mapsource to upload the data - which is incompatible with GIS. We don't have aerial or satellite photos of the area - and NASA images cost thousands of dollars. I didn't have terrain data, which is a particularly important piece of the map for such a hilly area. The SPU students professor had purchased a supplementary CD of terrain data for the Caribbean. The student emailed me a bitmap image of the terrain data for Los Higos, which I georeferenced to the GPS data points (using the original data converted to a text file) in GIS - but it is not pretty.

We have two printouts of the map - which consists of GPS waypoints and breadcrumb trails. The SPU students stitched together twenty printscreens of the image from Mapsource in MSPaint, which we printed out on sixteen sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper and taped together. At the printshop in town, we taped that to a large piece of roll paper and made two full size copies. We did it this way because it was only a preliminary map, and the only plotter in town printed on thick glossy paper - which

would have cost us fifty dollars.

In addition to the data availability and compatibility issues, using computers to work on the maps would make it hard for the villagers to be involved. The only local who has experience using MSExcel is quite busy with work and classes and family.

For the census, we split into three groups - one American and one or two Dominicans in each group - and went to each house with survey forms that we filled in by hand. For each household, we asked for people's names, ages, level of education, job, income, religion and whether they had water. There was a good deal of confusion. First, we spelled a lot of names incorrectly. Also, people went by nicknames, and would not be recognized by their real names - yet many people had the same nickname. For instance, there are at least four women called "La Negra." So for the map and census, do we use people's actual names or their nicknames? The easy answer is to use both, but it brings up an interesting question about the purpose of the map and census, and who it is for.⁹

The ages were also difficult to pin down. People usually knew the ages of young children, but ages over 20 were generally estimates. At first there seemed to be number of women who must have had their first child at alarmingly young ages, but it became apparent that the mistakes arose from a combination of not knowing the actual ages and bad math. We had several young adults in their mid-twenties tell us their mothers were in their early thirties. People had told us literacy was a problem, but numeracy seems also be an issue.

Older people could not remember clearly when they had dropped out of school. Because we surveyed during the summer, some of the responses indicated last grade completed while others indicated the grade to be entered in the fall. Because there is such a high rate of flunking or temporarily dropping out, grades do not strongly correspond to a particular age. There does not to be very much stigma attached to flunking which is good for encouraging the student to continue, yet not so good for

⁹The Ayuntamiento of Buena Vista, the regional government, contacted SI about working together to develop Los Higos because they heard SI had made a map of the community. But the latest version of the map is currently on my dorm room floor, and it is unclear what the Ayuntamiento had in mind and why the map made a difference.

discouraging missing class. Nearly everyone who had finished at least third grade responded that they could read. It may well be that many years ago they did learn to read; it's unclear whether they still can. Some of the reported incomes were obviously incorrect for example, the colmado-owner who reported an income of 500 pesos per month. Other colmado owners reported at least 10,000 pesos per month, and this particular one also benefits from remittances from a husband who lives in New York. Sometimes we even had trouble getting the total number of people living in the house. We are missing some people from the census young adults who work in the city and come home for a few weekends each month. Kenneth Sharpe, who spent eighteen months living in a rural Dominican village to study a coffee growers' cooperative, notes that thirty years of Trujillo dictatorship¹⁰ has made [the use of one-shot interview questionnaires'] in proving even simple facts (land owned, kind of production, family size, income) problematic: the census takers of Trujillo used such information to set taxes in past times not soon forgotten (Sharpe xvi).

When it came time to mark the houses with address numbers, the young men assured us the villagers would not mind having numbers written on their doorframes in black permanent marker. In fact, the electric company has marked houses with their own numbering system in black permanent marker. We went around marking houses - the locals writing all the numbers and the homeowners did not show any protest.

The census and map are in Los Higos only in digital format on a computer, unlikely to ever be opened by a local.¹¹ Houses have had large numbers scrawled on their doorframes for nearly a year now, for no apparent reason as the address system has not yet been completed. There is one local young man who continues to ask about finishing marking the houses, though no other local has mentioned the map. The census was used to determine the number of children under five, and attached

¹⁰Trujillo was in power from 1930 until his assassination in 1961.

¹¹The map I gave them was still not up-to-date with the latest address changes, and lacked any terrain data. While I was uploading the jpeg of the map onto a local family's computer (they are one of two families in the village who own a computer), the father walked in with a large rolled-up piece of paper. Imagine my embarrassment when he proudly unrolled it to show a map of some of his property, complete with contour lines, which he had gotten a local surveyor to make. My urban design professor often reminded us to never make a map without terrain data.



Figure 3-2: A local young man is marking a house with an address number.

to the request for a preschool that the village council sent to the district director of education. Beyond that, the map and census may not have been of much direct use to the community. However, the project gave the two students a reason to be there in the first place. It also provided legitimate reasons for local young men to spend time with us - not just *vagando con los Americanos*, but working and being useful. We were quite disorganized, and ended up visiting every single house three times - once to map with GPS, then to do the census, and finally to mark the house with address numbers. But in visiting each house so many times, people became more familiar with us, and we learned our way around the community.

Summing up his experience in the end, however, one of the engineering students said:

Yes, I think my teammates and I made a lasting impact on Los Higos and the people there, or, perhaps more accurately, God did through us. I could cite the various things that we accomplished in our time, like the map and census for the school application, or the people that accepted Christ, but I think there must be much more than that. God had me go to the Dominican Republic for a reason, and I know that He would not have done so if He did not have a specific and eternal plan for it. So, I may not be able to describe this in detail, because I simply do not have them, but I am confident that it happened.

This student left possibly the biggest impression on community. His 23-year-old host brother remembers reading the Bible together when they woke up. His 10-year-old host brother and 13-year-old neighbor remember watching Power Rangers together every morning. The family down the road remembers playing dominos with him in the evenings. Mery remembers teaching him how to make dulce de leche, his host mother remembers teaching him how to make panecico (a sticky yucca cake). The village boys remember watching him do backflips off the rocks into the river. Everyone remembers how he picked up the phrase *No importa; lo que vale es la persona* - It doesn't matter; what matters is the person.

Regular two-week outreach with SI; my own experience

I first encountered the Dominican Republic on a two-week mission trip with Students International (SI) January of 2006. Two of us had signed up for the agricultural site. I didn't know exactly what to expect, but I imagined that I would be working in a field. The website didn't give much information, but it said to come prepared for manual labor. My teammate and I spent our first few days alongside our two Dominican site leaders (SI missionaries) digging the base for a latrine behind the SI clubhouse in Los Higos, the rural mountain village where the agriculture site is located. Because of heavy rains, the truck couldn't make it up the muddy roads with the materials to build the latrine.

We also spent several days hoeing and weeding SI's 1-acre plot to prepare it for the children's club. We were always surrounded by dozens of children, tiny ones hacking energetically at the weeds with tiny spades, older ones using machetes quite skillfully. The kids' club, which had not yet started, was described as something like a 4H club, where the kids would learn to farm and compete to grow the best vegetables, selling them at the end of the harvest. The site leader imagined that the kids would be in the club for five years, and become role models to the other kids in the village.

It was usually sunny in the morning and rainy in the afternoon. We'd spend all morning digging up weeds, and then break for lunch and siesta at a local woman's home. We always ate two lunches - our sandwiches from the mission base, followed by Meri's tastier rice and chicken. My teammate and I would go slightly nuts during

the requisite one-hour siesta after lunch. We wanted to get back to work. "It's hard to be ambitious here," my teammate often commented. "Everyone's so carefree."

Usually, it would start raining at 2pm, and we'd sigh at the wasted hour of sunshine. Andre would put his hand out under the roof to feel the rain on his palm and smile, "God has different plans for us today." So we would go to a home where one of the children was mentally handicapped and pray for her family. Or we'd share personal stories about ourselves - why we had ended up in the DR. We learned how one had run away from home at age eleven, and come to care greatly for children after a tough and lonely childhood.

By the end, we had really enjoyed our time with the missionaries and the community members, but couldn't really name what we had contributed to the community. We'd spent two days digging the base for the clubhouse latrine, but hadn't been able to start construction. All the weeds we dug up during the mornings were safely rescued by the rains each afternoon, and by morning were happily rooted again.

During debriefing after the trip, we found that we had had quite a different experience from most of our teammates at the dental and health care sites. They had done a lot more obvious work - seeing patients, doing checkups, scaling teeth. Their contact with community members was short, and they saw different people each day. Also, we were the only ones who had gotten fed home-cooked meals everyday for lunch in a community home. The others had eaten their bagged lunches among themselves. They were quite envious of us. However, without having experienced the other sites to compare, each student felt that his or her own site had been the best experience.

3.3 Participant reflections

A survey of six open ended questions was sent to fifteen students who had been to Los Higos at least once during their outreach. The ten respondents included students on various types of outreaches (2- and 4-week regular outreaches and 6-week homestays) and interns, who had participated at the agricultural, dental, health care and construction sites. In summary, students referred to particular relationships they

had built and learning about the importance of relationships over efficiency as the most meaningful and lasting impacts of the outreach. Five respondents were unsure about or didn't think they had made any lasting impact on the community, and five respondents replied yes; the students who had lived in the community and spent longer times there were more confident about the impacts they had. All respondents emphasized the impact in terms of the friendships they had made over any obvious physical results. Respondents were surprised about various physical and relational conditions in Los Higos. All ten respondents said that the most satisfying part of their time in Los Higos was spending time with people, forming bonds and making friends. In general, respondents were very positive about their experience. Asked if there was one thing SI could change to make the experience better, the students who lived in Los Higos would have liked more communication with SI during their stay and more preparation beforehand. Students who participated in the shorter outreaches say they would have liked to spend a night or two in the village, and suggested more opportunities to spend time in the village outside of the specific work site (dental clinic, health clinic, kids' club).

For the students that I surveyed or interviewed (MIT students and students who went to Los Higos), the SI outreach experience generally influenced the students to consider serving the poor by "making missions real" and raising awareness of the conditions of the poor and making connections with real people in another, poorer part of the world. The particular occupation of the ministry site (except in a few cases) did not seem as important as the personal connections with the missionaries and the local community members.

For the majority of students who do not end up moving to a developing country, what they do take home are changed priorities about work and relationships. It is often said that one of the biggest impacts of overseas short-term missions is the greater boldness and commitment to love and share the gospel with friends and family at home.

3.4 The importance of occupational ministry sites

The idea of having students explore career-related ways to serve the poor may be most important in giving the student a reason to go in the first place. One student¹² (whose parents are not Christian) pointed out that for students whose parents may not support a religious mission trip during times they could be making money and resume-building doing an internship, a service trip to a developing country related to career/academic goals is a justifiable alternative (and might look even better on a resume.)

The health care, dentistry and education sites are an exception; these sites often get premed, pre-dental and nursing students, and students who plan to go into education, who have very hands-on experiences in their chosen career paths. The dental ministry participants don scrubs and masks and actually scale teeth; the health ministry participants watch surgeries and do checkups; the education participants give lessons. Other sites - art, construction, agriculture, sports, physical therapy - may be more unusual career paths for college students; these sites tend to attract students less as career- or major-related interests than as extracurricular ones.

The dental and health care ministries are a crucial supplement to the agricultural site in Los Higos. The clinics that SI holds in Los Higos are important because they add credibility to SI's claim that they care about the community. The doctors and dentist provide needed medical care, and are highly appreciated by the community.

3.5 What causes transformation?

Community members have begun to change. "I don't know what it is - I feel better. I used to drink, but now I don't. I feel better." "Caley used to drink a lot, party a lot. Now, if he has work in the evening, sometimes he won't go because of Bible study."

The change has come about primarily through the friendships the locals have

¹²This student has not participated in an SI outreach, but she is going to Calcutta this summer through Intervarsity Global Urban Trek to work in health clinics with the Sisters of Charity (started by Mother Teresa). Her parents are not Christian, and as a pre-med student, the medical aspect of the trip is a key reason her parents are allowing her to go.

formed with the student participants and the missionaries. Although guy-girl relationships have given SI some headaches, some of these have led to changed behavior and renewed commitment as Christians.

”Some young people see Students International as potential girlfriends. Others think it’s good - because before, young people here were drinking beer, but now are going to church and have a different life. Guelo learned more English. Children are sharing more. [The students] help other ones to know something with a different point a view different from what we have with the Catholic Church. Because here for example, 99% were born in Catholic Church, but when they grow up, they just don’t go to church. I think religion doesn’t help you to save yourself. I think the most important thing is what you can do for others, and to say thanks to God for whatever problem you have. God says in the Bible, you will see my face in the fellow man, and what you do for others, you do for me and I think that is the best way to be near to God.”

Students who spent time in Los Higos responded that the important things they got out of the experience was not material accomplishments, but the relationships they formed. (See Appendix D for a fuller selection of student quotes.)

An issue that I struggled with while there was that I did not always feel like I was being productive but as stated in the box above I learned that material accomplishments are hardly the only kind. I may not ever see the actual results of my time there but I know that the Lord had a reason for having me specifically be there. I need to be satisfied in the fact that God works in ways above ours and that He always has a purpose.

I think one of the most satisfying aspects of my trip, in terms of things that will be significant for me long term, was the realization about two weeks into the trip that this was not just a vacation, or something I could walk away from after a week or two. I was not a tourist, and had no interest in ”seeing the sights” or being catered to. This immersion in the Dominican culture, and the ability to see myself in this way, enabled me

to learn much more about what it means to live a life of financial poverty and social wealth, and to develop a passion for others who have the same worldview. Walking around the pueblo, hearing kids yelling hello to me as I walked past, and being accepted as part of their community, touched me in a big way.

I like that there was a lot of freedom and flexibility. There are other things like our trip to New Orleans to help out after Katrina where we gut houses 9-5 and have no time to talk to anyone. There I felt like I was able to make a small contribution. But this was more life-changing because I was able to talk to people.

I'll go ahead and reiterate again that the relationships formed were for me the most important thing. I think that spending intentional time with members of the community is to the benefit of the people of Los Higos as well as the outreach participant.

Again, to contrast the agricultural site with the dental and health sites (or more generally, the more focused and "productive" times in the community), here are some student quotes:

Vanesa was so clearly a highly skilled dentist, you could see that she's very technically capable. And you could see clearly how the community was being served. We had clear things to do and felt like we could contribute - actually scaling teeth, etc. It was really cool how we could, in two weeks, contribute to a longer term ministry.

I think that it would have been cool if there were more things we could do for the rest of the community. As wonderful as working with the kids at the kids club was, I think that it would have been great if we could have helped/ had more interaction with the rest of the community.

More community outreach outside of the "sites" we work in; like dentistry, health care, etc. This would provide more time to bond with the people in the community.

However, the impact of the actual work SI does through these occupation ministry sites is important both in demonstrating that they care about the communities and bringing about physical change. After learning to grow plants in the kids' club, several of the boys in the club have taken seeds home and started little gardens of their own.



Figure 3-3: Darlin's Garden



Figure 3-4: Arjenis, Randy and Jesse's garden.

10-year-old Arjenis had a dream that he found gold in a field and got the idea to start planting. He and fellow club members Randy and Jesse hoed some land by

Maruca's old house and planted seeds from the kids' club. These kids are ten, eleven years old. Everyday, Arjenis comes to his grandmother's house to get the hoe and ax to go work in his garden. One day, they even took her donkey to the goat pen to gather manure for fertilizer.

Chapter 4

The Community

4.1 Charity and Relief Legacies that SI must deal with

A diversity of methodologies guides contemporary missions. This paper is about a group that claims to pursue holistic development, which seeks to treat people as whole beings with spiritual, physical and emotional needs. Holistic development is the response to the internal backlash against both missionaries who "only preach" and those who "only develop."

The Christian missionary community has already learned much about the risks of causing harm by doing either incorrectly - creating dependency through careless aid, and imposing culture instead of spreading a universal gospel. Yet missionaries also seek a balance between contextualization - allowing for different cultures to relate to the gospel in ways that make sense to them - and challenging those traditions and beliefs that, according to the gospel, really are detrimental to life and well-being. In addition to the difficulties of each, there are risks involved in trying to do both evangelism and development at the same time - the missionary can be accused of using development as bait to get people to come to church, and the church may fill with people who understandably may just want the benefits of the missionary's access to outside resources. It is this complex web of fears and risks that the missionaries of

Students International deal with as they go about trying to love God's people in the Dominican Republic.

Mata Gorda is a small community, home to one of SI's preschools. The pastoral director says that a church came in and "just gave and gave and gave and did some damage." SI's administrative assistant, a Dominican national, originally did not want to have anything to do with missionaries because "they just regala and leave. Before, missionary organizations were excellent donors. Brought stuff, left it here and left. Eso no funciona." He joined SI because he felt that it was different.

SI has a particular vision for what it wants to accomplish with the student participants in the community, which involves working with mothers and children, and forming long-term relationships. However, SI is not the only group of foreigners who have come to Los Higos to help. One day, we ran into an American couple, who was visiting old friends in the community. They were part of another Christian organization, had taken in one of the local boys, and wanted to adopt one of the local girls. "Many people and organizations have passed through Los Higos," they said.

A community member said, "Everyone here thinks if you are from the States you have a lot of money. And sometimes they think that if people from the States come, they will help do something good for the community, that they will help the people here. It's just a few people."

One of the most oft-mentioned and beloved of these is Pepe Morel. Pepe came as a representative of the ayuntamiento of Madrid. Walking around in the village, you will see various structures stamped "Ayuntamiento de Madrid" and "INDESCO." The ayuntamiento of Madrid allocated 106,430 Euros (144,585.155 \$USD) to the Spanish development NGO Cooperacion Social for reconstruction of physical and social infrastructure after Hurricane George. Pepe organized the community to rebuild homes, construct improved latrines, put in a community piped water system, expand the electric connections, build a community center, the casabera, the basketball court and the baseball field. INDESCO stands for Inicativo de Educacion Superior y Complementaria. There is no information about it online, but it is listed as Cooperacion Social's local partner in Jarabacoa.

Pepe was a priest. But he came as a representative of the ayuntamiento of Madrid. Spain sent development aid to the Dominican Republic especially in Jarabacoa it was in 1998 after Hurricane George. Many people lost houses, jobs, their livelihood. The roads, etc. all destroyed. There was a lot of help from many countries. A lot of money came from the States to help with reconstruction after the hurricane. But politicians used it to build houses in the mountains, and sometimes trucks full of wood were stuck in the government and didn't do anything with it.

The money from Madrid went to the construction of houses, the sanitary project, the road reconstruction, the cancha, the salon communal, casabera, electricidad project. The help was actually for Hatillo. But there wasn't any land for a play (baseball field) in Hatillo so they put it in Los Higos. The people here had to help with the construction without pay. Pepe saw that the people in Los Higos were available to do this type of work so he concentrated the construction here.

They started reconstruction projects, first with the roads. They brought food and oil every Saturday for those helping with construction. INDESCO provided all the materials for the houses; the community just had to provide the manual labor. Then they did the sanitation program building latrines and added eight other communities.

Then they did the aqueduct project. It started in Hatillo, but it didn't work because they couldn't find potable water. One of the community men got a digging machine and they started making holes in this community like in the others. Each person of each community had a contract to pay the cost of the water, to pay for maintenance. At first it was 30 pesos/mes. And now it's 35. At first the water system gave each family five tubes. If you needed more, you had to buy it yourself. Besides the construction maestros, the community did everything else. Then we built the cancha, and then the streetlamps.

Pepe was here for four years. He was here a month, then back in Spain, back and forth. I think he lived in a hotel in Jarabacoa. Then he died of a heart attack. All 8 communities were in mourning. He was a great person; everybody loved him.

Why did people like Pepe so much?

Think about it if you lost your house in the Hurricane and they helped you construct a house; if you always had to go get water at 2 am at the river, and they helped create an aqueduct. And maybe five people had electricity, but now everyone has it. And they have a good project in the casabera. Before, everyone had bad sanitary system. The floor used to be of wood. Sometimes when people were sick and needed to buy something from the pharmacy and didn't have money, they bought it for them.

Pepe did a lot for this community. He got people together to build the water system, the latrines, rebuilt homes, the cancha and the play

Pepe promised to bring me a present if I passed all my classes in school.

Cooperacion Social and INDESCO's goals were post-hurricane relief and reconstruction, quite different from SI's. It may be difficult to come in after Pepe, with a long term vision of change. Local expectations have been raised. "Pepe worked really hard for the community. Missionaries are supposed to work for the benefit of the community. For example, if the kids need something, they ask them what they need and help them get it."

But there are some applicable lessons from Pepe's work in the community. Although we cannot ask him how, we know that Pepe organized community members to help each other. In Dominican history, people would gather in exchange labor crews called juntas to build someone's house, for example. In the mid-1960s, the Catholic Church in DR conducted a nationwide movement to throw off the old religion of mystery and fear, and create an *espíritu comunitario* (communal spirit) to

be put into practice "so that men would not live at the expense of others. Rather they would believe that they fulfilled themselves by helping others fulfill themselves. Its basis would be the principle of love of fellow man enunciated by Christ" (Sharpe 1977). The proponents of this movement sought help peasants develop cooperatives to fight oppressive economic conditions, and built on the tradition of the junta. This movement and how it played out in one village is described in vivid detail in *Peasant Politics* by Kenneth Sharpe, who spent 18 months living amongst locals to study a coffee growers' cooperative. One thing that stands out is that he was just asking questions and not trying to implement anything of his own, and was able to support efforts and initiatives taken by the locals themselves - for example, by grilling a peasant leader in a mock meeting before he went to speak with government officials (Sharpe 1977).

4.2 Information gathered through the map/census project

Map meeting held July, 2006 to determine community needs and desires.

Name	Nickname	Age	Title
Maribel Delgado	Maruca	38	
Roberto Dominguez	Robin	23	President, Young People's Club
Ruben Delgado		41	
Cristian de Jesus Dominguez	Crispy	19	
Jose Antonio Delgado	Negro	36	President, Aqueduct Association
Francisco Javier Dominguez Ortiz	Pancho	29	
Elvis Antonio Delgado Cruz		21	
Jose Marcelo Delgado	Marcelo	51	Director, Piedra Blanca School
Ramon Ortiz Delgado	Mon	61	President, Village Council
Maria de la Cruz Felix	Meri	61	
Franny Jose Cruz Felix		17	
Victor Jose Cruz Felix		18	
Jose Miguel Dominguez	Guelo	23	
SPU Student		19	SI participant
SPU Student		21	SI participant
Alice		24	SI staff missionary
Sandra		22	SI summer intern

The group brainstormed community needs and came up with:

- education (preschool and adult)
- road
- services: (water, electricity, sanitation)
- culverts

- health
- no catholic church
- training center for women (like sewing)

The school director gave a speech on why it's better to have an adult training center than a preschool, and to stay away from the church issue because it's touchy. He is the local school director of Piedra Blanca. In the open vote, everyone agreed with him. We held a second vote by secret ballot, where we asked everyone to pick their top three.

Results from the ballot vote

Issue	1	2	3	4
Education	12	0	1	0
Road	2	10	0	0
Training Center	0	2	2	7
Catholic church building (lack)	0	0	3	4
Public Services	0	1	3	0
Culverts	0	0	2	2
Health	0	1	2	0

At that meeting, we decided to focus on education because we were told there was a road committee, and we just wanted to focus on one issue. We know that the thirteen people present at the map meeting brainstormed pressing issues and picked education as the number one most important issue for Los Higos - but would the rest of the community agree? And did they mean a preschool or an adult school? Did they just pick education because I had given it as an example of how the map could be useful or because Marcelo had just given a long speech on it? We know that people care about education, but why did that lead to the idea of a preschool in Los Higos? In my discussions with people on the street, adult education seems to be a concern as well.

The commonly used figure for poverty is living on \$2 a day. The richest household in Los Higos makes 70,000 pesos per month for six people: \$44.69 per person per day

. Ramon makes 200 pesos/day from his job at the greenhouse, for him and his wife: \$11.49 per day. Another family reported a monthly income of 5800 pesos for 9 people: \$2.47 per day. The family that sends only three of their seven children to school makes 3000 pesos/month for 9 people: \$1.64 per person per day.

Sample family incomes and demographic information about the head of household.

Income	Family size	\$/day/person	Age	Education	Employment
70,000 pesos/month	6	\$44.69	43	10th grade	Agriculture, carniceria
200 pesos/day	2	\$11.49	61	6th grade	Greenhouse
15,000 pesos/month	6	\$9.58	44	University	Lawyer
5800 pesos/month	9	\$2.47	56	0	Mercado
3000 pesos/month	9	\$1.64	36	3rd grade	Casabe

The ability of the census data to give an accurate picture of household well-being is severely limited because we did not know to ask the right questions at the time. The monthly income question confused just about everyone because most people's incomes are variable. It also does not account for all the subsistence agriculture, chickens, goats, pigs, horses and cows that people use to supplement their income. Side jobs such as barbering, nail-painting, repairing shoes and selling homemade food at the local colmados were not mentioned by a single person in the entire census.

Occupational information from the census was supplemented by what we found out through conversations and observation to create the following table, which lists every type of occupation reported, frequency, and the gender of the worker.

Frequency	Employment/Sources of income	Sex
46	agricultura	(male)
29	ama de casa	(female)
20	invernadero	(both)
19	jornalero	(male)
13	casabera	(both)
12	casa de familia	(female)
12	colmado/cafeteria	(both)
11	concho	(male)
9	construction	(male)
6	private employment	(both)
5	banquera	(female)
5	fritura/carniceria	(both)
3	gas station	(male)
3	private farm	(male)
3	hotel/cabana	(both)
3	hair stylists	(female)
3	teachers	(both)
2	ayuntamiento	(both)
2	school directors	(male)
2	cafe monte alto	(male)
2	mechanic	(male)
2	barbers	(male)
2	manicurists	(female)
2	cow milkers	(male)
2	lawyers	(both)
2	shoe repair	(male)
1	arepera	(female)
1	hace dulces	(female)
1	banca messenger	(male)
1	chofer	(male)
1	cook (gran jimenoa)	(male)
1	electricity/plumber	(male)

4.3 Vignettes

All of the stories told in this section are built from observations and conversations held during down time, outside of official SI activities, and on two subsequent trips. This section complements the information gathered in the previous section.

The Naked Boy Two-year-old Chipo always ran around naked in the main street in front of Maruca's colmado, passersby calling his name, occasionally snatching him up into their arms.



Figure 4-1: "Chipo del todo el mundo," Maruca's 19-year-old son Antony called him, "El hijo mio." Most village children under three stay close to home. From observation, he could be a poor kid that the neighbors all recognized and took care of.

But it turns out that his household is not quite poor. His grandparents (who are in their forties) both work. Their reported income is 8000 pesos per month for four adults (over 18) and three children, which comes to \$4.364 a day per person¹³. They also own a cow and several horses, and have orange trees on their land. Chipo's

¹³Adjusted for PPP, using 2006 GDP values from the CIA World Factbook.

19-year-old aunt has her own fritura, where she sells fried snacks every night. His 21-year-old mother, Chelin, worked as a housecleaner in La Vega, returning once a month for three days. Most couples in Los Higos have common law marriages - where a couple moves in together when the girl gets pregnant. But Chelin left her husband because he drank, they say. And because she and her parents all work, his aunt and uncles (ages 19, 16, 12) would bring him down to their aunt Maruca's, where he would play in the street. All the random neighbors who doted on him were actually cousins, aunts, uncles, great-uncles and great-aunts. For Christmas this year, Chelin brought her son a brand new bicycle and a toy truck.



Figure 4-2: Chipó and his mother, Chelin

Chelin eventually quit her job this spring and came home to live in her parents' house again. She does not have a job, but is taking beauty classes in La Vega on Saturdays. She said she couldn't live like that any longer, coming home once a month, her son running around naked. She also said she didn't like her cleaning job - too much work and too little pay. I asked her if things were better now that she was back home. She looked at me and said, In some ways better, in other ways no.

All That Land At first glance, it seems that Los Higos does not have the problem of landlessness. One villager told me that Los Higos started out with about five families on a lot of land, and then as families grew and spread out, the land was divided and divided. So, because everyone who lives in Los Higos was born there, everyone has land from their parents, but it is fragmented among many siblings. Three of the

richest families hold a lot of land. Jose Antonio and his wife Maruca own two large plots - one is in the area traditionally owned by her family, and the other was bought some time ago and is located across the village from their home. Yiyo owns a large piece of land by his mother's house, on which his brother Agustin is growing batata. Yiyo also owns land all the way out east past Olga's house in the hills. When we were mapping the village last summer, we came across four large pigsties along the trails down near the river. They are all owned by Yiyo. He also owns the only boar in the village, with which the others breed their sows. Other villagers explained that Yiyo and Jose Antonio, who are cousins, inherited a large sum from a spinster aunt who left her savings to them when she died.

No Money for Shoes Many children run around barefoot, getting all kinds of scratches and parasites. Some of them actually do not have shoes, but others just don't like to wear them - and it is hard to tell the difference. 11-year-old Edwin told me his family doesn't have money to buy him tennis shoes. and that the government is to blame for having such high prices for everything. He said the government should lower the prices so people can buy things. His family reports an income of 8000 pesos per month for 7 people. His father works on a private farm and his mother is an administrative assistant in the Buena Vista government. She also sells things out of Avon catalogues, and their family raises pigs. When I visited their house, it was hard to believe their family would not have enough money to buy a pair of tennis shoes.

The Village Nurse Mery and her sister Mayra took a nursing class several years ago, and the SI doctors gave Mery a medicine kit (aspirin, gauze, aloe, Neosporin, IcyHot, etc.). She charges a few pesos for the use of the medicines so that she can keep the box stocked. She keeps the money and a little notebook of what's been used right in the box. When she learns about people with illnesses or injuries, she is quick to respond. She took the IcyHot to rub on 90-year-old Amado's rheumatic knee; she took the Neosporin and gauze to bandage Carmen's shin when she gashed it chopping wood. And people who know she took a nursing class come to her for medicine, and particularly for shots.

However, not everyone knows she has these supplies. Some people prefer to go to

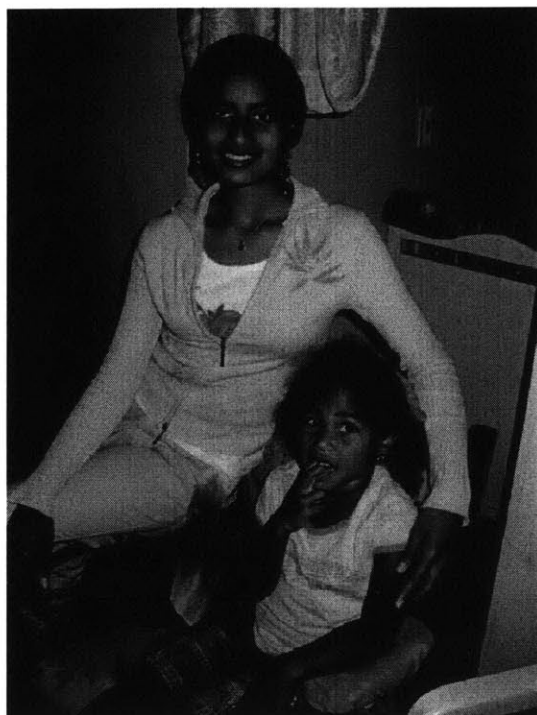


Figure 4-3: Edwin's sisters Yomairi and Vitmayra

a clinic, but for small things, more people might come to Mery if they knew.

Mucho Lodo One of the comments you will hear frequently in Los Higos is *mucho lodo* - lots of mud. All of the roads are unpaved, and poorly maintained culverts make for mucho lodo during the rainy months.

The following day, I asked some of the local boys who were sitting on the porch how they usually fix roads. They said there used to be a group of workers organized by the San Rafael Association, but it didn't exist anymore. One told me that he and two of his friends had tried to dig a culvert in the road in front of their house once, but that others had made fun of them, and that he wouldn't do it again. Some of the local boys told me that one of the men was organizing a group to work on the road on Sunday. They said they would start in the morning, but couldn't give me an hour. When I got there at 9am, they had already begun. Thirty or so men and boys gathered to dig culverts for this road in front of Felo's colmado.

Having arrived late, it was unclear whether one person or a few had decided where

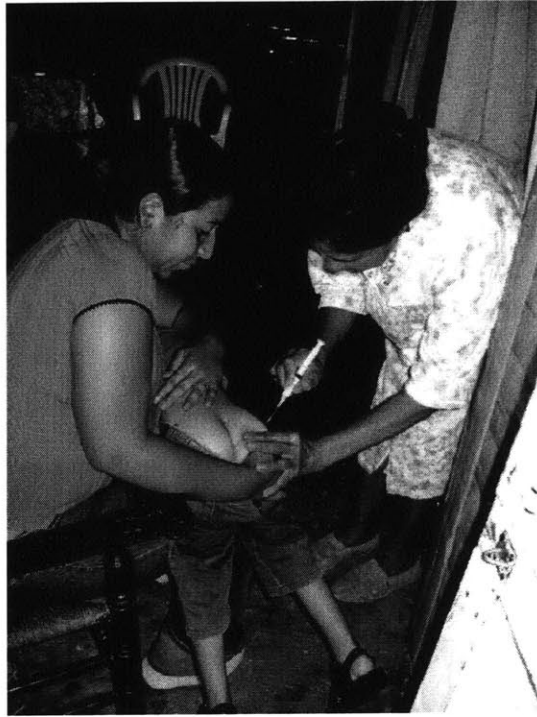


Figure 4-4: Mery giving 4-year-old Harold a shot of penicillin



Figure 4-5: This picture was taken on a Friday in March. Heavy seasonal rains had flooded the intersection and made passage difficult for the motorbikes that everyone uses, and for the truck that comes through weekly with supplies for the colmado (seen in the center of the picture).



Figure 4-6: People had brought their own shovels and pickaxes, but there were more people than tools or space to work.

and how to dig the culverts. Just from observing, I couldn't tell pick out a definite leader, but the two oldest men seemed to be pointing a lot more than the others. The man who had been said to have organized the group, wasn't actually there.

At around 10:30, one of the men went to the colmado and got a bag of cinnamon buns, a 2-liter bottle of red pop, and a metal cup for the workers to have a snack. They continued all the way up to the main road, where a large group of people watched from Narda's colmado.

I could not get a clear answer to who had organized the group or how they had come together - "No one." "I don't know." "They just spread word to meet on Sunday." "The road really needed to be fixed."

One of the men asked if I'd be helping again the following Sunday. I said sure, and asked everyone I met if they'd be helping too. The people who lived in the other zone were actually confused by my question - why would they work on the road in the other zone? Sunday morning, there were about eight people, but as time went on and others did not show, they started to leave. "People here don't like to work," they said. When I ran into the man who'd asked me about helping, he told me, "Oh, we are not working today. Next week." It also turned out that there was a baseball game that day, and many of the men had gone to the play to prepare.

The Young People's Club 23-year-old Robin started the Young People's Club a

year and a half ago. They hosted sports tournaments, held parties and showed movies, charging cover to raise money for people with medical needs. They raised money for the funeral when Yoba's mother passed away from breast cancer. Robin had gotten his boss at the coffee factory to donate a projector to show the movies. This group met every Saturday evening, and also just did things for fun, like spend the night down by the river, cooking chicken over a fire. They also took trips to the beach on holidays.

Without a clear sense of time and when events or meetings are being held, different activities come into unnecessary competition. Having SI's Saturday church services at the same time as the Junta de Vecinos and the Young People's Club meetings force the young people to choose between their community commitment and church. I never made it to a meeting because it was at the same time as Alberto's church service. The one time I decided to try and go - the last Saturday I was there - the club didn't meet. "The club is having problems," Robin told me. "Everyone is leaving." Although the Young People's Club membership did not completely overlap with SI's church, the growing Christian youth group does consist of some of the core members of the Young People's Club.

The Family with Seven Kids One of the members of this youth group is 17-year-old Diogenes. He has six siblings ages four to seventeen - one of the largest families in the village, which has seen a drop in family size (due to introduction of family planning and birth control methods) over one generation. Last summer one of our friends in the community, a single father of three, told us about this family and that they needed help because they had seven kids and made little money. In last summer's census, we had their household income as 3000 pesos per month (making casabe), for two adults and seven children. When I came back this spring, I found that they have a contract to make casabe for Rancho Baiguatè The Adventure Center in Jarabacoa, and have regular income. However, this income is spread thin over seven children. The family sleeps on two beds, and they only have one mosquito net. Children start school at five years of age, but only three of the five who are of age in this family go to school. Diogenes, the oldest, told me their family cannot afford the uniforms and

shoes for school. I was surprised to see several pairs of shoes hanging on their wall when I visited their home. They even had water shoes. I later learned from Alice that Diogenes mends shoes - those were not their shoes.

4.4 Los Higos personal dreams

During my time in the community, I liked to ask the young people what they wanted to be or do when they grew up. Here are the responses I got.

Name	Age	Dream
Nataly	9	Doctora
Janei	10	Abogada
Emelina	12	Salon
Endrina	14	Medicina
Helyn	18	Turismo
Damaris	22	Enfermera
Mayelin (Chica)	7	Tienda de ropa
Meluz	23	Child development
Violeta	25	Maestria
Wendy	19	Salon
Alicia	31	salon grande en el pueblo
Paola	6	Profesora de la escuela de Piedra Blanca
Daury	12	Presidente
Stalin	14	Arquitecto
Arjenis	10	Empresario agronomo
Edwin	10	Empresario - construir casas para los pobres
Franklin	13	Computadora
Darlin	13	Ingeniero - Systema, como Robin

Name	Age	Dream
Deurys	12	Abogado o veterinario
Franddy	17	Agronomo, to help the people in Los Higos
Yoba	12	Trabajar
Sara	11	Trabajar - no quiere ir a la Universidad
Chino	24	Quiere ir a la Universidad
Crispy	19	Trabaja en un fabrica de abono (sewing sucks)
Caley	19	Trabaja en construccion
Guelito	13	Ingeniero computadora o electronico
Chiro	16	Ingeniero electronico
Manuel	20	Ingeniero mecanico
Guelo	23	Ingles y turismo
Victor	18	Dentista
Erinson	12	Karateca
Jose Alfredo	14	Karateca
Robin	23	Take care of his extended family
Antony	19	Caballo, agricultura, construccion
Luz Carmen	5	No sabe
Darlene	9	Tal vez doctora
Ida	6	Pintora
Rafa	15	Profesor
Necco	14	Profesor
Cristobal	17	Doctor
Elvis	21	Estudiar kung fu en los EEUU
Nini	6	No sabe

Chapter 5

Final Personal Thoughts

SI wants to provide a spiritually and culturally transformative experience for students, and build equal, loving relationships with the local community members to share the gospel. I enjoyed all four of my trips immensely. I found that my first trip the two-week outreach last January, was most spiritually and culturally transformative because it was my first time encountering Latin American culture so radically different from our own! both our site leaders were Dominican and we could hardly communicate, and as an outreach participant, I spent every morning in group worship, followed by a talk, followed by personal devotional time. The last two trips were most conducive to building equal, loving relationships. This is in part because I was building on previous contacts. But having no agenda of my own allowed me to spend more time with many more different people, and in particular, allowed me to join in their activities and help with their initiatives (such as repairing the road one Sunday), instead of running about to do my own. As one of the students responded in the survey,

It was interesting seeing the Dominican lifestyle of carefree-ness. Here I feel bound to my goals and society's expectations of what I have to do. There it doesn't matter as much. What matters is that I was having good relationships with the people around me. It always reminds me to re-center myself, to have a different focus in life. They do have a schedule,

but it allows for change. I feel like they're not so much under time crunch. Having a flexible schedule allows more freedom and openness to random events - for example, if someone needs help, you're able to give that help.

SI's summer intern program seeks to bless the SI staff and get a taste of missionary life. My summer internship with SI was a crucial time for me, becoming very close with my site leaders, particularly with Alice, befriending both the SPU students and some of the young locals, and most transformatively, experiencing the joy of pursuing my career interest community development, whatever that means in a setting that fully supported and encouraged my religious beliefs. Alberto told me that he thought my secret to success was putting my whole heart into what I was doing. And finally, with Students International, I could do it. The experience didn't just make me long to go back to work with SI; it made me so much bolder about expressing all of me not holding back the parts I thought were too personal in what I do.

Alice said in an email nearly a year ago, I feel like I spend lots of time in Los Higos, but get nothing done, so then I end up putting off my work into the evenings. Crazy.

She is often stressed because it's hard to get anything done. It may differ for nearly all of the other sites, but for Los Higos, agenda-lessness¹⁴ has been a key part of the site's success in facilitating transformative relationships among the students, missionaries and locals.

As I started to write about SI as an organization, its goals, how it functions and how student participants evaluate their experiences, it seemed that, at least for the agricultural site, some of the most interesting insights, meaningful connections and transformative experiences happen outside of the planned activities, and are usually realized afterwards through reflection (follow-up surveys help!) This is not necessarily to recommend planning for more structured relationship-building time, but to allow students and missionaries more flexibility and down time in the communities.

¹⁴This does not mean visionless - students said they were able to appreciate the flexibility of the site because they felt the site leaders had a strong sense of purpose and vision for their ministry.

For Students International, there may be extra reason to value the slower-paced learning. SI cares a lot about the student experience, and feedback on the student experience has shown that students care a lot about the relationships formed with locals and missionaries during down time outside of the structured occupational work. It's a difficult issue because what appeals to participants and donors in the first place may be the opportunity to do career-related service for the poor.

As a caveat, all of this may be easier for me to say, because as someone whose career interest is in community development, I guess I am realizing that bumming around and chatting is, in fact, occupational work.

Finally, this research can never be finished because the world does not stop while a thesis get written. Things are constantly changing, both in Los Higos and in SI. New questions arise as current ones are being answered, and yet more wait to be unearthed. The fun never ends!

Bibliography

- [1] "A Country Study: Dominican Republic." Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. 1989. lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/dotoc.html.
- [2] *Best Practices in Poverty Reduction: An Analytical Framework*. Else Oyen et al, eds. CROP International Studies in Poverty Research. London: Zed Books, 2002.
- [3] Boyle, Tom. Intervarsity Director of Staff Development and Training. Talk on Students International. Delivered at a chapel service at InterVarsity National Service Center. March 21, 2007.
- [4] Bratton, Michael. *Local Politics in Rural Development*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1980.
- [5] Ellerman, David. "Good Intentions: The Dilemma of Outside-In Help for Inside-Out Change." *The Nonprofit-Quarterly*. Volume 13, Issue 3. Fall 2006.
- [6] Ellerman, David. "Helping People Help Themselves: Towards a Theory of Autonomy-Compatible Help." World Bank Working Papers, October 2001.
- [7] Ellerman, David. "Revisiting Hirschman on Development Assistance and Unbalanced Growth." *Eastern Economic Journal*, Spring 2004.
- [8] Ellerman, David. "The Indirect Approach." World Bank Working Papers. 2001.
- [9] Elmer, Duane. *Cross-cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2006.
- [10] *Evaluating Social Development Projects*. Development Guidelines No.5. Marsden, David and Peter Oakley, eds. Oxford: Oxfam, 1990.
- [11] Fowler, Alan. "Civil Society, NGOs and Social Development: Changing the Rules of the Game." UNRISD, 2000.
- [12] Harper, Malcolm and Shailendra Vyakarnam. *Rural Enterprise: Case Studies from developing countries*. UK: Intermediate Technology Publications 1988.
- [13] Ledwith, Margaret. *Community Development*. Great Britain: BASW/Policy Press 2005.
- [14] Lingenfelter, Sherwood G. and Marvin K. Meyers. *Ministering Cross-culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003.

- [15] Myers, Bryant L. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. World Vision. New York: Orbis Books, 2000.
- [16] *Nonprofit Quarterly*. www.nonprofitquarterly.org. 2007
- [17] *Participation: The New Tyranny?* Cooke, Bill and Uma Kothari, eds. London: Zed Books, 2004.
- [18] Riddell, Roger C., and Mark Robinson. *Non-Governmental Organizations and Rural Poverty Alleviation*. London: Overseas Development Institute, 1995.
- [19] Roberts, Hayden. *Community Development: Learning and Action*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979.
- [20] Schneider, Bertrand. *Barefoot Revolution: A Report to the Club of Rome*. UK: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1988.
- [21] Sharpe, Kenneth. *Peasant Politics: Struggle in a Dominican Village*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- [22] *Students International*. stint.com 2007.
- [23] Suki, Lenora and Joaquin Vial. "Meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the Dominican Republic: Identifying Critical Areas for Policy Action." www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/cgsd/advising/documents/suki_mdg_assessment.pdf
- [24] Tendler, Judith. "Turning Private Voluntary Organizations into Development Agencies." USAID April 1982.
- [25] Traynor, William J. and Jessica Andors. "Network Organizing: A Strategy for Building Community Engagement." *Shelterforce*. March/April 2005.
- [26] *Urbana*. urbana.org 2007.
- [27] Van Rhee, Gailyn. *Resources for Missions Education*. missiology.org 2005.

Chapter 6

Appendices

6.1 Appendix A: 25 Tips for Peace Corps Volunteers

by RPOVs Lyle Jaffe and Kathy Gamm

1. If you want to grow, drop your ego. If you want to change the world, change yourself. Capacity building by definition is not about you so drop your ego and your guilt. If you haven't gotten it by now - work on getting rid of your ego. Empowerment is the capacity to bear power responsibly. You cannot empower another person. But you can empower yourself.
2. Use this experience to learn about yourself. This is the most important lesson. Try to remember it.
3. Development is disruptive. It implies changes in power relationships. It means uncertainty. Few people willingly give up power. And most poor people cannot afford to change radically.
4. Do not expect a smooth ride. Do not expect people to fall over their feet to listen to you. Do not expect people to go out of their way to listen to you. Do not expect. People had a life before you came. They will continue to have a life after you leave. You are probably not a messiah. If you are, please forgive me. If not, your two years is a furrow in their field in a single agricultural year. Most of their years your furrow is not there
5. Appreciate the fact that you are one of many who will advocate change and then leave. Why should people trust you before you have demonstrated results?
6. You will not see tangible, measurable results in 2 years anywhere close to what you hope or expect. The saying that "what takes a day in USA takes a week in Africa, what takes a week in USA takes a month in Africa, what takes a month in USA takes 1 year in Africa is close to true for reasons that you have no control over. So after your first month on the job, when you are still in USA

mode, write down what you would like to achieve in 2 months time. This now becomes your 2 year work goal. NOTE: You can achieve more than this if you move into "take charge mode" but not through a capacity building approach. Also, in 2 years, you will probably not move out of USA mode.

7. There is no "us and them". Human beings are the same everywhere. Could you do it if you were you in their shoes? Don't think for a moment that because you live in a hut and don't make much money that you are in their shoes. In your life in the USA, how much of your achievements to date really reflect on you? Or did you just make good use of the opportunities provided you? For certain you did not need to build the systems, government and schools associated with creating these opportunities. Perhaps your great grandparents did, but not you.
8. It doesn't matter how right you think you are, if you haven't developed a working relationship with someone, if you don't approach your suggestion with the most sincere humility, you will not convey your message effectively.
9. Do not be the money volunteer. Personal interactions should be linked to building genuine relationships, encouraging positive self esteem and confidence. It takes a huge amount of energy (physical and emotional) for an average rural folk to maintain daily life, let alone try to break out of the poverty cycle.
10. Learn how to yield effectively to win. Their life is not about your principles. Neither is mine or anybody else's. Try to understand why people do what they do and then don't judge. Work the problem not your emotions.
11. Pay attention to the way you feel when you spend time judging. If it feels bad, if you feel worse, then don't do it. It isn't pretty to watch people sit around doing the "these people syndrome". If you find yourself doing it, it's a sure sign that you have something to work out within yourself. Find it and work it out.
12. Do not think for a minute that your attitude towards people is unfelt. Everyone feels when they are being put down. Make people feel that they have grown in your presence.

13. Build open, sincere dialog. Be sincere.
14. Don't want it more than they want it (or, don't show them how bad you want it to work). Find other ways to deal with your personal and professional frustration regarding the work ethic, the what could/should/can be in the face of serious problems. You are but one step in a very long journey to address these problems. Concentrate on doing your step well and having fun.
15. The basic logic associated with problem solving and analysis is weak. You may need to catch people up on foundation skills, including sorting, sequencing, matching, opposites, etc. In your personal time, this can be done in a fun way through puzzles, chess, card games, etc. Just don't show people that this is a learning exercise or it will come across as patronizing. The added benefit is that they may start to play these same games with their children. You have no idea how much difference this can make.
16. Over a 2 year period, your task is really teaching. Teaching is all about 1) finding people's starting point and thereafter, 2) experimenting with teaching methods that will walk people through the steps of awareness and skills development through applied knowledge. It might take 3 steps or it might take 21 steps. There is nothing right or wrong about the number of steps so do not judge as this is the same as saying "I have no hope that you can learn"
17. Introduce people to the process of problem solving and constantly refer back to the process. Define the problem and its root causes (problem-objective trees), turn the problem into SMART objectives, develop activities to reach the objectives, break the activities into tasks, monitor, and adjust. Action Reflection Action.
18. Understand that your frustration is about you. It is about 1) your own expectations regarding tangible achievements within your own time-frame, and 2) your limitations in coming up with appropriate teaching methods. No one gets it

right the first time or the second time. Good teachers are forever experimenting with new methods and trying to match proven methods with new students and situations. Everyone is more than capable of being a good teacher, provided they are prepared to adjust to the student. You need to constantly go back to the drawing board and revisit your starting point and your methods until learning takes place (at times learning needs additional intervention i.e. to address emotional issues etc... but you will only know this if you first go through the process of elimination phase)

19. Do not give up and do not give in. Unfortunately, the process of development can not be shortened. Respect that those you work with drew the short straw, appreciate that you did not. After you die, you can ask God about all this. For now, your anguish, guilt and questions about this will just distract from the task at hand and are really rather self indulging, if you think about it.
20. Keep a lot of irons in the fire.
21. Be a positive role model in your personal life, someone that young folk can aspire to become like. Healthy living and all that, including "walking your talk" regarding your sexual relationships.
22. Peace Corps is first and foremost a cultural exchange program. You will learn more than you will give. Be prepared to change your understandings. You can only balance the formula if you change both sides of the equation. This may not seem like much but refer back to step 1. It may impact a co-worker a lot.
23. It takes five years to be a player at management level.
24. If you follow any of the above, you will be out of step with most of the development world and time-frames. But at least you will have fun.
25. It goes without saying that I did not do a single one of these things satisfactorily. But I wish I had.

Found at <http://www.moneymissions.com>

6.2 Appendix B: Survey sent to students who spent time in Los Higos

- What is the most important thing (person/activity/realization/etc) you still remember about your experience in Los Higos? Why?
- Do you feel that you were able to have a lasting impact (for Los Higos, for the missionaries, for both) in some way? Please explain.
- Is there anything you learned about the people/community in Los Higos that was surprising?
- What was most satisfying about your experience in Los Higos?
- What is one thing that SI could change to make your experience in Los Higos better (more meaningful/more comfortable/etc)?
- How is your life (general attitude towards poor, career plans, how you treat your friends or family, etc.) different as a result of your experience in Los Higos? In other words, what is the lasting impact of your trip?

6.3 Appendix C: SI's Organizational Statement

SI's organizational statement includes the following:

Student Focus Students International seeks to impart vision in students for how their gifts, interests, and academic pursuits can be used to the Glory of God. We hope to provide opportunities for them to share the Gospel cross-culturally and gain a deeper sense of God's love for all people. We also seek to give them practical work experience in a specific field of interest. To achieve these goals, the Board of Directors and staff of Students International commit to student partnerships with long-term missionaries and Christian professionals who are working in community development, curriculum that is biblical and relevant to high school and college students, and mentoring relationships that allow staff to speak into the lives of students.

Ministry Distinctives Students International seeks to care for the poor through community development ministries that meet specific physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. These ministries will be developed and operated according to the following principles:

- Each ministry will seek to meet a real, felt need in the community. We seek to pioneer and participate in ministries that are responsive to the current problems and needs recognized by many within the community. Rather than solely implementing projects that our organization deems important, we seek to dialog with the poor and learn how we can best work together to meet the needs that are most pressing.
- Each ministry will strive to be non-paternalistic. Students International is committed to ministries that help the poor but that also include them in the solutions. This, at times, will mean that they will be asked to contribute to projects and services so that they take ownership and receive dignity from their participation.
- Each ministry will seek to allow for a strong, integral student component. Student participation is an important element in each area of ministry and will not

be conceived as an afterthought. There are many valid, important ministries with which to be involved. However, as a student training organization, we will only focus our resources on ministries that allow students even with limited language ability to work alongside our missionaries in a strong participatory role.

- Each ministry will value relationships. Students International seeks to impact people with the Gospel in word and action and give students an opportunity to befriend and touch the life of a national. We understand the important role of relationships in sharing the Gospel. They build trust, which opens hearts to receiving the Good News of Christ. Therefore we will focus on ministries that allow students to develop relationships.

Community One of the marks of Christianity is the way in which believers love each other. Because Christ has reconciled all believers to God through the cross, so we too, can be reconciled to each other and live as a community of brothers and sisters. Jesus said in John 17:21 that the world would be drawn to the Gospel by seeing how Christians are united. We also realize that one of our most effective means of evangelism is the way in which the Students International community demonstrates a Christ-like love for one another. For these communities to function properly, they need to be based in prayer, scripture study, worship, and reconciled relationships. Students International is committed to building loving communities within our multinational staff.

Professional Competence We are committed to a professionally qualified staff whose placement and advancement are based upon potential and past competence in student ministry, community development, leadership, and cross-cultural missions. In order to successfully train and mentor students in Christian vocation, we are dedicated to forming and equipping a staff team that is gifted in their individual fields of ministry (e.g. agriculture, education, and medicine) and committed to excellence.

Academic Partnership We are committed to working with Christian educators in our student programs and staff development. We believe that strong partnerships

with Christian academia will help keep our organization abreast of current trends in missiology, cross-cultural studies, community development, and student ministries. In turn, our experience on the field can complement the studies being addressed on the university and high school campuses. It is our desire to see practical mission influence Christian curriculum at the university and high school level.

Inclusive Structure We are committed to the inclusion of staff into all field, leadership, and board positions without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, or ethnicity. We are committed to a staff that reflects the diversity in gender, ethnicity, and culture that exists in the body of Christ. The call to be Christ's witnesses throughout the world is extended equally to all believers, from every nation and people group. Students International welcomes all women and men to pursue their vocation in missionary work and leadership as the Lord calls them. Our goal is to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ, stripped of our particular cultural overtones, so that people from all cultures may embrace it.

Multi-denominational Breadth The Board of Directors and staff of Students International belong to many different denominations both in the United States and overseas. We are committed to serving the entire church of Jesus Christ both through our community development work and our student outreaches. Recognizing the necessity of a unified staff to fruitful ministry, we all hold to the basic teachings of the Christian faith and more specifically, to the Doctrinal Statement of Students International.

The Local Church Doctrinal and cultural differences exist in many Christian denominations worldwide. Even denominational partnerships may vary from country to country depending on a host of historical and cultural issues. Students International will strive to work in a spirit of cooperation with the Christian church in all countries where we minister. Where possible and in keeping with our guidelines on the establishment of development projects, we seek to include the local church in our work in the community. Students International seeks to build up local churches and encourage them to be unified in the gospel mission. Through our role in evangelism, we will encourage all new believers to join a local Christian church. Where no thriving

church exists, we will help disciple new Christians, with the goal of building a local church base with national leadership.

6.4 Appendix D: Selected Participant Quotes

(from the survey, from interviews, and from an emailed questionnaire)

Lasting impact on the student:

The most important thing about my time in Los Higos was the relationships that I built, both with the local community and my teammates. I realized that we are relational beings and some times what I used to see as being "efficient" is not as important as simply being. Taking time to invest in the lives of others is what will be the lasting impact on them. I learned that I needed to get to know the people before I could share my faith and have it mean anything to them.

I feel like people like me need something to do, to feel like I accomplished something. Without that, I would feel frustrated. but in the end, looking back, what really made a difference was the whole experience - the relationships, meeting people. Seeing how the missionaries work - maybe that's all I can expect in a two-week trip.

I'm not sure if this answers the question exactly, but the experience that stood out to me the most was the time Alice* and I spent a couple of nights in Los Higos. I got to see how they live all the time, not just during the day. It's easy to step in and out of the culture during the day, but I felt that by living with them, even for the short time I did, gave me better insight into who they are.

I best remember my relationship with Guelo, my host brother, because during the six weeks I lived with him he became just that: my brother. Guelo was a fairly new Christian when I arrived, and the time we spent together every day reading the Bible and talking about things that we did not understand was probably the biggest blessing to me in a country so unlike my own. I did not really experience much culture shock, at least

in the way the rest of my group did, and I have to attribute this to the time I spent with him. I will never forget his last words to me as we were leaving - through tears he told me that when I go back I can help him build his house, and that we will build an extra room in it for me, so I can stay with him whenever I come.

The most important thing was just getting a glimpse into another culture. In the village of Los Higos, I learned about the love and value of relationships they had. Even though they are not rich, the families are content with good relationships. This is very different from the American culture.

Lasting impact on the community (student perspective):

That is a great question, and one that I think I can answer, but maybe not in detail. Yes, I think my teammates and I made a lasting impact on Los Higos and the people there, or, perhaps more accurately, God did through us. I could cite the various things that we accomplished in our time, like the map and census for the school application, or the people that accepted Christ, but I think there must be much more than that. God had me go to the Dominican Republic for a reason, and I know that He would not have done so if He did not have a specific and eternal plan for it. So, I may not be able to describe this in detail, because I simply do not have them, but I am confident that it happened.

I think that the lasting impact of this trip is far too great for me to explain here. It opened up my understanding of the work and considerations of an organization such as SI. That for me was a wonderful learning experience since I hope to one day work with a Christian non-profit organization. I feel like my time there more clearly showed me that mission work is definitely where my heart is. Yet again the biggest thing that I learned was the importance of relationships. Christ is a relational Savior

and therefore I'm called to act in the same manner. It inspired me to want to be very intentional about the time I spend with people.

As an individual, I have always had a hard time figuring out how to leave a lasting impact when all you do is play with kids. However, on this trip when I was able to do a combination of teaching them how to do math (I was so excited when I saw that they had made progress over the two weeks I was there) and helping out around the agriculture site I really did feel like I made an impact on their lives. I feel like the ministry as a whole, having so many people come in and out, is so wonderful. It is a constant reminder for the kids and for Los Higos that people do care about them and want to spend time there.

Well, I would like to say yes. An issue that I struggled with while there was that I did not always feel like I was being productive but as stated in the box above I learned that material accomplishments are hardly the only kind. I may not ever see the actual results of my time there but I know that the Lord had a reason for having me specifically be there. I need to be satisfied in the fact that God works in ways above ours and that He always has a purpose.

No... so many people come in and out. Looking at my childhood, the people who helped me out - I don't remember who they are. I just have a vague good feeling. I think the impact is more a cumulative effect. I think we're more there to encourage the missionaries more than anything else, and to gain new perspectives.

I feel like my impact was very minimal. I believe that my trip gave the missionaries encouragement and a sense of excitement in that I am bringing a new perspective onto the scene. However, that sense of encouragement is hard to remember on a day to day basis.

Satisfying aspects of the trip:

I think one of the most satisfying aspects of my trip, in terms of things that will be significant for me long term, was the realization about two weeks into the trip that this was not just a vacation, or something I could walk away from after a week or two. I was not a tourist, and had no interest in "seeing the sights" or being catered to. This immersion in the Dominican culture, and the ability to see myself in this way, enabled me to learn much more about what it means to live a life of financial poverty and social wealth, and to develop a passion for others who have the same worldview. Walking around the pueblo, hearing kids yelling hello to me as I walked past, and being accepted as part of their community, touched me in a big way.

Sitting on the galleria talking/listening/(catching every word I could and hoping I knew what it meant). Just being with the people and experiencing the genuine concern I had for them and they for me/us.

The most satisfying thing to me was how quickly I was able to form a bond with the community. As cheesy as it sounds, I feel like I went in wanting to make a difference to in their lives and they ended up changing mine. I value my community so much more and to take life more slowly so as to enjoy being in company with other people.

I'll go ahead a reiterate again that the relationships formed were for me the most important thing. I think that spending intentional time with members of the community is to the benefit of the people of Los Higos as well as the outreach participant.

I like that there was a lot of freedom and flexibility. There are other things like our trip to New Orleans to help out after Katrina where we gut houses 9-5 and have no time to talk to anyone. There I felt like I was able to make a small contribution there. But this was more life-changing because I was able to talk to people.

What the student was surprised to learn about the community:

I was very surprised by almost every aspect of the relationships and way of life within Los Higos, but the thing that stuck out most to me was the strong desire to be together in community shared by almost every member of Los Higos, whether that meant playing dominos late into the night, sitting around on porches talking with a stick of cuaba burning by one's feet, or eating meals together. Also, I was surprised at the way that people look out and care for one another, especially in terms of the children. For example, it took me several days to understand the relationship I had with one of my cousins, because he lived with my grandmother, but ate most of his meals at my house. Also, many of the leaders of Los Higos have a strong passion to provide for the children of the town, and often feed them from their own resources.

It was interesting seeing the Dominican lifestyle of carefreeness. Here I feel bound to my goals and society's expectations of what I have to do. There it doesn't matter as much. What matters is that I was having good relationships with the people around me. It always reminds me to re-center myself, to have a different focus in life. They do have a schedule, but it allows for change. I feel like they're not so much under time crunch. Having a flexible schedule allows more freedom and openness to random events - for example, if someone needs help, you're able to give that help.
(January 06)

I was surprised to see how close everyone in Los Higos was. Everyone always wanted to help everyone else and wanted to spend time with each other. It was amazing to see the sense of community that these people have. Although most of the kids had actual brothers and sisters, it was so cool that they were so close with the other kids that you could never tell who was actually related and who wasn't.

I think all the relationship problems are always surprising to hear about. As visitors, all the people seem to treat us very well and were very nice. It is hard to imagine all the problems they had to deal with, especially since I was there for a short time.

If SI could change one thing

I think that it would have been cool if there were more things we could do for the rest of the community. As wonderful as working with the kids at the kids club was, I think that it would have been great if we could have helped/ had more interaction with the rest of the community.

More community outreach outside of the "sites" we work in; like dentistry, health care, etc. This would provide more time to bond with the people in the community.

I can't think of anything I would want changed. Alice went out of her way to see that I had chances to really experience what the community is like. It's because of her that I had such a good experience. (three-month intern)

I think that it would have been cool if there were more things we could do for the rest of the community. As wonderful as working with the kids at the kids club was, I think that it would have been great if we could have helped/ had more interaction with the rest of the community.

I think staying there one night would have been cool. I only see one face of the village. Seeing them at night would help get a bigger picture of the village and more fully understand what their life was like.

How life has changed for the student:

I cannot emphasize enough that my experience in the D.R. had a very significant impact in my life, and one that will last with me for the rest of

my life. I now better understand things like contentment and joy within poverty, have a much stronger appreciation for the relationships in my life, and perhaps have also developed a more critical view of my own culture. My worldview has shifted, and I see my life, and the lives of those around me, through a much different lens.

The world, and those areas like Los Higos, are real to me. When I hear about stuff happening on the news, or see it on the TV, it's not like that guy said in Hotel Rwanda "Oh God that's awful. Then go back to eating dinner". It's a real thing, and something I take to heart when planning how I use the skills and resources God has given me.

I really learned to take life more slowly. I realized how quickly I move through my life, going from one thing to the next, that I wasn't spending enough time just slowing down and taking the time to enjoy all the aspects of my life. I also feel more aware of what is going on in other parts of the world. I keep pictures of the kids on my wall as a constant reminder to pray and think about them.

This trip made missions more real. I like that the missionaries are doing what they like to do in a missions context. It makes me think about how I can do that with engineering, which is what I'm doing now. I feel like it's more rewarding when you're out there on the field, making the relationships. I like the idea of being there directly and seeing people change - as opposed to sitting behind a desk and making money to support.

It's the kind of thing where one thing leads to another. After the five weeks there my Spanish got so good that when I came back and wanted to talk to my grandmother, what came out was Spanish. So it made me care about learning Chinese. I ended up going to China for the next fall for language study, and intentionally spent a lot of time having conversations with people. It ultimately led to my taking students on

a mission trip to China over the summer last year. It's funny how a service to the community type of mission got me more in the direction of a proclamation type mission later. (participant in dentistry site, summer 2001)

Emailed question sent to MIT participants: *The MIT teams consisted of mostly engineers, architects and pre-med students. They participated in two-week trips.

One of SI's goals is to help students discover ways to use their career/academic aspirations to serve the poor. Do you feel that the trip influenced your career/academic goals in this way?

Kind of, but not really. It made me think more about things from a global perspective, but they haven't actually changed any of my goals, at least not yet anyway.

Yes. I have become more focused on international development as a career.

A little. I already wanted to before the trip, and I guess it was just a little more confirmation.

Well, I guess it has had some impact. I was on that career path somewhat already. But I hope to do more in the future.

Yes, [it] somewhat helped me realize the opportunities I have to minister in poorer countries with what I decide to do for a living.

It did help me want to serve the poor more, but I still don't know how to do it with my current career path.

(There were also two yes and one no responses with no explanation.)

6.5 Appendix E: Images of the Map and Census

The map and census are still unfinished, after a year. Here are some photos of the work in progress.

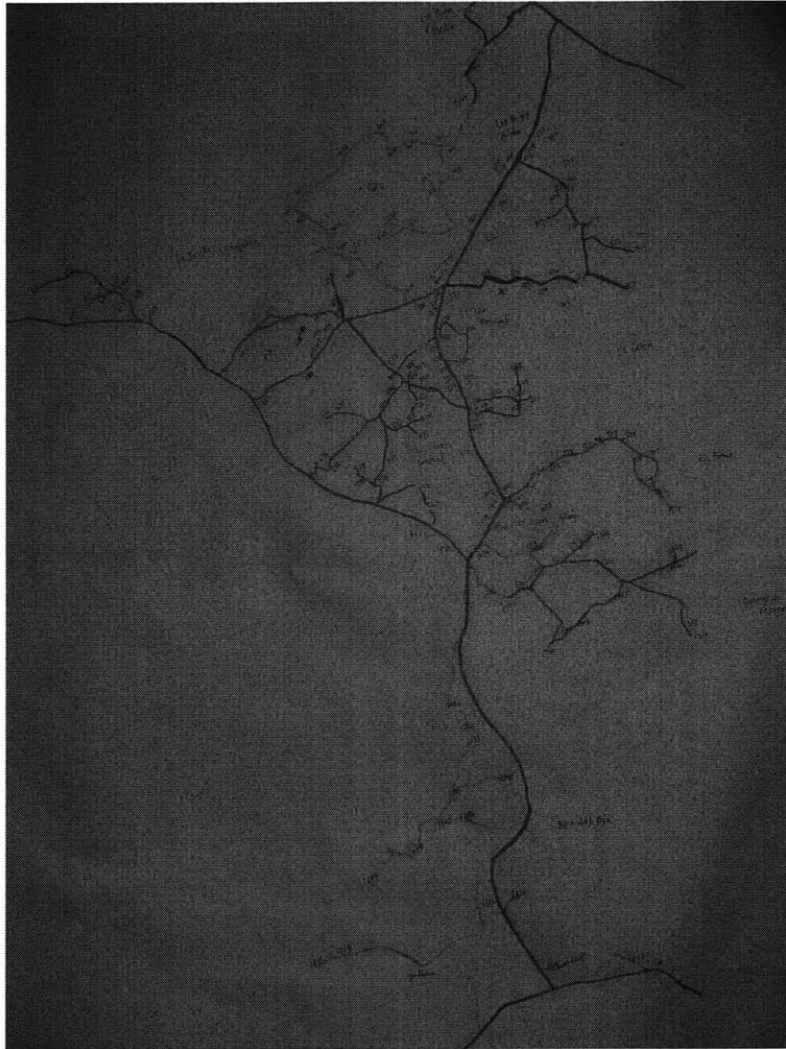


Figure 6-1: Partial Map of Los Higos

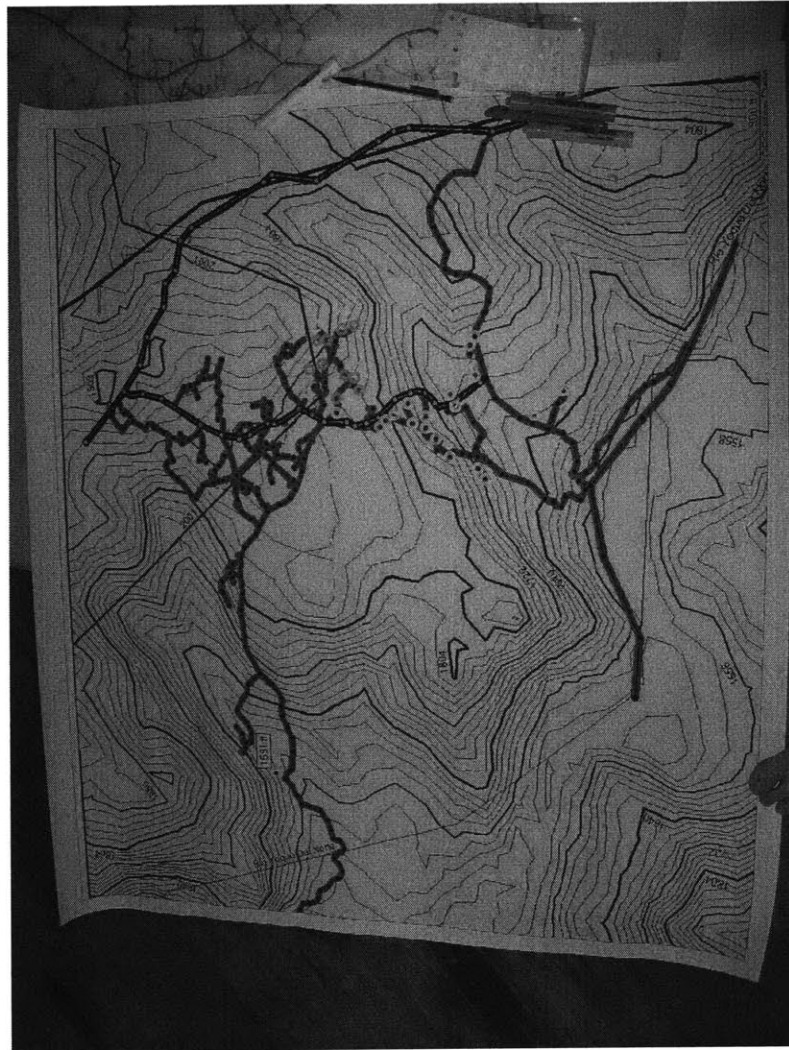


Figure 6-2: Terrain Map

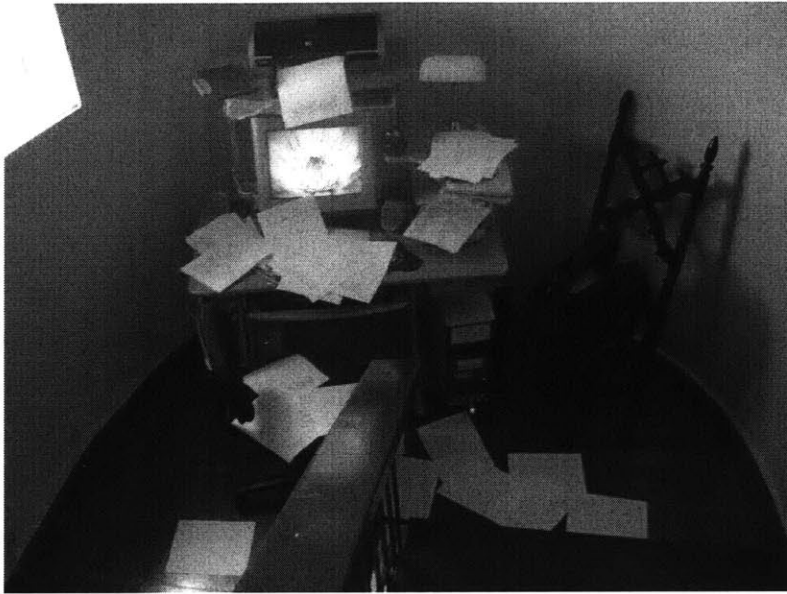


Figure 6-3: Printout of the census at the mission base