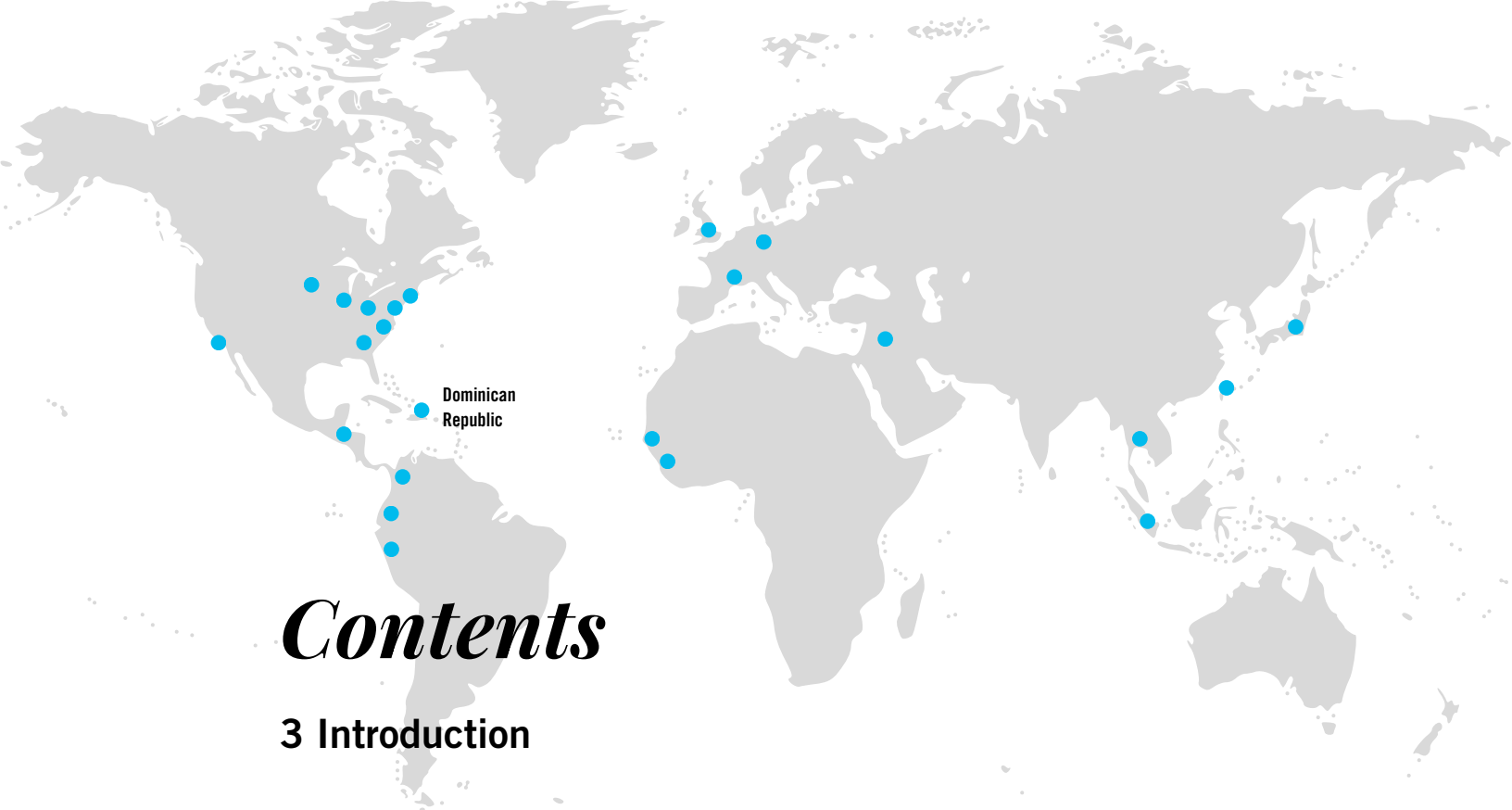




Dominican Republic

ENVISION HANDBOOK





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Introduction

ABOUT THE SITE

We are looking forward to hosting you and showing you the many exciting things that God is doing here in the DR. Envision DR is located in the capital city of Santo Domingo—home to almost four million people. Santo Domingo is the oldest Western city in the Americas. A city founded by Christopher Columbus' son, Bartholomew, in 1496, it became a city of firsts: the first university, first castle, and even the first entry point for Christianity in the new world. Unfortunately today, only 11–12 percent of the population have a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Living in the culture with the people and ministering to those around you is an accurate representation of what international workers do. We want your experience to have sustainable impact on the Kingdom as you work with the overseas team. With your help, we can come alongside the national church, giving the Dominicans resources that will help them reach their communities. We want to give them a sense of ownership by partnering in the work together rather than trying to do it all ourselves. You can come and fall in love with God's people in the DR, working alongside pastors and people of the churches.



General Information

TEAM COSTS

The team cost is based on a seven-day trip. The in-country expenses cover meals, lodging, transportation, construction materials and tools for your work projects, most ministry and media equipment for your ministries and Spanish translation help. Airfare is not included. Please refer to Envision's website for current costs.

INTERN COSTS

The in-country expenses cover meals, lodging, laundry, transportation, and Spanish tutoring (except summer months). Airfare, travel insurance and visas are not included but can be reimbursed with extra funds in one's support account. Travel insurance is required for interns to purchase prior to launch and is chosen by the intern. Please refer to Envision's website for current costs.



HOUSING AND FOOD

Teams

We provide a clean and secure stay while you visit us in the Dominican Republic. We house teams of 25 or less in the Envision guesthouse, which allows for us, and you, to build community with your team. The house has bunk beds, and both bedding and towels are provided. There is no air conditioning, but there are fans in the rooms. There is also no laundry service available, so please pack enough for your seven days here. We suggest bringing a trash bag to bring construction shoes and clothes back home in. Interns live in the Envision house with you to help with any needs or questions you might have. We also offer great food no matter the team size. For breakfast, our staff serves a variety of American and Dominican items such as eggs, toast, fruit, cereal, mangú, fresh natural juices, coffee, and more. Most days for lunch, teams eat “plate of the day” from a local Dominican restaurant, which includes rice, beans, a meat, and a type of small side salad. On beach or travel days, we serve lunch meat sandwiches, fruit, chips and cookies instead. Dinner is back at the guesthouse, and our cooks prepare some of our favorite Dominican meals with a few American meals mixed in as well. We can accommodate many allergies, but we must know specifics in advance and always suggest that those team members come with their own snacks to fill in any gaps. We cannot accommodate a vegan diet.

Interns

If you're coming while we have teams, housing and food will be provided, just as for teams. When we don't have teams, interns will still usually live in the Envision house. Bedding and towels are available, but you will be responsible to do your own laundry on-site. You will also be responsible to clean up after yourself and contribute to the house chores. You will be given a weekly food stipend, which you can use to buy groceries and cook or order food locally. We eat many of our meals together each week, but you should come knowing how to cook your own basic meals.



AIRPORT AND ARRIVAL INFORMATION

You'll need to book your flight on your own. Your final destination will be Las Americas International Airport (SDQ). Make sure that you select the correct airport, as there will be a transportation fee if you fly into one of the other DR airports, as well as the potential of a lost day. Also, if at all possible, please avoid arrivals and departures between 12 and 6 a.m. The DR is currently requiring everyone to fill out an e-ticket for the customs process, both entering and exiting the country. You will not be able to check in to flights without doing it, so please have it done ahead of time.

You can find the e-ticket here: <https://eticket.migracion.gob.do>.

Once your team is registered with Envision, a site team member will send you the local address you will need to complete the form. When you arrive, there will be an Envision team member or two to pick you up. If for some reason it is not one of the six IWs, we will send you a photo of the person coming. After proceeding through customs, you will get your luggage, and the walkway will lead you into the food court area where you will find the person picking you up. Do not go outside the airport without them, and do not allow anyone outside of your group to handle your luggage.

VISAS

You do not need to do anything ahead of time for a seven-day mission trip. The tourist visas are now included in the price of your plane ticket. It is helpful to let the embassy know that you and/or your group will be traveling to the DR. Before you depart, take time to register at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/>.

For interns staying longer than four weeks: Check the expiration date on your passport. If it expires within six months of returning home, the DR may not issue you a visa. To apply for a Dominican visa, you can go to the Travel Document Systems website (www.traveldocs.com).

MONEY

Groups may want to bring spending money for souvenirs and snacks. The currency is Dominican pesos. You can exchange dollars at the airport or the market if time allows. Large stores do accept U.S. credit cards, but do not expect it everywhere. The Envision house is located near several small corner stores and a local ice cream shop, and the Greenhouse sells coffees, sodas, and pastries. Envision also sells T-shirts (in U.S. dollars). Interns, consider bringing money for optional excursions, meals out, souvenirs, and snacks.

COMMUNICATIONS

There is Wi-Fi for team leaders only. We limit access due to slow speeds and so that teams will be fully present and engaged. If leaders desire to get an international plan with your current service, most carriers have that as an option. We discourage teen team members from getting international plans.

For interns, you will need to bring a cell phone. If you have an unlocked phone, you can buy a prepaid Dominican SIM card (traditional or electronic) and use your phone while here. You can also add an international plan to your phone. Talk to your provider about this.

Our cellphones have the ability to call the U.S. and can be used in emergencies.

Brandon: 1 (809) 753-0567

Bethany: 1 (829) 750-0302

HEALTH AND VACCINATIONS

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has health recommendations and requirements for travel. For more details, check out their website (www.cdc.gov) or contact your local health department. See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip. Recommended vaccines:

1. Hepatitis A
2. Hepatitis B
3. Typhoid
4. Booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria and measles



Packing List

- Passport and a color photo copy of it
- Clothes (see dress code)
- Jacket or warm sweatshirt for evenings
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Flip flops (shower shoes)
- Swimsuit (1-piece or covering tankini)
- Beach towel
- Reusable water bottle
- Toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray and anti-itch cream
- Hand sanitizer
- Prescription meds
- Bible, journal, pen

Suggested:

- Preferred medicines—pain, allergy, digestion, nausea
- Work gloves/shoes/hat
- Flashlight, extra batteries
- Nonperishable snacks
- Water shoes and sunglasses
- Games to play
- Spending money in USD

SUGGESTED DRESS CODE

People in the DR are much more conservative than in the U.S. To be effective in ministry, we must respect our Dominican brothers and sisters. We set aside our dress and customs and adopt those of the country we serve. We will make team members change if need be. Understand that we aren't trying to be legalistic or restrict individuality, it's just that particular appearances here don't say the same thing as they do in the U.S. Understand that the DR is a dressy culture. People dress up for even informal events, and you may feel out of place in shorts and T-shirts other than for construction and sports.

For both genders, we have a "shoulders to knees" policy. This means no tank tops or sleeveless/cut-off shirts, and shorts/dresses/skirts must actually come down to the knee (fingertip length is not acceptable). This applies universally. The only exceptions are the beach day and inside bedrooms.

No body piercings (all piercings for guys and all except earrings for girls must be removed). No tight-fitting clothes (including leggings or yoga pants).

Prayer walks and church: Girls—a dress or a nice shirt with pants/skirt and sandals or clean shoes. Guys—pants with a short sleeve button up/polo and clean shoes (no sandals).

Construction: Jeans/shorts with T-shirts and work shoes. Expect to get dirty.

VBS or camps: Pants/shorts with a T-shirt and clean shoes/sandals. Girls can also wear a dress or skirt. If your construction clothes are clean, you can wear those in the afternoon.

Greenhouse: Jeans/pants with a clean T-shirt (or nicer) and clean shoes. Do not plan to wear construction clothes there. This is one location with air conditioning!



Ministry

Envision DR has the great privilege of partnering with the Dominican Alliance Church to identify and develop the next generation of leaders through three main strategies:

THE GREENHOUSE STUDENT CENTER

It's located next to the largest public university in the Dominican Republic, where over 50,000 students study. What started as a closed-down brothel was renovated to become a place of refuge that breeds new life. *From Darkness to Light* has been the theme, prayed into the very bones of this space, and now we get to see it take place in the lives of those who enter. We hold English classes and conversation groups, host both educational and fun monthly events, and serve great coffee and treats. But more importantly, as the fastest growing religious group among university students describe themselves as “non-religious,” we pray that each day we find opportunities to share the hope we have in Jesus with those who walk through the door. We love having both American and Dominican believers serve there with us as part of their own development and understanding of missions.

ONE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

One Child partners with and equips local church leaders to holistically reach families in at-risk communities that are below the average poverty level in that country. These centers are run by our local Alliance churches, but we have the privilege of partnering with them to see success in getting children sponsored, hosting events and activities for children and their families, and using it as a bridge to share the gospel message in places that otherwise typically reject the church's presence. We believe in it because we have seen whole communities transformed. It's never too early to invest in the development of our future leaders.

LA ALIANZA CRISTIANA Y MISIONERA

We pray the local church will be here long after any of us, and our focus is to utilize short-term efforts to bring about long-term change through the local Dominican Alliance church. Teams and interns/volunteers can connect to one of our Alliance churches to help them develop ministry in a variety of strategic areas including: youth, outreach, theological training, and medical clinics, to name a few.

Schedule

TEAMS

We provide a unique schedule with multifaceted ministries and cultural proximity, where teams work alongside national workers. Here is an example of what your time may look like:

SATURDAY	Team arrives. If time allows, take a trip to the Colonial Zone and market. Dinner and orientation at the guesthouse.
SUNDAY	Breakfast, church, lunch, and community time with the pastor and church leaders. Pizza and evening evangelistic event at the Greenhouse Student Center.
MONDAY–THURSDAY	Team-led morning devotions and breakfast before work at the construction site. Lunch is eaten on-site. Afternoon spent doing various ministries at church (VBS, sports, prayer walks, medical, etc.) or at the Greenhouse Student Center, depending on the team. Dinner is back at the guesthouse, followed by Envision-led debrief.
FRIDAY	Extended team-led devotions and prayer time, followed by breakfast and a beach trip. Dinner at the guesthouse and a free night for team. Envision staff have an evening meeting.
SATURDAY	Breakfast, devotions, and final team debrief before departure. Beyond that, schedule varies depending on flight itinerary

INTERNS

Interns will be invested in ministries that fit their gifting and time frame in and alongside local churches, as well as at the Greenhouse Student Center. You will sometimes be asked to work alongside short-term teams who come as well. This includes investing in the teams, leading work and ministry sites, keeping track of the facility and supplies, and other responsibilities.

Weekly Envision team rhythms are: Monday team meetings, a discipleship meeting with your mentor, a team dinner and teaching night, and a Spanish tutoring session. Not required, but highly valued, are also game nights and coffee stops.



Cultural Sensitivity

The Alliance has had an active presence in the Dominican Republic since the mid-1960s when Dominicans living in New York, along with other Hispanic immigrants, sacrificially gave of their time and resources to take the Christ-centered message of the CandMA to their homeland. The church took root and grew, even with the absence of trained pastors or international workers.

In the 1980s, The Alliance sent full-time international workers to the country to work alongside Dominican believers to provide much-needed leadership and theological training and to expand the church into people groups with little evangelical presence.

Today, Alliance workers are involved in a variety of ministries, in many cases working alongside Dominican believers to build Christian communities throughout the country.

From the very roots of the Dominican Alliance Church, the U.S. Alliance has had a deep bond with our brothers and sisters. Envision has the unique privilege of deepening and strengthening those bonds by bringing short-term teams to partner with and assist the local church, as well as take the gospel to every part of the island that has yet to be reached.

Dominican people are a very hospitable. Stopping for coffee with someone is a regular part of life. When greeting someone here in the DR, they give a hug and kiss the air next to their cheek. You also need to greet everyone in a room if there are less than 10–12 people. Dominicans are also very willing to help you and each other—jumping in with their opinion when someone’s car dies, when someone has a problem with their house, when someone is in a relationship, etc., is par for the course. Be prepared for blunt answers and comments, as everyone shares their opinion. A big part of the communal aspect definitely has to do with the weather. The heat and humidity bring people outside, and as a result, they spend more time with neighbors and anyone passing by.

One thing we are very aware of as we are out walking or traveling is what we take with us. As is the case in many developing countries, petty theft is prevalent. We already stick out as Americans, which brings assumptions of being wealthy, so plan on carrying very minimal items when you go out. Many team members invest in a travel pouch or wallet that can be concealed under clothing and do not wear jewelry.

Dominican church culture is very conservative. Though we do not necessarily feel the same way about some issues, we want to respect the people we’ve come to serve. This would include removing all piercings (except earrings for girls), covering tattoos when possible, and being 100% abstinent from alcohol and/or any tobacco substance for the entire duration of the trip or internship.

Many short-term teams also want to take lots of pictures. Please be sensitive to not start snapping pictures of people we minister to right away. If it would be awkward for you to have your picture taken by a stranger, then it is for them too. Also, be sensitive to the fact that the Dominicans we work with are not our projects, but our friends and brothers and sisters.



