

Ruth Plaut Kindergarten



Concept

The Idea is basically to **provide a primary education** to children of a poor village – La Mina in the Dominican Republic. This education should be equivalent to middle class education in America/Europe, by providing a School, learning Materials and Teachers for free.

Our most important task is to give the children of the La-Mina Community an alternative to being raised at home with lots of love but nobody to teach them anything but household skills (and not even those to the boys). Due to the lack of space and toys children are taught not to ask, not to explore but sit still and quiet doing almost nothing for hours. Once they reach the age of 5-6 when they get enrolled into public school (with 40 children to 1 Teacher and 3-4 hours maximum of education per day) they find learning boring and difficult and copy/paste becomes the most developed skill they have. By the time those Kids reach 16-18 there capacity of learning has been reduced to that extend that a 2 week intensive course of English would take 6



month and still some of the participants would not be able to say the alphabet in English without mistakes.

Conclusion: Providing a good start in education to children as young as possible and giving them the tools to enjoy learning and becoming auto sufficient with this process is the goal of the **Ruth Plaut Kindergarten**.

Hechos/Deeds

For it being the first year we did a lot but by far not enough yet. **A Kindergarten was build**, furnished and started. In a 120 m² House divided only by a Kitchen and Office the children find a space that is adapted to all their needs. Divided in three age groups of 10 children each, they learn art, fine motored skills, the alphabet and algebra, Songs and English



Equally important where **social skills** like to listen, to be safe and to be gentle and many more things. From the beginning we started to bring in Volunteers from oversea so the children had exposure to different cultures and languages.

- a) From September 2006 to June 2007 the **Ruth Plaut Kindergarten** was working Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 12.00 pm for 30 children 3-6 years of age. 10 children that reached the age of 6 have left the Ruth Plaut school so that we will start in September 2007 with 10 new children from the Community age 2 1/2-3. Eventually all children should stay with us for three years.

b) At 10:00 am we serve **Breakfast** to the children mostly different types of cereal with fresh milk.

Instead of a tuition fee parents spent one week preparing this breakfast in the school for all the children. They also help cleaning the school and Bathrooms. This lowers the cost for the school and gives the parents an insight of the school activities.



c) Most of the **school materials are donated** by different organizations and student groups and are distributed to all the kids equally.

d) Since volunteers always come and go causing confusion to the children, the Ruth Plaut Organization comes up with the **Salary of three permanent Teachers** to provide a stable environment that absorbs those changes.

e) One of our big achievements was the organization of a **Christmas and Graduation Party**. Not so much for the Presents the Food and Sweets that were offered but to give the children the opportunity to present to their parents in an formal setting the skills that they had learned. Being the first time in this Community that parents saw children so young performing in public had an unexpected impact on everybody



- g) Finally the Ruth Plaut Kindergarten and ISV Volunteers organized a Camp throughout the whole summer vacation with emphasis on English, Art and Fun. This Camp was attended by approximately 40 children age 4-8 including the older of the Kindergarten Kids.
Highlight of the summer was a visit to **Ocean World**. It was for many Children the first time they left their village and for all the first time to see Dolphins and Sea lions live.

Community Center

For the rest of the Youth from la Mina that do not belong in the Kindergarten the Ruth Plaut Center opened its doors in the afternoons and weekends to give courses and workshops.

- a) For 6 month a Group of 15 Teenagers received a basic course in the use of **Computers** using the 5 computers that where donated to the Ruth Plaut Center



- b) Throughout the whole year 3 different **Courses of English** where offered for groups of 20 Students 12 to 24 Years of age
- c) For two month we had an artist giving classes in **pottery**
- d) Since the very beginning of the Idea of the Ruth Plaut Center we worked together with the local **Youth** and continued this work with regular meetings
- e) During this Year the Ruth Plaut Center was visited by 9 **Student Groups** from America, Canada and Europe. Most of these Groups worked as volunteers in our Community and Kindergarten and we used those visits of usually 2 weeks to promote the cultural exchange between the foreign and local Youth Groups.
- f) This summer vacation we organized a **Summer Camp** not only for the Kindergarten but also for more than 30 Children Age 6 to 14. Lots of Sport and Art but also English and Science. This was the first time in our community that children had a chance to spent their vacation in this active and productive way.

ISV- International Student Volunteers

Between May and August Blue Moon and The Ruth Plaut Center were visited by 150 Student Volunteers from different Countries brought together by **ISV** an organization helping underdeveloped Communities by bringing in Students to help in social work.

In La Mina 3 Projects were realized this year. A 500 meter long **Sidewalk** was built to bring children from La Mina save to the public school in Los Brazos. Before that the Kids had to walk on the very dangerous and highly frequented road without any protection



To decongest the Kindergarten and give the community a **Computer Laboratory** the ISV Students build a 40 m² room next to the Kindergarten. In this classroom we will focus to give specialized courses and workshops to improve the chances of the students to find better Jobs.

The 3rd ISV project was the organization of the summer camp for 40 Children 4-9 years of age in the morning and for 30 Kids 9-14 in the afternoon during 9 weeks of the summer vacation. This had a major impact on the children since for the first time they had a chance to spend their vacation learning and being creative with incredible materials that the students brought. Having to speak English to the students the children understood the need to learn another language and the fun that this could be.

On top of that each Volunteer brought us a bag full of donations with school and sport materials and cloth for the community.

A personal Note:

To name the Kindergarten after my mother was an instinctive right thing to do but giving it time and thought it leaves out a big part that was responsible for what I am today. Therefore I also want to commemorate my father by calling the Computer Laboratory Werner Plaut Learning Center so that from now on there will be the **Ruth and Werner Plaut Center** consisting of the **Ruth Plaut Kindergarten** and the **Werner Plaut Learning Center**. Helping others in the name of my parents allows me to keep their memory alive which is not easy in a foreign country.

Sponsors:

Dream Project: I want to give special thanks to this Organization who's dedication for the education in the Dominican Republic helped us to start of the right way, with 2 voluntaries, enough educational materials and most of all with the knowledge how to begin.

More People that believe in our project:

Gordon Segal, Joe Cohen, Thomas ? , Roland Grassl, Anthony Vogelaar, Marianne Luckner, Elena and Yuki, Claire, Paulina Tremblay, ISV, Fenway School, Anthenian School, Peace Corps, and many others

Projects for this Year

- a) Continue the Kindergarten that started this year with 32 children age 3-5.
- b) Finish and install the new Computer Laboratory with 10 Computers mostly Lap-Top and start classes
- c) For the 10 children that left our Kindergarten to start Public school we will give classes 3 times per week to continue their education in English and Computer.
- d) Continue our afternoon classes for the youth groups in Art, Computer, English and Science.

I hope that this summery will motivate more people to support our efforts since we need all the help we can get to cover the costs for Salaries, Breakfast, Materials and Maintenance.