

Dominican Republic

- **Country Overview and Map**
- **Headquarters: Hato Mayor** – “Royal Town”
- **Satellite Site: Sabana de la Mar** – “Caribbean Coastal Town”
- **Satellite Site: Vicentillo** – “Essence of Chocolate”
- **Satellite Site: El Seibo** – “Cultural Cradle of the East”
- **Satellite Site: Pedro Sanchez** – “Treasure of the East”
- **Satellite Site: La Higuera and Surrounding Bateyes** – “Hispaniola's Crossroads”
- **Satellite Site: Los Botados** – “Hillside Tranquility”

Overview

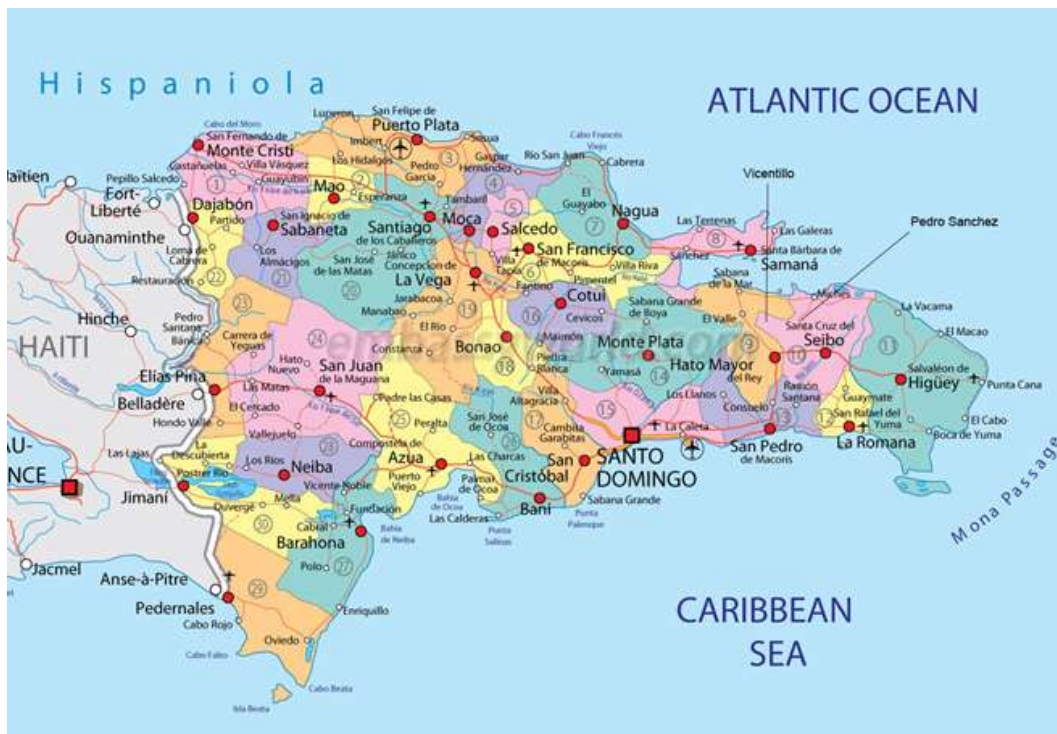
The Dominican Republic: part of the Caribbean or Latin America? Tropical or temperate? Touristy or untraveled? In-your-face or elusive? Welcome to a land of contrasts, contradictions, nuances, and overlaps – there is truly no place like it, and its complexity will keep you on your toes throughout your stay on the island.

Do not let this challenge scare you – it is a wonderful place for learning, problem-solving, and experiencing life from a vantage point that may be different from your own. The 10 million people who share a territory roughly twice the size of New Hampshire will teach you anything from how to harvest a cocoa pod to how to fit a family of five onto a moped. In your time with us, you will see various types of terrain (coast, mountains, urban sprawl), interact with a myriad of people (of different ages,



racess, professions, educational levels...just to name a few), and attempt countless approaches to economic and community development. Though your Spanish will improve, you may even learn some Creole from the many Haitian immigrants. You probably will not play soccer, but you may try your hand at baseball (or at least mention your favorite MLB team and find out that Dominicans know its line-up better than you do!).

In short, while we could provide you with a bunch of statistics on the DR's political, economic, social,



and environmental climate (which we do), to truly understand how the island functions you will have to live on it. Your host families, our trainings, and your day-to-day work will help you think through innovative tactics for tackling the DR's 40% poverty rate, and in doing so you will work with us to turn obstacles into opportunities through our MicroConsignment Model, grassroots consulting, another other tools in our toolkit in a diversity of contexts and areas.



Headquarters: Hato Mayor – “Royal Town”



Hato Mayor del Rey is the capital of the province of Hato Mayor and the seat of the provincial government. In the 16th century, the area was among the largest colonial herding regions on Hispaniola and served King Charles I, leading to the city's namesake which in English means *Largest Ranch of the King*. Today, Hato Mayor del Rey is a bustling pueblo and with a population of approximately 43,000 inhabitants, serves as the commercial center of the immediate region.

Satellite Site: Sabana de la Mar – “Caribbean Costal Community”



The municipality of Sabana de la Mar is home to roughly fifteen thousand inhabitants, most of whom work in fishing, agriculture, and/or tourism. Although Sabana itself is relatively low-key, it is a hop, skip and a jump away from *Parque de los Haitises*, a natural reserve world-renowned for its biodiversity and indigenous history, and *Samaná*, a peninsula home to some of the DR's most pristine beaches.

Satellite Site: Vicentillo – “Essence of Chocolate”



Located in the hills northeast of Hato Mayor, in the province of El Seibo, Vicentillo is one of 18 small communities dotting a winding road with a combined population of approximately 3,000 people. Here, chocolate is life. Cocoa trees cover the hillsides and many families rely on cocoa production for their livelihoods. The local women's organization produces handmade artisan chocolates and local guides offer cacao tours through the community. Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream buys fair trade cacao from Vicentillo, so Ben and Jerry themselves have made trips to the community. Culturally vibrant traditions, including palos and patronales celebrations, still occur on an annual basis and the community maintains multiple strong community organizations.

Satellite Site: El Seibo – “Cultural Cradle of the East”



Host of bullfights, patronales and a variety of fiestas, El Seibo is a fountain of culture in the Eastern region of the DR. Here, you'll find a bustling community set on rolling terrain. Though the city's official name is Santa Cruz del Seibo, it is more often referred to as simply, “El Seibo.” The province of El Seibo (in which the city is located) was one of the original provinces of the Dominican Republic and was initially covered much more territory than it covers today. Other provinces have slowly been carved out of El Seibo, including Hato Mayor in 1992.

Satellite Site: Pedro Sanchez – “Treasure of the East”



Locals claim that Pedro Sanchez, located between El Seibo and Miches, is the treasure of the East. It doesn't take long for visitors to realize why. The road passing by Pedro Sanchez is under consideration for designation as a panoramic highway and from the town itself, locals and visitors alike are afforded stunning views of lush green hills. A local tourism project in Pedro Sanchez combines beauty and adventure, offering caving, horseback riding and waterfall treks to tourists.

Satellite Site: La Higuera and Surrounding Bateyes – “Hispaniola's Crossroads”



La Higuera and many of its surrounding communities are “bateyes”, rural communities that developed around the sugarcane industry. An area of complexities, it is not uncommon to confront company houses for every family juxtaposed with public spigots expected to serve one thousand individuals, as well as residents born and bred in the DR currently prohibited from accessing right to proof of their citizenship for the reason that their parents emigrated from Haiti. The influence of Haitian culture and language is still apparent in personal and professional dynamics, although the communities are also distinctly Dominican.

Satellite Site: Los Botados – “Hillside Tranquility”



Los Botados is a relaxing place of refuge within the mountains of the *Cordillera Oriental*. In this calm and beautiful *campo*, residents grow cacao and other crops. Social Entrepreneur Corps utilizes the infrastructure of a community tourism route to work on internal projects and conduct reflections, as well as stay together in cabins, eat the tasty food a women's association prepares, horseback ride and swim in pristine rivers