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SET YOURSELF APART

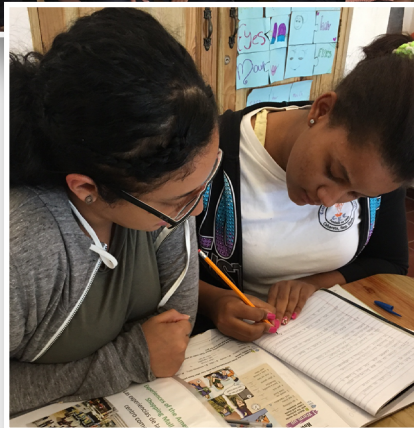
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

REFLECTIONS

I knew that I was blessed, but the trip made me realize there are things I take for granted. Being in the classrooms opened my eyes. I remembered being a young student, complaining about workbooks, and here I was in a school where students literally had to copy from a shared workbook to be able to finish their work. I know it's naive to believe I can do anything to ensure all children in the world have the same opportunities, but I believe I can be actively involved with helping the students in my own classrooms and make sure that I positively impact their lives. I was able to reflect on the person that I am and who I want to be - I couldn't wait to get home to allow the memories to influence my future steps.

CONNECTIONS

This experience helped me to be a more open-minded and patient educator. I realized how passionate I am to teach *and* how extremely important culture is, especially in the classroom. Working with the Mariposas I realized how blessed I am to be fluent in more than one language. I connected my own life and history to what we learned about "The Girl Effect" and how crucial it is for girls to grow up knowing the things they are capable of and to have the support and safety to be successful. I am motivated to spread the word and to do something concrete in my own community to help others.



Fernanda with her class at CORAL private school, getting her hair braided, and tutoring at Mariposa DR Foundation.
[Read Fernanda's Blog](#)



**La Fe no hace
las cosas faciles,
las hace posible.**

*Faith does not
make things easy,
it makes them possible.*

COMFORT ZONES

My advice to students is to take the chance -- go abroad. Through this experience I stepped out of my comfort zone in so many ways - ziplining, horseback riding, translating for my peers, teaching where resources are severely limited. I felt so free and was so proud of myself. I returned home the same person, only with an enhanced overview on life. IPDS will change your life and teach you things you never imagined - allow yourself to learn from these new experiences.