

Educational and Activity Study Center

The Program:

El's Educational and Activity Center is strategically located close to the impoverished community of Villa Esperanza so that children can easily access the facility. Children use the Center's computers and library daily for both academic and social purposes. At the Center friendships are formed and students encourage each other to stay in school.

How It Works:

Monday through Thursday, 80 children Grades 1-4 are tutored at the Center by EI-trained secondary school students. Most of the children play at the Center before or after tutoring. The center is a safe place to play where kids can be kids.

Open until 8pm, it is also a safe haven for community members of all ages. Mothers come to learn computer skills, parents' and teen meetings are held, and individual counseling and coaching sessions take place.



Home Visit Program

The Problem:

Most parents, who on average are educated at a 3rd grade level, do not understand the long term benefits of education. Very often, due to financial difficulties, parents encourage their children to drop out of school and start working.

The Program:

The home visit program focuses on mentoring parents and children to value education. Every child in the community is assigned an E.I. staff member, who visits their home regularly and cultivates a trusting relationship with the children and parents.

How it works:

Children are encouraged by reviewing their school work and discussing issues. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent-teacher meetings, help with homework when possible, providing verbal encouragement, and reduce the child's work/home responsibilities. Also, parents and children are coached to communicate with one another more positively and to treat each other with respect and love. Our model of continuous support leads to lasting positive change within families.



Teen Program:

The Problem:

Teens face many obstacles when continuing on to secondary school. Most teens are expected to earn money; girls often start having children in their teens. Parents often cannot afford school costs and pull children out once they can read. Teens are unaware of career choices and have not learned how to behave professionally, limiting their career potential.

The Program:

The program is focused on the holistic development of teens into successful adults using an intensive, hands-on approach. Each teen and their family receive ongoing emotional, social and academic support. Teens are given program ownership opportunities and leadership roles.

How It Works:

EI provides school fees and supplies for teens. Each teen is regularly visited in their home and parents are mentored to value education. Group sessions and counseling help teens make good choices about sex, drugs and alcohol, and gangs.

Local business owners and professionals come to talk with teens about job opportunities. The goal is to enable teens to make informed career choices and understand the technical and vocational training required in each field.



Primary School Program:

The Problem:

Parents in the community have on average a third grade education and often don't understand the benefits of education. Many children are not enrolled into Kindergarten and are at a disadvantage when they enter first grade. Schools are often overcrowded and poorly managed.

The program:

EI's unique, intensive, hands-on program focuses on the community. Children and families are supported at home through our home visit program. At the EI Center, children are tutored, have access to computers and medical care and participate in fun activities.

How it works:

An EI staff member conducts home visits and develops close relationships with children and their families (see home visit program). The staff works closely with the school and tutors from EI's tutoring program. At the EI center, children utilize books, toys and educational games. Regular piñata parties and small field trips are also part of the program.

The Impact:

The multi-faceted approach builds a web of support systems around the child to prevent them from falling through the cracks.



Tutoring Program

The Problem:

Children in Nicaraguan public schools have difficulty attaining academic success for several reasons. Most parents have little education themselves and do not promote schooling. Public schools are overcrowded and understaffed. Finally, rote instruction often leads to disinterest in learning. Children in the 4th and 5th grades, frustrated and suffering from low self-esteem, often drop out.

The Program:

The EI tutoring program provides young children with a solid foundation in math and Spanish, supplementing the public school education. In addition to academic learning, tutoring sessions provide students with social lessons ones like getting along with peers, grooming and etiquette.

How It Works:

Participants in Kindergarten through Grade 3rd are tested to determine their learning needs. They are matched with a tutor from EI's secondary school program or placed in a small learning group. Trained teen tutors conduct short assessments of the children's progress each week. Parents are included when possible.



The Impact:

Each year the pass and retention rates improve and are currently at 89% and 96%, respectively. Younger children have better grades, more self-confidence and a greater chance of passing to the next grade. Teen tutors demonstrate elevated self-esteem, knowing that they are helping their community.

University Program

The Problem:

Most students in the community that Empowerment International serves are unable to attend university, due to economic and academic limitations.

The Program:

Students are given access to stipends, computers, study space, career and emotional counseling, medical care, and homework assistance. EI also offers students co-scholarships, in conjunction with partnering universities.

How it works:

Students work with EI staff to select a university and a career path. Once accepted, the student begins an internship with EI, gaining professional skills, earning a stipend and giving back to the community. The students become role models for younger students.

