



VYLI's Entrepreneurship Initiative 2005-2007

VYLI's Entrepreneurship Initiative is the cornerstone of VYLI's mission to train young and emerging leaders to build a new Vieques. With few opportunities for economic and personal development, the Island's socio-economic condition continues to decline. Young adults with skills and higher education usually relocate to the main Island and beyond in search of better opportunities. This brain drain seriously undermines the islands' future. In order to become a socially healthy and prosperous island, Vieques urgently needs attention and support from both the public and private sectors, in Puerto Rico, the U.S. and the international community.



Kassandra Castillo at the Taste of the Island



Tania Cruz

VYLI Entrepreneurship Project Coordinator

VYLI Expands to include Taino Calabash Design: Fall 2006

Our commitment is to develop Eco-tourism products that educate youth how to preserve their heritage; while raising funds to help realize their dreams for their lives and their future. This fall young people learned from Taino artisan Daniel Silva to harvest calabash, prepare and carve into lampshades and bird feeders. Young people sold our signature T-shirts and hand-made jewelry from VYLI logo pendants Vieques' natural seeds and beads.



**Kutasha Silva, VYLI Project Coordinator
Tania Cruz, Glendaliz Sanchez, Valerie**

VYLI ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVE GROWS

VYLI's 3rd Annual Summer Institute: June 2006



Daniel Silva with Joel Cruz & Valerie Gonzalez

Entrepreneurship Workshop during VYLI's week-long intensive training with Kutasha Silva and Lynda Bayron. Fifty young people (ages 11-17) discovered how they could make their dreams come true by being entrepreneurs.



Cultural Arts-Jewelry-Making Workshop with 17-year old **Kassandra Castillo** -- turning Vieques' natural resources of seeds, beads, shells, glass and stones into unique jewelry. The young artisans proudly wore their hand-made crafts; some young entrepreneurs sold their wares at graduation. Kassandra's exquisite pieces were sold at the Taste of the Islands. Proceeds help support her travel to San Juan to participate -- and win in the Elite Model Look competition.



VYLI Youth Participate in 3rd Annual Caribbean Artisan Festival: March 2005

VYLI youth participated in the 3rd annual Caribbean Artisan Festival in Tortola, British Virgin Islands with ten other Caribbean countries. Youth experienced quality craftsmanship; learned to appreciate the time involved in producing handicrafts and how to preserve their unique Caribbean culture and contribute to the economic well-being of the Island. VYLI youth served as true ambassadors for a new Vieques -- making friends; creating partnerships; connecting Vieques with other Caribbean islands and inviting people to visit their beautiful island.





Vieques-Tortola Economic-Cultural Development Delegation: March 2005

VYLI youth leaders joined the first Economic-Cultural Development Delegation to Tortola, British Virgin Islands with Mayor Damaso Serrano Lopez. Josue Cruz and Eliasib Utreras made a presentation to BVI Chief Minister Orlando Smith and invited BVI youth to attend VYLI's 3rd annual Summer Institute. The Vieques delegation was the honored guests at prestigious H.S. Laverty Stout College. President Michael O'Neal welcomed the delegation at the College's Technology Center, hosting a videoconference attended by Banco Popular Vice President Ian Smith.



VYLI's 2nd Summer Institute July 2005

VYLI held our 2nd annual Summer Institute for sixty young people ages 7-19 years old. They began their week by making Dream Collages from magazines donated by the community. At graduation, these collections proudly displayed their hopes and dreams of our emerging car mechanics and graphic designers, engineers and architects, actors and musicians, poets and writers, teachers and biologists. Young people learned how they can make their dreams come true by creating entrepreneurship projects and little businesses. One group of jewelry makers made beautiful necklaces from local seeds and beads and sold them at graduation.



VYLI Youth, Mayor, Economic Delegation in BVI



Mayor with Trinidadian Entrepreneur



Ivan, Joshua and Joel

VYLI on the Malecon: November 2005

Launched 2nd successful season during busy Thanksgiving weekend – added new product-line to T-shirts.



BIZ Camp: August 2005

Project Coordinator Kutasha Silva conducted an intensive camp for young entrepreneurs who learned the basics of creating their own business. By the end of the training, they created preliminary business plans to realize their dreams including creating the first movie theatre business in Vieques.



Entrepreneurship Pilot Program: Nov. 2004

Organized successful four-month pilot program: first youth entrepreneurship in Vieques; Young Viequenses (ages 13-17) learned how to be entrepreneurs by managing their own business. VYLI youth designed cultural products, developed our presentation skills, practiced English; took our product (T-Shirts) to the marketplace on the Malecon in Esparanza. Used VYLI logo to design pendant and create unique hand-made necklaces.

VYLI's Entrepreneurship Initiative uses the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's educational curriculum featuring microcredit/finance pioneer, Muhammed Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank who won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. Yunus inspired our work in Vieques – following his receiving the Institute's prestigious award from Walter Cronkite in New York in 2002. www.soup4worldinstitute.com



How VYLI's Entrepreneurship Initiative Benefits Young Viequenses

Reduces School Drop Outs: We invite everyone to dream about what they want for their lives, their future and the future of their island. We motivate and direct youth to education and opportunities; connect to the world of work through mentors, apprenticeships and internships.

Increases Skills & Reduces Unemployment and Government Dependency: We train people to be entrepreneurs and reward them with recognition in the community and with travel opportunities.

Helps Reduce Petty Crime by Bridging the Cultural Divide: We appeal to the enlightened self-interest of the business community to get involved with training the young people of the island. As part of our quest to connect young people with caring adults, we invite everyone in our community to serve as mentors to open doors for them. Statistics show that young people who have a caring adult in their lives are more likely to succeed.

- Train youth in sales and customer relations while learning about running a small business.
- Increase youth pride, self-esteem and motivation for work ethic and realizing their dreams.
- Increase skills, education and job readiness while fostering life-long curiosity for learning.
- Breaks cycle of poverty, encourages self-sufficiency and sustainable economic activities.
- Develop bi-lingual communication & presentation skills.
- Learning-in-action project cultural-entrepreneur ventures.
- Multiplier effect/replicable model: trains young people to be leaders who reach out and help other youth.