

“In Jesuit education, the depth of learning and imagination encompasses and integrates intellectual rigor with reflection on the experience of reality together with the creative imagination to work toward constructing a more humane, just, sustainable, and faith-filled world”
Adolfo Nicolás SJ, 2010

Creighton University and the Centro de Educación Para la Salud Integral (CESI)

Creighton University and the Centro de Educación Para la Salud Integral (CESI) share a long history as partners in the Dominican Republic through the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) and the Encuentro Dominicano Program. From its earliest inception, the partnership’s fundamental purpose has been to facilitate the development of a critical consciousness – or conscientization – of participants by exposing them to the realities of people living in developing countries. Such exposure is accomplished within a distinctly Ignatian perspective consistent with the University’s Catholic mission and call to critically reflect upon the Gospel message of peace and reconciliation, and thus help make the world a more humane place for all our brothers and sisters. Thus, both institutions share the vocation to be instruments for the promotion of faith, of which justice is an essential element.

This shared mission requires several dispositions from us. First, we must actively and continually seek to understand the lived reality of people and communities in developing countries, especially those who might find themselves at the margins of society. Second, we must creatively find concrete solutions that address the complex and multidimensional challenges these people face. Finally, we must collaboratively implement programs that prioritize local voices and perspectives in all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation in such a way that the expected impact directly benefits the community and enhances its capacities as agents of change in their own society.

While CESI and Creighton University have a shared mission, they are distinct entities. CESI has legal status in the Dominican Republic. In contrast, Creighton University’s presence in the Dominican Republic is currently hosted mainly by CESI. Creighton University projects have an impact on CESI’s local reputation whether or not the project involves CESI personnel or resources. While CESI is at liberty to conduct initiatives independently, all projects sponsored, organized, facilitated or encouraged by Creighton University in the Dominican Republic that expect to gain CESI support or access CESI resources must first receive joint CESI and Creighton approval. Projects that do not require CESI support or resources only need to gain Creighton University approval, but generally CESI will be informed as a matter of partnership courtesy. If such projects have a potential negative impact on CESI activities or commitments, it will not be approved. Projects or programs that have not undergone this process may not utilize Creighton University’s name or related logos in any promotional materials including social media.

Guiding Concepts

All Creighton University sponsored programs in the Dominican Republic will be consistent with the University’s mission, Ignatian identity and Catholic tradition. Our guiding principles articulated below represent intersections of the Characteristics of Jesuit Education¹ and the principles of Catholic Social

¹ Creighton University (n.d.). *At Creighton, we’re forming leaders for a more just world.* Available at <https://www.creighton.edu/about/what-jesuit-education>.

Teaching.²All Creighton University programming in the Dominican Republic will:

- Be ***committed to service and the promotion of justice***. Thus, programs should conceptualize a long term contribution to the community either by their own activities or by being part of a broader sequence of programming. All programs must contribute to the community rather than solely obtaining benefit from it.
- Seek to ***flourish through equality, respect and mutuality with local partners***. Creighton University's partnership with CESI is governed, above all, by the principles of *mutuality* and *collaboration*. Therefore, designated CESI representatives should be invited to participate in the conceptualization, development and/or implementation of any project or program sponsored, organized, facilitated or encouraged by Creighton University in the Dominican Republic. Such Creighton University programs or projects must result in direct or indirect benefits to CESI and/or the communities it represents. Early involvement of CESI personnel will help determine the extent to which CESI may wish to be involved in the implementation and evaluation of the project. The principles of *mutuality* and *collaboration* are extended beyond CESI to members of any/all communities where the prospective project or program will take place. In other words, programs/projects are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for ongoing open communication, decision-making and conflict resolution. It is very likely and acceptable that CESI will represent the interests of their community partners in the development, implementation and evaluation of a co-sponsored project.
- Include ***intentional growth in participants' capabilities to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations***. Beyond cultural sensitivity and awareness, our programs will emphasize humility, highlight the value of the local culture, and develop skills to respectfully accomplish objectives in cultural diverse settings. This will necessarily include review of one's own culture and biases, especially related to notions of expertise and hierarchy. Special attention in the evaluation of any potential program/project is the consideration of unconscious biases that might inhibit self-determination and resilience in the community or reinforce dependence and unjust power hierarchies.
- Demonstrate ***a preferential option for and with the poor or vulnerable*** as integral collaborators in identifying, analyzing and solving their own problems. The option for and with the poor and vulnerable should further integrate a ***vision for sustainable development***. While projects or programs might have a narrow focus, efforts should be made to consider impacts of and on the local, regional and global environmental, social, and economic context in which the project or program will unfold. Further, in order to genuinely opt for and with the poor and vulnerable, we must be aware of how much we ourselves are "non-poor and non-vulnerable." Therefore, Creighton University projects and programs in the Dominican Republic should intentionally encourage reflection on how participants/visitors occupy privileged positions that permit them to choose a stance of solidarity.
- Be ***informed by and support faith formation guided by Ignatian values and pedagogy***. Whenever possible, the Ignatian tradition of spirituality, which emphasizes reflection, action and experience (also described as the iterative and repeating Pastoral Cycle of Experience → Social Analysis → Ethical/Theological Reflection → Action³) should be used as a framework for preparation, immersion and post-processing of engaged compassion. This includes, but is not limited to, development of a variety of

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (1998). *Seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching*. Publication No. 5-315. Washington, DC: USCCB Communications. Available at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm>.

³ See Joe Holland & Peter Henriot, S.J. (1983). *Social analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. Washington, DC: Center of Concern.

tools for reflection and structuring dedicated reflection opportunities in all programs modeled after the Ignatian Examen. Consistent with this spirituality, we will uphold openness to multiple perspectives and actively share resources with CESI.

- Emphasize *immersion* as the primary means through which participants can begin to experience life in solidarity by engaging with the community, building relationships, and seeking mutuality. Immersions should invite participants to examine their own priorities and to reflect on what it means to live not only “*in*” the world but also “*for*” it.
- Utilize *dialogue* as a central means through which to gain mutual insight, overcome differences, find common ground, build meaning and purpose, and set directions collaboratively within teams, between organizations, and with the communities we serve. The process involves listening with empathy, searching for common ground, exploring new ideas and perspectives, and bringing unexamined assumptions into the open.
- Utilize *sustainability* as a strategy for decision-making, planning, and action. Programs should first be mindful of our planetary boundaries and limited natural resources, then consider how cultural and social structures are situated in specific ecological (both environmental and sociological) contexts, and finally attend to economic analysis implications of programs or projects.