OPEN WATER LIFEGUARD TRAINING COURSE FOR RESCUE PERSONNEL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Project of

The International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA)

IslaSurf.org

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International Context

ISLA Background and Information about the Instructors

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The International Surf Lifesaving Association works to reduce drowning worldwide by providing resources for ocean-minded educational programs and through sending volunteer lifeguards to various regions to assist in the lifeguarding and medical response needs of the public. Since 2008 ISLA has conducted two lifeguard-training courses, performed 108 rescues, 976 preventative actions, and 168 medical aids in four countries.

ISLA started with four lifeguards in Huntington Beach in 2008. The four lifeguards recognized the need for an agency that could utilize the abundant resources of supplies and willing volunteers around them, to create a dynamic agency that provided medical supplies and lifeguards to beaches around the world. Since its inception, ISLA has grown to cover several beaches in Nicaragua and in Ecuador, also participating in projects in New Zealand and Mexico. ISLA will continue work to build relationships locally and globally until its reach is global in saving lives and providing support. We seek volunteers willing to work hard and see to it we build strong relationships with the countries, governments, and communities we service anywhere in the world.

In addition to being ISLA volunteers, the members of ISLA work as professional lifeguards in California for various agencies including the City of Huntington Beach, City of Pico Rivera, City of Long Beach, Los Angeles County, and California State Parks.

Combined Instructors Certifications/ Experience

- ISLA Lifeguard Instructor
- City of Huntington Beach Lifeguard Instructor
- United States Registry Emergency Medical Technician
- ATV, PWC, Unit Operations Certification
- American Red Cross AED, First-Aid, CPR Instructor
- American Red Cross Pool Lifeguard
- American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor
Rescue 3 River & Swiftwater Rescue Technician
- NAUI Rescue Scuba Diver
- PADI Rescue Scuba Diver

National Context

The Need for Lifeguards in the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic has an incredibly high drowning rate because of social factors and the dangerous ocean conditions present on the island, the two principal causes of death at any beach. First, very few people in the Dominican Republic know how to swim, and of those a smaller number have sufficient knowledge of the ocean, rip currents, and waves. This factor mixes with a beach culture that uses high amounts of alcohol to create an extremely dangerous situation at the beach. Separate from social causes, oceanic conditions create another crucial risk factor on the island.

Generally, the majority of the beaches in the Dominican Republic have very calm oceanic conditions, where the biggest danger is often created by the social factors of a particular region. However sometimes, usually when there is a large tropical storm far away from the island, the ocean becomes extremely dangerous with large waves and very strong rip currents that take people out to sea. Because these conditions are not present all the time, the Dominican Republic has an element of danger that is different than other parts of the world because the people do not recognize the risks when they are present, and worse they do not do how to handle themselves in dangerous aquatic situations.

The beach conditions that are cause to countless drowning’s in the country are completely manageable by people who have the proper training. For this reason, the need for professional lifeguards on the beaches of the Dominican Republic, both public and private, is critical.
Three Part Project Proposal: First, Second, and Third Stage of Dominican Lifeguard Project

General Objective

Contribute to efforts that aim to minimize death by drowning in the Dominican Republic.

Objective 1- First Stage- Dominican Lifeguard Training

Offer a complex open water lifeguard training course for rescue personnel in the Dominican Republic on the 25th, 26th, and 27th of November, 2011.

Objective 2- Second Stage- Project Semana Santa Dominicana (Project Dominican Holy Week)

Return to the Dominican Republic with a team of 10 or more ISLA volunteers for one of the most dangerous seasons of the year at the beach: Easter Week (30 March- 8 April, 2012). The team will work with participants from the First Stage Lifeguard Training, helping them in aquatic rescues during the week. This time will also be used as an opportunity for continuing training with the support of ISLA.

Objective 3- Third Stage- Private and Public Lifeguard Agency Development

Work with Municipalities, the Dominican Civil Defense, and private organizations in order to create permanent Dominican lifeguard agencies that guard the public and private beaches of the country. ISLA will help with the professional development of governmental and private agencies, taking advantage of various organizational and business models to ensure the greatest success of the agencies in meeting the need for professional lifeguards on the coast of the Dominican Republic.

Stage One Development- Dominican Lifeguard Training

The first stage goal is to offer a Lifeguard Training Course for 50 participants taught by professional ISLA instructors from California, in coordination with the Dominican Red Cross and the Risk Management office of the City of Santiago. Participants who successfully complete the course with receive and Lifeguard Certification from ISLA.

Activities and Methodology

The course will be three days in length, and take place on the North Coast in the city of Cabarete. It will have various subjects pertaining to the professional lifeguard training. Each subject will have two components: one in the classroom with lecture and written examination, and the other will be practical experience based learning y physical training. The instructors will use technology to show photos, videos, and lecture notes, and will also utilize specialized equipment to demonstrate the theory learned in class.

They will use the ISLA Open Water Lifeguard Manuel.
Some of the included subjects are:

- Aquatic Rescues- ocean hazards, prevention, recognition
- First Aid- Personal safety, patient care
- CPR- Proper Technique, use of AED
- Job Development- Professional Behavior, Lifeguard Responsibilities, public contacts

Participant Requirements

- 18 years of age or older
- Ability to swim 300 meters without stopping
- Ability to tread water for 5 minutes
- Ability to swim 5 meters underwater
- Ability to dive to a depth of 3 meters

* If possible, each participant should bring a pair of swim/surf fins

Resources

Equipment brought by ISLA:

- 5 Lifeguard Buoys
- 1 AED
- 3 CPR Mannequins
- 1 First Aid Kits
- 5 Radios
- 5 Sets of Fins
- 1 ISLA Lifeguard Training PowerPoint Presentation
- 50 Surf Caps (Donate)
- 50 bottles of Sunscreen (Donate)

Necessary Recourse to be provided for ISLA Instructors

- The ISLA instructors are volunteers so their payment is not required, however it will be necessary to provide them with sleeping accommodations (5 nights), food during lifeguard training, transportation within the country from Santiago to Cabarete, and at least assist them in paying part of their flight cost.
  - Flight from LAX to STI x 5-7 instructors= RD$80,000-100,000 (US$2133.34-US$2666.68)
  - Sleeping accommodations= provided by Dominican Red Cross
- Daily Food= To be Determined
- In Country Transportation= Provided by Dominican Civil Defense

Recourses for Participants

- Sleeping arrangements (2 Nights)- Provided by Dominican Red Cross
- Daily food- To be Determined
- Sunscreen- Provided by ISLA (donated)
- Surf Caps- Provided by ISLA (donated)
- Fins- To be determined

Logistical Details

Dates: 25-27 November, 2011; 8AM -7PM Every Day

Place: Cabarete and surrounding beaches (Playa Encuentro, Playa Mañanero,)

- We have chosen to have training in Cabarete on the North Coast because this region has the most consistent and dangerous conditions. In order to have the most successes, it is necessary for the course to be given in a place where the oceanic conditions, waves, and currents are the most extreme.

Details to be Determined

- Participants
  o 15- Red Cross
  o 15-20 –Civil Defense
  o 10-15- Fire departments of Puerto Plata, Sosua, and Cabarete
  o 5-10- Aquatic Department of Politur (tourist police)

- Finalized list of ISLA Volunteers