



Aaron Roth - Edify.org - "Through the Valley" - June 2014

I know it's been quite awhile since I've written a newsletter. Initially, I had intended this newsletter regarding my mission work with Edify to be monthly, but the past five months have been really slow, and up and down in terms of our progress. I prefer to have some news or updates to convey when I communicate, and I hadn't felt that I had some good solid news, until now. The past six weeks have simply been fantastic in terms of the progress we've made and I'm glad to share them with you now. A quick note, I just recently arrived to the Dominican Republic to host an internship for our local Peruvian partner and work in our three week Family Experience program with some Dominican schools. More on that below. -Aaron

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The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. (Ecclesiastes 7:8 NIV)

When you sign onto a new project or initiative you usually have some idea of what you're getting into. It is pretty tough when a new, demanding responsibility takes you by surprise and you find yourself saying, "I had no idea it would be like this." Well, for me, I suppose I had some idea that the process of starting something new would take



(Peruvian colleagues with Dominican staff.)

some time, and bringing a new program that has worked in other countries would certainly not be a cookie-cutter implementation in a new country. That's all true, I knew that. But it's been really difficult to be so patient, and I was not expecting it to be so difficult for me.



(Belinda and Ana Maria with a school director.)

Every time I have the chance to talk to someone back home, it's always encouraging and reassuring to me. My friends, mentors, and family all remind me why I made the decision to work abroad and what it means for the local community here, and why I do what I do. I believe that God has a plan for redemption for these economically poor communities and a way to restore what was broken.

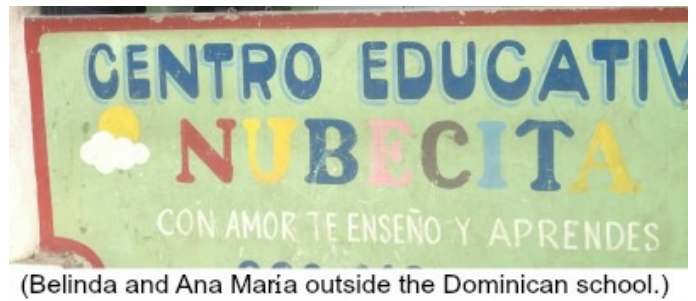
I know that this is a cohesive story that begins with love and ends in redemption. It's a true story that we are all familiar with, and yet it is new every time we come back to it. This story is good and beautiful, and we love telling it. Hmmm, well, we love the beginning, and certainly the ending, and when we compare the before and after it makes the everything clearer and more meaningful, and brings a well defined conclusion to beginning. But I think there's a part that doesn't get much airtime, certainly it's a part I had forgotten.

The middle.

I'd been in the middle for about a year in Peru. I've had the great blessing to be able to work in Latin America with various Christian organizations that are committed to doing good work in the name of Christ. I have seen so



much of the "before" - the brokenness of a community, all the pain and the suffering, and I have seen the beautiful "after." Lives have been changed, students graduate, adults learn to read, communities become safer, families can afford to live better and healthier, and individuals learn that God has not forgotten them, and that life is much better trusting Him and knowing and living like Jesus. I've been a part of that story many times.



But the middle? I kind of wanted to skip over that. Go around it, jump over it, race through it, but I've realized that sometimes you just can't. You can't really be past something unless you pass through it first.



(Workshop with the Dominican director of Coop-Aspire.)

Honestly, the middle was hard. It was hard for the simple reason that I came with a purpose, and I hadn't been able to fulfill it. Let me remind you though, that this is kind of an American struggle. Many of my Latin America friends do not usually align their feelings of spiritual fulfillment with career success. (I've often said to many of my friends back home that Americans aren't really fulfilled unless they are slightly dissatisfied with their progress. How can we ever find peace with this kind of mentality? Anyway, that's a topic for another newsletter . . .)

Throughout all the months, the visits, the calls, the emails, the meetings, what has continually motivated me is that I have seen the program work. Knowing that our

program for low-cost Christian schools has impacted more than a quarter of a million students in Africa and the Caribbean inspires me to take this program into the communities I've visited in Lima, Peru.

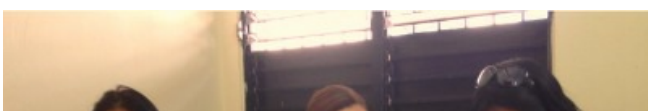
As I've seen now, sometimes to really have a breakthrough you've got to try to step back, analyze the situation, pray about it, and make a new plan. That's just what we did. Together with the Edify team we put forth a grand effort the past two months to make this work in Peru. I'm glad to tell you today, that we are finally on our way here in Peru. The past two months have been a tremendous amount of work. With a signed contract, transferred funds, and a pool of schools that have loan applications in progress, I feel like we've crossed through the valley, and I am more excited than ever to see this program work in Lima.



(Sitting where Dominican students sit.)

You know what I think helped us get to where we are? I believe it was our commitment to walk through the middle with our partner.

The past few months we've worked so hard to build up the technical aspects of the program, with a future goal of a week-long internship in the Dominican Republic with our Peruvian colleagues. What I understand from last week is that there is nothing like seeing something with your own eyes, walking in the same communities, talking with the local staff and being inspired by the men and women of the Edify-supported schools in the Dominican Republic. Our local Dominican staff have been amazing. They have been so hospitable and welcoming to our Peruvian colleagues.



What I've seen in the past week has been a visible ascent of coming out of the valley.



(Workshop with local Edify staff.)

From a wider perspective, when you look at both sides of a new partnership, both parties have their own questions, doubts, and processes for which they need time to understand. I think I was ready to push this program through all the way to the communities in Lima that I had visited because I was confident, I had seen it, and touched it. But in order for others to be in this same place, you've got to take them on the journey as well. The feedback from our Peruvian colleagues has been incredibly positive. I really feel like they've caught the vision, and are more

equipped than ever to bring this program to Peru.

There have been so many people who have walked through the middle with me this past year. My colleagues at Edify, my friends, my family, and of course I've felt the presence of the Lord more than ever.

Thank you to all of you who have supported me over the past year, and get ready to celebrate with me when we get our first few schools in the program in Lima in the next few weeks!

For now, I'll be in the Dominican Republic, celebrating with my Dominican colleagues for what the Lord has already done here with our family experience camps. That's what I'll write about in the next newsletter.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9 NIV)



(Another visit to Dominican school.)

I pray that you maintain the vision you have, and that you **don't let go of what you know to be true.**

blessings,
-Aaron

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