

Inspired by Ignatian Spirituality

Camino is not religiously affiliated, but the founders are two veteran lay Catholic school educators with nearly forty years' combined experience working in Jesuit schools. As such, our methods are inspired by Ignatian Spirituality, a centuries-old tradition inspired by St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. It invites us to be "contemplatives in action." By engaging with the world through meaningful service and focused reflection, we can grow in self knowledge while discerning our most authentic desires. At the same time, we can be of generous service to friends, family, and strangers alike.

The Dominican Republic

Comprising the eastern half the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola, the Dominican Republic ("the D.R.") neighbors Haiti. The island is the site of Columbus' original landing. Truly a developing nation, the D.R. is home to a diverse population of more than ten million. With a nominal per capita GDP of \$7,500, the D.R. is a nation of widespread poverty.

Camino's immersive seminars operate principally in two regions of the country: among the rural *campos* of the massive *Cordillera Central* mountain range, and on the north coast, just east of the tourist city of Puerto Plata. This region is home to many *bateys*, communities of poor, undocumented Haitian immigrants: the outcasts of Dominican society.

For all its struggles, the D.R. is a warm, welcoming, and safe country for foreign travelers. The challenges of daily life are set against a backdrop of natural beauty, including pristine beaches, the Caribbean's highest mountain, and lush tropical forests.

Our Approach

Context, Preparation, Action, & Reflection: These essential principles of Ignatian education guide the Camino method. Every Seminar begins with a comprehensive prep phase, which includes team-building, knowledge-building, and a primer in Dominican language and culture.

The weeklong practicum takes the group on a challenging, exciting, immersive journey from the central mountains to the north coast. Packed days are unpacked in nightly discussion, informed by guided reflection. The cohort experience balances physical labor with other forms of meaningful service in conjunction with locally-managed, well-vetted organizations.

Reflection is central to Ignatian philosophy. That's why Camino invites cohorts to continue the reflective journey after the physical one has ended. We gather to explore meanings, trade insights, and consider the future in light of our shared experience.

Learn More

More information, including a Frequently-Asked-Questions page, is available on our website:

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Camino Institute is a Limited Liability Company based in Buffalo, New York, Established in 2018.

TRAVEL
WITH PURPOSE

DISCONNECT
TO RECONNECT

FOCUS
ON WHAT MATTERS

BE
OF SERVICE



Our Mission

We provide a unique travel experience that couples personal growth with service to those in need. We invite individuals, families, and organizations to travel with purpose, disconnect to reconnect, focus on what matters, and be of service. Whether you're looking for a powerful corporate retreat or an unforgettable family experience, Camino will offer meaningful challenges and rewards—all while you're doing something good in a part of the world where daily life presents constant struggle.

Ignatian tradition invites us to discover the *magis* within ourselves, our relationships, and our world: that which is greater, deeper, and truer. Central to this is disciplined practice of discerning our most authentic desires. By “going off the grid” in a focused, purposeful way, our programs invite you to disconnect from electronics and your daily routines. The result? A deeper “re-connection” to what matters most in life.

More than a “Mission Trip”

The Camino Institute’s International Seminar is not going to save the world. So we try to avoid using the term “mission trip,” because it comes with some baggage. Many well-intentioned mission trips actually leave quite a mess after they leave a community. We are intentional in our approach. First off, we begin with the humility to acknowledge that our Seminars are principally *learning experiences* for our cohorts. We do engage in meaningful service work, but we don’t proselytize and we ask our participants to respect this. Service learning is a “both-and” prospect: we travel for ourselves, to learn and grow, but we can also use our resources to do something good.

Opportunities for Individuals and Groups
Individuals can join a cohort with others, or we can customize an experience built for your company, team, department, or family.

Contribute to the Greater Good Every trip combines personal growth with a meaningful, purposeful service project that meets authentic, expressed local needs on the ground.

A Model Built for Busy People It’s unlikely you can be away for a long time. We keep our travel to around one week, and we take care of all the details.

A Truly Unique Experience This is not simply a packaged tour. A Camino Institute seminar will truly take you well off the beaten path, physically, intellectually, and spiritually.

Camino Institute



camino (kah-mee-noh)

Spanish

noun

1. A path of travel (road, track, or path)
2. A route or way
3. A distance traveled, or journey

Transformative Experience

Camino’s seminars provide deeply transformative journeys for adults of all ages, and our programs can be tailored to fit the nature of the group. Perhaps you’ve hit a “wall” in your personal or professional life, or maybe you’re just looking for a new challenge and a way for you, your family, or your organization to serve others. Every group is different, but participants become companions on a shared journey, learning with and from each other. Often, age differences within a cohort create natural mentoring dynamics. We read interesting, thought-provoking material and dive deeply into shared reflection using the Socratic method of intellectual inquiry and discussion.

Experience Matters

The Co-Founders of Camino Institute, Paul Cumbo and Adam Baber, have more than twenty years of combined experience leading immersive service learning programs for high school students and young adults. Throughout careers as veteran teachers and administrators at Jesuit prep schools, they have led hundreds of people on truly transformative journeys in remote places. Paul and Adam bring seasoned travel know-how, professional credentials, local knowledge, meaningful relationships, and refined understanding of Ignatian leadership principles to every cohort. Depending on the cohort, experienced assistants provide additional leadership.