

Project Update: July 2016

It is my great pleasure to announce the arrival of Iram Nsogo Mba Mbasogo to the project as a research assistant. Iram was educated locally at Universidad ISA in Santiago, and he brings a new perspective to the research with his previous experiences as an intern with the Environmental Ministry and thesis work with Plan Yaque—an NGO whose focus is the sustainable use and management of the Río Yaque watershed.

In other news, our ongoing monitoring of abandoned pasture plots at the research sites has resulted in observations of the arrival and establishment of at least 35 animal-dispersed plants. Using a newly-formed collaboration with the Jardín Botánico Nacional Dr Rafael Moscoso, we have begun identifying and cataloguing the species we have encountered. With assistance from Grupo Jaragua education specialist, Andrea Thomen, we successfully carried out two Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival programs at the local elementary school.



Iram posing for the camera during our routine collection of seeds in abandoned pasture plots. Iram hopes to use this research experience to help him meet his goal of pursuing a Master's degree in sustainable forest management in order to apply these principles to his career. Photo by Holly Garrod.



During the afternoon education programmes for the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival, held on June 2nd and June 10th 2016 at Centro Educativo Almanzar Ureña, we led a series of short lectures and interactive games to teach students about the importance of native and endemic birds in the ecosystems of Hispaniola. One of these included an activity of Spencer's design involving a team relay contest to carry beans (seeds) to plastic containers (nest trees) using spoons in order to instil the concept of

how birds' messy feeding behaviours can lead to seed dispersal and forest regeneration. Photo by Holly Garrod.