



In 2015 at the Aspen Action Forum, Adela Mendoza, Executive Director of Hispanic Alliance and member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network, pledged to “build leadership development and self-discovery opportunities to prepare emerging Hispanic leaders in South Carolina to collaborate and lead across cultures and sectors”.

Based on learning models crafted from her own experiences in Aspen and with seed funding from local foundations, Adela’s team launched the Student DREAMers Alliance (SDA) model in 2016. High-achieving Hispanic youth of mixed immigration status, were provided a space for introspective dialogue and self-discovery, moderated by members of the Aspen and Liberty Fellowship. Community partners and a carefully crafted curriculum supplied the resources and knowledge needed to build their own toolbox of skills and resilience to position themselves for success and leadership.

This model is designed to accelerate youth leadership, magnifying the voice of immigrant student communities to bring increased awareness of inequities in our education system and advocating for meaningful legislative change on a state and national level. The ultimate goal of the Student DREAMers Alliance is to cultivate and mentor the next generation of leaders and empower them to open doors of opportunity for themselves and for generations that follow.

Recognizing the potential of this venture to make a greater impact, the Aspen Institute team invited Adela to present SDA at a Peer Consultancy at the 2017 Resnick Aspen Action Forum, just ahead of the launch of the SDA Scholarship Fund and the completion of our evaluation. For more information regarding this initiative, please visit SCDreamers.org



WHAT IS AT STAKE

IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: UNITED STATES

- 17% of the US population – Hispanics - don't have sufficiently strong political power to guarantee equitable policies in education, employment, or humane immigration reform for themselves.
- Yearly, 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school.

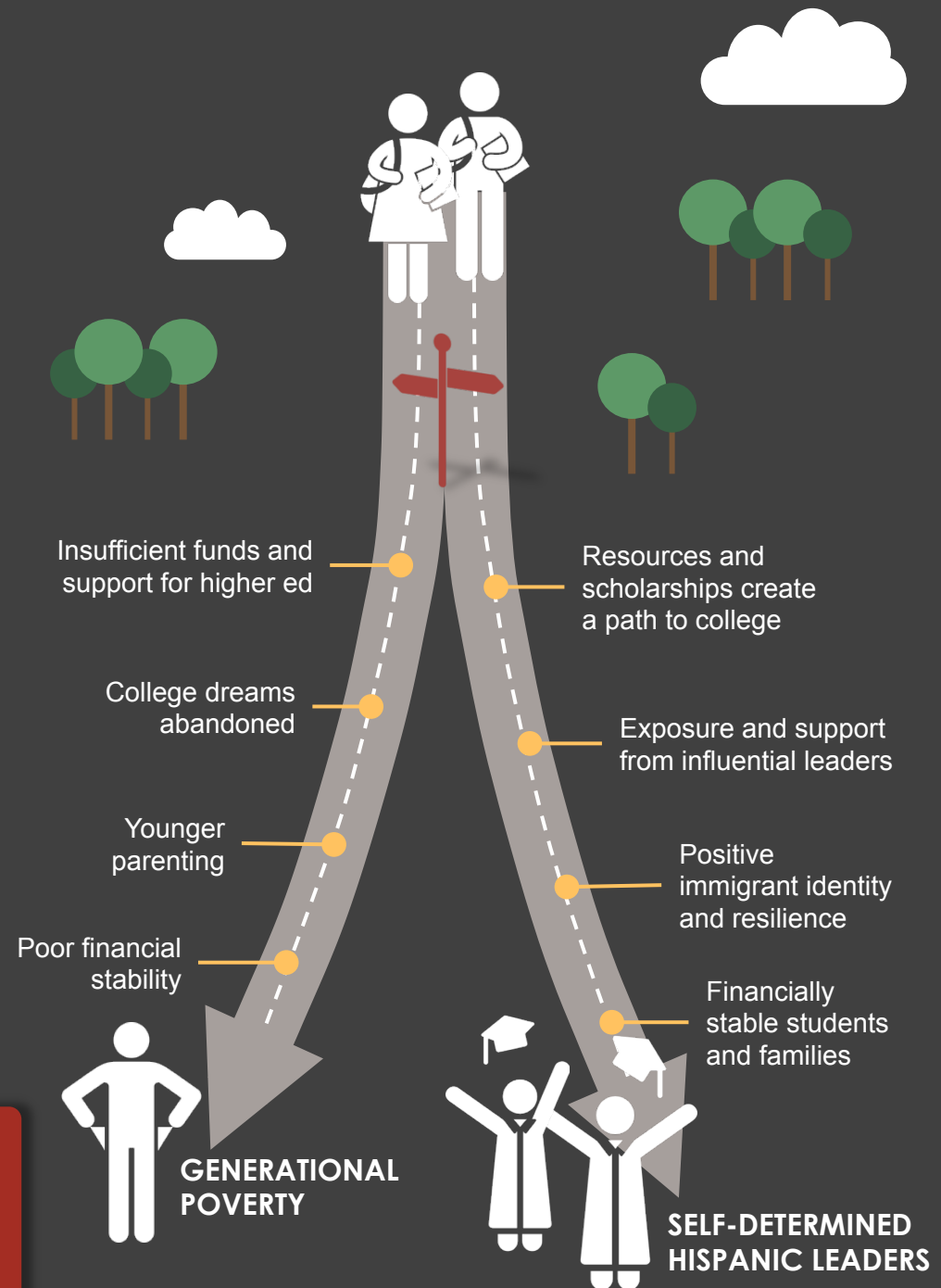
IN OUR BACKYARD: SOUTH CAROLINA

- 2000 – 2011: SC Hispanic population increased by 154%, the second highest statewide increase. Over 6,000 DACA arrived during this wave, including those represented in SDA - recent first-generation immigrants to the US.
- The first state banning undocumented students from public colleges in 2008. Currently, 16,000 young immigrants in SC remain undocumented because they cannot apply for DACA.
- DACA recipients cannot access in-state tuition, state financial aid, or occupational state licenses for over 40 careers.
- 2014: 41% of Hispanics 17-and-under lived in poverty in SC.
- Governor McMaster's antagonistic policies and description of the undocumented as "lawless," isolates immigrant communities.

IN OUR HOME: GREENVILLE COUNTY

- 1/3 of Hispanics live at or below the Federal Poverty Level, twice the rate of the county as a whole.
- 45% of Hispanics have not completed high school, 26% finished high school but have no further education, and 82% have limited English skills.
- 35% of the Latino population is below age 18.

If the high rate of youth poverty, low attainment of higher education, and systemic legal discrimination continues, the current generation of Hispanic immigrants will be in a full downhill slide into intractable generational poverty.



SEMINAR FLOW

SDA Curriculum

“ It is not pretty to see other people’s suffering. ”

1

AUTHENTICITY

- Team building
- Creating a safe space with ground rules

Reading: *We Wear the Mask*

“ Growing up we were really poor. My grandmother’s knuckles are hard and my grandpa’s as well. My dad tells me, ‘I don’t want you to have to work like a dog.’ ”

2

RESILIENCE

- Advocacy & Public Policy
- Build inner strength & support network

Reading: *Still I Rise*, Maya Angelou

3

COURAGE

- Social Justice, Immigration, Civil rights
- Awaken the call to serve

Reading: *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*

“ We cannot keep living in the darkness knowing that some one is suffering - we want to help. ”

CITIZENSHIP

SDA Community Service Day

- Students volunteer with different organizations
- Personal ownership of one’s community
- Experiential awareness of inequality
- Emphasizing selfless leadership

4

COMMUNICATION

- Public Speaking
- Self-awareness
- Telling Your Story

Reading: *The Danger of a Single Story*

“ Because DACA students were raised here, they have an American perspective and culture, so they can connect communities together. ”

5

EMPOWERMENT

- Regional and national political landscape
- Advocacy experts assist with final project

Reading: *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

“ Hispanics are being stereotyped, but I feel like some of us also stereotype people. I think if we want others to stop stereotyping us, we have to stop stereotyping other people. ”

“ I promise to better myself as a person to help this group! ”

6

LEADERSHIP

- Social change
- Solidifying personal commitment to SDA family
- Project finalization

Reading: *The Bridge Builder*

ADVOCACY Final Project

- A synthesis of all values and skills honed during the year.
- Cohorts plan and execute a project that brings awareness of their identity and needs to the broader community.

WHAT AGLN FELLOWS ARE SAYING



Justice John C. Few
Liberty Fellow, 2008

As a moderator for these kids, I have witnessed the pain they have already been through and fear again for their future--and the hope they nevertheless have in the promise of America... Every time I hear one of them express to the group the heartfelt passion that comes from their pain and feeds their hope, my own resolve to lead toward the ideals and goals of the AGLN is renewed, and I remake my commitment.



John Simpkins
Liberty Fellow, 2009

The Student DREAMers Alliance is cultivating the next generation of leadership in the South Carolina Upstate. Spending time with SDA students is one of the highlights of my year. They are thoughtful, caring, socially-conscious young people seeking to create better lives not just for themselves, but for their extended families. They live out the best of who we can be as a nation.



Windsor Sherrill
Liberty Fellow, 2013

I can think of no venture more appropriate for the McNulty Prize than this one which deals with challenges that are incredibly timely for our state and nation. Adela's program enables a conversation that welcomes all voices to examine one of the critical challenges of our society. The program also encourages the most important of voices – those of our young people.



James Encinas
Ricardo Salinas Scholar, 2016

I was truly touched and filled with the hope of possibility as I listened to the youth share their dreams and perspectives. I can't express how profoundly and critically important the work being done here is.



VIANA VILLANUEVA

Stories of Impact

“A seven-year-old has no say, whatsoever.”

That is how Viana describes being forced to leave her home in Mexico and complete an arduous journey to live in the US, with a father she had never met. In her new home, she tried to tell the teacher that her classmates hit her. She tried to tell the school nurse that she could see the pictures in the eye exam just fine. She tried to tell the lunch lady what she wanted to eat. But, her silence labeled her as powerless, blind, and difficult.

At least she had one ally – a boy named Juan who translated for her, and would later join her in the first class of the Student DREAMers Alliance. In her senior year at Carolina High, Viana was an aspiring health student and applied to the new leadership program offered by Hispanic Alliance. Viana says the SDA team “is more like a family to us – they are always there for anything.” But despite new knowledge and support, Viana still believed that going to college for a career in nursing was pointless. South Carolina law forbids DACA recipients from earning a professional license. She graduated in the top ten of her high school class...and went straight to work.

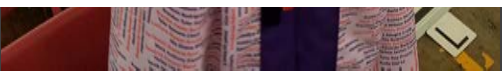
Every senior from the first year of SDA was going to college, except for her. Slowly the despair of a repetitive life began to weigh on her, until she got a message from her teacher and SDA facilitator, Mr. Campbell: “How serious are you about college?”

Inspired by her SDA cohort, dedicated supporters had partnered with the Hispanic Alliance to start the SDA Scholarship Fund. If she were willing to take the risk, the fund would grant her a scholarship to follow her dream. She accepted and is attending a pre-nursing program at Greenville Technical College.

The SDA program and staff are fully committed to the students as self-determined people, regardless of any bar of achievement they may or may not reach. It is this devotion to mentoring that continues to produce unexpected fruit in the lives of each of our youth. Viana is facing a future fraught with legal and educational barriers. Facing it head-on is what will make her a champion to those who will follow on the bridge she is building.



“ Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed— Let it be that great strong land of love, Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme that any man be crushed by one above.





DIANA HOYOS LOPEZ

Stories of Impact

Diana was sixteen when she found out that she wasn't a citizen. Suddenly, she had to incorporate "DACA" into her vocabulary and her future, with all its limitations. She was passionate about medicine but discovered that not only would her status bar her from in-state tuition, but it would deny her a license to practice medicine in South Carolina.

Her mother didn't have money to spare. Her parents brought Diana to the US as a baby and divorced when she was four. Her mother worked as an undocumented immigrant to support Diana, who matured early by taking care of herself.

"I joined SDA to learn more about myself," she says. Even before starting SDA, Diana was finding ways to spin her DACA status as a strength. She presented to the Greenville Hospital System ways that DACA students could ease the physician shortage in the U.S. The Student DREAMers Alliance was a natural amplification of her voice and her commitment to serve others. To her surprise, she was on a journey to becoming an activist for educational reform.

The Final Project of SDA is designed as an exercise in self-determination, and each group is free to create their own project, with a distinct method and message. Diana's cohort designed a listening session on barriers to higher education for community leaders, hosted at Carolina High. Though terrified at first to speak to a room of school board members, law enforcement, and political staffers, her vulnerability was deeply affecting and altered the perspective of the entire group.

"I want to see my mother rest, because it was so hard to see her struggle," she shared. "My mom inspires me everyday to do my best and to achieve my dream. I want to be the best that I can for her and myself."

Diana's bravery inspired many influential leaders to lobby for changes to South Carolina law and scholarship opportunities for DACA students. One year later, Diana willingly speaks with reporters, funders, and at rallies and is one of the founders of the Dreamers Alliance Club, formed on the heels of her SDA experience. She is a prestigious Golden Door Scholar, receiving a full college scholarship for DACA students, and was the only minority in Greenville County awarded the Daughters of the Revolution Good Citizen Award in 2018. She is an active mentor during our second year of SDA.



O, let my land be a land where Liberty is crowned with no false patriotic wreath, but opportunity is real, and life is free, Equality is in the air we breathe.

THE COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT OF SDA

SDA is poised to impact **6,000 DACA** recipients and **16,000 DACA eligible** youth in SC.

SDA Model presented at **Aspen Peer Consultancy**.

Increased support for SDA and DREAMers from **Liberty Fellows**.

Spartanburg and Charleston Counties seek to **import SDA model**.

SDA Students meet with **Senator Lindsey Graham**.



State Ecosystem Change



SC Representative Collins introduces **SC Dreamers Act 2018** into legislature.

SC DACA youth advocate in DC during national gathering of Dreamers.

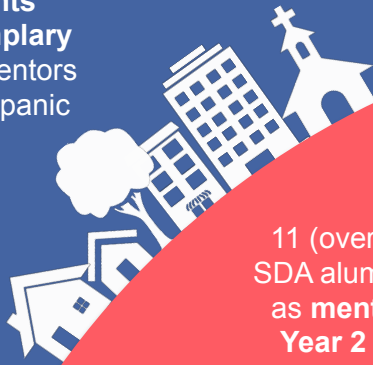
Advocacy for DACA participation in healthcare with Facebook Page: **Dreamers United in Healthcare**.

Greenville County School Board adopts resolution supporting professional licenses for DACA students.

DREAMers Scholarship Fund is established as byproduct of SDA.

Lexington County School Board seeks to replicate advocacy model used in Greenville.

SDA students become **exemplary leaders** and mentors to younger Hispanic students.



Community Awareness



Annual SDA Community Service Day.

2nd SDA Scholarship goes to DACA college student.

Partnership with Greenville School District to create new **Hispanic Families Liaison** position.

11 (over half) of SDA alumni return as **mentors for Year 2 cohort**.

SDA Alumnus, Viana receives **ACE "unsung hero" Award**, and **SDA Scholarship**.

SDA 1st Cohort Final Project School board and local leaders listening session.

100% of SDA Seniors Attending College.

1st and 2nd cohorts participate in panel with funders at **Sisters of Charity Event**.

Diana receives **Golden Door Scholarship** and **Daughters of the Revolution Good Citizen Award**.

Individual Growth

Allies for DREAMers club founded by SDA alums continues advocacy recruiting a cross-cultural membership.



39 Hispanic youth immersed in environment of **trust, authenticity, and unconditional acceptance**.

Advocacy and Activism Students organize meetings with school board and attend multiple rallies.

Self-reported Increase in Sense of **Belonging, Connection and Empowerment**.



OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF SDA

DEEPENING PERSONAL CONNECTION

SDA will extend this experience to more students, while maintaining and strengthening its connection with each alumnus. It will train the youth that are mentored to be mentors themselves, creating a tightly woven community fabric to support sustainable growth, without sacrificing program quality.

FOSTERING NETWORKS STATEWIDE

SDA staff will strategically foster community groups that have the potential and desire to act as new homes for SDA.

BROADENING HORIZONS WITH THE AGLN

SDA's birth from within the Aspen Global Leadership Network is a privileged one. Despite immigration, our youth are limited in their exposure to the spectrum of human ideas and possibilities. It is up to their adoptive family to hold their hands, and proudly show them a world of thought and action to enjoy.

“TO BE OF USE”

Adela was deeply troubled to find the SC immigrant community in a legally imposed state of displacement and discouragement. She remembers first working with immigrant students through the Hispanic Alliance: *“They were some of the smartest kids in their class, but they had already given up. I saw their hope crumble in front of me.”*

Acutely aware of the steep price immigrant parents pay for their child's American Dream, Adela refused to let that hope fail. The Student DREAMers Alliance is imbued with Adela's most precious values. She is “obsessed” with incubating and nourishing

the personal dreams and distinct voice of youth: *“It took me a long time to realize that what I wanted was good enough – better than good enough. And I had to free myself.”*

Knowing the past despair of living in America without fulfilling her vocation, it is inwardly healing to see this emerging generation stand up, and embody the hope of the “sacrificial generation” by following their individually distinct path.

“To me, SDA is the best use of my time – my years. There is nothing more noble.”

THE JUST SOCIETY

Our vision is as limitless as our dreams and love for the kids we serve. We are continuing a process of mentoring and support for them, so that they can create the America that has yet to be and use values-based leadership to form the just society of the future.

SDA PROGRAM BUDGET

YTD 2017-2018

SOURCES OF REVENUE	BUDGETED	ACTUAL	NARRATIVE
Local Foundations	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	Program & Operational Capacity
Hispanic Alliance	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	Operational Capacity
Individual Donor Support	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	Program, Operations & Scholarships
In-Kind	\$3,000.00	\$4,000.00	Space for seminars
Total Revenues	\$53,000.00	\$54,000.00	

PROJECT EXPENSES	BUDGETED	ACTUAL	NARRATIVE
Project Management & Coordination	\$20,000.00	\$15,950.00	Operational Support provided by Hispanic Alliance
Seminar Implementation	\$18,500.00	\$12,371.00	Materials, meals transportation, space & facilitation
SDA Scholarships	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	Scholarships for DACA Students
Outside Evaluator	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	Provided in-kind by Dr. Benjamin Roth at USC
Total Expenses	\$49,500.00	\$36,321.04	

Net Excess (Deficit)	\$3,500.00	\$17,678.96	<i>As of April 2018</i>
----------------------	------------	-------------	-------------------------

FOR A MORE DETAILED FINANCIAL REPORT, PLEASE VISIT
https://drive.google.com/open?id=16jLCPaKSNxtK7HsryARiQ_TT7IUk1qUa



Adela Mendoza

Adela is an international professional skilled at building strategic collaborative partnerships, facilitating cross-cultural relationships, and leading diverse teams and coalitions. As the Executive Director of the Hispanic Alliance, Adela is helping build collective capacity to embrace the emerging Hispanic population as a thriving, productive, and positive contributor to the community at large.

Before joining the Alliance, Adela worked for SE Consulting, Inc., and was Statewide Program Manager for the South Carolina Immigrant Victim Network, where she helped establish international cooperative relations among foreign consulates and US organizations. Adela lives in Greenville, SC and is a native of Veracruz, Mexico, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Journalism from Universidad del Valle.

Adela is an Aspen Ideas Festival Scholar, a Liberty Fellow, and a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. She is also a graduate of Leadership Greenville and Furman University's Riley Institute Diversity Leaders Institute.

Adela is a founding member of Upstate International and serves on the boards of Community Foundation of Greenville, Goodwill Industries of the Upstate/Midlands, the Greenville Chamber of Commerce and Legacy Charter School. She also serves on the United Way Community Investment Cabinet and MedEx Academy Advisory Board.

For more biographical information, please visit:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=13FaBuJfVosiq_d8-CBeHQ5wjF1j9bHSY