



YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS

Serra Grande, Brazil

Community(s):	Serra Grande, Bahia
Partner:	Instituto Floresta Viva, Cachoeira Vivências
Projects:	Athletics, agroecology, education and arts, construction, environment, entrepreneurship/financial education, public health
# Volunteers:	2016 (73) Trip Producer: Nadya Zawrocki
	2017 (31) Trip Producer: Andrew Garling '68
	2025 (37) Trip Producer(s): Judy Kessen Crawford '76, Perry Sayles '88

Building on our strategic plan designed to empower the communities we serve and to ensure that our programs have an enduring impact via robust partnerships, Yale staff and a small group of Yale alumni visited Serra Grande in March of 2015 where we met with ground partners, brainstormed with key community leaders, and discussed potential projects to strengthen planning for the program in 2016. We hoped to create the most effective and sustainable projects with engagement and commitment from the community, including its leaders and local organizations. Organized in collaboration with Instituto Floresta Viva, an organization that brings sustainable economic alternatives to small agricultural producers in protected areas, and State University of Santa Cruz (UESC), a leading academic institution in the State of Bahia, YASC organized two service trips (2016 and 2017) in Serra Grande, an underserved community located in the state of Bahia. Projects included teaching children in the primary and secondary schools a wide array of subjects, creating a children's room at the local library, supporting environmental conservation, building a playground, stairs, and picnic tables, addressing key public health needs, providing business consulting assistance, and introducing new sports to children. Students from UESC supported the effort as translators throughout the programs.

By working closely with our ground partners, we have stayed in touch with the organizations we met in Serra Grande through virtual programming. Working in collaboration with Industria Tabôa, YASC and Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC) organized a unique virtual service project in 2022 that helped local micro-businesses. The project consisted of a series of monthly virtual meetings that combined teaching and consulting in each session. Clients consisted of five micro-enterprises in clothing/apparel, food/bakery, custom handicrafts, and massage therapy. Curriculum included general accounting, cash flow, financial markets, marketing and social media, and business strategy. Each team of YASC volunteer consultants was supported by UESC student translators for each business.

A group of 37 Yale Alumni Service Corps (YASC) volunteers embarked on YASC's third service trip to Serra Grande, which took place March 21 – 29, 2025. Cachoeira Vivências - a socio-environmental organization focused on community development and biodiversity conservation – partnered with YASC for a week of service in the community of Serra Grande, Bahia. Projects strengthened the community's connection to the environment; promoted the education and well-being of children and adults; and provided education and consultation in financial management to local business owners and prospective entrepreneurs. YASC's work was supported by a group of undergraduate student interpreters from the Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC).