

DAVID BAPTISTA

Latin American Leadership Academy

Co-Founded with Diego Ontaneda Benavides

Funded with support from the Jerome L. Greene Foundation

2018 Global Fellow



BIG BOLD IDEA

Promote sustainable economic development and strengthen democratic governance in Latin America by training and connecting a new generation of principled and socially innovative leaders.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Latin American Leadership Academy (LALA) is building a new generation of leaders to drive sustainable development and strengthen democratic governance across Latin America and the Caribbean. LALA identifies high-potential, purpose-driven young people—ages 14 to 20, many from historically marginalized communities—and equips them with skills in leadership, entrepreneurship, social innovation, critical thinking, and socio-emotional intelligence.

These emerging leaders, known as LALÍderes, gain access to a lifelong ecosystem of support: mentors, universities, scholarships, dream jobs, venture funding, and a world of curated opportunities to accelerate their growth.

By cultivating a diverse and collaborative community of changemakers and partner institutions, LALA is laying the foundation for a more inclusive and prosperous future for the region.

PERSONAL BIO

David Baptista is co-founder and learning leader of Latin American Leadership Academy (LALA). David's passion is helping students develop the essential dispositions, skills, habits, and values that support lifelong learning and wellness. Over the past fifteen years, he has taught STEAM, philosophy, history, and theater at the International School of Curitiba; trained teachers and consulted for schools across Brazil; led retreats for the Posse Foundation; developed innovative social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula; and helped build assessment tools at Lectica. When he met Diego Ontaneda Benavides and heard about LALA, he saw the potential this institution held to transform educational practice for an entire continent. After two pilot programs in 2017, they founded LALA together in 2018. David triple-majored in philosophy, physics, and history from Tufts University, with honors in each major.

Organization/Fellow Location

Curitiba, Brazil

Impact Location

South America

Colombia

Organization Structure

Nonprofit

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