

MEET THE FACILITATORS



Shuier Zhang

Shuier is from Kunming, China, and began working with Dragons in 2006 as a Mandarin teacher. Her family later became a long-term host for Dragons students, with Shuier guiding them as a tutor and local mentor. After studying and working in the UK for over a decade, she returned to China in 2016 to reconnect with her roots and began leading a variety of Dragons programs. In addition to her work in China, Shuier has lived and traveled extensively in Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Cambodia, and Taiwan. As a professional translator and interpreter, she bridges Chinese and Western cultures through language and lived experience. She is currently based in Taiwan.

Luis Reyes

Luis Reyes, originally from the small Afro-Peruvian town of Subtanjalla, left home at thirteen, driven by a desire to explore beyond what his elders had known. His journey led him from Lima to Costa Rica, then to Idaho for an Anthropology degree, followed by time living with Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Bolivian communities. After travels in Europe and South America, he returned to Peru as a university professor in Lima. In 2021, he joined Dragons as the Latin America Program Director, aiming to honor local wisdom and foster personal transformation through immersive experiences. He is currently a visiting scholar at Harvard and enjoys soccer, cycling, and writing.



Claire Bennett

Claire has been leading transformative educational travel programs with Dragons since 2010 and is passionate about using education to foster global change. She has lived and worked across Asia—including Nepal, Cambodia, and India—and now freelances in development, education, and responsible volunteering. Originally from the UK, Claire spent years training educators and developing global curricula, and has worked extensively with youth and schools. She co-authored Learning Service, a guide to ethical volunteering, and continues to champion social justice through all her work, fueled by optimism and a love of British tea.

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Christy Sommers

Originally from small-town Iowa, Christy has spent over two decades working, studying, and teaching across five continents, driven by a deep belief in the power of education. Before joining Dragons in 2008, she taught in France, worked in international development, and conducted research in Bangladesh. Since then, she's led and directed programs across West Africa, South Asia, and Madagascar, including developing and directing Princeton's Bridge Year Program in Senegal and India. A multilingual educator and certified Wilderness First Responder, Christy now continues to blend her love for learning, travel, and cross-cultural connection—often with a camera in hand and birds in sight.

Ananda Casanova

Ananda grew up in southern Brazil, where a childhood immersed in agroecology and curiosity about nature sparked her passion for biodiversity and education. With over 13 years of experience as an educator, she focuses on designing learning experiences that foster inquiry, freedom, and connection to self, community, and the planet. Her international journey began after earning a Master's in Education, leading her to study and travel across Europe with a multicultural community, deepening her interest in global learning and interculturality. Ananda has worked in education programs across Latin America and now leads a Brazil-based initiative focused on outdoor and climate justice education.



Yim Jeffrey Rodriguez Sampértegui

Yim was born in Zaña, a historic town in northern Peru rich with ruins, legends, and cultural heritage that deeply shaped his identity as a writer, composer, and cultural promoter. Awarded a prestigious UWC scholarship, he studied at the United World College of the American West before earning a Neuroscience degree from Earlham College, where he explored research from nerve repair to cancer detection. His passion for learning took him across the globe through internships, eventually leading to six years of neuroscience research at the University of Buenos Aires. Alongside his scientific work, Yim is devoted to cultural preservation and science communication.