

Three Ways of Engaging with Disadvantaged Populations



Cherise White
University of Michigan School of Social Work



Quito, Ecuador: Interesting Facts

Quito, Ecuador is located in South America and known for producing commodities such as petroleum, bananas and cocoa.

Cotopaxi (**WHICH ERUPTED WHILE I WAS THERE**) is one of the highest active volcanoes in the world.

Mount Chimborazo at 6,268 meters (20,565 feet) is the highest mountain in Ecuador and **the peak of Chimborazo is the furthest point from the center of the Earth and the closest to the sun.**

A newly discovered species of gecko, small enough at its full-grown size to rest comfortably on the eraser of a pencil, was discovered in Ecuador.

Country with the **world's highest diversity of hummingbird species (131).**

Ecuador **exports more bananas than any other country in the world.**

Almost 60 per cent of the world's high grade "fine cocoa" is produced on farms surrounding the coastal city of Guayaquil – an output that makes it the world's capital of the sweet delicacy.

Ecuador is divided into **four geographical regions:** Pacific Coastal Area (Litoral), Andean Highlands (Sierra), Amazon Rain Forest (Oriente) and The Galapagos Islands

Galapagos island in Ecuador is the place where Charles Darwin devised Natural Selection which was inspiration for his world renowned book "The Origin of Species".

Agency

A Broader View Volunteers is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity located in the USA. The organization was founded in 2007 and is based in Pennsylvania. With a love for humankind, and a motivated spirit to help others, A Broader View was created on the belief that one person can make a difference in the lives of others.

Projects are arranged for volunteers to live with, and work side by side local people in a range of fields such as orphanage work, day care, community development, teaching and much more. They offer travelers the opportunity to explore a new country while taking part in meaningful, rewarding service work.



Project Details

Angeles en Cuatro Patas

- Equine-assisted therapy with mentally and physically disabled individuals

Fundacion ABEI (Amigos Benefactores de Enfermos Incurables)

- An integrated health facility for mentally and physically disabled children that provides language and occupational therapies and medical services.
- Cared for mentally and physically disabled children under 5yrs old
- Assisted with group therapies: (rice therapy, art therapy, swimming and free play)
- Participated in physical therapy sessions

Fundación Abuelitos de la Calle (ABC)

- Worked with elderly living in extreme poverty, people who have been abandoned by their families, and or have no work or social security.
- Facilitated color book/art therapy
- Assist with meal preparation and distribution to 80-100 elderly twice a day
- Participated in activities (exercising, dancing and singing)

Skills Utilized and Developed

Engagement

In each of my volunteer projects I was involved in some form of engagement with different populations of the community. With equine therapy I worked heavily with individuals with disabilities both physically. I often got children who did not verbally communicate so I would find other ways to engage such as smiling, talking and being more interactive through sounds as they rode the horse all the while paying attention to their nonverbal responses.

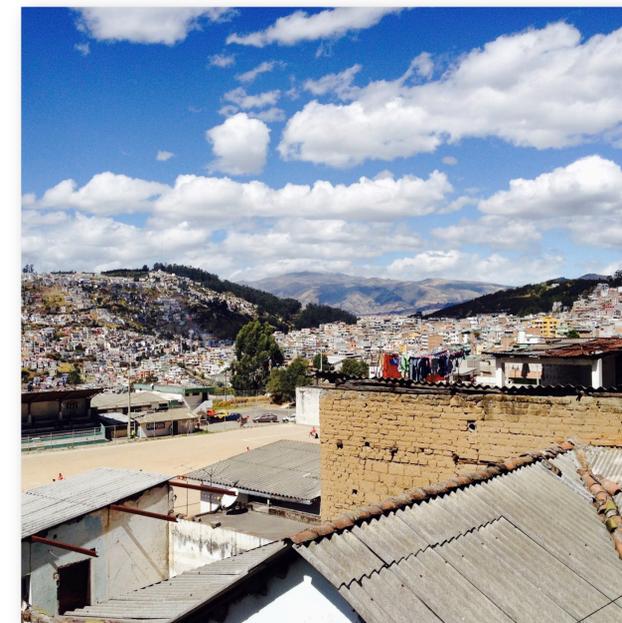
Human Behavior and the Social Environment

In both the Equine therapy project and working with the Elderly I learned to pay attention to how people interacted with others and their environment. An example, in the elderly day center individuals coming from all over the country by bus, foot and car to have social interaction with their peers. They often participated in art therapy more specifically coloring books. It was a highlight of their morning and was a time where they could both focus their attention but could also engage with the others at their table. It was soothing activity of which they would make as individual as they made it social.



Lessons Learned

I had a wonderful global experience. Not to say there weren't challenges, times where I felt alone or worried about my surroundings. However, the greatest lesson I learned was to be open and present. Going in between the ending of the summer semester and the beginning of the fall semester I found it hard to just enjoy the now. I also stayed rather busy with three different projects, daily Spanish classes for 3 hours and family activities with my host family. As mentioned before I learned to just breathe and focus on the moment, the current experience and let it enrich my life and well-being.



Advice

To the best of your ability learn the language of the place you will be visiting

Find multiple sources of funding as deadlines come and go quickly

Research the political climate and social justice issues occurring at your destination right before going.

Acknowledgments

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