



Water Purifier Program Evaluation

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Quiche, Guatemala

Quiche is a special province in the mountains of Guatemala with a long history of resilience and resistance. During the 36-year war between the U.S.-backed capitalist regime and the grassroots rebellion, Quiche was a stronghold of the resistance. The region treasures its unique indigenous history. Women wear their beautiful traditional woven fabrics and keep the old Mayan languages alive as living symbols of a modern resistance.

Special Study in Program Evaluation

With this project, we fielded surveys, moderated multilingual focus groups, and collected key informant data about how the purifiers impacted local life as well as completing analyses of the water purifiers themselves.

Association United for Life

The evaluation efforts in Guatemala were completed with the help and support of members of the Association United for Life, a group that had split off from a Catholic Charities subsidiary, Caritas, to pursue its own programming and goals. Agency staff were instrumental in navigating the local communities, arranging the team's travels, and communicating with the community members.

Outcomes

The evaluation team completed a report that was presented to the local agency at the conclusion of the evaluation. This included photos, a summary of the survey and focus group data, and information about the individual communities' specific contexts. The agency members worked with the team to devise solutions to issues that had been presented and improve protocol moving forward.

Skills Utilized/Developed

- Engagement
- Evaluation
- Experience

Classroom Connections

My experience in Social Work 683, Social Service Evaluation, prepared me for this experience by giving me a strong background in focus group protocol and survey methodology. I was able to contribute critical improvements to the survey formatting and phrasing as well as analytical support.

Lessons Learned

I learned to prepare for the worst. I ended up getting extremely sick and spending most of the weeks that we were in Guatemala fighting a parasite and a subsequent infection. The illness immobilized me for much of the summer. Luckily, I had health insurance through the university and was able to get some form of treatment. When travelling abroad it is important to be prepared for any eventuality.



Career Connections

I see myself using this experience to better understand the complexities of intercultural and multilingual research and evaluation efforts.

Advice

Get plenty of rest before your trip and make sure your immune system is in tip-top shape. I was tired and stressed before I left for Guatemala and I think that impacted my ability to fight the infection.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Global Independent Study funds for making this experience possible. I also appreciate Clean Water for the World for arranging the trip.

Clean Water for the World

Clean Water for the World is a Michigan-based nonprofit organization that builds water purifiers and installs them in communities around the world. The long-term goal of the organization is to have community's building and maintaining their own purification systems with locally acquired parts and tools.

