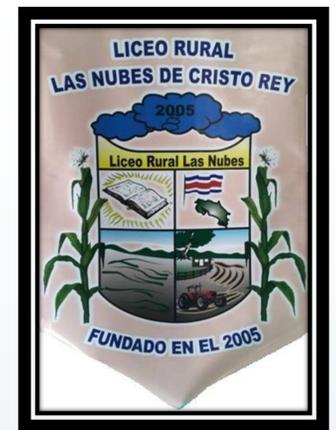


Creating Community in Rural Costa Rica

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Las Nubes de Los Chiles, Costa Rica

Las Nubes is a village with around 72 lots and approximately 450 people. The village is about 10 kilometers from the northern border and has a demographic mixture of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguan immigrants. The population of Las Nubes is considered economically disadvantaged and in extreme poverty according to the local human services organization IMAS.

Youth Development in Las Nubes de Los Chiles!

Youth Development Peace Corps volunteers promote and foster programs for the Arts, Sports, and Recreational activities in the communities that volunteers serve. This can be working locally with Sport Committees or bringing in county or country-wide organizations such as ICODER (El Instituto Costarricense del Deporte y la Recreación), which support sports and recreation on a national level.

My Service

Throughout my service I worked on a community organizing macro scale and built capacity in the community to form five renewed committees that worked on issues that the community felt priority-including development, health, sports, roads and youth. We created both smaller and larger initiatives including computer classes, women's empowerment, a sports court and life skill courses.

Placement/Project Information



INAMU (women's empowerment group)- 5 months of capacity building with 34 women. The organization taught about women's rights, goal-setting and healthy relationships. They received an economic stipend monthly as well.

Creation of a multi-use sports court- Brought the Sports Committee, Development Committee and the high school together to create a full-size multi-use court that included basketball, volleyball and soccer.

Capacity Building- Community organized with the community to create 4 new organizations and strengthen 1 formerly formed organization. This created 5 priorities in the community-development, health, sports, roads and youth.

Agency/Community Partner

INAMU- El Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres or the National Institute for Women of Costa Rica is in charge of protecting women in areas of domestic violence, discrimination, interdisciplinary social, legal and political. It also promotes the development and teaching of Costa Rican women.

Courts For Kids- a U.S. organization whose mission is to transform lives through building courts and cultural exchange.

Outcomes

- Formation and capacity building of 5 local organizations to meet the priorities of the community.
- Creation of a multi-use sports court for volleyball, basketball and soccer.
- Strengthening relationships within the community.

Skills Utilized/Developed

- Community organizing (Capacity Building)
- Asset Based Community Development (Strengths)
- Relationship building/rapport
- Resiliency
- Trauma informed/Resiliency focused

Lessons Learned

- Meeting the community where they are is extremely important. We cannot assist in development if we are trying to develop things that the community is not ready for.

- Community organizing takes time, we cannot rush the process of relationship building, genuine relationships and trust.

- The world goes on without you. People who you were close with in the United States have their lives too and they continue while you are gone. (Relationships change.)

Classroom Connections

- SW 504
- Evaluation course
- Children and Families courses



Career Connections

My passions lie in the realms of community organizing and global relations. For my social work career I would like to work with refugees and immigrants either internationally or locally in Michigan. A dream of mine would be to work with the United Nations or an NGO.

Advice

- Don't be afraid.
- You will never be ready, there is never a perfect time to go.
- You really can do anything that you set your mind to. Yes barriers exist but so do creative solutions.
- Challenge yourself, test your limits and tap into your imagination.

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•Love to all of my family (blood or not)

