Nicaragua

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Program: Colaboración Ambiental-Water Stewardship and Environmental Education in Nicaragua

Did the trip influence your knowledge of and perspective on the host country/city/community?

The trip definitely influenced my perspective of Nicaragua. Since Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America I wasn't expecting much but I was very much blown away by the knowledge and hard work and interest to learn that our Nicaraguan partners showed. This made me realize that just because a country is very poor doesn't mean it doesn't have knowledgeable people that are willing to put in hard work to effect change.

Did the trip influence your view of yourself?

Although I had seen poverty and environmental degradation before going to Nicaragua, I didn't realize how bad they could be or understand that government and other organizations play a role in keeping poor areas underdeveloped and unsanitary. I also realized how much I take clean water for granted.

Did this trip change your perception of the field of global health?

This trip not only taught me a lot about the importance of water and the environment but also how doing successful global health work takes a lot of collaboration and cultural understanding.

Did you participate in some kind of volunteer work or service learning?

My trip did include service learning activities. One example is when we went to a school in Granada and built a school/community garden with the teachers, community leaders, and children. I believe this counted as service learning because we worked closely with the community to achieve a common goal and then discussed our success as a group as well as what we could do in the future to keep the garden successful. I feel like not only did we accomplish our goal in building a garden but mutual learning was shared between the Wisconsinites and the Nicaraguans. The Wisconsinites learned about specific plants and growing seasons in Nicaragua and the Nicaraguans learned about rain gardens and how to maintain and build them. I learned from this experience that collaboration between people and groups is the best way to achieve a common goal.

Collaborators from Wisconsin and Nicaragua working together to build a garden using recycled objects

Sierra and some students at one of the schools in Granada where they built a school garden