

PARTNERSHIP REPORT 2016

East Africa

Guatemala

Middle East

South America

South Asia

Southeast Asia

West Africa

East Africa

- Kipepeo
- Femme International
- Jifundishe

Kipepeo

Kipepeo is a youth-for-youth social enterprise that seeks to improve education and the livelihoods of youth in Tanzania, targeting 8 - 25 year olds through: capacity building, creating youth employment opportunities, and improving learning environments. As a small grassroots organization with limited funding, OG's input goes a long way in helping their initiatives succeed.

Goals

- Paint classrooms to improve students' learning environment
- Connect with the Kipepeo volunteers & beneficiaries
- Prepare Kipepeo students for a spelling bee

Accomplishments

- Painted 10 classrooms in Mjimwema Primary School
- Trained students for a school wide spelling bee competition

Community Engagement

Kipepeo connected our teams with the Mjimwema Primary School, which was our main community partner. The participants interacted with the students on a daily basis and were welcomed by the school.

Space for Growth

Both the Program Leaders (PLs) and the Kipepeo team mentioned the collaborative effort from both parties that made the partnership a success. Kipepeo noted that in future it would be better to have volunteers with specific sets of skills and expertise to allow for more capacity building and training for the Kipepeo staff. They also requested volunteer skills be communicated to them prior to the program so they can better tailor the program based on the skills of the volunteers.

Femme International

Femme International is committed to advancing the rights of women and girls through gender targeted programs that focus on menstruation, sexual health, and feminine hygiene. They have a female sexual health program where they educate girls, particularly girls in secondary schools, about their sexual health and provide them with 'Femme Kits' (which contain a menstrual cup, reusable pads, soap, underwear, etc.). Femme also has a male sexual health program that addresses women's issues and sexual health with school boys. Femme was co-founded by former OG program leader, Sabrina Rubli. Along with working with our teams in East Africa, Femme was a recipient of an OG Alumni Project Fund grant.

Goals

- Educate the community group (Tuleeni) about menstrual health
- Deliver Femme Kits to help girls in the community manage menstruation
- Collect needs assessments from the Maasai village of Maji Moto to facilitate the construction of female toilets in the community

Accomplishments

- Created and distributed Femme Kits in Maji Moto
- It was not possible to do the trainings due to the language barrier, however, participants were able to learn more about Femme's work and the barriers to feminine hygiene
- Assisted in the construction of the female toilets

Community Engagement

Our teams worked with Femme staff and community members regularly. This included an overnight trip to the Maasai village of Maji Moto, and a dinner at Sabrina's house to help form a more personal connection. Teams were also connected with Femme's partner CreAid, as they were staying at their Backyard Hostel and collaborating with them.

Space for Growth

This is the partnership that participants look forward to the most, and many of them mentioned that in the future they would benefit from learning about different women's health issues, as well as sanitation issues in rural areas.

Communication with Femme is something that OG continues to work on, as Sabrina, our main contact, is not always on the ground. To remedy this, we're working to put PLs and facilitators in direct contact during the programming.

Jifundishe

Jifundishe runs several educational and capacity building programs out of their center – a rural library -- including job training, micro-finance loans and computer training. They also offer a free library for surrounding communities, offer secondary school training during the holidays, and provide local women with loans to start or continue their business – helping bring up the economic development of the village. Jifundishe runs tuition educational programs for secondary students for skill-building and directly impacts more than 20 communities by having residents visit their library, learn from the books, and then transmit that knowledge outward.

Goals

- Provide materials and support to a local school which is lacking in stationary and textbooks
- Assist in the community library
- Train students on how to use new e-readers

Accomplishments

- Participants were able to support monetarily (which was positive) but didn't get to offer as much in way of volunteering as they had hoped
- Participants engaged in community building and cross cultural education through various homestays

Community Engagement

Our teams were very connected with the community – as they were both staying in community homes and volunteering with the community schools. OG felt very welcomed within the community.

Space for Growth

Jifundishe has been a great partner for OG in the past few years, however as they are a fully funded organization OG has noticed our support is not necessarily as important as it once was and the impacts we can have while on the ground may not be mutually beneficial. This year we had some communication issues between the program leaders and Jifundishe staff, which created some tension that we hope to avoid in the future.

Guatemala

- Asociación de Productores de Cade Santa Anita (APCASA)
- Escuela La Paz
- DESGUA & Café La RED KAT
- Escuela de la Calle (EDELAC) *School of the Street* & Quetzaltrekkers (QT)
- The Chico Mendes Reforestation Project
- Y'abal Handicrafts
- Instituto Mesoamericano de Permacultura (IMAP) *Mesoamerican Institute for Permaculture*
- Asociación de Desarrollo Integral de San Miguel Ixtahuacan (ADISMI) *The Association for Integral Development of San Miguel Ixtahuacan*
- De La Gente
- The Hub and its Partners: OMET and Xe Ku'Ku Ah'haj
- El Estor
- Rio Negro & Centro Comunitario Educativo Pokomchi (CECEP)
- Tzibal

Asociación de Productores de Cade Santa Anita (APCASA)

APCASA is a coffee and banana growing cooperative based in the community of Santa Anita La Union situated on the pacific slope of Quetzaltenango. All of its members served in Guatemala's civil war as revolutionary guerillas and members of the URNG. In 1998, they purchased a previously abandoned farm with some support from the EU and Spanish Red Cross. They have since developed it into a productive coffee cooperative and healthy community of 34 families with primary and secondary schools, daycare, and recreational facilities.

Goals

- Provide a warm and immersive homestay experience that fosters cross-cultural learning and understanding
- Work in solidarity towards a self-sufficient, sustainable, and thriving cooperative. This includes:
 - Regaining coffee production capacity
 - Collaborating on alternative income generating projects to diversify the community's economic interests

Accomplishments

In the 2015 – 2016 program year, four OG open programs worked with Santa Anita including:

- Winter Break: At Origin
- Alternative Reading Week: Seed to Shelf
- Fair Trade
- Seed to Shelf

On these programs, program leaders, participants, and community members shared lives for a few days, learned about each other, and collaborated on coffee production projects in the community greenhouse and out in the rolling coffee fields.

This year's main project involved acquiring and planting 1,530 new coffee plants, followed by the application of organic fertilizer and copper sulfate spray, in order to protect against Roya, debilitating coffee rust. The project also included funds for the tools needed to make this happen!

Outside of these programs, OG began supporting Alex, a young man from Santa Anita, through the Hub Scholarship fund. Alex is finishing up a post-high school pre-med program, in preparation to attend nursing school in 2017.

Team Learning

Groups really seemed to enjoy all of the project work in Santa Anita, but often, especially on short programs, walked away feeling like they hadn't done "enough". The

project work they did complete could be made more meaningful if participants were given a better understanding of how it fits into ongoing collaborations and Santa Anita's longer-term goals and projects.

Community Engagement

OG groups are warmly welcomed and accepted into Santa Anita, and homestays this year have been particularly positive experiences. Santa Anita does an incredible job of telling their story and helping participants understand the complex history of Guatemala through individual family interactions and an informative "charla" with ex-guerrilla army commander turned community leader Rigo.

Space for Growth

In addition to talking with the ex-guerrilla members, participants could benefit from an introduction to our collaborations with Santa Anita. They provide a better understanding of how the project work each individual group is completing fits into broader goals and larger-scale, longer-term projects developed between APCASA and OG. With a record number of 8 programs scheduled to visit Santa Anita in 2017, we have even more space and time to collaborate on either larger or more diverse community projects, and for positive interactive exchange and mutual learning.

Escuela La Paz

Escuela La Paz is a non-profit education center located in Xela. Principally run by university educated indigenous women, the school facilitates one-on-one language study in a context that gives students an awareness of the social, political, and economic realities of Guatemala. In 2013, Escuela La Paz was accredited by the Guatemalan Ministry of Education to provide beginner, intermediate and advanced Spanish language certification to eligible students.

Goals

- Help participants to develop communication skills in Spanish in order to foster a more engaged and immersive experience while traveling in Guatemala
- Engage participants in local history, traditions, and culture

Accomplishments

Two, one-week open programs visited Escuela la Paz in 2016 for a traditional highland dinner and Mayan Chocolate workshop:

- Alternative Reading Week: Seed to Shelf
- Seed to Shelf

Both new two-week *Mayan Roots* programs also visited in June & August 2016. Between the two programs, OG & Escuela La Paz were able to collaboratively improve on workshops to make them more interactive, and added a morning of group Spanish lessons.

On the six-week summer programs *Fair Trade* and *Extreme*, Escuela La Paz provided a week of Spanish language instruction and cultural orientation for participants.

Community Engagement

There is a great sense of community engagement and connection with this organization and the community at large. Participants are able to put their Spanish lessons into practice by communicating with community members and participating in workshops.

Space for Growth

We've been working together the past few years to make all of the learning that occurs at Escuela La Paz more hands on, interactive, and experiential, from Spanish lessons, to workshops, to conferences. This is something we hope to continue to improve in the future, as well as exploring and adding new themes and workshops to the standard curriculum. We're also planning to expand upon the newly developed group Spanish lessons and incorporate this new twist on our traditional classes into more two- and three-week programs in 2017.

DESGUA & Café La RED KAT

Based in Xela, Café La Red KAT is a Café and Restaurant owned and operated by a collective of indigenous reformers. It's dedicated to cultivating a domestic coffee culture and constructing markets for locally produced commodities including coffee, textiles and chocolate.

DESGUA is a grassroots organization and network of community groups in Guatemala and the United States working to create economic and educational development with and for returned immigrants and Mayan communities in Guatemala. One of their most recent projects includes a cooking school for Mayan youth.

Goals

- Create a solidarity network of communities and individuals in Guatemala and abroad

Accomplishments

Every single OG Guatemala program in 2016 visited Café La RED KAT, learned about the mission, vision, and work of DESGUA, and participated in solidarity economies. In addition, program leaders and members of DESGUA developed hands on cooking lessons with graduates of their cooking school for local youth on the *Mayan Roots* programs. This allowed participants to more actively engage in DESGUA's work while learning about local traditions. It was also the first opportunity for two young female chefs to work directly with a group of foreigners, boosting their confidence and helping to develop their communication skills.

Space for Growth

OG is talking with Willy (the founder of Café La RED KAT) and other members of this community about the possibility of working more integrally with DESGUA in the coming years. As an organization, DESGUA is becoming more structured and organized at the same time that OG is expanding programming in Guatemala. With mutual interest and growth, both OG & DESGUA hope that an ethical and feasible project can be developed for larger collaboration in 2017!

Escuela de la Calle (EDELAC) *School of the Street* & Quetzaltrekkers (QT)

Quetzaltrekkers (QT) is a volunteer based trekking company. It was started in 1995 by a South London social worker and local Guatemalan teacher as part of a multifaceted fundraising campaign to fund a rehabilitative home for children living on the street and/or with histories of drug abuse and child prostitution. QT directs 100% of its profits to what has grown to become the Escuela de la Calle (EDELAC), the sustainable fundraising enterprise that now provides free education to 225 children and has allowed the opening of El Hogar Abierto, a group home supporting 15 additional children who have difficulty reaching educational services.

Goals

- Support educational and health initiatives in Las Rosas, a lower-income neighborhood in Xela
- Introduce participants to the natural beauty of the Guatemalan highlands

Accomplishments

Two programs trekked with QT this year, including *Fair Trade* on the Lago Trek and *Rights & Resistance* on the Nebaj Trek. These two treks generated a revenue of Q26,650 or approximately \$4,845 CAD for QT, the profits of which will go directly to EDELAC and El Hogar Abierto.

Additionally, and for the first time, OG was able to collaborate directly on a project with EDELAC. *Fair Trade* and *Extreme* each spent a week working on a family health & hygiene project in Las Rosas, the neighborhood surrounding EDELAC.

As a result of a scholarship fund which was developed in 2012 with students from EDELAC and El Hogar in mind, 2016 was the fourth year that OG has supported Marta in her university studies to become a certified nurse practitioner. Marta is a graduate of both EDELAC and the Hogar and has one more year to go until she completes her university studies. As a medical student, she was able to actively participate in the educational component of the family health and hygiene project undertaken between EDELAC and OG this year.

Space for Growth

This year, there was difficulty in communication regarding expectations and what OG is all about, both with QT and EDELAC. Since the end of the 2015 – 2016 program year, the RD has been working with both halves of this initiative to fill in the gaps.

With high turnover rate for volunteer QT guides, OG needs to be more proactive about introductions and our shared history. Senior guides from QT and OG Guatemala's Regional Director sat down to create a document which explains OG, our collaboration over the years, and what to expect on a QT/OG trek for new guides.

Based on a follow-up chat between OG regional staff and EDELAC staff, there seems to be a myriad of ethical projects where we can continue collaborating in the future. With a

better, shared understanding of how OG and EDELAC operate, and what volunteering together can look like, we're on the right path towards not just an awesome project, but an awesome collaborative work experience.

The Chico Mendes Reforestation Project

The Chico Mendes Reforestation Project is a non-profit organization founded on the principles of environmental remediation and community awareness. Population growth, resource extraction, and climate change have produced deforestation and the pollution of local forests and waterways, as well as increasing pressures on the region's ecosystem. Through the efforts of community members and visiting volunteers, the Chico Mendes Reforestation Project promotes environmental and cultural education as well as defensive reforestation to restore the area's natural environment.

Goals

- Provide a warm and immersive homestay experience that fosters cross-cultural learning and understanding
- Develop a shared importance regarding environmental issues that fosters solidarity between people, communities, and nations
- Introduce participants to the power of defensive reforestation techniques

Accomplishments

Due to expanding programming in Guatemala and offering a wider variety of program themes, OG was able to increase the number and diversity of visits to the Chico Mendes Reforestation Project over the past year. The partnership has expanded from just a few occasional visits over the past few years, to a total of six OG programs collaborating with Chico Mendes during the 2015 – 2016 program year.

Five of these programs lived with local Mayan Quiche host families, sharing in local culture, traditions, and daily life, and all programs worked collaboratively in reforestation projects. While no new projects were developed in 2016, OG crews were able to lend a hand in the necessary every day chores of making defensive reforestation possible. They worked with seedling trees in the nursery, re-planted community hillside prairie land, took to the forest to collect nutrient rich soil, and made organic compost. Throughout the process they learned about the role of the environment in traditional Mayan Cosmovision, environmental challenges in Guatemala, and why it matters – not just for Guatemala, but for all of us.

Furthermore, OG's *Alternative Spring Break: Mayan Roots* team was able to participate in the first ever trek run by Kuk Tours Cantel, a local guiding company based in Pachaj. Kuk Tours Cantel was started with the goal of providing more jobs for local youth and generating more revenue for reforestation projects with Chico Mendes.

Team Learning

In addition to a hands-on experience, teams received an introduction to Mayan Cosmovision and Mayan Quiche culture, as well as an understanding of how large-

scale industries such as mining companies and the privatization of water affect local communities and our shared environment.

Community Engagement

In 2016, OG crews contributed to a positive influx of economic gains for the community and to a shared need for environmental action. The eco-tourism model developed by the Chico Mendes Reforestation Project that involves home stays, home cooked meals, and interactions with community members and families is an important income generating project that directly supports the families who open up their homes to OG participants.

Space for Learning

While plugging into ongoing projects within the daily operations of Chico Mendes provided an incredible experience for OG participants, we hope to be able to collaborate on a new project in 2017. Currently, OG only collaborates on the Chico Mendes eco-tourism initiative and, while this is positive, collaborating on a new or larger project would allow OG to have a greater impact on the community that offers our groups such an enriching educational and cultural experience. Additionally, in 2017, we hope to gain a better understanding of how the Chico Mendes Project, an amazing family-run organization, operates financially.

Y'abal Handicrafts

Y'abal is a sustainable fashion social enterprise that works to empower indigenous women weavers in the highlands of Guatemala through fair trade job opportunities and social programs. They promote the ancient technique of the back-strap loom, a centuries old Mayan art-form, to create sophisticated and sustainable fashion collections that mix traditional and contemporary design.

Goals

- Introduce participants to the world of Fair Trade for handicrafts
- Share the importance and history of the traditional back-strap loom weaving technique in Mayan culture
- Support local artisans through ethical consumerism and travel

Accomplishments

Three OG programs visited Y'abal in 2016. Each program learned about the artisanal side of Fair Trade, as well as the traditional art of back-strap loom weaving and its importance in Mayan culture. Over the course of the summer, teams collaboratively developed more hands-on ways in which to engage participants in these concepts. For the August Mayan Roots program in particular, we organized small-group workshops that allowed participants to try their hand at each step of this complex weaving process, developing a greater understanding and appreciation for the work of traditional Mayan artisans.

Informally, most OG Guatemala programs visited Y'abal's store during their time in Xela to partake in some ethical shopping!

Team Learning

For programs that engaged more actively with Y'abal, they walked away with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the very complicated art that is back-strap loom weaving. They also developed an understanding of the potential role of Fair Trade for rural artisans. Y'abal, in return, received an influx of enthusiastic, ethical shoppers!

Space for Learning

Currently, we are looking for ways to expand this partnership, both in their Xela-based store and also in the surrounding highland communities where Y'abal weavers live and work. We should continue to make workshops more hands on and are considering the addition of immersive weaving workshops for longer programs. We've also been talking about the possibility of collaborating on a community requested project in the weaving communities of Pacutama and/or Nueva Chuicutama where Y'abal works.

Instituto Mesoamericano de Permacultura (IMAP) (*Mesoamerican Institute for Permaculture*)

IMAP is based on the shores of Lake Atitlan. It is a not-for-profit community organization focused on the development of self-sufficient communities through the responsible management of natural resources, using a combination of permaculture techniques and ancestral and traditional knowledge.

Goals

- Endow participants with a better understanding of permaculture
- Create a community garden at the Hub in San Juan, in part, on permaculture principles and IMAP's model

Accomplishments

The *Mayan Roots, Track 2* program visited IMAP in August of 2016. They spent a day learning about IMAP's unique take on permaculture infused with Mayan cosmovision, and worked on an instant-compost garden bed.

Team Learning

Participants on the Mayan Roots program learned about permaculture, Mayan Cosmovision, and challenges related to health and nutrition in Guatemala. While their 2-hour insta-compost garden project was based more around group learning and had less of a tangible impact on IMAP's project, their visit generated a small economic gain for the organization.

Space for Growth

IMAP's mission is one that OG wholeheartedly supports and wishes to promote throughout our many partnerships in Guatemala and specifically at the Hub in San Juan La Laguna. However, while we share missions and goals, IMAP is less in need of the project support and collaboration which OG can provide through participants and community contribution funds. Instead, IMAP is more in need of direct donations to cover scholarship and organizational costs. Since OG Guatemala is moving away from a direct donation model of operation, we often struggle to find ways to work collaboratively with groups in a way that is mutually beneficial for both organizations.

In 2017, we will either need to modify the way in which we interact, or look for different ways to be mutually beneficial, which might take the form of sharing knowledge, contacts, etc., and not necessarily working together on projects with groups.

Asociación de Desarrollo Integral de San Miguel Ixtahuacan (ADISMI) (*The Association for Integral Development of San Miguel Ixtahuacan*)

The Association for Integral Development of San Miguel Ixtahuacan (ADISMI) began in 1985 as a Maya Mam indigenous group working towards the collective rights of indigenous peoples and sustainable rural development. In the early 2000s, the organization's vision shifted to include defense of land rights in response to the Marlin Mine, a gold mine that began production in the area in 2005.

Goals

- Understand the role and impact of Human Rights Accompaniment in embattled communities
- Become a part of the solidarity network of human rights advocates located both in Guatemala and throughout the world

Accomplishments

The 2016 *Fair Trade* program spent two days in San Miguel Ixtahuacan taking in the site of the extensive gold mine, visiting local community members, and hearing their stories.

Team Learning

As Human Rights Accompaniers in training, these delegations didn't necessarily 'do' anything, like build a composting toilet or plant trees. Instead, they observed and listened, stood in solidarity, and lent some of the safety and privilege they inherently held along with their North American or European passports to those negatively affected by the mining companies. The visit pushed participants to confront what role they might play in international mining, even without previously recognizing it.

In return for their time, coordination, and expertise, OG provided a cash Honorarium to ADISMI. However, unfortunately, we were still unable to develop a community project on which to work with ADISMI in order to have a greater impact on the community.

Space for Growth

Unfortunately, there is only so much that a small donation can accomplish. OG is actively working with ADISMI to develop more methods in which to actively and positively impact the community and organization that affects our groups so deeply. This could potentially come in the form of a viable community project proposal that would allow for the use of more funds in San Miguel. However, one of the challenges in San Miguel is that ADISMI has almost no sources of funding, making it challenging for the organization to operate fully.

De La Gente

De La Gente (DLG) is a non-profit working to support and capacitate local Guatemalan coffee cooperatives. They offer direct assistance and training to campesinos, as well as provide extra income through social tourism and coffee tours.

Goals

- Provide an alternative source of income for local campesinos (i.e. through coffee tours)
- Facilitate a meaningful cultural exchange
- Introduce coffee consumers to what it means to be on the other end of the coffee commodity chain

Accomplishments

Ten programs visited DLG in 2016, participating in their coffee tour and enjoying a delicious, local meal with members of the cooperative. Operation Groundswell supports DLG's social enterprising and eco-tourism arm by bringing participants on various tours throughout the year, generating sustainable income for local farmers and their families.

Team Learning

Throughout the experience, participants worked with coffee in its natural, unprocessed form, often for the first time. Going into the fields and learning from local campesinos impresses upon participants the challenges of being a small-scale coffee farmer and helps them to appreciate the huge amount of work and dedication that goes into their morning cup of coffee. Once out of the fields, DLG's Executive Director Andy Feldman, often donates some of his time to help OG participants understand, in an informal setting, some of the larger concepts of cooperative structures and the international coffee trade. The combination of these two experiences with DLG helps put coffee and the coffee commodity into perspective.

Space for Growth

OG will continue working with DLG and plans to bring even more programs and participants on coffee tours and artisan workshops in 2017. We are looking forward to finding more ways to collaborate, from taking part in new workshops, like coffee cuppings (tastings), and working together on projects with other coffee communities and mutual partners such as Santa Anita.

The Hub and its Partners: OMET and Xe Ku'Ku Ah'haj

The Hub is the physical embodiment of OG's culture, philosophy, and mission. It is a place where solidarity is cultivated in and between people and local partners through conversations and collaborative projects. Since 2015, OG has been working directly with two local cooperatives on the site. OMET is a women's cooperative that works in coffee, textiles, and community health initiatives and began working with organic family vegetable gardens at the Hub in July of 2015. Xe KuKu A'baj is a local tourism and textile cooperative that started a medicinal garden on the site in November of 2015.

Goals

- Find creative solutions to local and national problems such as malnutrition, health, and income generation
- Stimulate intercultural exchange and learning between partners and participants through shared meals, workshops, and collaborative work on the site
- Create a living laboratory and classroom where participants, partners, and staff can experiment with new and innovative projects and learn together
- Improve consistency, accountability, communications, and collaborations with all of OG's Guatemala partners

Accomplishments

After 2 ½ years of dreaming, planning and building, the 2015-2016 Winter Break & Alumni Adventure programs were the first groups to stay on the Hub site starting on January 1, 2016! Since then, all 13 of OG Guatemala's 2016 programs visited, stayed at, and worked at the Hub.

Participants got their hands dirty working on the medicinal plant garden with Xe Ku'ku Ab'baj, the organic family vegetable gardens with OMET, a permaculture spiral garden, an aquaculture system/tilapia pond, a chicken coop, various types of organic compost systems, and dry composting toilets.

Team Learning

The physical Hub has provided space for new partnerships and projects, allowing for creative collaboration on projects that could address various challenges faced by many of the communities we work with in Guatemala, from nutrition, to waste disposal and recycling, to income generation, to the use of sustainable building materials. Furthermore, having a year-round presence in San Juan has also allowed OG to participate more fully in the community, offering participants a more integrated experience in this tight-knit, culturally rich Maya Tzutujil community.

Space for Growth

The Hub is meant to be an ongoing project that has no completion date, but continuously strives to adapt and improve as a result of local and organizational needs. For 2017, our goals include a fully functioning medicinal plant garden with Xe Ku'ku Ab'baj, more integration into the community of San Juan and collaboration between participants and partners working on the site, and the addition of one to two new community partners working on the site.

We are also hoping to bring more local expertise into project planning and execution on the site. They are an incredible resource in the area, in addition to other organizations such as the CCDA, located across the lake in San Lucas, and FUNDAP, based in Xela. While these organizations don't necessarily need the space on our site to develop projects, they are excited to share ideas, provide some technical knowledge on particular projects, and may be able to help connect us with locally based cooperatives and organizations that would be a good fit for partnerships on the site.

El Estor

The communities surrounding El Estor including La Paz, La Union, and Lote Ocho, are represented by Angelica Choc, a long-standing partner of OG. Angelica has devoted herself to advocacy and activism on behalf of primarily indigenous communities affected by nickel mining in and around Lago Izabal.

Goals

- Understand the role and impact of Human Rights Accompaniment (HRA) in embattled communities
- Become a part of the solidarity network of human rights advocates located both in Guatemala and throughout the world
- Comprehend how both locals and foreigners play a role in, and are affected by, international mining
- Support alternative income generation projects in communities affected but not benefited by international mining projects

Accomplishments

The Guatemala Extreme teams spent two days visiting the communities surrounding the El Estor nickel mine, GNC, accompanied by Angelica. Through the experience, they learned about an alternative form of volunteering known as Human Rights Accompaniment (HRA). HRA is a non-violent form of protection acquired through international observers, which has been successfully used in conflicted mining communities around Guatemala. Additionally, the crew worked with the La Union Women's Committee on a chicken coop project which offers an alternative source of income generation.

Team Learning

Outside of the project work, the visit pushed participants to confront what role they might play in international mining, even without previously recognizing it. They learned about Human Rights Accompaniment and walked away with a greater understanding of the complexities surrounding embattled communities like El Estor.

Space for Growth

El Estor is an incredibly valuable partner and one that gives participants huge take away, both during the program and after. In the future, PLs need to take more ownership over project coordination and setting expectations for collaboration. There needs to be better and more consistent communication between PLs and local partners, including Angelica and the Women's Committee in La Union, before the group's arrival in order to ensure both sides clearly understand expectations and roles.

Rio Negro & Centro Comunitario Educativo Pokomchi (CECEP)

While they used to live in the Rio Negro valley, this embattled community was violently displaced during the infamous Rio Negro Massacres of 1980-82. Once gone, their ancestral home was flooded to create the Chixoy Dam, a power plant which generates approximately 15% of Guatemala's electricity. Today, members of the Rio Negro live primarily off the land as agriculturalists, but they are also actively working to develop a sustainable ecotourism project within their community.

CECEP is an organization working in cultural and historical perseverance of the Mayan Pokomchi language and traditions. Besides running a museum, library and artisanal store, they also work in small-scale community development projects and community tourism. In 2008, they began working in solidarity with the Rio Negro community, helping to manage and organize their eco-tourism initiative by offering coordination and logistical support to outside groups visiting Rio Negro.

Goals

- Endow participants with an understanding of Guatemala's complex and troubled history

- Stand in solidarity with members of the community by listening to and sharing their stories, and engaging in historical memory

- Create sustainable, alternative income generation and solidify the community's ability to live on their ancestral land by supporting the Rio Negro eco-tourism initiative

Accomplishments

In 2016, we were able to renew a partnership which we started in 2013 with one program! The 2016 Rights & Resistance teams visited the Rio Negro to learn about the community and Guatemala's troubled history. While there, they worked on an expansion of the bathrooms in the eco-tourism lodge used by visiting groups.

While the group wasn't able to see the bathroom project completed while they were there, two bathroom stalls and a shower were constructed by the community over the course of the summer. Already by the fall of 2016, two large delegations from other organizations had visited the Rio Negro and put into use the extra bathrooms and showers. The community hopes that this expansion to their lodgings will allow for the influx of more and larger groups that might be less interested in visiting if they only have access to one bathroom for 20 + people.

Team Learning

Participants walked away from the experience inspired by the community's collective story, having gained an incredible wealth of knowledge about Guatemala in just a few short days.

Space for Growth

In 2017, OG is looking forward to building a more substantial relationship with both Rio Negro and CECEP. We'll be working towards improving and creating more consistent lines of communication, increasing facetime with both organizations during planning stages, and also increasing the number of program visits. With improved planning and a better understanding of how we want to collaborate on projects, we hope to be able to incorporate participants into more direct and hands on project work within the community if and when applicable. In addition, OG is looking for ways to collaborate more directly with CECEP and to support their incredible community initiatives around San Cristobal Verapaz, in addition to working with them in Rio Negro.

Tzibal

Tzibal is a small community of about 365 people located outside of the town of Campur in Alta Verapaz. Tzibal proudly identifies as Q'eqchi Maya, and continues to maintain the use of traditional Mayan language and dress. The community is small and tight-knit, but is challenged by insufficient income generation, inadequate access to water during the dry season, and lack of electricity. Tzibal is the only Operation Groundswell partner that consists of an entire community, and not a singular community organization.

Goals

- Foster cross-cultural exchange, understanding, and relationships
- Provide support for a community initiative that allows the community to take a lead in visioning, planning, and execution
- Generate conversations around community development, both within Tzibal and OG programs

Accomplishments

In regards to physical project work, the 2016 Extreme crew worked on the construction of a *bodega*, or storage room, and the floor of the Community Cancha. At the site of the bodega, a few members of the crew worked hacking out the floor, starting the foundation, and the beginning of the walls. The bodega will be used to house construction materials and tools over the course of the build of the cancha. Once construction is complete on the community cancha, the bodega, which will be managed by the local school teachers, will house sporting equipment which community members can use at the cancha.

Meanwhile, the rest of the crew was working on leveling what will be the floor of the cancha, in preparation for a cement pour. This involved moving the copious amounts of rock that were covering the upper corner of the site. Some of the rock could get dug out and pushed into the trenches surrounding the site, while other rock was large enough to merit the use of dynamite (by a professional) in order to break up the rock before it was moved. The crew also brought in wheelbarrows, pickaxes, shovels, hammers, levels, and meter tape to assist with the construction.

The homestay experience, apart from providing an incredible opportunity for cultural exchange and interaction, also supported Tzibal budding eco-tourism initiative and provided alternative income generation for the families that chose to participate.

Team Learning

The project work itself was a combined effort by the entire community, resulting in an inspiring, if sometimes slow-moving and messy collaborative experience. By the end of the week, there was a real connection made with the community. Tzibal pushed

participants and PLs out of their comfort zones, helped everyone to recognize their own privilege, and made everyone think a little bit harder about what they are doing as international volunteers.

Community Engagement

Outside of construction, the 2016 Extreme crew lived with awesome host families, consumed more beans and tortillas than they thought possible, and took to the fields for some epic futbol matches. The last day consisted of a party extravaganza during which this year's team of gringos were out dressed, out danced, and out fiesta-ed by adults and children alike!

Space for Learning

Coordination between program leaders and the community needs to be stronger up to and during any and all project work, in order to ensure that participants are involved as much as possible.

A general understanding that, while incorporating a more organizational approach to partner relationships that begins with Regional Directors, PLs still need to take a leadership role in regard to partners. Overall, this is an incredible partnership, and one that we hope to nurture in the future.

Middle East

- Roots
- Women in Hebron
- Yad B Yad School (Project Harmony)
- Keffiyeh Center
- Machsom Watch
- Sulimon Bedouin Village Talk
- Other Voice

Roots

Roots is a joint Palestinian-Israeli initiative run by Palestinian and Israelis in the Gush Etzion area of the West Bank. The organization aims to create a neutral space where local Israelis and Palestinians can meet each other with the hope of bringing about a paradigm shift, transforming the relationship between the historically conflicting sides, and changing the individual's hearts and minds. Shorashim is an organization that runs educational excursions and promotes solidarity within Israel.

Goals

- Our major goal with Roots was to help improve their infrastructure so they are able to focus more time on their ongoing programming. Specifically, these improvements were to:
 - Build a structure for animals
 - Build a functional shower
 - Improve the land

Accomplishments

Participants funded and built a new structure for animals and a functional shower. They also improved the land by moving rocks from a deteriorating wall and rearranging them to help funnel water away from the wall.

Team Learning

Our *Middle East: Behind the Headlines* teams were able to connect on a deeper level with the people at Roots, through the talks that the settlers and Palestinian peace workers give about their experiences and the work they do. They felt like they were making a meaningful difference by supporting the peace work that happens here.

Community Engagement

OG has a very special relationship with Roots, specifically with Ali, one of Roots' founders. Our teams always enjoy staying at the farm and meeting the many guests that pass by.

Space for Growth

In the future, teams should increase the amount of time with this organization in order to make more time for community involvement. A great plan for next year is to coordinate with the fledgling youth nonviolence program that is being developed. This year, we had some scheduling issues, specifically around meeting and meal times, but a discussion was had with Ali about improvements in the future. While Ali will always accommodate our volunteering schedule, we have to keep in mind that Roots is incredibly busy, and we need to be flexible in our plans to help accommodate their needs.

Women in Hebron

The Women in Hebron cooperative (WIH) allows Palestinian women to be independent breadwinners for their home by providing training and resources to make and sell handmade embroidery. Their programs give women autonomy and power in communities where this is not always possible.

Goals

- Visit Hebron and learn more about the organization in order to better understand the struggles these women face and the work being done to bring about positive change

Accomplishments

Our *Behind the Headlines* teams visited Hebron to learn more about WiH and their work supporting Islamic Feminism. Participants had a positive experience and were inspired by the unique narrative and were able to further support the WIH work by purchasing goods.

Team Learning

Our teams were inspired by Leila, the founder of Women in Hebron, and her story, as well as WiH's mission and values.

Community Engagement

Leila presents the Palestinian perspective during the Hebron tour, followed by an overview of her organization. Teams were invited to lunch at her house and some downtime after a lengthy and intense tour. Leila is very accessible and easy to schedule a visit and lecture with and always generously welcomes OG.

Space for Growth

Although there were not a lot of hands-on contributions to be made, the team felt that they learned a lot about the Women in Hebron Cooperative from Leila and definitely valued the experience of visiting WiH. In the future, OG should make time to visit the actual cooperative and learn more about what and how they do what they do.

Yad B Yad School (Project Harmony)

Project Harmony is an English immersion, integrated summer camp for Jewish and Arab children. The summer camp is held at the bilingual Yad B Yad school in Jerusalem, where students study alongside each other in Hebrew and Arabic and participate in activities to help them work on their language skills after the school year ends.

Goals

- Help out with a small staff for the last week of camp, specifically help supervise campers during the water park day
- Prepare for an event at the end of the week to celebrate the end of camp

Accomplishments

The team was able to successfully help the staff for the last week of camp. Participants were able to help manage the children during their day at the water park and also contributed to preparing the camp's final event.

Team Learning

The team struggled to connect with the staff and found it difficult to make a positive impact on the campers.

Community Engagement

Overall, it seemed the community was not engaged in the project and didn't connect with our teams. The time spent with Project Harmony was fairly isolating and participants were only able to interact with the campers and counselors.

Space for Growth

As a fully funded, sustainable organization, Project Harmony doesn't really need support from OG and in the future it might be more impactful to work with an organization that would benefit more from our visit.

Keffiyeh Center

The Keffiyeh Center is a social/youth organization started by young men and women in Nablus' New Askar Refugee Camp in 2012. These youth established the organization to provide services to children in the camp, including sports training, tutoring, and music classes. The organization hopes to establish a computer centre and to include other services in the future. Our 2013 crew first met with the Keffiyeh's leadership in Nablus and discussed their work and their goals. This initial meeting and OG's subsequent community contribution to the organization established a framework for potential collaboration on future projects in Nablus.

Goals

- Visit Nablus to learn about the work being done there and show solidarity with those who are displaced from their homes
- Stay at homestays and engage in cross-cultural activities to build a strong, lasting relationship

Accomplishments

Located in a refugee camp in the West Bank, the Keffiyeh Center provided our teams with a local introduction to a more tumultuous area of the conflict. Teams visited Nablus to learn about life in a refugee camp and financially support the center. They learned Dabka (a Palestinian dance), ate local food, slept in a homestay, and spoke with a family whose son is in prison, and to a former prisoner about their experiences with the conflict and occupation.

Team Learning

Through the center, participants heard stories from Palestinians directly affected by the conflict and occupation, and our teams were shocked and inspired by a story of a man who was in Israeli prison. Homestays were also arranged, giving the teams the opportunity to spend time with Palestinian families and see how the community lives on a daily basis.

Community Engagement

The whole staff of the organization and their families were involved and received funds either personally (homestays) or as an organization.

Space for Growth

All the participants had great experiences with this partner and OG should definitely work with them again. In the future, it would be beneficial to have more time with host

families and have a conversation before program starts in order to organize each day and not overwhelm participants or host families.

Machsom Watch

Machsom Watch is an organisation made up of Israeli women who are against the Israeli Occupation of the territories and the systematic repression of the Palestinian nation. They call for Palestinian freedom of movement within their own territory and for an end to the Occupation that destroys Palestinian society and inflicts grievous harm on Israeli society.

Goals

- Assist Machsom Watch in a childcare program
- Engage in cross-cultural conversation with the children

Accomplishments

Teams spent a day helping the ladies of Machsom Watch oversee a group of approximately 80 Bedouin children from the West Bank, took a trip to the sea, then joined them for lunch and a boat ride.

Team Learning

Our participants got great insight into how Bedouin communities are treated on a daily basis and how the occupation affects every aspect of their lives.

Community Engagement

Our teams were only able to volunteer for one day, but in the future it would be beneficial to expand our collaboration to a couple of days. The ladies of Machsom Watch very much appreciated our teams' help with the beach day, as it is a hectic day and lots of adult eyes are needed to watch the kids.

Space for Growth

By the time our teams arrived at Machsom Watch they were exhausted from consecutive travel and volunteer days, so in the future planning a couple of rest days would mean teams could be more productive upon arrival.

Other Voice

Other Voice is a pro-two-state solution peace organization based in Sderot, an Israeli town on the border of the Gaza Strip. They promote dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians and believe in the power of communication as an important path to conflict resolution.

Goals

- Build a relationship, engage in cross cultural exchange, and learn more about Other Voice and life in Sderot through a Q&A with Roni, our contact at Other Voice

Accomplishments

Roni spoke about life next to Gaza in a peaceful agricultural village and participants engaged in an active discussion and asked questions.

Team Learning

The participants learned a lot and the talk was well received, as it offered a unique perspective on peace work so close to the threat of daily rocket fire.

Community Engagement

There was not a lot of community engagement because the participants primarily listened to Roni share stories about life in an agricultural village. Therefore, there wasn't a huge need for the community to be engaged but the team really liked talking to Roni and he was very informative.

Space for Growth

Other Voice is an incredible organization and it would be great to be able to spend more time working with them in the future.

South America

- Sacred Valley
 - Kausay Punku
 - Union Chahuay
 - Derechos Humanos Sin Fronteras
- Peru - Coast
 - Art of Living
- Peru - Jungle
 - EcoAldeas
 - Radio Ucamara
 - TSANWA
- Bolivia
 - Fundacion Alternativas
 - Café Takes
 - Condor Trekkers

Kausay Punku

The Kausay Punku farm is run by brothers Arcadio and Dario Ccapa, but is truly a family enterprise. Kausay Punku's major goal is to preserve traditional methods of working the land and the Inkan culture and lifestyle, therefore, environmental sustainability and traditional health care are ever present themes. Another, overarching goal is transmitting this traditional knowledge to the larger community and to help youth celebrate and understand their heritage. This is accomplished by implementing different projects on their land, such as constructing buildings and other infrastructure using traditional methods, cultivating and preserving a variety of indigenous plants and crops, and hosting traditional ceremonies, among other things. The brothers hope to create change by being an example for the community.

Goals

- 1) Contribute to physical labor on the farm
- 2) Cultural exchange through sharing meals or evening talks on different social themes with locals
- 3) Assist in the execution of a community day

Accomplishments

In 2016, both *Peru: Mind and Body* teams spent the equivalent of two weeks at the Kausay Punku farm. The main project that was accomplished this year was a plant nursery, started by the early summer team and finished by the late summer crew.

Another project that bloomed this year was the Community Day initiative. This was a success, allowing Kausay Punku to reach out to the community and showcase what they do with the hopes of getting the community more involved in their work, along with a day of games and food with the youth of Maska.

Space for Growth

Our partnership with the Ccapas is strong and there is a great deal of understanding from both sides about expectations and why we work together. Going forward, we should focus on clearly defining projects and roles to ensure accountability on both sides, which will help to improve project coordination prior to groups arriving.

Union Chahuay

Union Chahuay is a community of approximately 200 people who, as a community, have built an “albergue” (large hostel) with the aim of attracting more tourists to facilitate cross-cultural exchange.

Goals

- Improve communication and coordination for groups visiting and spend more time with them with our *Mind and Body* program
- Participate in farming and cooking activities with local families to experience daily life of community members
- Go fishing and tour the lake to learn more about Union Chahuay’s community tourism initiatives

Accomplishments

This year, two different programs went to Chahuay (*Peru: Mind and Body* and *Peru+Bolivia: Explorations at Altitude*) for a total of four OG teams.

The *Mind and Body* teams spent a total of four days with the community on each program. In these four days, teams did a day hike to Colca, followed by a two-day hike to the Waykara Pukara ruins. On the two-day hike, eight community members joined the groups which allowed some of them to see the ruins for the first time. At the ruins, there was a bonfire with music and dancing. On the first night, the group was received with a traditional meal and traditional dance.

With *Explorations at Altitude*, Union Chahuay was the location for disorientation at the end of the program. Therefore, the immersion and cultural exchange with the community was limited, although it was a great location to decompress and served a different purpose. However, in the future, our relationship with Union Chahuay should focus on cultural exchange to support their initiatives within tourism.

Space for Growth

It is important to note that as the “albergue” is a community initiative, communication with Union Chahuay is sometimes difficult. For the summer of 2016, the main contact was Lucio, the president of the community. Lucio gathers members of the community and the “albergue” committee to help organize to receive groups. The president and vice-president of the community change every 2 years, with a change happening at the beginning of 2017. Therefore, the main contact for OG will change continuously.

Derechos Humanos Sin Fronteras

Derechos Humanos Sin Fronteras (DHSF) works to defend human and environmental rights near conflicted sites in the Cusco region of Peru. Their mission aligns with the objectives of our *Peru+Bolivia: Explorations at Altitude* program, and meeting with them offers a valuable perspective on volunteering -- namely, that giving your time and being willing to hear a story is as, if not more, effective than building a fence.

Goals

As this is a new partner, our major goal was to build a strong, consistent relationship in the support we can bring to them (for instance, having three visits scheduled with them per year). As DHSF is a non-profit, they struggle with finding unbiased funds for projects; therefore, OG provides a great partner for them.

Team Learning

Both the early and late summer *Peru+Bolivia: Explorations at Altitude* teams met with DHSF to learn about their mission and ongoing work.

The early summer team's meeting was held in the DHSF office in Cusco. The meeting was held by Jaime, the director of DHSF, and Elsa, a community member from Espinar, was present to tell her story.

The late summer team visit was held in Espinar. The meeting was organized by Yovana, a coordinator for DHSF. Part of the meeting was in the DHSF office in Espinar where once again, community members joined to share their stories with the group. The late summer team was able to go on a tour of the affected sites. Overall, OG's role in Espinar was to act as an ally, showing support to the community.

Space for Growth

Working with DHSF is solidarity in its purest form. Standing side by side with community members and empathizing with what they are enduring is an eye-opening form of volunteering for most participants. Whenever possible, and within the availability of the organization and the community, it would be super beneficial for future teams to make a visit to one of the affected communities to begin to understand what Human Rights Accompaniment means.

As 2016 was the first summer working with DHSF, there was some lack of coordination. Improvement in communication and coordination between OG and DHSF would be beneficial.

Asociacion Casa Juvenil de Pachacutec (ACJP)

Asociacion Casa Juvenil de Pachacutec (ACJP) is a community center offering community services, and circus and English workshops to kids and young adults in a low-resource neighbourhood. Their goal is to empower youth, give them self-confidence, and provide skill-building opportunities as an alternative to formal education. The teachers of the different workshops are alums of ACJP. In order to be part of the group that performs and organizes events, they have to finish high school, which encourages kids to stay in school and complete their education.

This year, our teams spent the afternoon with ACJP learning from the leaders about their work and mission.

South Asia

- TARSHI
- Latika Roy
- The Leprosy Mission India
- The Indian Stammering Association
- Students for Free Tibet
- Ecosphere
- Gurgaon Ki Awaaz/The Restoring Force
- Thrive Seed
- RLEK/PRAGATI
- Tibetan Women's Association
- Jatan Sansathan
- SECMOL
- Local Futures

Latika Roy

Latika Roy is a charity that works with children and adults with disabilities, particularly developmental disabilities, in Uttarkhand, and seeks to improve education and healthcare, while providing vocational training and advocacy.

Goals

To maintain our partnership with an amazing organisation and to see if we can push our partnership towards more effective collaboration for Latika Roy.

Accomplishments

Our teams were able to meet with Latika Roy's founder, Jo Chopra, and her colleagues to learn about the context of their work, and the work itself. Participants also spent an evening at Latika Vihar, an after school club which emphasises inclusion over everything else.

Space for Growth

As a relatively new partner, it would be beneficial to become better acquainted in order to mutually understand how we can improve this collaboration. Based on the past year, it's apparent that this could be a very impactful partner for our participants, however they are a very busy organization with very few resources and we need to make sure any partnership going forward actually benefits (rather than burdens) them.

The Leprosy Mission India

The Leprosy Mission is a global collection of national leprosy missions; we were working with the Indian organisation.

Goals

To engage our participants in becoming “ambassadors” for the Leprosy Mission. Their main campaign right now is all based around visibility and awareness to make people aware that leprosy is curable, avoidable but unfortunately once again the number of cases is on the rise in India.

Accomplishments

We did a day of engagement at the Leprosy Mission’s head office, and spent a half day visiting one of the Delhi hospitals.

Space for Growth

In the future it might be helpful to have a conversation about how OG can impact the organization in a more meaningful way. Aside from ‘being ambassadors’ we don’t really contribute much to the organization. While being ambassadors and helping to spread the word about their work is helpful, as our relationship grows it might be more beneficial to adjust our goal.

The Indian Stammering Association

The Indian Stammering Association (SHG) is a local self-help group for stammerers located in the Punjab and Uttarakhand regions of India.

Goals

- Support the work of SHG by empowering the members and learning from their personal stories

Accomplishments

The team was able to complete all goals for this partner and supported the work of SHG. It was an amazing event for SHG, fitting neatly into the program goals and aims and building upon the work they have been doing together. It was also a wonderful holistic, hands on, supportive experience: just by listening and sharing we were able to support a wonderfully simple but effective initiative which has an incredibly dramatic effect on its members. Our collaboration aligned perfectly with their goals as well as being a wonderful opportunity to learn from their work. It was an amazing event for SHG, fitting neatly into the program goals and aims and building upon the work they have been doing together up until now.

Space for growth

They're not a big enough community for a larger collaboration, but incredible to share a short time with and a partner we should continue to work with going forward.

Students for Free Tibet

Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) works in solidarity with the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom and independence. They are a chapter-based network of young people and activists around the world. Through education, grassroots organizing, and nonviolent direct action, they campaign for Tibetans' fundamental right to political freedom. Our role is to empower and train youth as leaders in the worldwide movement for social justice.

Goals

To become allies and ambassadors for SFT, by taking the time to understand the situation on the ground for the refugee community, and support their work with our time.

Accomplishments

- Exposed participants to a wide range of Tibetan perspectives through tours, discussions, lectures, and activities.
- Educated ourselves and others about the occupation of Tibet and created a groundswell of support for a Free Tibet
- Inspired students to become activists in their home or international communities
- Learned about non-violent direct action and communication
- Through work for Tibetan independence we also aim to inspire and enable people, especially youth, to create a just and equitable world, free of oppression, in which there is respect for the earth and all living things.

Space for Growth

SFT is a great partner and one that OG should continue to engage with. On top of the projects we're already undertaking with them, it would be beneficial to spend some time each day doing conversation classes at Gu Chu Sum to deepen our relationship with the organization.

Ecosphere

Ecosphere is a voluntourism supported organisation looking to support communities in Spiti by encouraging and facilitating sustainable practice, for the environment and for livelihoods, helping to ensure a safe, community led approach to development.

Goals

To continue to support the development of local communities through ecosphere projects.

Accomplishments

Our *India: Himalayan Adventure* team built one greenhouse in Demul and provided well distributed income to the village through the homestay system Ecosphere uses. Along with directly supporting Ecosphere and the local communities through our stay, the aim of the greenhouse project is to provide future income generation.

Community Engagement

Our teams continued to support the green house project which enables villages to have vegetables year-round-- something that was impossible in the past as Spiti is disconnected from the rest of the world each year for six months.

Space for Growth

We'll slowly be moving towards different types of projects once Ecosphere reviews pilots for various projects they have.

RLEK/PRAGATI

Rural Litigation and Empowerment Kendra (RLEK) is an umbrella organisation for a wide range of organisations working in the rural areas in Eastern Uttarakhand. PRAGATI is one of those organisations, and they are dedicated to female empowerment in rural areas. Their ethos is *“for the women, by the women”*.

Goals

Support PRAGATI in designing games and posters for the women’s empowerment workshop.

Accomplishments

Helped PRAGATI design games and posters for their women’s empowerment seminars and workshops.

Games included snakes and ladders as well as educational drawings and games intended to be used by PRAGATI in the villages in which they work.

Space for Growth

There is a slight language barrier but we are working towards a better understanding of our ability to contribute, as well as our limitations, and on us improving our understanding of how we can best support their work.

Tibetan Women's Association (TWA)

TWA is a global organisation working to support the female refugee diaspora. There are many local chapters, with the head office in Dharamshala, as well as advocacy and activism around issues related to the Tibet situations.

Goals

To become more focused in our collaboration, and to move towards a more hands-on volunteering component.

Accomplishments

The groups were able to gain exposure to the complexity of issues and the diversity of activism around Tibetan issues, as well as being able to engage in project work that matched their skill levels, specifically English language conversation classes. The addition of a conflict resolution program this year also contributed to positive group and individual learning.

Space for Growth

OG should try to move towards more hands on project work, rather than just on the classes in order to better connect with TWA in the future.

Jatan Sansathan

Jatan Sansathan is a grassroots not-for-profit that works in rural Rajasthan empowering youth and marginalized communities. For over 15 years, they have worked to design and implement initiatives focused on improving the lives of the region's most underserved populations-youth, women, girls children and adolescents. They work on programs related to health, education, violence against women, strengthening women in governance, migrant labour, and livelihood issues. They also work actively towards community participation, research and advocacy to ensure the sustainability of their projects.

Goals

To spend some time learning about the organization and build our relationship with Jatan in order to improve future collaboration

Accomplishments

We participated in the Say No to Plastic Campaign, contributed to the Andawari centres and health clinics as well as the Safe Menstruation and UGER project.

Community Engagement

The Safe Menstruation and UGER project was the most measurably successful. Our participants made a real impact supporting the workshop and creating a space where young women could talk about menstruation comfortably, which continues to be rare in rural India. The community impact on the other two programs were harder to assess.

Space for Growth

Jatan is an incredible organization that is doing really important work in Rajasthan. Moving forward it would be mutually beneficial to work more closely with them and spend more time on specific projects that move their mission forward.

SECMOL

The Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL) is the oldest and only local Education NGO that works all across Ladakh. SECMOL is an alternative educational center where students, staff, and volunteers pursue practical, environmental, social, and traditional knowledge, values, and skills. Students learn ancient Ladakhi culture and history alongside modern academic knowledge while managing and maintaining the campus. SECMOL strives to equip local Ladakhis from rural or disadvantaged backgrounds with the knowledge, skills, perspective, and confidence to build a sustainable future.

Goals

Build and strengthen relationships with the SECMOL students and community and gain an understanding about their alternative approach to education.

Accomplishments

Our teams contributed to daily conversation classes for the students, assisted them with work, and ran educational activities with them.

Community Engagement

Overall there was a ton of positive engagement with the community. Teams, at times, weren't really sure what they were supposed to be doing and would have benefitted from more clear guidance and planned activities.

Space for Growth

It could be beneficial to bring students into the planning process in order to ensure they're getting the most out of the partnership. Definitely a partner we should continue to engage with and worth growing our relationship.

Local Futures

Local Futures is working toward the revitalization of cultural and biological diversity, and the strengthening of local communities and economies worldwide. They operate out of Ladakh, promoting discourse around localization vs globalization and supporting local communities against the adverse effects of globalization.

Goals

To learn more about Local Futures and assist with their education programs in the local community

Accomplishments

We participated in Local Futures ongoing Leh project educating people on their impact in Ladakh, seen through both a local and global context, through film screening events followed by discussions. We also spent time with Local Futures staff in a more informal setting. We went on a small hike and had a picnic which was a really great introduction to the area and them.

Space for Growth

Local Futures is trying to arrange the Learnings from Ladakh event around our time in Ladakh next year so that we can continue to expand our work with them and have a more meaningful impact.

Southeast Asia

- Freeland Foundation
- Ockenden
- Banteay Chhmar Community-Based Tourism Group (CBT)
- OrganiKH Permaculture Farm
- Tiny Toones
- Mekong Turtle Conservation Center (MTCC)
- Elephant Valley Project Cambodia

Freeland Foundation

Freeland is an organization that focuses on combating human and wildlife trafficking initiatives on a global level (though focused in Asia). They have a number of initiatives for flora and fauna conservation throughout Thailand specifically, and they also offer support and training to members of forest ranger divisions throughout a number of national parks in Thailand. They complete wildlife surveys, mostly for Tiger populations throughout Thailand. They run outreach and marketing campaigns which tackle human and wildlife trafficking, while collaborating on government policy within the regions they operate.

Goals

- Engage with Freeland in order to develop a volunteer project together with hopes of creating a long-term partnership
- Create an immersive and educational group experience which would benefit Freeland through raising awareness, reinforcing their commitment to the work they do in the national park, and receiving some financial support.

Accomplishments

Our *Southeast Asia: Animal Conservation* teams collaborated on a three day educational/volunteer visit to Pang Sida National Park. The idea of the project was that the group would “shadow” Freeland with their camera trap surveys, install water points for periods of extended drought, meet with the Sai Tong community and help to reinforce a check dam in Pang Sida.

Space for Growth

Due to the amount of work required, Freeland sometimes is unable to accommodate volunteer projects. OG can help with organizing the volunteer projects and build the capacity of the organization to do so more efficiently.

More communication between the NGO and OG is also required as they were not completely aware of OG’s role and the amount of funds they could contribute. As well, there needs to be better coordination in the planning stages, as some of the priorities were not very clear.

Ockenden

Ockenden Cambodia is an NGO with world class parentage. It aims to improve rural self-reliance, working with small farmers on sustainable agricultural systems and techniques. It works with technical partners, such as the Halo Trust, to clear land mines and make agricultural land safe for working. It runs infrastructure projects, establishing schools and teachers for education in small villages, building access roads and bridges and funding small scale plants such as feed mills for villagers. Ockenden also works on the labyrinthine process of establishing Community Forests for indigenous tribes and villages.

Ockenden's model is to provide initial support in these areas, focusing on capacity building, so that farmers and communities can support themselves in the longer term. Sometimes with the help of overseas volunteers, keen to learn the difficulties of life in Cambodia, but always with dedicated staff from the Ockenden team, projects are closely managed and monitored. Part of the job is therefore in fundraising, to enable this really essential work to continue.

Goals

- To support Ockenden with some of their ongoing, long-term projects (specifically, INDRA in Banteay Menchey and the Permaculture Farm in Battambang) through:
 - Financial support that allows for resources and labor to be mobilized
 - Providing volunteers that work alongside Ockenden staff to complete tasks
 - Being willing to support Ockenden in trying innovative new techniques (e.g. floating gardens, bale gardens).
- To provide OG participants with immersive experiences in the Cambodian countryside which will allow them to gain insight into the life and struggles of rural villagers and threats to the ecosystem at large. Most importantly, the goal is to introduce participants (in a hands on way) to Ockenden's model of capacity building and innovation as a way of combatting these issues.

Accomplishments

In total, our teams worked on four projects together with Ockenden. Teams mostly participated with Ockenden's ongoing "Introducing Native Disaster Resilient-Agriculture (INDRA)" project, which is designed to improve farmers' understanding of disaster resilient agricultural techniques (especially, flooding). The *Cities and Sanctuaries* Late Summer program visited Ockenden's Permaculture Farm in Battambang, which is a live training center for farmers to acquire knowledge in permaculture.

- Animal Conservation ES: INDRA at Mongulborei Community
 - Completed Floating Island from Bamboo and Straw Bales
 - Completed Straw Bale Garden

- Cities & Sanctuaries ES: INDRA at Kok Samrong, and Banteay Chhmar Communities
 - Teamed up with a group of Cambodian school children and planted 500 paper trees
 - Homeless House Building & Repair
- Animal Conservation LS: INDRA at Mongulborei Community
 - Paddy Art Rice. Making an Angkor Wat Rice Mural with black rice, which, when grown, will look like the temple.
 - Tree planting at local school
 - Straw Bale gardens
 - Floating Gardens and fish for the lake.
- Cities & Sanctuaries LS: Permaculture Farm in Battambang
 - Planted trees in the schools for Disaster Risk Reduction from winds, flooding, and for shade.
 - General work around the PC farm

Space for Growth

Communication and expectations should be a little more clear, as some participants were expecting different kinds of work. It would be beneficial if the Regional Director and the NGO planned volunteer activities together, to avoid PLs coordinating with Ockenden separately and to plan around construction projects so that participants can have a more meaningful experience. Lastly, the focus should be more on long-term planning and not just program by program.

Banteay Chhmar Community-Based Tourism Group (CBT)

Banteay Chhmar Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a group of local villagers dedicated to preserving and protecting the cultural heritage of the area as well as creating a responsible tourism industry in Banteay Chhmar. The CBT was originally started in 2007 with the aid of the French NGO Agir Pour le Cambodge (APLC). In 2009, the Global Heritage Fund (GHF) began conservation work on Banteay Chhmar Temple and formed a partnership with the CBT. Since then the CBT has been functioning year round, welcoming an ever increasing number of tourists.

Currently, over 70 villagers are directly involved in the CBT as tour guides, cooks, homestay owners, musicians, etc. Even more are indirectly involved by reaping the benefits that well-managed, grassroots tourism development has in a region such as this. The CBT is also active in development work in the community, which includes the maintenance of a CBT Local Fund, designed to finance projects that will benefit the community at large (similar to OG's Alumni Project Fund!).

Goals

- To support the CBT in their mission to preserve their cultural heritage, create a sustainable tourism industry, and aid in grassroots development.
- To provide participants with a truly immersive experience -- one that is not "manufactured" for us, but rather just gives us a glimpse of life in this part of the country.

Accomplishments

The Early Summer *Cities and Sanctuaries* team spent a total of eight days in Banteay Chhmar. This is an incredibly long time for a group to spend in the community. Just by virtue of staying there so long -- sleeping at the homestays, eating three times a day, getting things from the market, contributing to the CBT -- we are giving a strong nod towards supporting community-based tourism.

Participants received a culturally immersive experience, got to hang out in an awesome ancient temple, see parts of Cambodia travelers rarely see, make friends with local community members, and develop a critical understanding of responsible tourism.

The late summer team aided in the repair of an impoverished widow's home and planted trees around a newly dug irrigation pond. The group decided to fund an additional \$150 USD to replace the walls of the house, as the house was in bad condition and her children had fallen out of the house due to broken sidewalls.

Space for Growth

In the future it would be helpful to allow space to include volunteer projects directly with the CBT, as opposed to their partner organization in order to strengthen our relationship with CBT and their ongoing work.

OrganiKH Permaculture Farm

OrganiKH is a permaculture farm in northwestern Cambodia whose goal is to promote self-reliant and sustainable agricultural practices in the Cambodian countryside, as well as generating income from sustainable tourism to help local communities.

While respecting the environment and local lifestyle, community-based tourism helps to improve sanitation and support educational projects in the village, while preserving traditional culture & know-how. The organic farm not only aims to fulfil their own needs, but also wants to generate income by selling local/natural products to visitors.

Goals

- To instill a better understanding of permaculture, the problems with genetic modern day farming, how to make simple changes back home in your own life and help the environment.
- Make a contribution to the center, both financially and with some hands on work. This year's teams learnt how to make mud bricks, which are now being used in the construction of a new tool shed.

Accomplishments

- Initiated a new partnership
- Provided the groups with a great half-day of experiential learning
- Supported the farm with a financial contribution
- Made some mud bricks which will be used on the farm.

Community Engagement

Very positive. Oliver, one of the founders of Organi, is very talented at delivering the educational content on his farms and getting people to think critically.

Space for Growth

Oliver would prefer if groups came for a longer period of time. While he is open to hosting groups for a day, his long-term vision is centered around volunteer groups that stay for a week or more. He is willing to make an exception for us - especially if it is packaged into an Ockenden itinerary - but if we are to seriously consider OrganiKH for a partnership we should explore the idea of doing longer stays there.

Tiny Toones

Tiny Toones (TT) is a grassroots organization that offers music and dance programs, as well as English, to youth aged 5-24 who are particularly vulnerable to drug and substance abuse, sexual and labor exploitation, domestic violence, and gang involvement. TT employs former students as teachers, as they understand the needs of the students. Their aim is for all youth in Cambodia and beyond to live healthy lives free of HIV and drugs, realize their full potential through educational and creative opportunities, and to pursue their dreams and become positive leaders of tomorrow. Their mission is to provide a safe, positive environment for at-risk youth to channel their energy and creativity into the arts and education, empowering them to build self-confidence in their daily lives, aim for better employment possibilities, and feel supported pursuing their dreams.

Goals

- To support Tiny Toones in their mission of creating a positive space for underprivileged youth in Phnom Penh
- To deliver retreats
- For participants to forge meaningful relationships with the TT staff and students, understand their mission, and be engaged in delivering activities and games

Accomplishments

- Delivered two successful retreats
- Increased the number of TT students able to come on the retreats by running two retreats

Team Learning

- Participants really valued their time with Tiny Toones, and saw it as cultural exchange experience.
- The students had a great time with the activities organized by the OG groups.
- Tiny Toones staff got a getaway from the city and got to spend more relaxing time with their students and got to know new OG friends.

Community Engagement

The community engagement was positive, particularly in regards to the degree of love and respect that exists between TT staff and their students. This carries on to working with OG, where they very respectfully and energetically go along with all planned activities and games. It is easy to work with TT, one can approach staff when translation is necessary, and collaborate to make an awesome retreat. The retreat is a balance of

organizing activities/playing with the students and downtime. It's hard to draw that boundary. Tiny Toones values working with OG and part of the relationship has always been just to hang out as friends and get to know each other.

Space for Growth

The partnership will evolve in the future, depending on a visit from the Regional Director. Tiny Toones has suggested the possibility that OG provides support in a different capacity, such as supporting the new social business in the city. Also, if OG continues to do the retreats, the expectations of OG and Tiny Toones need to be a little more clear.

Mekong Turtle Conservation Center (MTCC)

The Mekong Turtle Conservation Center (MTCC) is an offshoot of Conservation International, located inside the 100 Pillar Pagoda and run by the monks who occupy the premises. MTCC aims to protect and replenish the critically endangered *Cantor's Giant Soft-shell Turtle* species through their nest protection and hatchling headstarting programs, where they raise hatchling turtles in captivity and re-release them back into the wild to increase their chances of survival. They also act as an ecotourism attraction, where tourists can see and learn about the soft-shell turtle and other turtle and tortoise species native to Southeast Asia, see the conservation program in action, and participate in a turtle release.

Goals

- To support the MTCC in their mission to protect the Mekong soft-shell turtles, who continue to be endangered.
- Join the turtle release project twice every year.
- To gain valuable educational insight into the threats to the turtles and the Mekong biosphere as a whole.
- To gain valuable insight into the conservation effort of the MTCC and get a backstage look at how they operate.
- To develop the MTCC's ecotourism infrastructure beyond just doing the turtle release. Potentially homestays and volunteering.

Accomplishments

- Participated, next to MTCC, in the release of dozens of baby turtles into the Mekong River. This increases the chance of survival for this endangered species.
- We participated in a minor volunteer project to get rid of some invasive weed species along the banks of the Mekong.
- Provided great insight for our participants into the inner workings of a successful conservation program.

Community Engagement

Generally quite good, though there were some language barriers when Yeoung (our main contact at MTCC) wasn't around. None of the staff are fluent in English (and no one at OG is close to fluent in Khmer) so this was an issue in terms of coordination and delegation. That being said, it was still smooth and participants enjoyed the turtle release and hearing stories from staff and volunteers of the MTCC.

Space for Growth

We would like to explore the possibility of expanding our partnership towards extending our stay in Kratie and working on a bigger project with MTCC. They are a perfect fit for the Animal Conservation program. This is a conversation which will be had between the Regional Director and MTCC in the upcoming months. It is also worth looking into the possibility of integrating dolphin viewing into the day with the MTCC, rather than having to do it separately.

Elephant Valley Project Cambodia

Elephant Valley Project (EVP) is an elephant sanctuary developed to create a home for injured and overworked elephants throughout Cambodia. The sanctuary provides a space for an ecotourism project that provides an alternative approach to elephant care, rehabilitation and conservation. Through their umbrella NGO, ELIE (Elephant Livelihood Initiative Environment), they work to improve the health and welfare of the captive elephants in Mondulkiri Province, conserve the natural habitat for Cambodia's wild elephant population, and support the local indigenous Bunong community who work closely with these creatures. EVP uses the funds generated through their ecotourism project to support ELIE programs, including an elephant research and monitoring program, mobile veterinarian program and indigenous community based assistance program that provides employment, education and health care to the local Bunong community.

Goals

- To support EVP in their mission to protect Cambodia's captive and wild elephant populations. By bringing in groups of volunteers, we provide financial support (EVP is 100% funded by volunteer program fees) as well as labour to maintain and improve the sanctuary through volunteer projects.
- To provide participants with an immersive, hands on and educational experience that really digs into issues of elephant conservation and welfare.

Accomplishments

- The OG teams put in a great effort in planting vegetable and bamboo patches, clearing weeds, and doing other tasks needed at the time.
- There were a lot of good discussions around travel ethics and what a good volunteering/tourism/community involved partnership can look like.

Space for Growth

It would be good to get a general sense of the kind of work and activities the group will be engaging in before arriving. This is often difficult, but we should inquire earlier on. Once on the ground, it would be a good idea to organize a social event between EVP and OG to promote the partnership.

West Africa

- Orgiis
- Nkwa
- Hoops Care
- Orthopaedic Training Center
- Kayayei Youth Association
- Dzi Wopoano Nyi (Keep Your Beach Clean)

Orgiis

Orgiis seeks to use indigenous knowledge and environmentally sustainable initiatives to engage in community development for the people in the communities in the Northern most regions of Ghana. They have numerous environmental projects in which they are reforesting community spaces, encouraging environmental awareness among community members, and producing agricultural products for income-generation including moringa, shea, sesame seeds, and baobab fruits. They also have a Savings and Loan Federation they have started where women in the area are encouraged to save money and then give loans toward entrepreneurial or other projects that a member in the cooperative may wish to start. In that way, all members are able to benefit from investing in the projects. They also promote health topics to community members, specifically those regarding maternal health.

Goals

- Increase environmental awareness for both participants and community members
- Nursing and/or planting of numerous new trees that will be under the care of the community for future income through agricultural production

Accomplishments

We were able to increase environmental awareness throughout the community while also broadening our own perspectives and participants saw the relationship between health and environment. Moreover, we contributed to the preparation of land and planting of an organic moringa farm.

Team Learning

Our participants were able to create deeper, more meaningful connections with the partner and women in the community while gaining an understanding about the link between health related issues and the environment.

Community Engagement

ORGIIS has immense interest in the survival of the farm. It will be one of their greatest success stories and the women we worked with are well aware of the potential income from being engaged in the moringa farm project. Our partnership with ORGIIS also allows us to get to know their team as well as other local communities through project work and a big cookout lunch to celebrate our tree planting. We are received and treated as family.

Space for Growth

In the future, it would be helpful for participants to spend more time at homestays with their families in the afternoons or evenings, asking questions about life in the community, helping cook dinner, playing with or tutoring kids in their household, or accompanying families to the farm to help in their work. This would facilitate a deeper connection with the community as a whole outside of the project work.

Nkwa Foundation

Based in Cape Coast in Ghana, Nkwa Foundation is a non-profit organization that works to promote community development and health care through outreach, education, and health survey data projects. Past OG teams have assisted the Nkwa Foundation with their community development and education projects in local villages, such as demonstrating proper hand-washing techniques, planting seeds, and collecting health data.

Goals

- Improve understanding about community health and environment for participants, while assisting with community outreach programs

Team Learning

Participants gained an insight into alternative ways of treating and informing communities of health related issues as well as a better understanding of sustainable ways of ensuring livelihoods through farming initiatives.

Community Engagement

Our team lived in Ramzy Okyere's house, the founder of NKWA. He was very engaging, always willing to answer our questions and take us out. Ramzy is a great link between our teams and the larger community and is a great resource for our participants.

Hoops Care

Based in Cape Coast, Ghana, Hoops Care promotes health through physical activity and nutrition. They work with local schools to host sports games and tournaments as a way to teach youth about health and leadership, to promote healthy lifestyles and proper nutrition, and to provide health information to the community. Hoops Care also helps local communities to gain access to otherwise unattainable health insurance. In the past, OG teams have assisted Hoops Care with their annual health week programming in various capacities – as coaches, nutritional educators, infant health assessors, and media interns.

Goals

- Learn about alternative community education and assist with community outreach workshops on issues related to health in an urban setting, as well as youth education.
- Encourage youth to improve health and wellbeing through sports participation, feminine hygiene, rehabilitation, and education.

Accomplishments

The participants were able to see how a focus on sports, nutrition, rehabilitation, and education were able to address health concerns in an urban community.

Successes included:

- Malaria discussion and setting up treated bed nets in the homes of single mothers in the neighborhood
- Discussions with women and girls at the center (many of whom used to be involved in prostitution) about feminine hygiene, STIs, and sexual health. In the session with the women, one could see that they opened up and really took something away from the educational points, and idea of taking control of one's sexual health.

Team Learning

Participants were able to learn about preventative health through education and a focus on sports, nutrition, and rehabilitation. They were also able to see how the concerns of more urban communities in Cape Coast differ from those of rural communities worked with in Nkwa.

Community Engagement

Those within the community were engaged with the activities and always happy to interact with us. With better planning, community outreach, sports activities, and education could have a bigger turnout and our participants could have a more positive impact on the community.

Space for Growth

Although we were able to fulfill most of our goals, there needs to be some more organization and preparation for changes in the itinerary. There needs to be better communication between PLs and Hoops about who OG is, what our participants are capable of/interested in, and how we can all be prepared for the entire week. We could do this better by having an in-depth discussion with both the Hoops Director and Volunteer Coordinator present so we are all able to be on the same page during the planning stage. Scheduling out our work with day by day layouts during the planning stage, and insisting that this is needed in advance, would allow the execution to go much more smoothly and lead to more effective placements as well.

Orthopaedic Training Center

One of the only centres of its kind in Ghana, the OTC performs a range of functions for those who are physically disabled, including physical therapy, individual prosthetics fashioned by hand, mobile prosthetic clinics, and outreach and education initiatives.

Goals

- Provide participants with a greater understanding of the issues surrounding disability and accessibility-a subject often overlooked at home as well as in Ghana
- Tour the centre in order to understand the holistic approach to treatment OTC offers

Accomplishments

The participants were certainly moved by the work of OTC, learned a lot about their broad range of efforts, and walked away with a better understanding of disability and the lives of those affected.

Team Learning

The team was able to better understand the material, logistical, and cultural issues surrounding disability, and were moved by the words and attitude of Gloria, our guide.

Community Engagement

Gloria, who is the main contact at OTC, and other health care personnel at the centre freely shared their struggles and hopes surrounding their work and access in Ghana, and were happy to contribute to our visit.

The staff at OTC were happy to answer questions about the centre, about living as a person with disabilities in Ghana, and about the logistics of their work. We were warmly greeted in every room we entered. The children at the centre were also very excited by visitors and we were able to meet them and sing a few songs with them during their play time.

Space for Growth

We can improve coordination by choosing a weekday to visit rather than weekends and encouraging participants to think of questions surrounding disability/accessibility before, during and after the tour.

Kayayei Youth Association

Kayayei Youth Association is a non-profit organization working in Old Fadama, Accra, that aims to provide the necessary resources for the safety and well-being of Kayayeis, who are the women who have migrated from the North and now work as porters in the markets. This organization is one of the largest informal settlements in Ghana, which works to address many issues related to global health: gender roles, family planning, economics, political structures, sanitation, and food security. They offer support and employment opportunities for Kayayeis. Past OG teams have contributed financially to the Kayayei Women's Association's income-generation projects in the Northern regions of Ghana, which focus on educating and training women in sewing and hairdressing so that economic opportunities are available to them there, making migration to Old Fadama unnecessary.

Goals

- Have participants recognize the health concerns of those living at the margins of society and see how health is influenced by factors which are socially, politically and economically founded
- Learn about the organization's effort to improve the lives of women there, and to learn about the challenges of the women from the women themselves.

Accomplishments

The participants heard the stories of the Kayayeis, and learnt how government and civil society actions play a large role in health outcomes.

Team Learning

It's an often overwhelming experience, even with extensive debriefs beforehand. Participants realize that there are faces and stories to the poverty, migration, sexual assault, lack of sanitation resources, and slums they may have read about in books only. It also provides a context with which to understand the divide between the north and south of Ghana, and why people choose to migrate to urban centers.

Community Engagement

The partner is engaged with our visit and many women from the community come to sit and speak to us about their experiences. The team has an opportunity to talk with the women of the community and ask them questions and the women are very open and responsive.

Space for Growth

The interactions could be improved by some simple changes in seating and arrangement to make sure everyone is included and heard. Additionally, hearing can always be a bit difficult as the area is a busy marketplace, so perhaps speaking to the partner members inside first to get a better-heard understanding of its aims and efforts, then moving outside to talk with the women.

Dzi Wopoano Nyi (Keep Your Beach Clean)

A local, grassroots organization whose aim is to clean up garbage and debris from beaches in Cape Coast, Ghana. They also focus on physical activity, environmental education, and supporting marginalized youth.

Goals

The goal was to encourage kids to take care of the environment, promoting sports and also education through two parts:

- Beach clean-up
- Assisting with and participating in a football tournament

Accomplishments

Although the goal of our participants was not met because they did not participate in the clean up, due to a miscommunication about start time, the kids did, which still sent the message about environmental protection and stewardship. By participating in the tournament we were able to engage with the youth, promote sports activities, and by providing educational materials (books and pencils) to those who participated we also encouraged academic learning.

Team Learning

The team had a great time playing with the children. It's a fun and humbling experience to play with the kids and help promote greater care of the environment, participation in sports, and positively correlate fun with education.

Community Engagement

Dzi Wopoano Nyi was definitely engaged with the activity as it was a goal of the organization to put on something large scale, like a tournament, for the kids.

The kids of the community were definitely engaged with the team and loved playing a few games with them. Even other community members and children who weren't on the teams were also eager to interact with the team and teach a clapping game if one was inclined to learn.

In general participants tend to interact with people in their volunteer placements. Outside of projects/activities participants also tend to go out and make contacts with people from the community. We connected with a partner outside projects, Ras Kobby, who oversees his peaceful eco-lodge Natural Bamboo Village and his NGO Dzi Wo Mpoano Ni that organizes beach clean ups with the children. He also organized a dinner and bonfire night for us. He is a potential major partner for next year.

Space for Growth

We can improve upon the partnership by organizing activities better including time and execution, making sure everyone is on the same page. We may also be able to support in future projects at Natural Bamboo Village, the guesthouse Kobby runs that also provides funding for Dzi Wopoano Nyi initiatives.

A final note from Operation Groundswell:

This report is the result of hard work and dedication of many different people; from Program Leaders on the ground, to Regional Directors, to our staff at HQ. For more information about any of the projects listed, please email our Financial Support Coordinator, Will, at will@operationgroundswell.com.