

## DESCRIPTION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

ISAAC DE LA FUENTE



### DESCRIPTION OF TRAINING

Isaac de la Fuente began Peace Corps Nicaragua's community-based training program in the town of Pio XII on September 3, 2003. The intensive twelve-week training program is designed to help trainees adapt to actual field situations while living with Nicaraguan families. The program included formal instruction in Spanish, Nicaraguan culture, cross-cultural adaptation, community development, non-formal education techniques, and technical themes related to environmental education in Nicaragua. Training consisted of approximately 180 hours of Spanish language study, 69.5 hours of technical training in environmental education, and 29.5 hours of cross-cultural studies. An additional 104 hours of non-formal self-directed activities were also carried out in technical and cross-cultural themes at the community level.

After successful completion of training, Isaac de la Fuente was sworn in as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nicaragua on November 28, 2003.

### PRIMARY WORK ASSIGNMENT

As an Environmental Education Volunteer, Isaac de la Fuente was assigned to work in the community of Boaco Viejo, located in the Boaco region of Nicaragua. Isaac de la Fuente was assigned to work with the Ministry of Education to help local teachers enhance their participatory teaching methodologies by integrating environmental topics in the classrooms and by implementing hands-on activities outside the classroom setting. Isaac de la Fuente conducted the following activities in Spanish:

- Taught environmental education to seven classrooms in three rural schools from grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> (5hrs. per week). Promoted participatory learning via dynamic activities including games, role playing, student led lessons, arts & crafts and outdoor activities related to environmental science and conservation. Class topics included garbage management, organic composting, endangered species, human impact on ecosystems, organic pest control, nature appreciation and land management. Coordinated participatory outdoor activities in organic composting, gardening, tree planting, transplanting and garbage management.
- Performed a community survey used to assess the needs of the community and help guide future sustainable projects. Met with the town development committee to discuss issues pertinent and pressing to the community.
- Led school wide games and activities to promote environmental education. Activities highlighted lessons being taught in the classroom and were performed in from all 350 students. Topics included endangered species and organic composting.

- Co-facilitated participatory lessons with 4 teachers; helping to improve the teachers' understanding of interactive and participatory environmental education.
- Facilitated monthly 1-hour workshops with entire 35 teacher staff on topics including student self esteem, classroom management, participatory subject content, environmental education and educational technology.
- Organized and facilitated annual teacher workshops at 5 different schools with teacher participation of over 200 each year for 2 years. Topics included classroom management, integrating environmental education into the curriculum, and participatory subject content for: math, social studies and natural science.

## **SECONDARY PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

- Facilitated the construction and painting of 12 foot by 6 foot world map by 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- Established 5 computer learning center; providing the access of word processing, spreadsheet, photo editing and educational software to over 300 students and 35 teachers and staff.
- Taught computer literacy to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students (2 hrs. per week). Students attained competency in basic computer management, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and various educational software.
- Taught computer literacy to preschool students (2 hrs. per week). Students achieved competency in basic computer skills and preschool educational software.
- Taught computer literacy to 7 teachers (4hrs. per week). Teachers attained competency in basic computer management, Microsoft Word and various educational software. Facilitated the integration of educational software into daily lesson plans of 3 teachers for grades preschool, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Taught English grammar and conversational skills to 2 community members. The adults were responsible for homework and class participation. Helped in translating communication between community members and Canada; allowing them to participate in a beekeeper exchange program in a Canadian city.
- Developed seed exchange program for local community members looking to establish home gardens or expand their existing crops. Community members traded harvested produce for seeds and bags.
- Established "work-it/bank-it" program for 5 neighboring children in which they earned money for performing chores but were only able to withdraw money from their account to support family needs. Program promoted proper money management work ethic.
- Gave personal computer repair lessons to host family brother (2hrs. a week for 3 months). Established a baseline of knowledge of PC repair; allowing the student to enter a technical school the following year.
- Acted as master of ceremonies at the annual Corn Festival where all of the members of the outlying communities bring in corn and crops to sell and celebrate. Organized educational activities for the hundreds of children present.

- Established informal after-school youth group for 10 students. Held discussions and informal talks on subjects such as gender, sexuality, sex and work ethic. Led outdoor activities including hiking, running and animal watching. Indoor activities included painting, coloring, reading, letter writing and educational software usage.
- Established after-school exercise center for 5 students. Taught exercise and nutrition concepts to help dispel myths and establish healthy lifestyles. Led 2 students to achieve their fitness goals and have control of their body fat percentage.
- As a member of the Diversity Committee, facilitated training for trainees on cultural and gender awareness and in-country stress coping techniques. Led specific portions of the training on inter-cultural communication techniques and stress-coping techniques.
- Presented informational workshops during pre-service training to the environmental education trainees on subjects including teacher workshops, participatory education, and community analysis tools. Hosted one Trainee on a four-day Volunteer visit, which introduced her to environmental education activities, safety and security realities, cross-cultural and counterpart relations, and daily living skills
- Presented informational workshop on classroom management to 15 trainees and their 15 in-country counterparts. Designed workshop to promote better classroom management skills and to create better understanding of classroom management problems between volunteers and counterparts.
- Presented project details of a completed world map project to all volunteers at the annual all-volunteer conference.

## **COMPLETION OF SERVICE**

Isaac de la Fuente completed his Peace Corps service on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

“Pursuant to section 5(f) of the Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. 2504(f) as amended, any former Volunteer employed by the United States Government following Peace Corps Volunteer service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps service credited for purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave and other privileges based on the length of Government service. Peace Corps service shall not be credited toward completion of the probationary or trial period or completion of any service requirement for career appointment.”

“This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order 11103 of April 10, 1963, that Isaac de la Fuente served satisfactorily as a Peace Corps Volunteer. His/her service in Nicaragua ended on October 25, 2005. She/He is therefore eligible to be appointed as career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a non-competitive basis.

This benefit under the Executive Order entitlement extends for a period of one year except that the employing agency may extend the period for up to three years for a former volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institute of higher learning, or engages in other activities which, in the view of the appointing authority, warrants extension of the period.”

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Todd Sloan  
Country Director

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Date