

Fuerza Honduras

Newsletter – December 2017

Introduction

A team of Dartmouth students and alumna embarked on a familiar journey to Honduras in November of 2017. In the village of El Rosario, they administered the “La Fuerza para el Futuro,” or “Fuerza” program, which develops leadership skills in the youth to catalyze positive change in their communities. In the past, these programs have run concurrently with different public health initiatives in collaboration with the Norris Cotton Cancer Center. During the past March trip, the Dartmouth team created a curriculum that involved educating the community of El Rosario about safely using agricultural chemicals. For the November trip, the team expounded upon this curriculum and travelled to the neighboring communities of El Chaguite and Carrizalito to reach further populations and have a broader impact within the region. Since the team traditionally travels in March, the Dartmouth team was especially excited to experience El Rosario during a new season.



Fuerza Program Participants Outside Educational Center

This trip had four returning students who anticipated seeing familiar faces in El Rosario. Two of the members, Dominique Dadekian '18 and Angie Lee '17 returned for the third time, while Lucia Caballero '19 and Jamie Park '20 returned for their second time. The new members were very excited to become involved with the work in El Rosario. One of the most integral aspects of this trip is the continuity of the program. Because ACTS Honduras has worked within the region for numerous years, ACTS has built strong relationships with the local community members in Honduras. For returning Dartmouth students, engaging in this program for consecutive years is a meaningful opportunity to participate in sustainable community development and watch former Fuerza students grow into leaders through the program. Ultimately, many students continue to return for the trips because of how impactful the program has been on their own personal development.

To prepare for the trip, the team worked diligently for months to develop the agricultural chemical education curriculum that expanded upon the pesticide education that had been successful during the past March trip. During the last trip, Dartmouth students also piloted the new Fuerza Arriba program created by Juliana Ortego '13, which was a separate leadership-building workshop for veteran Fuerza students. This year's trip expanded upon the Fuerza Arriba program to provide resume and career building advice for students as they consider their future paths.

Community Workshops: Agricultural Chemical Education

The agricultural sector is a critical component of the economy of Honduras. Unfortunately, farmers who work in rural villages like El Rosario work with agricultural chemicals without wearing the proper protective equipment to reduce respiratory and tactile exposure to these harmful chemicals. Members of the family can also be exposed to the chemicals because they are stored at home. To exacerbate the issue, men do not shower before returning home which results in contaminated clothing within their homes.



Fuerza Students Prepare for Skits

As a continuation of the partnership with the Cancer Program, Fuerza students travelled to the surrounding villages of El Chaguite and Carrizalito to deliver the educational program from the March trip on a grander scale. As a result, much time was spent perfecting the skits and creating public health posters that illustrated the main points of the chemical education. To encourage initiative and leadership skills, the Dartmouth students asked veteran Fuerza Arriba students to lead the creation of the skits and posters. They took charge of smaller groups to help them

develop creative skits and create vibrant, informative posters.

The Dartmouth students were especially proud to see how much the Fuerza Arriba veteran students had grown as a result of their continued participation in the program. Because of their commitment to the program over the past years, they have demonstrated incredible leadership skills. With little guidance, the Dartmouth students watched as the veteran students confidently stood at the front of the classroom to educate their peers on how to effectively deliver the skits with the proper information.



Fuerza Students Perform Skits in Carrizalito



Fuerza Students Administer Educational Pamphlets

The Fuerza students travelled together to the surrounding villages of Carrizalito and El Chaguite. Upon arrival, they used props like backpacks and jackets to demonstrate how to safely use protective equipment when spraying chemicals. The students also administered their educational pamphlets and posters to the village members such that the village members could remember these practices in the future. The audience was very engaged during these presentations and listened intently to the skits, and the Fuerza students were proud of delivering their effective and educational performances outside of El Rosario.



Students Peruse Books in Library

Educational Programming: Library Project

Thanks to a generous donation from ACTS, the El Rosario Education Center houses a small library which is available to all members of the communities in the Locomapa region. During their most recent trip to the village, the Dartmouth undergraduates planned and executed a workshop which aimed to promote use of the library by showcasing the large variety of books and garnering interest in reading. The Dartmouth

students taught how to get relevant information about a book by reading the front and back covers and the table of contents. Each student chose a book out of the library and wrote a small report on the book using the information they read.

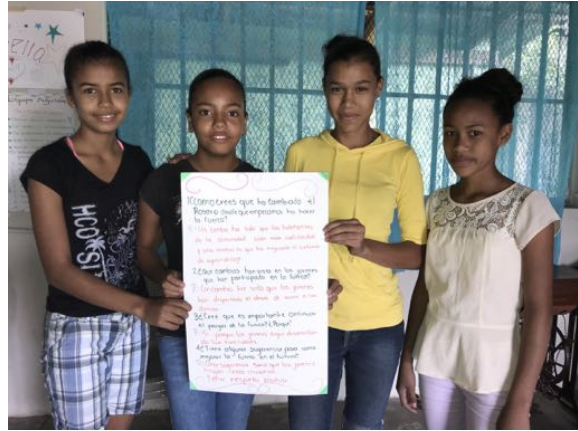


Fuerza Students Create their Book Reports

Each Fuerza student presented their book reports to the rest of the class. These presentations helped the students synthesize key information from a book and develop public speaking skills as they shared their book reports with the rest of the students. This activity also generated more excitement about reading especially given the proximity of the books to the educational center. We look forward to continuing encouraging the Fuerza students to read books and develop key critical thinking skills.

Fuerza Program Impact Focus Groups

During this year's trip, the Dartmouth students decided to lead focus groups that assessed the impact of the Fuerza Program on the community of El Rosario. Given the history of the Fuerza Program, the team wanted to collect data through surveys that were administered to the students. To collect this data, the students first answered questions that asked about the effects of the agricultural chemical education project within their social circles. These surveys also collected feedback on positive aspects of the program as well as any suggested areas of improvement. These survey results will be analyzed by the Norris Cotton Cancer Center as well as the Dartmouth undergraduates to guide development of future programs to ensure that they produce evidence-based sustainable and positive changes for the community in the future.



Fuerza Students Present Findings of Focus Groups

The students also orally surveyed local community members to ask how they believed their community had changed since the implementation of the Fuerza program many years ago. They found that the program had a tremendous impact on the community and that most community members are highly supportive of its continuation. The students once again had the chance to work on their teamwork and presentation skills by creating a poster that contained all of the data that they collected while talking to community members about the program.

Fuerza Arriba: Career Building Workshops



Fuerza Arriba Students with Resumes

As the veteran Fuerza Arriba students prepare to graduate from their high schools, they look towards possible career paths and higher level education. To help these students along their future paths and aspirations, the Dartmouth undergraduates conducted workshops separately with Fuerza Arriba

students and helped them create professional resumes. The Fuerza Arriba students were given multiple copies of these resumes which listed their meaningful experiences and achievements, many of which were done in their past participation with the Fuerza Program. For the Fuerza Arriba students, creating these resumes was an important period of reflection to see how they had grown as a result of the program. They will help future employers understand their fit and relevant experiences for their position of interest.

The Dartmouth students also conducted mock interview workshops with the Fuerza Arriba students. They practiced how to maintain eye contact with a future employer and how to effectively their strengths and fit for a job position. As the Fuerza Program has seen the growth of many students, we look forward to seeing how these future leaders will utilize their developed skills in their future careers.



Fuerza Arriba Students Practice Interview Skills

As a result of their work with Fuerza Arriba students, the Dartmouth students especially anticipate seeing how younger Fuerza students will continue to develop and eventually become Fuerza Arriba students themselves. The younger Fuerza students look up to the Fuerza Arriba students as future role models that they can emulate. The Fuerza Program is truly and impactful program that creates future leaders of Honduras.

Looking to the Future

The team of Dartmouth students is looking forward to seeing future changes and documenting the impacts of the program like the agricultural chemical education in partnership with the Norris Cotton Cancer Center. From the results of the focus group discussions that assessed impact of the Fuerza Program, it is clear that the program has produced lasting, positive changes upon the community.

The entire team would like to thank all of the supporters of the Fuerza Program. We have witnessed the growth of many students and have developed incredibly meaningful relationships. We look forward to sharing future success stories with you all in the future.



*(Top left to right) Armando Pulido '19, Lucia Caballero '19, Jamie Park '20, AJ Spiegelman '19
(Bottom left to right) Dominique Dadekian '18, Angie Lee '17*

Warmly,

Angie Lee '17, Trip Leader

Dominique Dadekian '18, Curriculum Coordinator

Lucia Caballero '19, Fuerza Leader

Armando Pulido '19, Fuerza Leader

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