

Connecting a Community to its Environment through Education: Volunteering at the Sarapiquí Learning and Conservation Center

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OVERALL MISSION OF SARAPIQUÍ LEARNING AND CONSERVATION CENTER

The SCLC focuses its efforts in environmental education, community development, conservation, and tourism. The ultimate goal is to form future environmental leaders, promote sustainable land use, connect tourists to the local community, and encourage future education in Sarapiquí's citizens. The Center strives to encourage education to the local community by raising money for scholarships through donations so that kids have the opportunity to go to high school and further their education.

CHALLENGES IN SARAPIQUI

Sarapiquí is a poor, rural area fairly disconnected from the outer world. Education is not a priority to many families in the area because there is a strong need to work or farm for the family. Education (past elementary/middle school) is not affordable to all families. Chilamate is a community highly influenced by banana and pineapple plantations, giving work to its community members. However, this kind of work involving the handling of chemicals leaves many residual health effects including cancer. This incapacitates the family even more.



MY WORK AT THE SARAPIQUÍ LEARNING CENTER

• Bird Sleuth

Implemented the Bird Sleuth teaching curriculum (University of Costa Rica, Cornell University) which teaches local kids about birds and why they should be conserved. The program's goal is to connect children with nature and build their knowledge and science and environmental education through experiences both inside and outside the classroom focused on birds and their habitat needs. The program consists of 10 basic lessons through which children can be guided to actively engage and motivate children to channel their energy into a positive learning experience.

OTHER WORK

- Helped matriculate community members into the evening English (EFL) classes
- Researched potential future environmental education programs for the center to conduct
- Service projects: Painting a local high school, reforestation of previous agricultural land
- Participated in meetings for: Comisión de Educación Ambiental Sarapiquí
- Held a fundraising event for the Isidro Elementary School

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