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Studying Abroad in the Dominican Republic: A Journey of Growth and Discovery: Experiences, Challenges and Opportunities

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Dominican Republic Study Abroad Final Project

Shum Saleh

Children's International

The Event

We visited Children's International during our study abroad trip. We observed the class activities as well as interacted with students in the classroom. The school was run by the agency who supports youth who don't have family support for education and struggle with familial loss and are poverty stricken. The students were engaged, and happy to be in the classroom to learn English. The teacher we observed had been in the classroom as a student before. The teacher provided a safe learning space, a rewarding learning environment and was very motivated to provide her current students with a better life.



My Takeaways

As a refugee I have been exposed to multiple cultures such as the culture in my home country Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, and United States. Visiting Dominican Republic; Children's internationals has left a positive impact on me to appreciate the relationship between the students and their teachers in different cultures. As a person who has experience in the foster care system, I was especially impressed by how this teacher understood her students and interacted with them in that culture.

Congress in DR

The Event

We visited the Dominican Congress and met with a Senator who explained different functions of the government. While visiting Congress, I was impressed that a senator would take time for our group and interact with the young people. He seemed genuinely concerned about the issues his country faces and made me think on how governments function and why people choose to work in government. It made me think about our shared responsibility for societal improvement, regardless of our careers.



My takeaways

I plan to work in the field of social work, so social justice is crucial to me. This experience highlighted the importance of addressing the specific issues of a society, as they can vary from place to place. I aspire to work in Egypt and this experience reminded me that I must be mindful of the needs and goals of the people I am serving instead of just following generally established guidelines.

Seita Scholars: Community

The Event

Retreat Day we were able to enjoy the day with one another in community at a local ranch. It was just us together. We engaged with each other and reflected on our trip together before we departed back to WMU. The tree in the photo helped me reflect on our growth. Like the tree which was the only big tree in the area but was still growing well, we were also there for a brief time and away from families, but we learned so much and grew a lot personally.



The Takeaway

The "loving Kindness" meditation reminded me of the community we have with Seita and how this trip has impacted me personally. It helped me understand my own vulnerability, I realize that we all need to show vulnerability and humility in our human connections and experiences. I have been impacted by the kind connections I have made with Seita community.

Building connections and growing together

The Event

Sometimes being away from your home or being around people you regularly don't spend time with could be hard on us. In this Study abroad trip I had personal growth in building friendships. Ali, Rahim and I used to sit around the pool often and chat about life in the hotel where we were staying. We all had big impact on one another, and I made friends. Seeing one another made our day so much easier. I learned a lot about others but especially Ali and Rohim. The three of us made many memories with laughter and good times. Our trip was never boring because of the many laughs we shared.



My takeaways

I enjoyed getting to be around others and embracing our journeys together in Dominican Republic. It taught me that being away from home teaches us not just about the world but about ourselves.

THANK YOU