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In a country where over half of the residents live below the poverty line, many do not have access to health services, education assistance, micro-enterprise loans, and basic needs such as water, housing, and food. Government funding for programs that provide these services is extremely minimal. Sixty percent of Nicaragua's population lives in urban areas and the growth rate in urban areas is twice that of rural areas. However, the majority of land is rural and the majority of economic output is steeped in agriculture. This puts added pressure on community development initiatives in these rural areas to maintain economic and cultural strength.

The best resources for community development are Nicaraguans themselves and their locally-born, grassroots movements. Through peer training and peer education, community promoters are instrumental in every aspect of development: serving on boards and processing administration funds and policies; conducting surveys and outreach visits in homes and community centers; and organizing work projects that range from a health education radio programs for teenagers to the installation of a solar-powered wells for clean and accessible water. These promoters transform communities as empowered local leaders who offer culturally sensitive education programs and capacity building that is proving to be one of the more successful development movements in the country.

Support for the promoters and their affiliate organizations is constantly in need. Interns in Nicaragua might assist in this type of community development through support of implementation of workshops, training programs, and development projects that benefit all aspects of the community.

Internship/Volunteer opportunities in community development in Nicaragua include:

- Offer community workshops for poor, rural farmers on topics such as: micro-credit opportunities, natural medicine, preventative health, domestic violence, agricultural management, cooking, nutrition, and organic agriculture.
- Support expansion of an FSD project that is in the process of building a women's community market for local entrepreneurs.
- Assist a program that recruits youth from local communities to become promoters (peer educators) on issues such as reproductive health, birth control methods, etc. Youth groups work not only in their own communities but also in secondary schools and rural areas, organizing talks and workshops, and training other youth leaders to multiply their efforts.
- Plan and host community educational workshops and discussions that address vocational skills, local leadership, and education curriculum for local schools.
- Support an organization that provides comprehensive resources to communities for sexual and intra-familial violence, vocational and technical training, HIV/AIDS awareness programs, and legal assistance for rights violations.
- Work toward the preservation of indigenous culture by assisting the building and maintenance of a local museum to house artifacts found from nearby archeological digs.

For more opportunities in community development in Nicaragua, visit our website or contact us directly.