



All People Be Happy

foundation

Labor Day may be the “official” end to the summer in most places in the Northern Hemisphere, but here in Houston it is still hot, and it may be a long time before we get relief. Luckily for most of us who live and work here and other places on the U.S. Gulf Coast, air conditioning is ever present, as are clean running water and access to fuel. Just listen to the complaints if we lose power for a few hours or a few weeks after a big storm if you want to know what life is like for those living in similar climates around the developing world.

People Who Make a Difference



Over the years we have given stipend grants to volunteers through the Foundation's Volunteer Service Awards. Most of the award have gone to individuals who volunteer during their summer vacations or during gap years. In the Spring of 2018, we awarded \$5000 (\$2500 each) to a husband and wife engineering team. Lisa Hall, a water resource engineer, and Steve Meicke, a mechanical engineer with years of experience in hydro-mechanical design in hydroelectric facilities, took a leap of faith and quit their paying jobs to spend a year as volunteer consultants with **Green Empowerment** in rural Bolivia. Even though they will tell you that they ran into many obstacles and their progress was nothing like what they would have liked, it is amazing what these 2 accomplished. This is just a small excerpt of their report.

“Coming into our year of service, we envisioned our impact in a vastly different way than what actually came to fruition. As people accustomed to getting things done quickly and effectively in the corporate engineering world, it's easy to see why we might have expected to arrive, get the lay of the land in a few weeks, and quickly be snapping construction photos in dozens of communities as we commissioned flawlessly operating water systems.

What we came to find was indeed very much different. The fact of the matter is that this is very difficult work... The normal challenges of daily life for us included communicating effectively in a new language, being constantly sick as our bodies adjusted to the new climate, food, mosquitoes, and water, extreme heat, limited materials available for purchase locally, limited or no project budget, expensive transportation via boat, limited training of local technical staff, intermittent extreme flooding, very dangerous roads, managing cultural expectations, challenging relationships with village leaders, corrupt and/or ineffective governments, and other

water in this region, the rainy season had begun. During the rainy season in the Bolivian Amazon, constructing water projects is not feasible due to the challenges of working in saturated soils, flooding, intense rainfall, and the inability to provide reliable transportation to extremely remote sites in the jungle.”

“Looking back, we both believe that our greatest impact was through the networks that were strengthened through our work, and through the training we provided to community members, and technical staff from other NGOs and municipalities. It was clear from our observations that the existing water infrastructure in the region was designed and constructed in almost every instance by people who did not have any formal training in engineering, water sanitation and hygiene, or community risk reduction. The water systems we saw were precariously functioning at best, without any recorded history of water analysis to prove the water was safe, even in cities such as Rurrenabaque with upwards of 15,000 inhabitants.” Perhaps their most important, long term impact was the training material that they provided.

- Wastewater Treatment Practical Guide: Development of a step-by-step guide for the design and installation of small-scale black and grey water treatment system using locally available materials. Installation of this technology will help avoid contamination by sewage and ponding of wastewater, also minimizing mosquito breeding habitat in these remote communities
- Water System Sizing Calculation Book: Basic calculation book showing how to calculate the amount of water needed for present and future community use.
- Solar Pumping System Design Calculation Book: How to size a solar-powered pumping system. This tool will help users to better estimate how many solar panels they will need during the rainy season to supply a community with the water they need.

These tools will also be used by Green Empowerment and their many partners throughout Latin America and Asia.

We are happy to report that Steve and Lisa have accepted jobs in Portland, Oregon and will continue to be involved with Green Empowerment.

Project Grants

This past quarter the Foundation also funded 4 renewal project grants of approximately \$10,000 each. Follow our blog at <http://allpeoplebehappyblr.tumblr.com/> for more frequent updates of the Foundation’s investments.

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