



IIP: Comunidad Connect San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua

Anna Menke '16
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About Comunidad Connect (CC)

- Community driven sustainable development non-profit founded in 2007 by Roman Yavich and Jon Thompson
- Two offices in San Juan del Sur and Jinotega, Nicaragua
- Small, multicultural staff, most of whom are Nicaraguan
- Projects include: Campo Verde, Cultural Connections, Nica-Agua, Community Sports Park & Nicaragua Community Health Connection (NCHC)

Comunidad Connect

Outside of the CC office in
San Juan del Sur!



Yariesleidy, the head of CC's Nica-
Agua project explains Filtrons.



My Work & Projects at Comunidad Connect

- Social Media management
- Sports park data base creation and data entry
- Municipal Recycling needs assessment
- Water filtration impact and sustainability monitoring
- Taught English classes
- Solar Panel Installation and coordination
- Coordination of new partnerships for Cultural Connections
- Proposal and implementation of girls sports initiative
- General youth sports organization and assistance

A few of my favorite days at work

Solar panel installation day!



Girls sports clinic!



Most rewarding aspects

- Learning functional Spanish
- Proposing and initiating my own projects
- Working with a multicultural staff
- Working closely with community members and children
- Truly becoming a part of the community

Learning inside and outside

Students crane to get a view
of new computer!



Wednesday afternoon
English class!



Impact of My Work on Comunidad Connect

- Led the first We Care Solar project in Nicaragua – possibility of more projects and a future partnership
- Initiated the first girls sports clinic through Comunidad Connect's sports park – contributed to the infrastructure for a potential league in the future and more events catered specifically to young girls
- Conducted an investigation of the factors inhibiting effective recycling programs in San Juan del Sur – sparking NGO interest in future involvement and support of municipal recycling

New initiatives with Comunidad Connect

The first sports clinic specifically for girls at the CC Sports Park!



Solar Panel installation in Jinotega, Nicaragua.



Impact on my career path and academic pursuits

- Inspired to continue studying Spanish at Princeton
- Curiosity about different avenues of development – planning to take a social entrepreneurship class this fall
- Learned how much I like working in a tight-knit group of people and how much I like project work on the ground
- Plan to pursue a career that pairs international development with environmental sustainability, either in the non-profit sector or in the form of corporate social responsibility

The perks of field work

A few chicas outside a farm school in northern Nicaragua!



A long, hot day of water-filter monitoring!



Life in San Juan del Sur

- Bustling old fishing village turned into a popular tourist destination for surfers
- Town is located right on a crescent shaped beach with 8 other beaches within a half an hours drive
- Always very hot and humid – even in the rainy season. Air conditioning is scarce and expensive
- Great hiking
- Vibrant night life
- Westernized restaurants and food available in town
- I lived with a local family in a homestay for my first 2 months and then spent my last two weeks renting a room from two old ladies who lived in town
- Gyms & cross-fit classes exist
- Easy access to public transportation (buses, taxis, shuttles)

An amazing place to live

Sunset in San Juan del Sur!



Beautiful hike in Gigante (just north of San Juan del Sur)



Personal Growth and Cultural Awareness

- Confidence in my own leadership and ability to navigate unfamiliar places and situations
- Self-awareness of my own culturally curated assumptions and expectations
- Comfort speaking a second language
- Appreciation of the privilege that it is to have choices and mobility
- Appreciation of the artificial nature of most of the stress in my life at home, in America



San Juan del Sur