



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: I Love Lake Atitlan - An Immersion in Mayan Culture **Name:** sarah safford

Other Team Members:

Program: New York City Program

Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001

Location Visited: guatemala

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: Despite hundreds of years of colonial rule, civil wars, and exploitation by global capitalists, Mayan culture is alive and strong in Guatemala, especially in the villages around Lake Atitlan. Everywhere you see people in beautifully colorful traditional clothing, women carrying large baskets on their heads or men with enormous bundles of sticks on their backs, children working alongside their parents weaving textiles or cultivating corn and other crops in much the same way they have for centuries. In the pueblos around the lake women cook over wood fires, preparing fresh tortillas daily, washing their clothes and bathing in the lake, and spending the rest of their time weaving, marketing or working in some way to contribute to the family's needs. The men fish in hand made wooden canoes or farm the fertile slopes of the surrounding volcanoes.

This was an inspiring place to learn Spanish within a cultural context so different from my own. I wanted to explore Mayan culture through questions about food, farming, daily life and fair trade, basic themes that I felt would also interest my students. Two different home stays and schools, one in the colonial city of Antigua and one in San Pedro on Lake Atitlan provided contrasting and complimentary experiences. After getting my feet wet in Antigua, refreshing my language skills and learning a bit about the history and current economic situation, I went on to Lake Atitlan and plunged deeply into the rural Mayan lifestyle. Learning Spanish while learning to make tortillas, carry firewood, pick coffee and transplant seedlings, was a peaceful and rewarding process, and one that I look forward to sharing at my school.

Career Impact:

- Improved Spanish conversation ability and experienced Guatemalan approach to instruction
- Learned about specific aspects of Mayan culture to use as focal points in teaching
- Explored various environments including villages, volcanoes, farms and the lake
- Learned about the many different indigenous languages and groups that inhabit this country
- Gained first hand understanding of daily life in rural villages

Classroom/Community Impact:

- Acquired language skills needed to plan lessons and become a better Spanish teacher
- Gathered ideas and materials to use in developing a Mayan curriculum unit
- Collected artifacts, photos, videos and recordings to use in the classroom
- Made contact with a cooperative farm and a school for possible future exchange and collaboration

Open Response:

- A curriculum unit for Spanish Level I focused on Mayan culture
- A video on the process of making tortillas
- A video about a cooperative coffee farm
- Other short videos to use for units on daily life including work, clothing, and marketing
- Audio recordings of Mayan legends to use in creating performance project

Quote: I wanted to explore Mayan culture through questions about food, farming, daily life and fair trade, basic themes that I felt would also interest my students.

Photos:



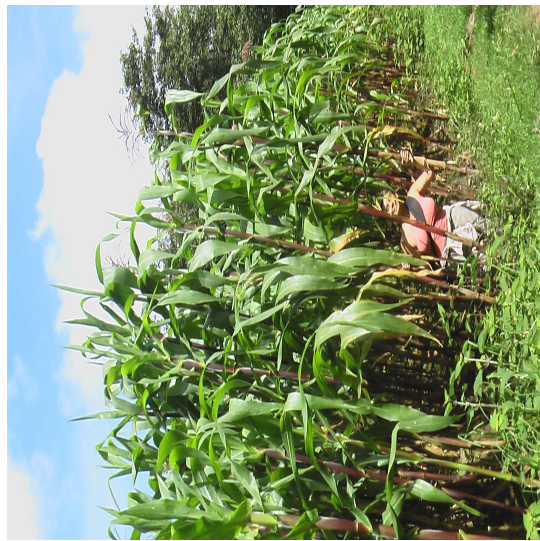
on top of La Nariz del Indio



making tortillas with Ana



Market in Santa Clara



Standing in the tall corn



woman carrying basket



selling weaving in the market



Men fishing in Lake Atitlan



Flor de Maiz