

INTRODUCTION

Team Monterey provides a professional, international opportunity for graduate students at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) to cultivate development skills and enhance language and multicultural competency by developing and nurturing a partnership with La Coordinadora-Asociación Mangle (LC-AM) through ongoing development projects for the past five years. Team Monterey 5 (TM5) is comprised of fourteen graduate students from the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) and TM Faculty Director, Adele Negro. On January 3rd, 2010 the team arrived to the Bajo Lempa region of El Salvador where our work will take place during the three weeks of our stay. Our team is divided into three groups, each working on a project that was requested to us, by the LC-AM. The TM5 leaders of these groups are Emily Hanks, Karin Orr and Melissa Summers. Of these three projects are; the environment team working on a business plan for eco-tourism, the infrastructure team working to develop a general waste management plan, and the production team working on an assessment of agricultural practices and production.

PROJECT TEAMS: ENVIRONMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, & PRODUCTION

Environment: Eco-tourism Team

Team Monterey: Emily Hanks

Within the past week the environmental team has further prepared for our meeting with the Director of Environmental Policy and Procedures for the Bajo Lempa. During the meeting on Tuesday, we coordinated with the community leaders with whom we will work and further discussed a proposal of our work in El Salvador. The rest of the week was spent clarifying the goals of the environmental team, meeting with community leaders from five different towns, and discussing how best we can improve upon the community ecotourism in the Bajo Lempa.

After these discussions, it was decided that we would work with all five communities to help them develop a community ecotourism plan for their region. The goal is to have a network of communities that will create routes for ecotourism in the area. In order to help achieve this goal, we will be holding meetings with the board of directors in each of the five communities: Aguacate, San Jose, Isla de Mendez, Ceiba, and Llanos. The goal of these meetings is that the board of directors will draw a map of the current ecotourism situation in the town followed by a futuristic map of where they would like to see their community in 10 years within the realm of ecotourism. These maps will be discussed by all community members using strategic questions that will contribute to a SWOT Analysis for each community. After the environmental team meets individually with each community, we will then meet with all five communities together to visualize the maps together in order to see the possible tourist routes, as well as devise a one-year strategic plan. To conclude, the environmental team will complete the following deliverables: a 10-year visual strategic plan for five communities, a SWOT Analysis for each community, and a workshop for all five communities on how to improve upon their strategic plan.

Infrastructure: Waste Management Team
Team Leader: Karin Orr

Within the course of the past week, the Infrastructure: Waste Management Team has conducted primary research for the purpose of determining a strategic plan that will be the most beneficial to the community of Bajo Lempa region. In our first week we met with the Board of Directors of the partner organization La Coorindaora-Asociación Mangle to discuss and then assess the present needs of the community. Through a series of facilitated dialogues with various stakeholders; such as a biologist fishery expert, waste management engineer, Park Ranger of Protected Areas in El Salvador, community members of the Isla Mendes area and other primary stakeholders, for the purpose of developing the focus of our work over the course of the next three weeks.

Based off of these meetings, the Infrastructure team decided that it will be working to develop a waste management model that can be customized to rural and protected environment areas that have limited resources. We will be using the Isla Mendes region of El Salvador as our case study, where a yearlong waste management program had been implemented but failed due to a lack of sustainability and resources. The purpose of this model will be to establish specific guidelines in designing a Waste Management Plan that can be tested through a pilot program, and then adapted and customized to meet the needs of the various surrounding communities. Our project team will be achieving this by analyzing a series of former research, such as a study done by Luis Orellana, Coordinator of Infrastructure Program for Asociación Mangle in 2005, previous data compiled by NGO, *Friends of the Earth*, in 2009, a recent development of waste management community training workshops in Isla Mendes, a recent grant proposal submitted by Asociación Mangle, as well as our own primary research through community meetings.

Currently, among the many problems that present themselves are the following: excessive garbage without specific locations for disposal, the use of incineration and burying solid waste, lack of a sustained garbage pick up, lack of funds to allocate to consistent pick up, plastics and glass not reused and/or recycled, lack of a recycling location, and the subsequent obstacles that persist due to these problems (health issues, water contamination, etc.) among others.

The infrastructure project team has categorized these obstacles into the three main indicators: Resources, Infrastructure, and Education. By analyzing these indicators the team will apply guidelines within each of them while focusing on the 4 Rs of waste management: Reduction, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle. The team will develop the Vision, Mission, Goals, Objectives, Program, Phases, Projects, and Activities within this model, integrating the 3 indicators and the 4Rs.

Production: Agricultural Production Team
Team Leader: Melissa Summers

The Production team has spent this first week clarifying the nature, direction and deliverables of our project. On Tuesday we met with La Coordinadora's Production Program Manager, Juan Luna to discuss the ultimate goals and current state of the various projects being carried out by the Agricultural Production Program. The goals of the program are to create food security and agricultural diversification in the communities of the Bajo Lempa, while also promoting organic agricultural practices in place of the current practices which rely heavily on harmful chemical fertilizers and pesticides. In order to be instrumental in helping La Coordinadora achieve these long-term goals, we will be working with the Agricultural Production Program on a survey and diagnostic tool to assess the current agricultural practices and production of each household in the Bajo Lempa, as well as the current knowledge about and interest in diversifying and increasing their agricultural production.

The purpose of our work here, during these three weeks, is to refine the diagnostic tool and create a survey, which La Coordinadora will be able to use in order to create a database of information about the various communities of the Bajo Lempa. Additionally, we will be identifying certain indicators that will be used to assess the potential sustainability of the practices currently in use in the area. Once the diagnostic tool and survey are tested and complete, we will create a workshop in order to train the Agricultural Production Program workers how to use the tool and analyze the data they will obtain. The goal is to create a tool that can be used to assess and compare all the communities of the Bajo Lempa so that La Coordinadora will be better able to serve them.