

Blue Sparrow Summer 2015 Microfinance Project

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Arrival & Adjustment

Our team of four girls, Maryssa, Yousra, Stephie, and I, arrived in Huancayo, Peru during the first week of June. The NGO's on-site director, Maritza, and her husband Pedro, picked us up from the bus station when we first arrived late at night from Lima. They brought us to our host mother's home, a decently sized house with lots of bunk beds—and children of various ages! Teresa, our host mother, served us a delicious dinner of chicken noodle soup while we introduced ourselves to her. One of the volunteers, Stephie, was still in cultural shock despite being the only one out of all of us that could speak Spanish fluently. She retired early to bed with a moderate bout of altitude sickness. The next three days unfolded rather quickly. After one day of adjustment to our Manew home and planning the details of the microfinance project, we woke up early on the second day to make the long trip to Acostambo, a very underdeveloped town on the outskirts of Huancayo. For the next six weeks (broken down into two 3 week sessions), we would be teaching the basics of finance and distributing loans to certain families living in Huancayo.

Our first meet up with the mayor of Acostambo went very badly. After almost two hours of traveling to Actostambo from Huancayo to meet and introduce our project to the people, we arrived to the center plaza only to see a massive parade of sorts—mostly of school children, but also the teachers and principal of the local school. When the parade was finally over, Maritza, our on-site director, spoke to the mayor about the meet up with the townspeople that she had previously scheduled. The only excuse he could come up with was that today was a “holiday” and we would have to reschedule. We simply did not understand why he could not have warned us earlier, instead of saying “yes” to the scheduled meet up. One thing for sure that we would learn from being in Acostambo: the people can never say no.



We had been semi-warned of the conditions we would be living in, but two of the girls felt “unsafe” with the living conditions. Particularly, they were upset about the direction the project was headed. At the time, we had not been accustomed to the delays and complications that always arise when people try to work with underdeveloped villages in South America. After a Skype call with their parents, two of the girls decided immediately to leave our project. Maryssa and I were devastated, as it had only been three days since we had arrived. They had simply not given themselves enough time to adjust to the conditions. Of course, it would be rough—no hot showers, only eating rice and potatoes, and living in a freezing house with no heating. This was South America, after all. What were we to expect?

First Session in Acostambo

Maritza, our on-site director, laid out the plan for the next few weeks. We would teach in Acostambo twice a week, Tuesday’s and Friday’s. The remaining of the time would be spent preparing the lessons, but also teaching English at the local schools!



I have attached files of a few of the lesson plans for the first few weeks. In the final report, I will submit a detailed report of each class, the interactions between the volunteers and the “students”, and the final outcome of the project. Since we only have \$7000 to disperse in loans, we are limited to who we are able to loan the money to. The final decision concerning the loans is completely up to the directors of our NGO, Blue Sparrow.