Local Views Toward the Rainforest, Environmental Issues, and Conservation in Mastatal, Costa Rica

By Kathryn Winglee
Overall Study Abroad Goals

• To learn about a country in a part of the world that I have never been to
• To immerse myself into the culture in order to see how other people live in comparison to my own lifestyle
• To gain knowledge about a subject (ecology and conservation) that interests me but is outside my major
Project Description

• Survey of the residents of Mastatal, looking at how they feel about the rainforest, which environmental issues they are concerned about, and their opinions of conservation efforts

• Interview with Tim
Method

• Researched surveys on similar topics
• Wrote questions in multiple choice format
• Had survey translated
• Had people answer questions by marking their answers
• Tallied results and compared responses according to age, gender, and nationality
Project Goals

1. Learn about how the rainforest is used by inhabitants of Mastatal
2. Study how people who live close to the rainforest feel about conservation efforts
Section 1

Uses and Views of the Rainforest
How often do you go into the rainforest?

- Often: 40%
- Sometimes: 50%
- Almost Never: 10%
The rainforest is part of my livelihood.
I enjoy living near the rainforest.
I use plants from the rainforest.
If you do use the plants, do you use them as:

- Food?
- Decoration?
- Medicine?
- Fuel?
- Other?

Percent

Yes
No
The rainforest does not need protection.
I have seen the rainforest decrease in size in my life.
Conclusions

• The people of Mastatal both visit and use the rainforest frequently
• Respondents appreciate the rainforest
Section 2

Environmental Issues and Concerns
I support public funding for preserving the rainforest.

American results from “Schuylkill Watershed Conservation Plan”
I believe that there should be more environmental education programs.

American results from “Schuylkill Watershed Conservation Plan”
There should be stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment.

American results from “The Environment: Red Flags”
I personally am worried about:

- Water pollution
- Toxic waste contamination
- Air pollution
- Plant & animal extinction
- Loss of tropical rainforests
- Global warming

American results from “The Environment: Red Flags”
Conclusions

- People from Mastatal are aware of environmental issues
- They care more about these issues than Americans
Section 3

Conservation Efforts
Conservation is an idea brought to Costa Rica by foreigners.
Conservation efforts are helping the rainforest.
Conservation efforts interfere with my livelihood.
I approve of La Cangreja becoming a national park.
The new national park will benefit my town.
Conclusions

• Conservation is helping the environment
• Conservation does not negatively impact local people to the point that they do not accept it
Bibliography


Questions?