



H Garcia Melendez

GenNext Fellow, H Garcia Melendez, recounts their incredible experience accompanying their host organization, Global Communities, to visit program sites for the Podemos Mas program in Guatemala.

Six a.m. on October 6th, my brain connected the dots, that for the first time in my life, I was on an international flight. The words grateful and honored are not enough to describe what I feel when I think about the incredible experience and support, I was offered in completing this trip.

From October 6th to October 12th, I was in Guatemala to do program site visits, for Global Communities' Podemos Mas Program.



H Garcia Melendez, stands next to a Global Communities banner, at the Global Communities Huehuetenango Office.

First let me offer you some insight into what the project I visited was. Podemos Mas is a Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) funded program with sectors of Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) transfers, Shelter, and Economic Recovery Market Systems (ERMS).

Our program support team planned out the itinerary for myself and my supervisor, Christina, so that we would be able to see each one of the sectors as they were being implemented.

“... to view our program support team do the work that we are all passionate about and put everything I’ve heard into context waslife changing.”

There were so many elements of the trip that I loved, but the biggest one was being able to see the work that I read reports about; inputted data for; and attended meetings for, in action.

Being able to view our program support team do the work that we are all passionate about and put everything I’ve heard into context, was, and I truly don’t think there is another way to describe it other than, life changing.

Each day of our trip, we saw a combination of the sectors that we implement. The first activity I was able to see was an MPCA transfer for several groups. I particularly enjoyed viewing the sector, as, prior to my trip, I had decided that the technical specialization I want to pursue is cash assistance and how that is implemented in a humanitarian assistance context.

Later that same day, we conducted shelter visits. As part of the Podemos Mas program, we provide pre-mixed concrete to replace dirt floors in homes, particularly focusing on the more vulnerable populations (homes with children under the age of 5, people with disabilities, and the elderly).

The other days that we completed site visits, it was a combination of the two sectors I mentioned previously, plus the ERMS sector. There are two things we viewed while observing the ERMS activities, one part of it was “livelihood visits” and



H poses with a Global Communities globe on the second floor of the Huehuetenango Office.

the other part was observing one of the Women Empowered Groups conduct one of their meetings. These visits were also very insightful, as I got to see more of the impact that cash assistance and technical assistance can do for families and individuals.

The more I look back on my trip and revisit my notes, the more in touch with the work I feel. Talking to the members of the team who I don't get to see on a daily basis, asking the participants of the program for their thoughts, seeing the landscape of Guatemala, specifically Huehuetenango, all those things have completely reframed the way I view the program, our portfolio, as well as the individual work I do in my day-to-day.

I would like to thank my advisor during my Program Operations rotation, Christina Villareal, for her endless support both in the trip and in day-to-day activities. I would also like to thank the program support team



H walks along a mountain trail as the team carries out shelter and livelihood visits.

for Podemos Mas, the work we do would not have happened if it wasn't for them, and I thank them for creating a wonderful itinerary.

Lastly, I want to thank Global Communities and the Public Health Institute for their support and efforts and how those things impact my career as a Humanitarian Assistance young professional.

