Gaining a Sense of Solidarity

Having been funded through LACIS, I had the opportunity to grow personally as I linked theory to practice in my efforts to exchange ideas, politically support a community, and develop my sense of solidarity.

As a participant of the delegation with CRIPDES, I gained a sense of solidarity with the community of Arcatao, in El Salvador. Throughout the experience, it was important for me to first develop trust and respect with the community of Arcatao. This meant I had to understand my privilege as an outsider and humble myself as an individual who was learning a sense of solidarity. Having attended community meetings, I learned about the community’s empowerment and ways to organize and efforts to collectively resolve current social struggles and issues that impact the community’s well-being. In specific, the community emphasized how important it was to maintain youth from migrating to the United States.

Becoming aware of the community’s demands, I learned the importance of collaborating with teachers and educators to explore these issues further. Having become aware of the community’s current movements to maintain a positive identity within youth groups using theatre, I decided to dialogue and exchange ideas of how Chicanos have used Son Jarocho popular music for similar objectives. Son Jarocho is popular music that roots from the Mexican revolution, and originates in the region of Veracruz, Mexico. As a result, I had the opportunity to conduct participatory workshops with students at a high school to further discuss the importance and relationship of history, identity, culture, and resistance using popular music. The youth responded positively and expressed their interest to develop similar movements using music.

The education setting was not the only area music as resistance was reinforced. Other areas included public parks, community member’s homes, and community events. Furthermore, community members shared music that was used as resistance during the civil war. This included trova and rancheras. Through these experiences, I learned how to strengthen and develop organizing skills using popular education, such as music. But most important, I learned how popular music helps build community and positively support the well-being of a strong community that keeps organizing post the civil war.

As a result of LACIS’ support, I witnessed firsthand what the majority of academics in the United States rarely become aware or learn about. I gained an opportunity to spark transnational work as relationships were built. Lastly, this experience helped shape my personal and career aspirations to continue movements that help build solidarity and support already built community grassroots efforts to overcome socio-political and economic oppression.
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