ABSTRACT / Method

Twenty-six qualitative interviews were conducted with American individuals volunteering in the cities of Antigua and San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala during the month of January 2012. Interviewees were asked about motivation, the history behind their volunteer experiences, and personal values and views of poverty related to their ongoing volunteerism. Audio recording devices assisted interviewers in preserving the integrity of all statements and fostering accurate analysis. Transcripts of the on-site interviews and follow-up emails were analyzed in categories of experience as listed above in order to identify themes related to learning and the learning processes.

Conclusions:

“I’ve also learned a lot about myself and my relationship to the world... doing this has sort of broadened my mind in a way.” - Mark Wofford
San Diego, CA

“International volunteering has helped me realize a lot about American culture, the meaning of culture, and our almost innate predisposition to see our culture as the ‘right’ culture.” – Marisa Nelson
Little Rock, AR