

Xiaoyu Yu

**Graduation Year:** Sophomore

**College:** Science

**Major(s):** Biological Science, Mathematics

**Minors(s):** Latino Studies

**Scholar Group Membership:** No

**Did you received other funding for this project?:** No

**Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding?** Yes

**More details on CUSE funding assistance?**

**Project Title:** Amazon Indigenous & Community Health in Ecuador

**Project Location:** Ecuador

**ND Faculty Mentor:** Kraig Beyerlein

**Project Type:** Service-Learning

**Why did you undertake this project/experience?** Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue

**Did your funded experience help you:**

**[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]:** Very Much

**[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]:** Very Much

**[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]:** Very Much

**[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]:** Very Much

**[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:**Very Much

**Tell us about your experience.**

I learned a lot about the healthcare system in Ecuador, and the use of plants in the indigenous community. During the first week, I worked with people from the malaria prevention group in the suburb area in Guayaquil. We went door by door to talk to the people about malaria, and how it is transmitted by mosquitoes, and why we need to check the water to see if there were eggs or larva in the water. If there were eggs or larva, we would give them some medicine to put in the water to kill the mosquitoes. I learned about the special community-based prevention events in Guayaquil. I spent the second week working in a community clinic. We would have a little table on the street, and measure people's weight, blood pressure, and HIV test. By doing so, I learned that HIV was a serious problem in some part of Guayaquil. I shadowed physicians during the third and forth weeks. I learned that one of the most common health problems in the rural areas was problem with muscles, as people did a lot of physical labors.

**Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.**

As a college student, I was restricted in the campus during the school year. By going to different country, I gained a better understanding of the world and I realized how small and ignorant I was. Moreover, I became really interested in the use of plants by the indigenous people, and they reminded of the traditional Chinese medicine. I hope to do research about the similarity and

difference of the Chinese medicine and South American indigenous plants.

Although I could hardly speak Spanish, I tried my best to tell the people I worked with about China and about my college life in the United States. They were really friendly, patient, and curious about my life as a Chinese student in Notre Dame. I also talked about Notre Dame, and encouraged the high school students to learn English and to come to the U.S.

**Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.**

I major in Biology and minor in Latino Studies, and this trip was a perfect combination of both my interests. Moreover, I have a biological project in a lab about malaria and mosquito specialization. I want to work as a researcher in the field of global health in the future, and Latin America is a great place to practice my career, since I love Spanish, I like their culture, and people in South America need healthcare help. Before this trip, I was not sure if I will continue my minor in Latino Studies and if I could connect myself with South America. However, Ecuador taught me that I should definitely come back.

**What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?**

Don't expect things to happen as exactly as you expected. I met friends in the most unthinkable ways. For example, I went to spend my weekend in a small town called el Baños, and I got lost. Then I ran into a family from Quito, who were having a weekend trip in El Baños too. They invited me to Quito the next weekend, and they showed me around. Just be open to any new things, but firstly, be careful.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.

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