

On August 19<sup>th</sup> a group of 10 participants set out to Guatemala on a Young Adults Mission Trip. All of participants were from the London Presbytery and there were 4 churches represented: Westmount Presbyterian Church, Knox Presbyterian Church, Chalmers Presbyterian Church and Dorchester Presbyterian Church. I worked with Matt Foxall from Youth in Mission to organize this trip and he was able to take care a lot of the logistics. Before the trip Matt had talked to the group about how YIM had shifted its focus of mission, and how we would be going to learn from the different organizations and about the struggles they faced, instead of participating in a building project.

We spent 2 weeks in Guatemala learning from 3 PWS&D sponsored organizations: Francisco Coll School (Guatemala City), Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials (FPM)(Quetzaltenango) and Maya-Mam Association of Research and Development (AAMID) (Commitancillo). Youth in Mission organized the trip with the help of CEDEPCA, an organization in Guatemala that has an Intercultural Encounters department.

Our first organization we visited was AMMID, and we were instantly blown away by the work that they were doing. We were able to spend 3 days with them and learned about a lot of their different projects, including their weaving program for women, family gardens, tree nurseries, livestock wellness and child nutrition. It was great to see how AMMID focused on education and that being the key to sustainable development.

The second organization we visited was FPM, and again we were pleased to see the great work they were doing. FPM is a similar in the work they are doing as AMMID, but on a larger scale. We were able to visit multiple farms to see their cow project, which gives mostly single mothers a chance at owning a cow and producing nutritious products for her family and to sell at the local market.

We then travelled back to Guatemala City to visit Francisco Coll School, which was a very challenging visit for us all as most of us have never seen that level of poverty before. The Director of the school told us awful stories of the living conditions of the 235 kids that went to this school. However, it was very evident that the teachers of this school were helping to create better lives for these children.

Lastly, we learned from CEDPECA. They have a 4 departments: Seminary, Disaster ministry, Women's ministry and Intercultural Encounters. They are not a PWS&D sponsored organization, but were the ones that organized the majority of our trip. At all times we had 2 facilitators with us, who got us from place to place, taught us about their country and translated. I cannot say enough good things about the professionalism that this organization showed, and how comfortable and safe they made us feel in Guatemala.

If you would like to learn more about our trip, we were able to blog everyday. The final blog called "So What" will give you some insight in the benefits of this trip.

<https://allisonbell2.wixsite.com/mysite>

Myself, and all of the participants would like to thank the Creative Ministries Committee for helping to sponsor this trip as it would not have been possible without your help.

Respectively submitted,

Allison Bell  
Knox Presbyterian Church  
St. Thomas, ON