



## Between Two Worlds

By Elizabeth Cobarrubias | June 16, 2011



My experience in Ecuador was incredible, life changing one. To be able to say that I spent a term living in the extremely chaotic city of Quito, the rural jungle town of Puyo, and in the Ecuadorian Amazon alone feels unrealistic. I worked day shifts in clinics and in hospitals. In the evenings I would hangout with my friends I made during my time there.



I didn't think I would miss Ecuador as much as I do. I remember that when I first arrived there I didn't like the food; everything seemed so fast passed and busy. I just flat out missed my family my friends and all the commodities I sometimes take for granted in USA. I had traveled abroad before, but never to a third world country. Getting adjusted to Ecuador was hard and took some time. Never did I imagine that I would miss it so much! I miss everything from what once seemed like bland food, the many different types of banana, and the flavorless beer. What I would trade to have one more night with my friends at our favorite bar Volcano drinking Pilsner beer and talking about how our day went in clinic or just simply relaxing.



While in Ecuador I meet a lot of incredible people. Many of the doctors I worked with were my age. Working with them and learning about the health care system in Ecuador and the medical school process was very fascinating. I ended up becoming really good friends with my colleagues. With some of them I would spend all day in clinic with and then hangout with in the evening.



When I left the idea of never knowing when I was going to see my friends from Ecuador again made it hard to leave the country, but it wasn't so scary because I knew there were ways to keep in contact such as skype, msn, facebook and others. We exchanged information and because of all the methods to keep in contact made it much easier to say good-bye. When I was there at the time I didn't realize I would form such close ties to the people I meet there in such a small time. But now that I've been back in the U.S I defiantly feel the nostalgic. For all my friends there and my life style.



I feel as if I am stuck between two worlds. I spend so much time talking to my friends in Ecuador through my msn or skype on my phone that my battery is always running out. I stay up late and get up early just to be able to talk to them. I've come to realize I spend more time talking to them then I do hanging out with my friends here, I find that it is hard to focus on my life here. I know that it is normal to be so caught up in both worlds. My question to my self is where do I draw the line. Do I have to let go of my life there? Being back in the U.S has been really hard for me. I am already making plans with my friends there to come visit me. I am working on getting back into a routine here also.



Before leaving to Ecuador I put all my stuff into storage and in a way put my life here on pause. When I got back I felt like it was all one big mess. I ended up getting stuck in Miami airport due to an explosion and didn't come home to Oregon for almost another week. I had planned on getting here Friday before school started but with the change in flights I didn't get here till Tuesday. My life has been a little crazy since I have been back and missing my friend's abroad has not made it easier. But I am finally putting the pieces together. When I got back had to take my stuff out of storage and move in with a sister of mine, I was late in registering for all my classes, and I didn't get a chance to catch up with my friends before going into the busy term. I think that because of all the chaos going on it has been easier to neglect a lot of things here and just keep talking to my friends in Ecuador.



Thankfully I am now distracting myself with working on my thesis and finishing up my last few classes at Oregon State University, and writing my thesis and I am looking for a job until applying to medical school. I am taking being back in the U.S one step at a time and trying to focus on the things I have going on around but still staying in touch with my life in Ecuador. I know it is going to be hard at first but hopefully with time things will fall into place and once the sun starts shining and it feels like spring this will be much easier. I know that one day in the future I will be reunited with my friends in Ecuador for they now form part of my world.