

Grenada's Children: Educational Development on a Caribbean Island



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Project Goals

- To document the socioeconomic conditions of children living in rural, low-income communities and to assess the impact of their circumstances on their educational performance
- To evaluate how well GRENEDE addresses their needs and develop recommendations
- To lead GRENEDE-sponsored students on a path of self-reflection and personal growth



Personal Goals

- To learn how NGOs work and to understand their role
- To immerse myself in a culture very different from my own by developing relationships with the people of that culture
- To make a lasting contribution to the lives of the children

Activities

- Developed and implemented a six-session program for the children
- Traveled to each of the parishes on the island to conduct one-on-one sessions with children living in income-poor, rural villages
- Interviewed parents, educators and government officials about the educational system and obstacles in Grenada
- Organized children's recreational activities, such as hiking, dinners, trips to the library, and Internet sessions

Key Dilemmas

- Can a temporary, one-time grassroots initiative ensure a lasting and sustainable effect? If so, how?
- Do I, as an outsider, have the right to impose my values, however well-intended, on children of another culture?
- What methods are most practical and effective in promoting educational motivation and emotional well-being?
- As a female, when is it safe to be friendly to males exhibiting a cultural norm of assertiveness? When am I justified in treating strangers differently based on their gender?

Important Learnings

- The educational needs of a society are intertwined with the social, economic and cultural needs.
- Positive role models play a much greater role in determining the educational outlook of a child than the economic wealth of the family.

- Although I had never considered myself "white" before, being perceived as a white woman made me realize the complexity and ambiguity of race in identity.

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