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Peace Boat US – Summer 2018  
IPL Funding

### **Peace Education and the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America**

This summer 2018 I had the opportunity to volunteer with the organization Peace Boat US and its Summer Program “Peace Education and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Latin America 2018”. I have volunteered with Peace Boat US in the past but this time I was given the opportunity to help with the design of the SDG program for students, activists, and lifelong learners of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities who have a strong desire to learn about sustainable development. My main role was to help with the coordination of the activities during the summer voyage.

This SDG Program traveled in Central America and Mexico onboard of the Peace Boat while learning about the United Nations SDGs in an experiential and practical way. During this SDG summer voyage, a group of selected youth were able to visit local NGOs and other public and private institutions who are working directly on SDG issues related to climate change, youth engagement, and policy-making. For example, in Panama the program visited the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office to learn about efforts in the Latin American region to maintain peace and sustainability, highlighting SDG #17: Partnerships for the Goals. The group also had a cultural exchange with indigenous communities and refugee youth with the Embera Quera community and the group RET International. In Puntarenas, Costa Rica, we explored the rich natural environment of the rain forests and coastlines, while focusing on SDG #13: Climate Action. To finalize the trip in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, we held a program focused on SDG #14: Life Below Water and the conservation of marine resources. Our group was able to take part of one of the beach-cleaning initiatives by My World Mexico and visit the Marieta islands, a natural protected area in Mexico.

This SDG program gave me the opportunity to see theory in action and to share my ideas, hopes, and possible approaches to international development with other young professionals from all over the world. I think this week also allowed me to meet and learn from people who are fighting

for change in the world which will benefit my particular interest in humanitarian collaboration and sustainable development for Latin America. The alliances and the networking we made during this trip helped us clarify the importance of the SDG 17: Partnership for the goals, as it reminded us about the power of combined efforts and how two heads can think better than one.

I believe that this program gave me experiences and exposure to the “real world of development” that will last beyond the program’s duration. As an International Policy and Development graduate student I am confident that this group highly benefited from my personal experience, participation initiatives and teamwork skills. In return, this immersive program provided me with many opportunities to participate in cultural, educational, and social activities that reinforced my passion to work for Latin America’s development.

The Peace Boat itself and all the programs held during this trip were used as a platform to educate our youth and local partners about the SDGs and, to get them more involved in combining efforts to protect our environment, oceans and the world. During this trip we worked together, built friendships and planted a little seed towards social change.