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# Beyond the Volcanoes: A Community Partnership for Health in Rural Nicaragua

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## **Beyond the Volcanoes: A Community Partnership for Health in Rural Nicaragua**

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Background: Health inequities related to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geography exist in rural Nicaragua due in part to lack of access to health services. The purpose of this ongoing project is to improve health equity in rural Nicaragua through social transformation using community-based participatory action research. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, school health, and primary health care theories provided the framework for this research. Community-based participatory action research involves six phases: partnership, assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. In the evaluation phase, the goal was to gather information from stove recipients to see if their new stoves have improved their health. Information was gathered by surveying the main cook in each household. Questions inquired about changes in health, perceived benefits from the new stoves, and suggested improvements for future stoves. Data was collected and recorded to be analyzed and compared to previously gathered baseline data. The information gathered from the community members will determine the effectiveness of the new chimney stoves on health. Also, the community feedback provided will help guide improvements for future stoves.

### *Information about the Authors:*

This research project began in 2007 with a pair of nursing students and has been ongoing since. Each member of the research team has made multiple trips to the Nicaraguan community to facilitate research and build relationships with the community members. The evaluation phase for the first round of stoves has been completed, and the research team hopes to continue the project until all members of the community have received stoves. Chelsea Zeman, a senior nursing major, has been working on the project since the spring of 2010. Paige Snyder, a junior nursing major, joined the project in fall of 2010, and Cathy Wingstrom, also a junior nursing major, began working on the project in spring 2011.

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