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Person to Person in Ecuador

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Anna Beshears

Quito, Ecuador

November 15, 2015

Different Hemispheres, Similar Lives

I have been studying in Quito, Ecuador for close to three months now. I am having an incredible experience, learning so many new things and making great friends. One of my very close Ecuadorian friends, Pablo Mamallacta, graciously allowed me to interview him. From interviewing my friend Pablo, what surprised me most about his lifestyle compared to mine is that they're not very different. We may live our lives in different hemispheres in countries with very different cultures, but we both love to play basketball often, sleep whenever our schedules allow, and enjoy meeting new people. Before entering college, he lived in a very different part of Ecuador than where our university is so his lifestyle consisted of different activities obviously. However, his life in college has consisted of experiences very similar to my own in college. That does make sense to me in a way since we get along so well, but that also brings up an idea of how similar people are even in very different parts of the world.

Pablo is a member of an Amazonian indigenous community called Quechua. He lived in a town called Lago Agrio in the northern region of the Amazon, up until moving to an urban city to attend college. So naturally some of our preferences, outlooks, etc. are different, such as his love for traditional seafood dishes that I have never heard of or the fact that he likes being in the scarcely inhabited jungle in which he can go on adventures. I on the other hand would prefer watching a Blazers game at home with my dad or eating a rather unhealthy quantity of chocolate. However, we do also have several similarities such as a love for sports like basketball and soccer, and we value family very strongly.

Having this interview with Pablo helped me to see that our countries and our people are not as different as I first thought they were. We may come from countries with different cultures and different languages in different parts of the world, but there

are still a lot of commonalities. However, there are some aspects such as Pablo's indigenous background that are quite different even throughout Ecuador, let alone the United States. He has told me stories about his community and has even taught some words in the language Quechua. I realized that there are people in similar situations in my own backyard, but you will never know until you go outside of your comfort zone and really get to know someone new, regardless of the circumstances. It can greatly broaden your knowledge of a place, a group of people, a culture, and even yourself.