

Describe an activity

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



From Cleaning Beaches to Growing as a Global, Environmental Citizen

May 22, I have volunteered several times in cleaning up Isla Vista. I expected to actually pick up plastic bottles, toys, trinkets, cigarette butts, leaves, twigs and the like, but I was quite culturally shocked to find used and unused condoms and used sanitary napkins. In my culture, sex and sexuality matters are still taboo, so being exposed to their physical symbols is unsettling. Moreover, I read students' news articles about the litter that accumulates in Isla Vista, especially after famous community events, such as Deltopia and Halloween, and I agree with the questions that Cvitanic and Hoegerman (2013), Opinion Co-Editors of Daily Nexus, asked: "What can we learn [from these negative effects of our social activities]?" These beach cleanups made me realize that, apart from school activities, community experiences contribute to my development as a global, environmental citizen, if I both learn how to ask questions and to offer answers through personal and collective action.

Community interactions, especially through voluntary experiences, help me become a global citizen because I ask action-oriented actions and offer solutions and contribute to collective action. Sexuality is not wrong, but leaving behind litter because of its expression is. After finding numerous used and unused condoms, I thought about how irresponsible these people must be to have sex so openly and yet not minding their trash. Paul and Elder (1999) underscored the importance of asking questions in teaching, learning, and thinking. They said: "Questions define tasks, express problems and delineate issues." Many of those who litter in Isla Vista are not only community members, but also outsiders. My questions go to all of us who

partake in these community events are: How should global citizens inject responsibility into the meaning of “ partying” in modern society? How can we nurture thinkers who ask their accountability for their community actions? Because of these cleanups, I realized the role of thinking in being responsible global citizens who visit and attend different community affairs. Apart from asking questions, these volunteer experiences helped me offer personal solutions, while contributing to collective efforts. As I clean up, I reduce litter in the beach, and together with volunteers, we hopefully provide a model of good conduct to the community. These efforts contribute to my global citizenship by making me aware of my connection to others through our oneness in the community.

Apart from global citizenship, I learned the meaning of environmentalism in light of social affairs. Williams (2009), a Noozhawk contributor, asserted that cleaning up is not only about being responsible for “ their night” or their parties, but also for every person to be responsible for every mark and object they leave on the environment after these social events. When she mentioned the erosion of the cliffs, I found out how people have turned their environment into risky places. I am on the same page as Williams (2009) and Cvitanic and Hoegerman (2013) who argued that every person is responsible for these activities and their environmental effects, including trash and cliff erosion. In the meantime, as a first-year student, I should do more by asking questions to the right people. What is the role of the University, the government, the students, and the community in keeping Isla Vista safe and clean for all? How can we help people, especially visitors or outsiders, be responsible guests of our communities? These are only some of the

questions that criticize stakeholders and hope to inspire further action. Learning cannot happen in answering questions only, but in posing more questions for continued personal and collective growth and development. Isla Vista should be safe and clean for community members and visitors alike. As a learner, these experiences help me become more aware of my growth as a student and community member. I am not only volunteering in these events because I am a student, but because, deep down, I am global citizen who see myself as part of every community I live in and I visit. I think that if people see themselves as global citizens, they will respect every community they visit as if they are in their own homes. Hence, global citizenship is an important aspect of identity for all citizens and something that students should also develop while they are still young.

References

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