



# First-Gen Voices: Creative and Critical Narratives on the First-Generation College Experience

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## Global Parallels: A Reflection on Civil Rights and Ethical Consumerism in Costa Rica

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Abstract: This reflection on the First to Go trip to Costa Rica examines the civil rights issues faced in the country. In particular, it highlights the significant parallels with the United States, especially concerning immigrant communities. During our time there we specifically talked about the exploitation of immigrant labor on pineapple plantations by corporations like Del Monte. This trip underscored my understanding of ethical consumerism and a new approach to mindful purchasing.

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After my trip to Costa Rica, I quickly realized the many parallels within our world. Despite Costa Rica being a developing country with its unique customs, socioeconomic conditions, and identities; many of the civil rights issues we face here in the United States are very similarly experienced there. Many of these issues include the rights of immigrant communities, Indigenous peoples, the Afro-Latinx community, and the LGBTQ+ community.

I was particularly struck by the difficulties faced by immigrant communities in CR. Much like in the U.S., many of these communities often get the short end of the stick and are unfortunately exploited for their labor. What really disturbed me was discovering that the immigrant communities working on these pineapple plantations receive a fraction of what the pineapples are sold for here in the U.S. Even more infuriating was learning that corporations like Del Monte use their power, size, and money to lobby the government for their benefit, disregarding the welfare of the local community.

As it stands, Costa Rica is one of the largest exporters of pineapples in the world. You would expect this to contribute to a thriving economy, yet the reality is that most of the wealth remains in the hands of the top one percent. This realization made me take a step back and become more conscious of where the products I purchase come from and who truly benefits from them.

Moving forward everyone should learn to shop with intention and consider the broader impact of their spending choices. Look at the ethical standing of the companies at the store and think about who really benefits from your dollars.

Thank you.

Pura Vida