

Shonettia Monique

Visiting Cuba was a life-changing experience. The Delegation allowed me to meet with women's organizations that I would otherwise only know through news articles and second-hand reports. Seeing women in significant positions of power seemed so commonplace that I soon realized that I had to step out of my U.S. expectations of sexism. The same went for my conditioning around healthcare, and the respect that youth are given. I marvel at how witnessing an idea of equality that I've supported for years required such an unlearning of my societal norms.

Learning about the Literacy Campaign may have had the largest impact on me, because it represented the country's dedication to education, and the simple yet profound assumption that everyone has a right to it, worldwide. It also magnified women and youth as volunteers demonstrating their purpose and voice.

Simply put, it's been three months since the Delegation, and I think of Cuba practically every day.