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Welcome

Dear GESI Student,

Welcome to the 10th annual Global Engagement Studies Institute (GESI)! GESI began with the idea and perseverance of an undergraduate like you. It has since grown from a small experiential-learning program in Uganda exclusively for Northwestern students, into a nationally recognized model that has trained and sent over 525 students from almost 100 colleges and universities to 11 countries for community development work.

GESI offers students the unique opportunity to apply their classroom learning toward addressing global challenges. Students will spend their time abroad working with, and learning from, our community partners across the world. Northwestern University provides students with comprehensive preparatory coursework and training, ensures a structured and supported in-country field experience, and facilitates critical post-program reflection.

This program will challenge you to think and act differently. To create change you will need to listen, ask questions, and build relationships, not merely provide solutions. We trust you’ll approach GESI with the respect, curiosity, and humility requisite to understanding people, their talents and challenges, and the role you can play to support positive social change.

GESI is one step on a path toward your personal, professional, and leadership development, as well as your understanding of complex issues of consequence to the planet and its people. Throughout the program, our professors and student instructors will be in contact with feedback and encouragement; during Final Summit, they will help debrief what you’ve learned. Even after GESI, our staff will be a strong support system as you use your own unique skills and passions to live lives of global social change.

We have seen this program make a tremendous impact on students’ academic pursuits, career paths, and worldview, as well as their skills in cross-cultural communication, project management, and collaboration. We are excited to join you on this journey and to see where it leads. Get excited!

Best of luck,

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Program History

Global Engagement at the Buffett Institute:

The Buffett Institute for Global Studies' mission is to prepare undergraduates with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to address shared global challenges and to lead lives of responsible global engagement. Global Engagement at the Buffett Institute is a comprehensive student support center dedicated to improving undergraduates' abilities to address global poverty and inequality. We help students attain tangible skills and critique academic theory through experiential learning.

Through a unique set of multidisciplinary opportunities, ranging from study abroad programs to fellowships, the Institute builds the capacity of young global leaders to cross borders and partner with communities to produce responsible, sustainable solutions to global challenges. We connect students to a network of individuals and organizations at Northwestern and around the world and are actively shaping a new generation of experienced, effective, and compassionate global leaders in a variety of fields. The Buffett Institute runs the Global Engagement Studies Institute (GESI) program. To learn about other programs and activities, visit: www.buffett.northwestern.edu

GESI History:

GESI was first conceived in 2005 by a group of undergraduate students led by Nathaniel Whittemore, then a Northwestern University junior who had recently returned from volunteering at refugee camps outside Cairo. Talking with dozens of other students volunteering and researching abroad, Whittemore realized that he was not alone in feeling a gap between the desire and ability to make a difference in the world: “The story among my peers was pretty common... tons and tons of passion and energy, a deep belief and desire to connect across cultural, religious, and national borders to make a better world, and frustration at the lack of support, infrastructure, resources, and education necessary to really move beyond our good intentions. Young people knew they didn't have the skills or resources needed to impact the problems they were trying to solve; they didn't even know where to get those things.”

Whittemore and a fellow Northwestern student, Jon Marino, went in search of academic training that could be combined with off-campus experiential learning to help students gain the tools they needed to be agents of change. Rather than founding another program to raise awareness of global issues, they sought to create a new type of study abroad experience that would provide the educational tools and experiences that could help students in the field, and then help students reflect on what they had learned by working at the grassroots. The program, they hoped, would provide the training and capacity-building young people would need to run, start, or participate in international development, service, and social entrepreneurship.

From these student-initiated roots, and together with support from across campus—including the Northwestern Office of the Provost, Buffett Institute for Global Studies, School of Education and Social Policy, and School of Communications—the Global Engagement Studies Institute developed.
Program Information

Who does what in GESI?

The Global Engagement Studies Institute (GESI) is a program, not a physical institute. Whether or not you are a Northwestern student, the “acronym soup” that surrounds GESI is often confusing. It is important for you to understand the difference between each organization that helps make GESI happen so that you can communicate it effectively to your friends and family, and so you know where to turn for support (now and in the future). There are numerous partners who make important contributions to your academic, cultural, and personal experience in the GESI program.

Global Engagement at the Buffett Institute: The Buffett Institute is the Northwestern University office that runs GESI. We include people you’ve met or spoken with (Patrick Eccles, Meghan Ozaroski, Corey Portell, Jessica Smith Soto, and Emory Erker-Lynch) when applying to the GESI program. GESI is part of the Buffett Institute for Global Studies, which is run by Bruce Carruthers. Patrick Eccles and Paul Arntson will be your main professors during the GESI coursework. The GESI team supports you before, during, and after your trip, in the following ways:

• Program Arrangement and Logistics: GESI works with the on-site teams to make arrangements for your trip. We also provide you with lots of information and supports you during the program application phase.

• Pre-Departure Orientation and Materials: GESI provides you with important information about your program to help you prepare for your experience. This includes resources, such as this packet, and in-person meetings related to health, safety, budgeting, travel, and academics.

• Academic Coursework and Credit: GESI is responsible for organizing all Northwestern coursework.

• In-Country Support: Your on-site team will provide support for you while abroad and should be your primary resource, but if you need additional assistant or would feel more comfortable approaching GESI staff with any matters experienced in-country, please do not hesitate to contact Meghan Ozaroski, Assistant Director, or Patrick Eccles, Associate Director (contact information on page 6).

• Reintegration Support: Upon your return, we will provide you with resources to help you transition back into campus life, as well as connect you with other returnees and opportunities.
Program Staff

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Emergency Contacts

Students will receive detailed in-country emergency contact information at the pre-departure summit at Northwestern. In case of emergency, parents should call (in this order):


Parents should not call the site teams or contact us via social media.

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Office: +1 847-467-0844
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GeoBlue Health Insurance:
001-610 254-8771

University Police:
001-847-491-3456
Program Partners

The Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD):
FSD is GESI's on-the-ground partner for sites in Bolivia, India, Nicaragua, and Uganda. FSD is a non-profit, non-governmental organization created in 1995 to offer capacity building and funding to grassroots community-based organizations throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia. A professional field staff and trained volunteers provide on-site technical training and project support, while enabling information sharing to more than 300 partner organizations around the world. FSD is GESI's oldest partner. FSD has played a key role in supporting the development of the GESI model over the past eight years.

Social Entrepreneur Corps (SEC):
SEC is GESI's on-the-ground partner for sites in the Dominican Republic and Guatemala. SEC is a social enterprise that leads innovative and dynamic international internship programs. GESI students will work with SEC's sister organization, Community Enterprise Solutions, to support the creation, development, growth, and impact of social innovations focused on intelligently and sustainably alleviating poverty. Participants create sustainable impact in the field while gaining the perspectives, skills, and knowledge to become the social entrepreneurs of the future.

Amizade:
Amizade is GESI's on-the-ground partner in Ghana. Amizade collaborates with universities, high schools, and community groups to design and manage safe and empowering global service-learning and volunteer programs. In partnership with its local community partners, Amizade develops and manages sustainable and empowering initiatives, such as the partnership for reforestation of the Sweet River in Ghana. In the process, it creates strong cross-cultural bonds and new global citizens. Amizade acts as a catalyst for improvement in international education, developing innovative curriculum and sector-changing ideals like Fair Trade Learning.

All GESI partners have unique offerings based on their networks and development model. They each have a commitment to asset-based community development, provide exemplary health, safety, and logistical support to our students, and are well respected locally and internationally, including by our peer universities.

It is important for you to understand that each year we adapt our programming to fit the feedback of our alums and in-country partners and align with the learning goals of our program. Given the different cultural contexts and models employed by our in-country partners, your experience will differ from what you've heard from alums. To succeed in this program (and in any international engagement), you must be flexible and open-minded.

You must also listen to be surprised—something you'll hear us say a lot during your courses. It is important that you take time to get to know students who are traveling to other GESI country sites. The experiences of your peers in different cultural contexts, working with different types of organizations, can enrich your own learning and reflections on community development, cultural exchange, and global issues.
Academic Information

What is experiential learning?
The following are definitions of various types of experiential-learning. GESI fits most closely into the “service learning” category, though the program incorporates elements of all of the below:

- **Volunteerism** – Students engage in activities where the emphasis is on service for the sake of the beneficiary or recipient (client, partner)
- **Internship** – Students engage in activities to enhance their own vocational or career development
- **Practicum** – Students work in a discipline-based venue in place of an in-class course experience
- **Community Service** – Students engage in activities addressing mutually defined community needs (as a collaboration between community partners, faculty, and students) as a vehicle for achieving academic goals and course objectives
- **Service Learning** – Students engage in community service activities with intentional academic and learning goals and opportunities for reflection that connect to their academic disciplines


What to expect at GESI Pre-Departure Coursework (Summer: June 12 - 19 or Fall: September 11-18):

The GESI pre-departure coursework at Northwestern University is an intense eight days of class. You are expected to arrive by 11 a.m. on either June 12 (summer) or September 11 (fall); we will spend the rest of that day getting to know each other, getting to know representatives from FSD and SEC, and establishing expectations for the week ahead. During Pre-Departure, you will be in class from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., with breaks for meals. GESI alums will serve as student instructors, facilitating class activities and discussions. We will have many guest speakers supplementing class lectures as well; it is important that you complete all course readings before arrival. Some nights, we will assign additional (short) readings. You will need to discipline yourself so that you are able to complete these assignments and be alert and engaged for long days of class. If your group flight departs on June 20 or September 19, you will have free time that day until your flight departs for your host country. We will provide CTA cards for you to get to the airport.

Below is a sample day of class. A detailed schedule will be provided upon arrival on campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 10:55 a.m.</td>
<td>Lecture by Patrick Eccles on International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 - 11:55 a.m.</td>
<td>Language lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 12:55 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Lecture and group activities with Paul Arntson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 - 5:55 p.m.</td>
<td>Guest speaker on your host country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 - 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner with group or on your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Back to hostel for evening reading and sleep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Information

In-Country Assignments:

We feel strongly that in a foreign context you should look to your local hosts for “expert” advice. Your interaction with GESI staff and faculty while abroad will be limited. Occasionally, GESI staff, faculty, or student instructors will reply to your weekly updates (and/or other deliverables, as outlined below) with comments, questions, cautions, or feedback. However, given that they are not in-country with you, their written feedback will be limited. Only you, your site team, and community colleagues can truly understand your situation and challenges in country. Please note that GESI staff are always available to discuss any program, health, safety or other concerns you have.

You will be evaluated based on satisfactory submission of the following (through Canvas):

1. **Work proposal.** This should be a maximum of two pages; initial proposals are due within the first few weeks abroad.

2. **External work plan.** These are due at the same time you submit your work proposal. These should be a maximum of two pages and conform to the template provided. FSD students will also be required to submit a budget along with their proposal and work plan.

3. **Weekly group reports.** These are due on each of the seven Fridays while in the field. Submit these online on your group’s Canvas discussion board. Entries should be a maximum of one page and should answer the following questions:
   - What you accomplished the previous week
   - What you plan to accomplish in the week ahead and who is responsible for these goals
   - What are the barriers/challenges that you are dealing with in terms of accomplishing the work plan, and interacting with your organization, community and your group

4. **Field notes.** You will be given a spiral-bound notebook upon arrival to campus. It is your responsibility to complete the reflection activities outlined in the journal each week. You will choose from a variety of reflection topics outlined in field notebook. While we will collect these from you at the conclusion of Final Summit, you can choose to fold any page you do not want us to read and we will honor your request. We will mail the notebooks back to you after we are done reviewing them.

5. **Final Reflection Summit summary.** In order to share your work with your fellow GESI colleagues, you will complete a summary of your work, including your rationale, process, and assessment. This will be shared with all students at the Final Summit to guide discussions.

6. **Evaluations.** Before you return to the US, the country site teams will complete a two to three page evaluation with you. You will also be required to submit a comprehensive GESI program evaluation electronically shortly after returning from GESI (date will be specified during Final Summit). Failure to complete the electronic evaluation will result in an “incomplete” grade appearing on your transcript until we receive your completed evaluation.

**Note:** There may be times when you do not have access to Internet or communications. If you are unable to submit any of the aforementioned assignments due to communications issue, do not worry. GESI staff and faculty are accustomed to technological delays and this will not be held against you as long as you submit any missing deliverables once your internet access allows.
Academic Information

What to expect at the Final Reflection Summit (summer: August 15-17 or fall: December 7-9):

Upon returning from their host countries, students meet back on campus for a three-day Final Reflection Summit where we will reflect on some of the program’s learning outcomes, including but not limited to:

- Understanding ethical, historical, political, economic, and/or social issues in relation to community development
- Analyzing multiple perspectives of the social issue at hand
- Taking responsibility for your own actions as they have an effect on society
- Contributing to the society through the application of new field knowledge
- Appreciating ends as well as means
- Appreciating cultural pluralism and global connectedness, as well as the challenges and opportunities of each

In addition, GESI participants from all sites share and compare geographical experiences while processing their immersion and what it has taught them about global development challenges, culture, and themselves. Students will also consider how to respond to the GESI experience by networking with professionals who are creating social change in a range of fields.

What happens after GESI?

As the program closes, GESI transitions into the role of alum support. GESI aspires to help students lead lives committed to international social justice. For us, this means helping our alums find internships, jobs, or project support opportunities that allow them to continue engaging with the issues they care about most. You may always contact the GESI team for guidance and support.

Changing our worldview is an implicit goal of most service-learning programs. Unless we understand how political, economic, and judicial systems tend to favor one group over another, we will be unable to truly assist those in need.

Crisis and Emergency Procedures & Contacts:

In the event of any unanticipated crisis or emergency, it is important that you understand the action plans that your on-site staff will follow to ensure your health and safety, as well as your roles, responsibilities, and appropriate prevention and response steps.

General Policies and Preventive Measures:

- Site teams will arrange to ensure students have cell phones. You must provide your cell phone number to your on-site staff so that you can be contacted in case of emergency. You should also program your cell phone with your country program director’s, GESI’s, other students’, and local emergency contact numbers.
- All students must carry the list of emergency contacts and GeoBlue (international health insurance) car—provided on campus during the pre-departure coursework—with them at all times. If an emergency arises and you cannot access the contact numbers in your cell phone, you should have a backup, so that you can call the emergency phone numbers.
- Contact your country program director first if an incident arises. They will lead you through next steps and make any necessary arrangements. If your program director is not available, contact another on-site contact to help you. If the incident involves your on-site administrators or if, for some reason, you cannot reach anyone on-site, contact GESI staff.
- Do not participate in any kind of rally, protest, or political manifestation.
- Report any independent travel, including a written itinerary and contact information, to your on-site administrators. Also, enter your travel information into the Personal Travel Locator in International SOS.

Scenario I: Physical or Mental Health Emergency
If you are not feeling well or are experiencing emotional distress, contact your country program director or other on-site administrator, and they will help you get the care that you need. You will be given more specific information at your in-country orientation.

Scenario II: Crime Committed Against a Student
If you are the victim of a crime (e.g., a robbery or assault), contact your country program director or on-site administrator, and they will notify you of the proper procedure for reporting the crime and if applicable, the steps for replacing stolen items. If your passport is lost or stolen, you will need to contact local police and the US Embassy.

Scenario III: Hostility Toward United States Citizens & Terrorist Acts
We monitor International SOS and the State Department for announcements regarding the safety of our students abroad. In case of emergency, we will work with the US Embassy, the State Department, and International SOS to analyze the severity of the situation. We will keep you informed of any situations that have occurred and any relevant warnings and update you about any potential risks or areas to avoid. If necessary, we will make arrangements to evacuate students to a secure and calm location far from anti-American or terrorist activity to prevent attack.

Note: You will be provided with comprehensive safety sheets and emergency contact information prior to your departure!
Cultural Adjustment

Cultural norms and adjustment:

Students will experience cultural differences and react to these differences (commonly referred to as “culture shock”) in a variety of ways. There is a lot of helpful literature related to the cultural adjustment process, including common themes and experiences, representing phases of highs (comfort and excitement) and lows (discomfort and anxiety).

It is also helpful to keep in mind that, just as you enter into a new place and experience adjustment, so too do your host organizations, host families, and host communities; be aware that your actions, habits, and words can impact those around you as much as those around you can impact you.

Your on-site teams will be the most important resources for helping you to navigate cultural differences and adjustment, but just keep in mind a few things:

• Culture shock is normal and however you experience it is normal.
• Intercultural adjustment not only varies by individual, but also by program. You may find that some of the traditional “low” phases may correspond with program excursions and produce a “high.”
• Culture shock can exacerbate other mental health challenges or conditions. If you have seen a therapist or psychiatrist for any mental health conditions within the past three years, be sure to indicate this on the required NU Health Assessment Form and meet with your doctor to discuss your condition in light of study abroad. If you require any special accommodations, be sure to discuss your situation with GESI prior to departure, so that we can work with on-site staff to determine what—if any—provisions can be made.
• Be aware of what you are experiencing. If you encounter any difficulties or discomfort, which prevent you from participating and being successful, discuss this with your on-site administrators or GESI staff ASAP.

Encountering culture:

For many GESI students, witnessing extreme poverty first-hand causes a great deal of culture shock. Encounters with beggars, for example, can be a deeply unsettling experience. Richard Slimbach offers the following advice:

“Begging may be a deeply flawed method of redistributing wealth, but letting ourselves lapse into callous indifference only injures our moral sensibilities. Whether to give or not to give ultimately must be decided case by case, because much depends on our knowledge of the particular beggar and the larger social context. We simply cannot give to all beggars but neither must we refuse all. Over time, our giving probably will be selective, biased in favor of those who provide some service. Instead of our “gift” reinforcing the notion that poor folk are simply welfare wards of wealthy westerners, it can become a legitimate and dignifying form of payment for services rendered” (Slimbach, p. 188).

Bargaining is another cultural experience that can sometimes overwhelm students. Yet bargaining can be the most enjoyable of experiences abroad and we hope you’ll learn to have fun with it! Remember that if you really want something, you should plan to pay fair price, not the lowest possible price. Bargaining can be a fun way to form relationships with locals. Just be careful not to pay high prices for basic goods because it may harm locals. If local merchants can get premium prices for their goods and services from foreigners, they may be less likely to sell to their neighbors at lower, fairer rates.
Food for Thought

You are passionate about making a positive impact while abroad, yet short-term study abroad can have long-term negative impacts if the traveler and program provider are not thoughtful and reflective about their engagements abroad. These questions are meant to help you think about the unintended consequences of study abroad and foreign travel. Many GESI sites are located in areas frequented by general tourists throughout the year. We encourage you to reflect with your GESI groups, in your personal writing reflections, and whenever you travel abroad again. These questions can help us continue to develop programming that does not harm local communities.

• Upon arrival, figure out where your food/water/housing comes from. Do foreigners/tourists impose any hardship on local people, such as water shortages? What about garbage disposal and pollution? Is land being used for visitors rather than local needs?

• Does the economic impact of study abroad or tourism create economic inequality in the community? Do foreigners or local elites own or manage the hotels that students/tourists frequent? Are guides and drivers outsiders or wealthier members of the community? Do local prices go up as a result of the student visit? The giving of gifts can contribute to similar questions, however well intentioned—can nonmaterial gifts be given instead, or gifts to the community as a whole?

• Do student/tourist visits contribute to economies of dependency on outsiders, orienting those economies to pleasing or providing pleasure for wealthy foreigners rather than to local needs?

• Is there a season for foreign visitors to come to the area, such that student visits contribute to a boom and bust cycle in the local economy? Is there any way to mitigate this effect?

• Do outsiders’ patterns of consumption contribute to problems in the community? The “demonstration effect” of students bringing high-end travel gear, lots of clothes, spending money easily on restaurants, giving gifts, etc. may create resentment, the perception of American students as wealthy consumers with no responsibilities at home (McLaren 2006), or the desire in local people (especially youth) to leave the community so they can make money to buy similar goods and services. Even traveling on an airplane or traveling away from home can create these problems among people who do not have that option.

• Are local people excluded from any of the areas where foreigners are encouraged or allowed to go?

• Are foreign visitors well-behaved and respectful in terms of the local culture? Do they dress in culturally appropriate clothing, or otherwise commit cultural offenses that will anger, distress, or shock people in the local community? Do outsiders see culture and the “authenticity” of local people as commodities to be consumed? What other cultural impacts result from outsiders’ visits? Cultural differences in themselves are likely sources of confusion and conflict in unanticipated ways.

• Do foreigners smoke, drink, or do drugs during their visit? The effect of these behaviors can range from being poor role models for local youth to bringing new addictions to the community.

• Do students/tourists demonstrate other expressions of privilege during their visit, such as doing things “our” way, eating “our” food, playing “our” music, requiring things to be done on “our” schedule?

• How well are students prepared to understand the community they are visiting? Do they bring damaging stereotypes that can be countered throughout the program? These might be as narrow as “Bolivians” but for most students are more likely to be broader such as “poor people”, “indigenous people”, or “people in developing countries”, as well as racist and exoticizing images of people in out-of-the-way places.

• Are there human rights issues already present that are exacerbated by the presence of foreigners?

• Does anything about the students’ presence or activities reinforce a negative self-image for local people, for example that Americans are smarter, more competent, more attractive? Is there any way their presence could promote a positive self-image instead?
Food for Thought

To mitigate potentially negative impacts, we encourage you to honor the host community's independence and encourage self-reliance; to never impose your personal agenda when working with the community; to respect local people's visions and opinions above your own; and to be vigilant of any cultural impacts you might be having and adjust your behaviors and actions as necessary. Here are some additional tips to make the most of your time abroad and to leave a positive impact:

• Take advantage of opportunities to interact with people who are different from you.

• Engage in every activity fully, remaining mentally and emotionally present. Consider going unplugged, leaving technology like laptops and iPods aside or even at home. While technology can be helpful to keep us connected to our world and people at home, many times it ends up restricting our ability to immerse ourselves in the local community or interferes with our ability to make ourselves available to the people right in front of us. Think about ways you will travel abroad with technology and still remember to look up.

• Do not try to replicate the U.S. in your host community; avoid demanding the services you would expect at home. Observe the way things are done locally, refrain from judgment, and when you feel yourself getting irritated or judgmental, take a step back and try to understand why the locals do things differently from the way you are accustomed. Speak with locals to understand their viewpoints, listen to be surprised so that your own assumptions are challenged.

• Question your and your peers’ use of words like “authentic”, “real”, “rural”, “indigenous”, and “traditional”. (“To suggest the life of a rural citizen is any more or less “real” than that of an urban citizen of the same culture is condescending and can indicate a disturbingly colonial nostalgia for a cultural experience laden with pre-development realities”) (Johnson, 184).

• Avoid the “theme park” experience, the places that were clearly designed for foreigners’ amusement.

• As you meet people and form strong relationships with your hosts, remain curious about the larger global, national and local structures that exist, that recreate the poverty and inequality you are trying to grasp. Global learning must reach in both directions—toward persons and structures.

• Recognize the value of play and lightheartedness in cultivating friendships.

• Practice culturally sensitive photography: Always ask first. Be especially mindful of children, who are often readily photogenic. Photos of children are sometimes easily taken as we seek to document memorable experiences in the community, but be careful and considerate when taking kids’ photos. • Keep an open mind and heart but avoid romanticizing your experiences in host communities. Remember that below the surface of a seemingly homogenous social structure are power hierarchies, conflicting interests, and patterns of discrimination and exclusion.

• Be a listener, more than talker; a learner more than teacher; a facilitator more than leader.

• Observe, listen, and inquire rather than criticize, rationalize, or withdraw.

• When confronted with a language barrier, speak English as little as possible. Expand your vocabulary, if necessary, actively engaging community members with nonverbal communication.

• Risk making mistakes.

• “Go slow. Respect People. Practice humility, and don't condescend with your good intentions. Make friends. Ask questions. Know that you are visitor. Keep promises even if that means mailing a photograph a few weeks later. Be a personal ambassador of your home culture, and take your new perspectives home so that you can share them with your neighbor” (Potts, 2008).
Stop complaining and start reflecting!
When you catch yourself complaining, ask yourself: Can we—both hosts and guests—learn to adapt to each other? Can our differences be a source of mutual enrichment rather than separation? When we discover that things abroad are profoundly different from things at home, our natural tendency is to flee away from them. Instead of seeking to understand why certain practices irritate us, our immediate impulse is to simply spurn them as primitive and uncivilized, even immoral… “Doing so justifies our escape from the culturally disagreeable environment into behaviors where we can feel protected and affirmed: calling home frequently, sleeping either too much or too little, reading romance novels, blogging or listening to music for hours, movies…We may not ‘return home’ in a physical sense, but psychologically we’re a world away” (Slimbach, 158-160).

Get out your journal.
Writing in an analytic mode helps us to calm down, gain some objectivity, and ask the critical questions: What provoked this reaction from me? How do locals interpret this act or event? And what does my reaction tell me about myself? Especially as we learn to put personal experiences and reactions into a larger social and theoretical context, our writing takes on a distinctive character—one that joins personal expression with cultural analysis—and encourages a more rigorous cognitive process than is common in conversation.

Think About the Six Skills of Intercultural Communication:

1. Cultivating curiosity about another culture and empathy toward its members
2. Realizing that effective communication requires discovering the culturally conditioned images that are evoked in the minds of the people when they think, act and react to the world around them
3. Recognizing that role expectations and other social variables such as age, sex, social and economic class, religion, ethnicity, and place of residence affect the way a people act and behave
4. Recognizing that situational variables and convention shape behavior in important ways
5. Understanding that people generally act the way they do because they are using options that their society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs
6. Developing the ability to evaluate the strength of a generalization about the target culture (from the evidence substantiating the statements) and to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, internet, mass media, people, and personal observation and reflection
Works Cited


International Program Development Study Abroad Handbook, Northwestern University, 2011.

Welcome

Dear GESI Ghana Summer 2017 Participants:

Congratulations! It is with great pleasure that Amizade welcomes you to participate in what we hope will become a lifetime of engaging, sharing, and learning with our friends in Jukwa, Ghana. During your stay in Jukwa you will have the opportunity to work closely with our site facilitators, Reverend Chris Nyame and Kwame Appiah. Together they run and operate Peace Humanity International, one of the organizations we will be assisting during our time in Ghana. My name is Tyisha Burroughs, I am a Program Coordinator for Amizade, and I look forward to spending the summer with you exploring, learning, and tackling some of the most pressing issues of our time.

I first want to thank you for embarking on this journey with us. Joining the Ghana program places you in a unique network of thousands of people from around the world who have set out to build relationships across borders and cultures unlike their own. We hope that this experience helps guide your transition to becoming an active global citizen. While in Ghana you will have the opportunity to work with community-based organizations on projects that focus on reforestation and sustainable agriculture. You will assist local organizations, led by activists who seek to improve the environmental conditions, educational opportunities, and general standard of living for their communities. This experience is designed to challenge, inspire, and spur you into becoming critical, engaged, and empathetic global citizens.

At Amizade we believe that global service-learning allows you to learn new skills, gain a deeper understanding of other cultures, and to find the best in yourself. Through this engagement you will be encouraged to not only experience a new culture but to truly understand the conditions that allow for some of our most challenging social conditions. Cross-cultural learning isn't limited to understanding the cultures of others, but also fosters a better understanding of one's own culture. As you spend time and make friends in Jukwa, not only will you be asked to understand the society you have temporarily adopted, you will also be asked to take an honest look at the society that you represent, and share that understanding with others.

We believe that the work you do in Ghana will go beyond Jukwa, it will affect who you are and how you see the world, and you will carry these ideals with you when you return home. We hope that our participants use the experiences they have had and the knowledge they gain and share it with their family and friends. Through educating ourselves and others about the world outside of our own we plant the seeds that encourage other to become active participants in the world at large.

Program by program, person by person, community by community, we are building a global network, based on cross-cultural trust and critical reflection that honors nuance and inspires empathy. We already have over 10,000 alums who have impacted tens of thousands of others - all of whom are part of solutions to the very real challenges the world faces today. We hope that 20 years from now, the types of experiences Amizade provides will not be a luxury, but an equalizer, and a more perfect way for us all to travel, serve, learn, and communicate with others. I am excited about our upcoming journey together and looking forward to meeting your group this upcoming June.

Sincerely,

Tyisha Burroughs
Program Coordinator
Amizade Ghana Summer 2017
tyisha.burroughs@amizade.org
Overview

Amizade History
Amizade Global Service-Learning has been empowering individuals and communities through worldwide service and learning since 1994. Over 10,000 individuals have served with local community leaders in 12 countries on 4 continents with 16 partnerships. From working with women and girls on rainwater harvesting initiatives in rural Tanzania to running at-risk youth camps in Jamaica, Amizade volunteers have transformed and been transformed. As a multi-mission organization with an equal focus on community and individual development, Amizade’s rationale reflects the belief that individual and community change must occur in concert. Amizade’s emphasis on community-based learning, community-driven service, and immersion in local life and culture is premised on the beliefs that:

- Addressing – and even comprehending or analyzing – global social issues is nearly impossible without local perspective and consideration;
- Forming friendships across cultures is essential to developing more nuanced worldviews and enhancing the possibility of peace by pieces;
- Visceral, emotional, and other kinds of learning documented in the service-learning literature, enhance and deepen possibilities for student cognitive learning and personal.

In 2010, Amizade pioneered the concept of Fair Trade Learning. Fair Trade Learning recognizes that the individuals and communities that host students and volunteers are uniquely impacted by visitors and should be offered fair working conditions and compensation, hold significant voice in the orchestration of programming, and be offered proper professional development opportunities.

Pioneered by Amizade Global Service-Learning, the Fair Trade Learning framework commits volunteer sending organizations to transparency, community-driven service, commitment and sustainability, deliberate diversity, intercultural contact, community preparation, local sourcing, reciprocity, and reflection. Each ideal is broken into specific standards that have been vetted by community members, staff members across several VSOs, and a broad coalition of academics.

Ghana Overview
The people of Ghana are diverse, ever-changing, and - like everywhere else - impossible to easily classify. Many of those whom we collaborate with in Jukwa, however, tend to endure daily hardships, including recurrent droughts that severely affect agricultural activities; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; poaching of wildlife populations; water pollution; and inadequate supplies of potable water. Despite all of this, Jukwa is filled with incredibly resilient people with an important history and culture. From rainforests to beaches and lagoons to dry savannah and open woodland, Ghana has as much beauty and diversity in its natural habitat, as it does in its people. While in Ghana, you will make friends from from all over the region. You will learn to do work that you have never done before, and you will be introduced to a group of people that you can share, learn, and build solidarity with.
Ghana Overview (continued)
Participants will live in the overgrown village of Jukwa, about 20 miles north of Cape Coast. A little over a decade ago, Jukwa had no electricity, it had no public water, and cell phones were nowhere to be found. Like many areas in Africa, change has been fast for the town, which now boasts all of the aforementioned amenities, as well as a series of paved roads, a nice guest house, and a growing small business base.

Amizade and its partners recently completed the construction and programming roll-out of an 8-room, massive, public library (including internet cafe) next to the secondary school. This library, stocks thousands of books, computers, large meeting rooms, and is open to the entire community. With the library project completed, we now turn our work to a large reforestation project - which you will be crucial to its launch and completion. Beyond meaningful service work, while staying in Jukwa, participants will also get the opportunity to visit with local leaders, a local rainforest canopy walk, Cape Coast Castle, local cultural and religious events, and much more.

Amizade's also has close ties in the town of Winneba, Ghana. Winneba is a historic fishing port in south Ghana, lying on the south coast, about 90 miles east of Cape Coast. While in Winneba, participants meet, work with, and learn from leaders in the front lines of protecting and ending modern day slavery. It's possible that you will get the opportunity to spend a small amount of time in Winneba, learning and sharing with our friends there.

Community Partners and Service: Peace Humanity International
Peace Humanity International (PHI) is a community development organization based in Accra, Ghana. PHI works on various development initiatives, ranging from computer literacy projects to rural sustainable agriculture projects. The founder, Reverend Chris Nyame, and his associate, Kwame Appiah, grew up in Jukwa, and are considered local leaders. Together, they are committed to creating global learning and development opportunities for the region.

By working with Peace Humanity International and local traditional and political leaders, Amizade volunteers learn about community organization and gain important organizational and management skills. Past volunteers have worked on construction projects, environmental projects, and educational initiatives. But do be clear - the impact of this volunteer experience is complicated, evolving, and not always the most important part of your time in Ghana.
Approach to Service

Amizade's Approach to Service
Amizade strives to promote an “ethic of service” on all our programs. This means that we envision the entire experience as one of service to our fellow human beings. There will be scheduled time for engaging service, but we also encourage you to carry your ethic of service with you throughout the program. You can do this by volunteering to help with food preparation, cleaning, or various other daily tasks. As guests in the host community, Amizade volunteers are encouraged to act respectfully in all community interactions. The global service experience provides a unique opportunity to learn from the traditions, beliefs, and customs of a new community. Since most Amizade volunteers come from outside of the community, they are often seen as “ambassadors” representing their countries and are able to use this opportunity to share positively about their culture. At the same time, volunteers have the unique opportunity of experiencing another culture while taking the time to absorb and respect new world views.

Volunteer opportunities
PHI, alongside the community, is currently in the planning stages of embarking on a reforestation initiative along the banks of the Sweet River. The participants in coordination with community partners, will begin by learning about environmental issues within the community, including regional deforestation along the river and the negative effect this has on the river environment and larger ecosystem. Participants will engage in a variety of activities including, but not limited to:

- Assisting in mapping of the river and identifying areas for the first phase of re-planting
- Conducting a baseline survey on local perceptions of reforestation to allow our community partners to structure outreach campaigns on the importance of altering farming practices
- Planting and caring for seeds in the nursery
- Transplanting seedlings from the nursery to designated areas along the banks of Sweet River
- Understanding the context and history of environmental issues within Ghana and how they are being addressed

Participants will also engage in cultural and educational activities to supplement their learning within Jukwa. They will have the opportunity to participate in basic Twi languages lessons. In addition to language lessons and spending time with host families, students will learn traditional drumming and dancing with a local cultural troupe, visit the Cape Coast Slave Castle and Kakum National Park, visit cocoa and palm oil plantations, hear lectures from local experts, as well as engaging in other relevant community activities.

Reflective Inquiry
Amizade’s vital components of community-driven service, intercultural immersion and exchange, deliberate learning, and exploration of global citizenship are woven together through reflective inquiry. The questions participants face when engaged in intercultural service around the world are often difficult and it can be challenging to stay connected to global civic engagement after a short-term experience. We have provided each of you with an Amizade Journal and encourage you to write and reflect on your experience.
On-Site Experience

The Amizade experience
Amizade programs are deeply intimate experiences. They are not big bus tours that happen without mistake. They are raw, community-driven journeys in which challenge is guaranteed to occur. How all stakeholders respond to that challenge is what makes the difference.

The time that you spend in Ghana is sure to be one filled with many new experiences: new outlooks, new cultures, and new situations. Therefore, the Amizade experience is enhanced by looking at some of the conversations that have been engaged in relation to the country and the issues over the last several years, getting a rough idea of what’s happening, and going with an informed set of questions in mind. The entire experience is about getting in deep enough and starting to dream enough to realize that your time abroad can’t possibly be enough to see and understand all of Ghana, but it can be enough to get an idea of it, connect with new friends, meet and struggle with some significant challenges, make connections, create difference, and begin to understand an entirely different kind of place. That’s really a lot for such a short amount of time, yet much of it will happen. And all of this will take place in the context of a relatively unpredictable environment. Unpredictable does not mean that it is unsafe.

Unpredictable simply describes the “climate” of Amizade programs’ in Ghana. That means it’s characterized by something called a “lack of redundancy.” Lack of redundancy refers to an absence of continuously present and reliable systems and products. With water supply, that means it may go out sporadically. With transportation, it means buses may be delayed. In stores or restaurants, it may mean the things they sell are not what they advertise outside, but rather whatever they have in stock (or can quickly get from a neighbor) inside. All of this relates to an absolutely essential ongoing Amizade motto, which is:

“OK, GOOD.” “Okay, good” refers to moments when we show up for transit at the right time, yet quickly learn that transit will not be arriving for eight hours. “Okay, good,” we have an opportunity to hang out in Ghana. “Okay, good” refers to moments when we long for some familiar comfort foods, but we have another helping of the same, exotic local foods. “Okay, good,” we have a great deal more exotic local food than most of those around us. “Okay, good” refers to times when we’re crammed into transportation (cars, vans, trains) in a way that we did not previously believe was possible. “Okay, good,” we have transportation and are moving to our desired destination more easily than most people in the area. “Okay, good” is about remembering – even when we feel that we are struggling – that we are fortunate for the opportunities to travel and serve; that we are still in amazing places with incredible people; and that life will go on even though (unlike in our local environment) the day-to-day life is just not all that predictable. Of course, “Okay, good” is also useful when the last leg of the return flight home doesn’t connect at the right time!

Flexibility
Flexibility on behalf of the participants is the most important element on an Amizade program. Itineraries may change at the last minute in order to meet current community needs or participate in unexpected opportunities for recreational, educational, or cultural exploration. Many aspects of traveling are unpredictable and time-consuming, so be prepared to enjoy the unexpected surprises and embrace the opportunities they provide!
On-Site Experience

Amizade Staff
Amizade programs are staffed by a variety of motivated, trained people. We encourage you to get to know the staff members that will be coordinating your volunteer program. Any concerns or questions during the in-country experience should be directed to the appropriate Amizade staff. Staff that you may run into include:

- **Facilitator** - This is a trained leader, who will work with you in reflection exercises and activities. They will challenge you, learn with you, and act as a type of mentor as you imagine how you can best contribute to your own community when you return from your trip.
- **Program Assistant** - This person is responsible for coordinating all of the administrative elements to your program, including your applications, liability forms, health and security documents, planning documents, and post trip/reentry follow up. They've got a lot of work to do so they'll be in touch with you quite a bit.
- **Education Director** - This person oversees monitoring and evaluation of our programming. Think quality control and impact. They'll spend time with your leaders in planning and re-entry evaluation.
- **Site Director** - This person, in harmony with their assistants, is the community representative who you will work closely with on the ground. They are your window into the community and culture, as well as your logistical point person. Feel empowered to discuss plans, updates, program shifts, health and safety concerns, and everything else with them. Site Directors are the lifeblood of the organization.
- **Site Liaison** - This is a staff member based in our Pittsburgh headquarters who works very closely with our local Site Directors. They are usually considered a regional expert, spend a lot of time in the community, and help to communicate programmatic elements.
- **Executive Director** - This is Amizade’s chief executive. Please contact this person if you run into major problems, have some brilliant ideas for partnership, or would like to get more involved at the Board level or on one of Amizade’s four Advisory Groups. They'll love to hear from you!

Housing
While in Jukwa Participants will be housed in vetted homestays. These will vary in comfort level, size, and type of family. You can expect a bed with a mosquito net, fan, and bucket shower, but you should not expect much more than that in terms of comforts. You can also expect to have to boil and drink “bagged” or bottled water. Some houses have stoves, but others cook on charcoal outside of the house. Food preparation is, by itself, a lengthy daily task, and you will be asked to assist in cooking nearly every meal. Some families have children, others don't. Some have televisions, others don't. Nearly everyone has cell phones now, but very few families have internet. By US standards, it's extremely rustic, and yet, you will adapt. Most participants find the homestays to be the most important part of their time, where they are challenged in extreme ways, bridge cultural gaps, and cultivate unlikely networks. In Accra, participants will stay in hotels or hostels. The hotels/hostels in Accra are typically no frills, but safe places.

Amizade programs generally have a strong core element built around group living. For many people, living, volunteering, studying, completing projects, and spending leisure time in a group may be new. Therefore we ask all Amizade volunteers to approach group interaction with flexibility, openness, and constructive communication. We strive to respect each other’s space and needs while also supporting each other to achieve personal goals on the program. While in Ghana you will usually be in homestays, you should still consider approaches to group living. Your day to day sleeping arrangements will vary, but together, you’ll be a tight-knit group who will have to manage many shifts in your own dynamics. Always be mindful of this.
On-Site Experience

Transportation
While in Ghana, you will primarily take local buses or “Trotro’s.” These buses travel to nearly every local town and village, and have regular transfer times. Sometimes these buses can get very full, and we ask that all participants remain vigilant if the bus seems unsafe. There is a strict no open-air vehicle riding allowed. This means that no one is allowed in the back of a truck, a motorcycle, or a personal watercraft. There are no exceptions to this rule. In addition, we ask that you take steps to recognize that:

Internet Access
Jukwa has limited internet access. As such, you will have access to e-mail, social networks, and internet communication most reliably on your phone or wireless connect card. While a hotel and library in town has internet, the closest actual internet cafe is in Cape Coast, a 25 minute drive.

Meals
Eating abroad is an adventure of new tastes, smells, and meals. You will have the opportunity to try genuine local dishes. You may be eating the same or similar food regularly if that is the local custom. In Ghana, there are many delicious dishes, such as beans and fried plantains, fufu (mashed yam or cassava), kenkey (fermented corn meal) and ground nut (peanut) soup. A few grocery stores in town carry products common in the US (cookies, cheese and other pre-packaged items). The Kotokraba Market in Cape Coast has seasonal fresh produce: pineapples, peanuts, oranges and bananas.

According to food by country, Ghanaians traditionally consume three meals a day and each meal is usually only one course. The typical kitchen contains an open fire, a clay oven, a large pot for cooking large quantities of food (such as stew), and a large iron griddle for frying. Fish, especially near the coast, is found more often in everyday dishes and stews. Kyemgbuma, crabs with cassava dough, meat, and potatoes, and gari foto (eggs, onions, dried shrimp, and tomatoes) accompanied by gari (coarse manioc flour) are popular seafood dishes. Breakfast is occasionally more substantial than the light, midday snack that some groups consume. Ampesi (am-PEH-si ) is a popular dish eaten in the morning. It consists of a cassava, cocoyam, yam, and plantain mixture that is boiled with onion and fish, and then pounded and boiled a second time. Dishes served for lunch and dinner are typically very similar.

Note to Vegetarians
Vegetarianism is not very common in Ghana. Most Ghanaians eat fish, chicken or some other meat each day; however, fresh fruit is widely available, as is vegetable stew and beans and rice. Amizade will make every effort to provide vegetarian options, but sometimes they will need to be supplemented with further protein and vitamins. We encourage vegetarians to bring healthy snacks and vitamins with them. Please indicate your dietary needs and restrictions on your Amizade Medical Form so we can best prepare for you.

Climate and Weather
Ghana's average temperatures range between 75°F - 90°F with the primary rainy season lasting from April until June. Expect some bugs that you're not used to, and some mid-day heat that's harsh. When the electricity goes out, fans stop working. This can sometimes make sleep more difficult.
### Getting Started

**Service**

**Suggested Work Plan:** This itinerary is subject to change to reflect community circumstances and the availability of community members for presentations and cultural activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 12 - June 19</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>• Pre-program health, safety, and security orientation.</td>
<td>Readings, journals, presentations, Skype meetings, group conversations. Led by GESI, with support from Amizade.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Cultural sensitization and preparation.</td>
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<td>• Student-led intentions and agreements.</td>
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<td>• Community partner introductions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 20 - June 22</td>
<td>Accra, Ghana</td>
<td>• Students are welcomed to West Africa with an orientation to Ghana.</td>
<td>Site director leadership, Amizade Site Liaison, NGO meetings, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Visit local historical and cultural sites, such as the Kwame Nkrumah</td>
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<td>Museum and open air markets.</td>
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<td>• Students are introduced to Ghanaian peers at a local university.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students meet with NGO leaders and community partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 22 - June 30</td>
<td>Jukwa, Ghana</td>
<td>• Students are welcomed to Jukwa by traditional and elected leaders.</td>
<td>Site director leadership, GESI faculty leadership, Amizade Site Liaison, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours, community leaders presentations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to the environmental climate of Ghana and the Sweet River Project.</td>
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<td>• Twi lessons and additional cultural activities begin.</td>
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<td>• Visit cocoa and palm oil plantations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students begin to think about project proposals and external work plans</td>
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<td>Date Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1 - July 7</td>
<td>Jukwa, Ghana</td>
<td>• Service continues</td>
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<td>• Cultural activities continue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Presentations by local community leaders on specialized topics</td>
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<td>• Students formalize project proposals</td>
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<td>Site director leadership, GESI faculty leadership, Amizade Site Liaison, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 7 - July 14</td>
<td>Jukwa, Ghana</td>
<td>• Service continues with the Sweet River Project</td>
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<td>• Visits to Cape Coast Slave Castle and Kakum National Park</td>
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<td>• Cultural activities continue</td>
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<td>Site director leadership, Amizade Site Liaison, reflection, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 15 - August 13</td>
<td>Jukwa and Accra,</td>
<td>• Students continue service with community partners and the Sweet River</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Project</td>
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<td>• Students present their work with the Sweet River Project to community</td>
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<td>leaders</td>
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<td>• Students present their project proposals and rationale to community</td>
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<td>leaders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Engage in final reflective activities</td>
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<td>Site director leadership, GESI faculty leadership, Amizade Site Liaison, reflection, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 14 - August 17</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>• Students return to the USA and enter re-entry period.</td>
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<td>• Students engage in the GESI Final Reflection Summit</td>
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<td>• Students join Amizade’s alumni network to stay involved with Amizade, Jukwa, and community partners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GESI and Amizade leadership, group conversations, reflection.</td>
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</table>
Getting Started

Preparing for your program: transportation to site
An Amizade staff person will meet you and the group at the airport to transport you to the hotel in Accra, and then to the program site. This will be done by private shuttle. GESI has organized group flights to and from Ghana, therefore all participants are expected to arrive on the scheduled program start date and depart on the scheduled finish date.

Travel Documents
Amizade will work with you to secure your visa to Ghana. If you are a non-US citizen, you must check with the consulate in your country regarding travel documents including passport and visa requirements.

Please note that passports can take up to 6 weeks to process, so if you do not have one or it has expired, please address this immediately. Information regarding US passports is available at: http://www.travel.state.gov/

As of November 2016, a passport, tourist visa and proof of yellow fever vaccination are required for entry to Ghana. Please check with the Ghanaian Embassy for the most up to date information.

Visa Requirements
ALL VISA APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS AND PASSPORTS FOR VISAS TWO WEEKS TO ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE INTENDED DATE OF DEPARTURE.

Completed visa application must include:
- Valid passport for at least six (6) months (Before Expiration)
- Evidence of financial support or letter of invitation from host in Ghana
- Visa Fee - money order, postal order, cashiers check or certified bank check
- Two passport-size photographs of applicant. Should be taken at least within the last three months (Very Important)
- Affix each photograph with glue on the top right corner of the application form.
- Applications submitted by mail must be accompanied by prepaid self-addressed overnight, trackable envelope (FEDEX) for return of passports. Only requests accompanied by certified prepaid return envelopes will be processed.

Send the completed application to:
The Consular Section
3512 International Dr. NW
Washington DC, 20008

Please be prepared in case of losing your wallet, passport, or other travel documents. Bring copies of all your important travel documents and monetary documents, especially your passport and visa, and store one set of copies in your luggage while leaving another set of copies with your emergency contact at home. Make sure to make copies of ALL your travel documents prior to arriving at the airport.
Health, Safety, & Security

General Notes
Traveling often affects one’s health, so it is imperative that all volunteers are in good physical condition. Typical travel ailments in Ghana include upset stomach, diarrhea, bug bites, jet lag, minor cuts, scrapes, bruises, and sunburn. Please feel free to bring travel-sized portions of over the counter medicines such as headache medicine, stomach medicines, sun block, bug spray, band-aids, etc. to prevent common issues.

An on-site Amizade staff member will have a first aid kit. We recommend that you check with your medical physician regarding further information about healthy travel abroad - and specifically about malaria prophylaxis.

Prescription Medicines
If you have prescription medicines, bring them in the original prescription bottles with your name on them and bring an ample supply for the duration of your program. In some countries, certain medicines are not as readily available.

The Best Medicine is “Preventative Medicine”
Throughout the program, please rest, drink plenty of water, and take care to avoid overexposure to the sun. While on the program, let the Amizade staff know if you have any concerns about your health and contact them immediately if you experience a health emergency.

All participants are required to complete and submit the Amizade Medical and Insurance Form prior to participation. It is imperative that you complete this form as comprehensively as possible so Amizade staff can best address medical situations on site. On this form you will also list your immunization records. Please consult with your physician regarding your health participation in the activities for your program and recommended immunizations.

Health: Immunizations
Amizade staff are not doctors, and recommend consulting your physician and the CDC for the most up to date information. According to the CDC, as of November 2017, for travel to Ghana, you should be up to date on routine vaccinations while traveling to any destination. These vaccines include:

- measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine,
- diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine,
- varicella (chickenpox) vaccine,
- polio vaccine, and
- flu shot

Yellow Fever
- Yellow fever is a risk in Ghana, so CDC recommends this vaccine for all travelers who are 9 months of age or older.
- The government of Ghana requires proof of yellow fever vaccination for all travelers, except infants

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Health, Safety, & Security

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Ebola

• It is important to note that Ghana has remained Ebola free, and as of November 2016, there is no threat of Ebola in Ghana. However, over the last two years, Ebola has gone beyond a health problem to become a social problem, an economic problem, and a humanitarian problem. As a result, the United Nations Mission on Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) has been set up in Accra. In general, travelers should frequently wash their hands, avoid contact with the blood or body fluids of another person, avoid facilities where Ebola patients are being treated and report any potential unprotected exposure or illness promptly.

Current information regarding immunizations can be found on the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

For more information:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30333 USA
(404) 639-3311 (404) 639-3312 (TTY)
Public Inquiries 1-404-639-3534 and 1-800-311-3435

Safety

The West African state of Ghana has relatively low crime rates and currently has a stable, democratic government. Health concerns, such as malaria, do exist and require travelers to take the necessary precautions. Frequent power outages occur, resulting in demonstrations in the capital city of Accra. Based on research conducted by our security partners at Armada Global, Ghana does not pose any imminent threats or dangers so long as travelers follow proper safety precautions.

As a volunteer in the community you will have local companions and friends. Participants should observe and imitate local customs regarding safety. Regardless of where you are it is best to travel in pairs, especially at night. Be cautious with your money and make sure you store it in a safe place or in a money belt. Trust your instincts. If you do not feel safe in a situation or someone's behavior is making you uncomfortable, get out of the situation immediately. Firmly say “no” to any invitation you do not want and turn away. Ignore persistent overtures.
Health, Safety, & Security

Safety Recommendations
All travelers should practice the following security awareness techniques: Be cognizant of your surroundings Avoid predictable patterns and change your travel routes Do not dress extravagantly or wear expensive jewelry Travel in groups Use only trusted transportation nodes (arranged by western hotel, for example) Do not hail street cabs Prior to your trip, register with the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program - https://step.state.gov/step/. Ensure you have proper vaccinations and have registered for travel insurance and medical evacuation coverage

Security Standards of Practice
All sites have been visited and evaluated by Amizade Staff Members for the following:
• Security of accommodations
• Basic standards of comfort for accommodations
• Safety in food preparation
• Access to safe and sanitary water
• Access to health services
• Access to phones and the Internet in case of emergencies

All sites are staffed by local Amizade site directors who:
• Possess knowledge of local security and medical providers
• Are aware that Amizade functions within a US liability and safety environment
• Are available and on-call throughout an Amizade program and are prepared to respond

Amizade provides a US call number that is staffed continuously During emergencies, Amizade employs a system of rapid response, including:
• Securing medical translation services
• Consulting with a US doctor
• Flying to location to clarify and improve communication and cooperation
• Evacuating volunteers in the event of civil unrest

Amizade maintains an exemplary record of safety with 22 years of participant safety and security.

Risk Management
The primary concern of Amizade is to the safety and security of its participants, Site Directors, Staff Members, and community partners within any Amizade program. Amizade is dedicated to identifying any potential risks and addressing them with manageable and effective safety plans in order to continue our mission of excellence in safety. For a full report of our risk management policies, please contact our office.
Standards of Practice

**Accommodation: Standards of Practice**

- Home-Stay Family Selection and Quality Measures:
  - Home-stays through Amizade are arranged with middle income families
  - Amizade Site Directors routinely meet with home-stay families and inspect participating houses
  - Only stable, well-respected families in the community are selected to participate in the Amizade home-stay program
  - Families who participate in the home-stay program have 24/7 access to the Amizade Site Director via cell phone to report any concerns or problems
  - Home-stay families are required to provide participants with a clean, safe living environment
  - Homestay families provide support for participants in acclimating to the home and community
  - Participants are provided their own bed, bedroom (unless shared with another Amizade participant), and access to a private or shared bathroom
  - Home-stay families are educated on safe food preparation
  - Participant food allergies or specific dietary requests are communicated to home-stay families in advance
  - Homestay families provide participants with access to safe, sanitary drinking water
  - Any accidents or incidents are reported to the Amizade Staff and further documented in an incident report
  - Participants are given a home-stay evaluation form and are encouraged to submit it at the end of their program in order to assure continued comfort, safety, and excellence in home-stay programs

**Safety and Security Measures**

Amizade provides all participants with pre-departure and on-site orientations that cover the expectations, responsibilities, and rights of participants.

All participants are provided with contact information and location maps in order to familiarize themselves with means of contact as well as work, home-stay, and Site.

**Director locations**

- The Amizade Site Director or Staff Member accompanies participants to the homestay homes in order to introduce them to the family and assure they are settled
- The Amizade Site Director or Staff Member routinely visits the participants at the homestay homes to assure adherence to the expectations of Amizade
- Home-stay families introduce the participants to their family and community, providing the participant with continuous guidance and support throughout the duration of the program
- Participants have 24/7 access to the Amizade Site Director and the Amizade Executive Director via cell phones
- Participants meet with the Amizade Site Director and/or Amizade Staff Member at least once weekly to discuss program logistics and home-stay accommodations
- All incidents, concerns, and complaints are addressed immediately and reported to
  - the Amizade Office
- When requested or necessary, participants are relocated to another home-stay house
- The Amizade Office maintains a current list of all home-stay contact information, including, but not limited to, the main contact of the household, the home address, and various phone numbers
- All arranged home-stays and changes are reported and maintained on file at the Amizade Office
Standards of Practice

During Pre-Departure

- Staff Members closely monitor news agencies, the United States Department of State, and international embassies for relevant information
- Staff Members compile accurate contact information for the following:
  - United States Embassy or Consulate in the country(ies) of destination
  - Site Directors, on-site Staff Members, and homestay families
  - Local police and emergency services
  - Nearest hospitals
- Staff Members designate a safe meeting location and a reliable means of transport in the event of an emergency
- For programs abroad, Amizade Staff Members contact the United States Embassy or Consulate in the country(ies) of destination with information on the program itinerary, dates, contact information, and all registered participants for the program
- If an emergency were to arise during pre-departure (including terrorism in the United States or abroad, war, civil unrest, natural disasters or other emergencies), all Amizade Site Directors and Staff Members will be made aware immediately and appropriate action will be taken.

During the Program and Intercultural Immersion

- Staff Members continue to vigilantly monitor news agencies, the United States Department of State, and international embassies for relevant information
- Directors and on-site Staff Members regularly contact the Amizade Main Office in the United States via e-mail or telephone communication
- Staff Members provide each participant with an emergency contact card listing the contact information of the Site Director, on-site Staff Members, local police and emergency services, local hospitals, and the United States Embassy or Consulate in the country(ies) of destination

Emergency Protocol

- Amizade on-site staff will assure the safety and security of all program participants, determine the severity of the issue, communicate to participants that resources are available and will be contacted as soon as the situation is stabilized. This may include participants being taken to a different location, particularly in the country rather than the city. Amizade on-site staff will provide a way to ensure that students are able to contact their family and friends back home.
- Once the safety and security of all program participants has been secured, any necessary emergency health service providers have been contacted, and pertinent information has been gathered, on-site staff will contact Amizade Headquarters.

Site Directors and on-site Staff Members will provide calm and professional direction to participants while establishing and maintaining constant contact with the Amizade Main Office and the United States Embassy or Consulate within the country.

In the event that participants venture without the supervision of the program group, Amizade requires that they provide detailed itineraries and accurate participant contact information
Money and Packing

Bringing Money Abroad
Many of the costs of your program are included in your tuition, so keep this in mind when you plan for the amount of money that you would like to bring from home. When traveling, having cash-on-hand is always a useful and wise idea. However, it is recommended that you bring an amount of cash that meets your needs but does not hugely exceed the amount you would typically spend over the course of a few days. Upon arriving in Ghana, there are exchange bureaus, including one in Kotoka International Airport. Banks in larger cities will also have currency exchange services. With ATMs, exchange rates are applied automatically and are generally up-to-date with the current rates.

ATMs
Perhaps the best, most highly recommended way to access money while abroad is utilizing ATMs. ATMs can be easily found within any larger city in Ghana, such as Accra and Cape Coast. Jukwa, however, has no access to ATM machines. Visa is the most widely accepted card in Ghana (and often, worldwide). It is very important to inform your bank that you will be using your card to withdraw money while in Ghana. This will help to avoid them from issuing a “hold” on your card which prevents one from withdrawing money. As always, use common sense and care when using an ATM and planning the amount needed for your activities. For the latest currency conversion rates visit: [http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/)

Packing List: What to Wear?
First and foremost, participants should plan and pack according to the weather, climate and temperature. As previously stated, Ghana experiences a generally stable climate with temperatures ranging from 75°F - 90°F. Keep in mind that, depending on your service placement while on-site, you may consider bringing clothing that you don’t mind getting a little dirty. It is also important to remember that you are acting as “diplomats.” While abroad, you represent not only your country of origin, but also your university or organization, Amizade and even yourself. It is highly recommended that, along with packing for the climate of the region, you pack clothing that is tasteful, respectful and conservative. You will meet with politicians, you will visit schools, and places of worship. For these times, as well as when you are in professional environments, it’s imperative that you ensure you are dressing conservatively. For women, this means that you knees and shoulders should be covered, and for men, this means that you should wear pants and a dress shirt.

PLEASE PACK LIGHTLY!
You should bring a maximum of two bags. Ideally, this includes one medium-sized suitcase/duffel bag and a smaller daypack for daily activities. You should be able to carry your luggage comfortably by yourself. Rolling luggage does not always work effectively in developing countries. Please use your best judgment regarding valuables. Amizade does not recommend that volunteers bring expensive jewelry, electronics, etc. Amizade is not liable for lost or stolen articles.

Electrical Voltage and Outlets Abroad
The electrical outlets of Ghana allow 230V at 50 Hertz and are utilized with both D and G outlet plugs. By comparison, the electrical outlets of the United States allow 120V at 60 Hertz to pass through them and are utilized with A and B outlet plugs. Use this information to purchase any electrical voltage and/or plug adapters for your electronic belongings. Keep in mind that most laptops have the “black box converter” attached to their power cords. Amizade recommends that students consider purchasing “all in one converters.”
Packing List

Strongly Encouraged Packing List

- Documents: passport (original + 3 copies), airline tickets, personal health insurance information, and cash, ATM/credit cards (and copies of each in a separate place)
- Money belt or wallet
- Water bottle
- Amizade Journal
- Notebook and pencil
- Converter/Adapter
- Flash Drive if applicable
- Towel and washcloth
- Toiletries – just the basics such as toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo/conditioner, feminine hygiene products and soap
- Prescriptions in original bottles (remember to bring enough for the entire program!)
- Clothing
  - T-shirts
  - Two pair of pants
  - Bottoms
  - Men: 2-3 pairs of shorts
  - Women: 4-5 dresses or shirts which fall below the knees
  - Two nice outfits
  - Socks and underwear
  - Pajamas
  - 1-2 long sleeve shirts
  - 1-2 jackets, including one rain jacket
  - One pair of closed-toe, comfortable walking shoes
  - One pair of sturdy sandals
  - Sun protection: bandanas, hat, sunglasses and sunblock
  - Bug spray containing DEET
- Cell phone
- Family photos to share with the community
- Postcards of your hometown to share with the community
- Small day bag
- Over-the-counter medications (headache, stomach, band-aids, anti-itch cream)
- Shower shoes or flip-flops
- Modest bathing suit
- Flashlight & batteries
- Playing cards, some form of entertainment
- Hand sanitizer
- Gifts! You may choose to bring small gifts or thank you cards for your host family and/or community members.
Cultural Considerations

Gender
Friendships between men and women and ideas about romance are a bit different in Ghana. Female participants should expect to get a lot of attention. Some female participants, however, will tire of the constant attention. There are many ways to handle the unwanted attention you receive, with the goal to find a method that you are most comfortable with. Joking with the your would-be “suitor” is a good way to relieve some of the tension while simultaneously changing the topic to something else. Another method would be to ignore the entire situation, don’t respond to a person asking to marry you, or out on a date, simply pretend he is not there. Keep in mind that you always have the right to be direct, refuse the attention, and demand to be left alone. Staying in groups will shield you from many of these advances, but not all of them. Always be aware of your surroundings, and make sure to report any inappropriate behavior to program facilitators. They are there to support you. If you ever feel uncomfortable please speak up.

Race
In Ghana you may not encounter the same approach to race and understandings of ethnicity as you may be accustomed to finding in the U.S. If you have features associated with an Asian heritage, you may be referred to as “Chinese.” Even persons with dark skin and of African heritage will sometimes be referred to as “white.” White in these instances is not meant as a reference to your race, but refers to your status as a foreigner. Ghanaians are not trying to insult or offend you by using these terms. If you should find yourself in these situations please remain calm, and use this as an opportunity to teach. This is a cross-cultural experience, and we hope that through the diversity of our participants, we can demonstrate the diversity of the United States. If you ever feel uncomfortable, please speak up.
Cultural Considerations

Relationships
Amizade is the Portuguese word for friendship. We believe that the best development we can create is through relationship-building. Of course, when relationships move from friendship to sexual partnership, there is much to consider. Amizade is not the love police, and we sincerely hope everyone gets the opportunity to fall in love. And while there are several Amizade marriages on the books (between participants, between community members, and between community member - participants), for every good story, there are dozens that end in awkwardness. We ask that you recognize a few things about any sexual relationship you chose to enter:

1. There is likely to be a power dynamic that you need to be cognizant and honest about;
2. Think about how your relationship may impact the rest of your group;
3. Your time in Ghana is brief, but you will have plenty of time for courtship once your return home;
4. STD rates are higher in some communities, and you literally could be making decisions that risk your life.

Homosexuality in Ghana
Despite Ghana being a democratic nation, Ghana is one of nearly 40 countries in Africa in which homosexuality is illegal. Punishments for homosexual relationships range from a misdemeanor to the death penalty. The overwhelming majority of the population in Ghana agree with the government’s decision to outlaw homosexuality as it is viewed as morally unacceptable. In August 2014, a man was accused of engaging in homosexual acts. The Walewale community (northern Ghana) threatened the man with lynching and the police responded by incarcerating the man for fear he would be killed by the angry mob. A similar situation occurred in May 2014 in which a homosexual man was lynched by a mob of 30 individuals.

We recognize that this information is difficult to read, and can be worrisome for members of the LGBTI community. The program facilitators are there to serve as liaison between the community and the participants. Communicate with them if you feel you are being verbally, or emotionally attacked, judged or ill-treated by members of your host-community. We believe that this experience will be productive and positive for the community and participants, but do speak up if you are ever uncomfortable.
While You Are Away/Returning Home

Culture Shock
Culture shock is a term used to describe the emotional stress that may occur when a person travels to or returns from a new culture. When experiencing culture shock, people sometimes feel unsure about what is appropriate in the new culture, confused about how to manage daily tasks (such as banking or telephoning), frustrated with managing language and cultural barriers and generally vulnerable. This experience is normal and affects people at different times throughout a cultural immersion program. Exercising, reading, listening to music, watching movies on your computer, writing letters home, keeping a personal journal and talking to fellow participants and facilitators are all methods you can use to cope with the stress of experiencing a new culture. Remember to rest, eat, and take care of your physical and emotional needs in order to function at your best!

Contacting Home
Ghana has several cellular service providers. However, it is important to remember that cellular service may not be available in all areas of your travels in Ghana. It is recommended that if you desire a cellular phone while on-site, you purchase a prepaid phone upon arrival in Ghana. Prepaid wireless phones are inexpensive and incoming calls do not incur any fees on you! Also keep in mind that internet access is available in Cape Coast and Accra. You may also want to use your own cell phone; please check your rates, as these can sometimes get very expensive.

Reverse Culture Shock
Many participants find that they encounter difficulties when transitioning home. Volunteers will be happy to return home and visit with family and friends, but after the initial reunions take place, they often find that they experience problems when trying to communicate the experience that they had abroad. Many people feel alienated, knowing that they have grown, while many of those around them remain the same. It may help to connect with others who have had similar travel experiences, as they understand the need to talk about the experience in greater detail. If you would like to be connected with past participants from an Amizade program, please let an Amizade staff member know, and we will facilitate that for you.
Reading Guide

- Armah, Ayi Kwei. (1986). “The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born.” Published by Heinemann
Reading, Website, & Film Guide

Reading, Website, & Film Guide

Website Guide

• http://www.foodbycountry.com/Germany-to-Japan/Ghana.html#ixzz4Q6a5CaK
• The Economist: http://www.economist.com/topics/ghana
• http://www.our-africa.org/ghana/people-culture
• http://africa-facts.org/
• https://www.britannica.com/place/Ghana-historical-West-African-empire
• http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/ghana.html
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqB5LYNPe4

Film Guide

• Bronx Princess. Dir. Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed. 2009. Documentary
• Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire. http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/
• The Cursed Ones. Dir. Nana Obiri-Yeboah. 2015. Film
• Nakom. Dir. Kelly Daniela Norris and Travis Pittman. 2016. Film
• The New Scramble for Africa. Al Jazeera English. Documentary. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KM06hTeRSY
• Sankofa. Dir. Haile Gerima. 1993. Film