Table of Contents

**PART I**

About GESI
- Welcome (3)
- Program History (4)
- Program Information (5)
- Staff (6)
- Emergency Contacts (7)
- GESI Partners (8)

Academic Info
- Experiential Learning (9)
- Pre-Departure (9)
- In-Country (10)
- Final Summit (11)

Safety
- Procedures (12)

Preparation
- Cultural Adjustment (13)
- Pre-Departure Homework (14-15)
- Food for Thought (16-18)

Works Cited (19)

**PART II**

About SEC
- Letter from SEC (21)
- About SEC (22)
- In Country Program Outline (23-24)

Safety
- Safety & Security (25)
- Health Preparation (26)
- Visa (27)

Logistics
- Packing List (28-29)
- Electronics & Communication (30)
- Rules & Regulations (31-32)
- Family Homestay (33)

Preparation
- Location Overview (34)
- Race, Gender, LGBTQ, Religion (35-36)
- Language, Reading, Website Guides (37-39)
Welcome

Dear GESI Student,

Welcome to the ninth 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 400 students, from almost 100 colleges and universities, to seven countries for community development work.

GESI offers students the unique opportunity to apply their classroom learning toward addressing global challenges. Students will spend their summer 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 summer, our professors and student instructors will be in contact with feedback and encouragement; in August 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,

Patrick Eccles
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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 entirely 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 (despite what the name might suggest!). 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, Emory Erker-Lynch, and Corey Portell) when applying to the GESI program. GESI is part of the Buffett Institute for Global Studies, which is run by Bruce Caruthers. Brian Hanson 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, Program Manager or Patrick Eccles, Assistant 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

Patrick Eccles | Assistant Director
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Patrick Eccles joined the Buffett Institute staff as Assistant Director during the fall quarter of 2012. Prior to joining the Institute, Patrick spent seven years working to expand and deepen experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students while coordinating local, domestic and international immersion experiences at Loyola University Chicago. Patrick earned his bachelor’s degree from Northwestern, majoring in political science with minors in international and environmental studies. During his college years, Patrick spent a year volunteering on a reforestation project and assisting with various community development efforts in the western highlands of Guatemala. He earned his Master’s degree in Latin American and Caribbean Studies from the University of Chicago. In his Master’s thesis and fieldwork, Patrick pursued research interests in trade, human rights and the environment through a critique and comparison of fair trade arrangements in coffee production as a sustainable development approach in Guatemala and Mexico. He speaks fluent Spanish and limited Portuguese.

Meghan Ozaroski | Program Manager
m-ozaroski@northwestern.edu
Office: +1 847-491-5932
Meghan is program manager of Global Engagement at the Buffett Institute where she works with the GESI program and the Institute’s co-curricular student groups. She created the Northwestern University Global Opportunities (NUGO) website, global.northwestern.edu. She also founded AHEAD@NU: the Association for Higher Education Administrators’ Development, a professional development group for employees of the University which has grown to over 700 members. Before coming to Northwestern, Meghan worked at the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), coordinating study abroad programs in Tanzania, Botswana, India, Japan, and Chicago. Meghan has a master’s degree in Higher Education Administration and Policy from Northwestern. As an undergraduate at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, she majored in Psychology and Music.

Corey Portell | Program Coordinator
corey.portell@northwestern.edu
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Corey joined the Buffett Institute in October 2013 as Program Coordinator. She came to the Institute from Stephens College, a women’s college in Missouri, where she worked in admissions with domestic and international recruitment. She received a BA in international studies, political science, and religious studies from Loyola University Chicago, where she focused much of her co-curricular efforts on harm prevention, women’s rights, and social justice issues both in the United States and during her time studying abroad at the University of Ghana.

Emory Erker-Lynch | Graduate Intern
emory.lynch@northwestern.edu
Office: +1 847-467-5728
Emory joined the Buffett Institute in 2014 as an intern while working towards her master’s degree in Higher Education Administration and Policy from Northwestern. Before coming to Northwestern, she worked in Boston as a housing resource manager and advocate for persons experiencing homelessness. Emory has a master’s degree in Theological Ethics from Boston College, where she also worked as a graduate assistant with the Arrupe international immersion education program. She received a BA in Religious Studies and History from Santa Clara University before living and working in El Salvador for two years with the Casa de la Solidaridad study abroad program. When not working, you will often find her with her nose stuck in a novel, her hands covered with dirt in the garden, or out exploring new parks.
Emergency Contacts

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


Parents should not call the site teams.

Patrick Eccles  
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Office: +1 847-467-0844  
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HTH 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 seven years.

Social Entrepreneur Corps (SEC):
SEC is GESI’s on-the-ground partner at the Dominican Republic site. 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.

ThinkImpact:
Our on-the-ground partner in South Africa is ThinkImpact. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, ThinkImpact is a global social enterprise that trains the next generation of social entrepreneurs to think differently about poverty alleviation. ThinkImpact sites are located in rural Africa. GESI students will learn about new cultures while exploring market based solutions to poverty. ThinkImpact’s approach utilizes an asset-based community development philosophy to fuel social innovation in developing economies. Students work with local community members promoting a mindset of innovation and self-sufficiency rather than dependency and aid.

Each GESI partner has unique offerings based on their networks and development model. All partners 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 alumni and in-country partners and to 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 alumni. 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 (June 15 - 21):
The GESI pre-departure coursework at Northwestern University is an intense seven days of class. You are expected to arrive by 11 am on June 16th; we will spend the rest of that day getting to know each other, getting to know representatives from FSD, SEC and ThinkImpact, and establishing expectations for the week ahead. From June 15 through June 21, you will be in class from 9 am to 9 pm, with breaks for meals. GESI alumni 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 22nd, 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 in Chicago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 10:55 am</td>
<td>Lecture by Brian Hanson on International Develop-ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 - 11:55 am</td>
<td>Language lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 12:55 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 4:45 pm</td>
<td>Lecture and group activities with Paul Arntson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 - 5:55 pm</td>
<td>Guest speaker on your host country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 - 7:30 pm</td>
<td>Dinner with group or on your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 pm</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. **Project Proposal.** This should be a maximum of 2 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 project 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 Blackboard blog. Entries should be a maximum of 1 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. **Reflection Journal.** You will be given a spiral-bound reflection journal upon arrival in Chicago. It is your responsibility to complete at least two of the reflection activities outlined in the journal each week. You will choose from a variety of reflection topics outlined in the journal. While we will collect these journals from you at the 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 journals 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 2 to 3 page evaluation with you. You will also be required to submit a comprehensive GESI program evaluation electronically by August 25th. 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 for some time. 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 for it.
What to expect at the Final Reflection Summit (August 17 - 19):

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

- 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 six 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 alumni support. GESI aspires to help students lead lives committed to international social justice. For us, this means helping our alumni 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.
Safety

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 the Emergency Card--both provided in Chicago 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 you 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 & 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).

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 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.
Homework

By doing some research before you go abroad, you will begin to grasp important historical events, as well as social, economic and political systems that shape the cultural realities in your host country. Knowledge will make you better equipped to interact with residents in a substantive way, throwing aside stereotypes of the “Ugly American”. Without doing research and grappling with multiple perspectives about your host country, you are likely to have many misconceptions about the place and people, carrying counterproductive stereotypes with you that taint your ability to fully comprehend what you experience on the ground. “Carrying knowledge conveys a curious and concerned self, one who cares enough about the peoples and places in one’s destination country to invest the time learning about them. This, in itself, may not be enough to distinguish us from the camera-toting and culturally clueless tourists piling in and out of tour buses, but it’s a good start” (Slimbach, p. 128).

Therefore, don’t leave home without “packing” place-specific knowledge into your head. You should develop at least a basic understanding of the cultural, social, political, historical, and environmental dynamics of the place where you will be living. Knowledge of the local language spoken is also critical. GESI predeparture coursework will provide you with some of this information, but you will take more out of the classroom and field experience if you discover new knowledge about your host country on your own as well.

Please complete the following activity before coming to Chicago on June 15th:

This activity is taken and amended from Richard Slimbach’s Becoming World Wise. Divide up the following sections among your teammates. See what you can learn about your assigned topics, make sure you read from multiple sources with conflicting viewpoints, and be prepared to informally present your findings with your teammates, faculty, and GESI staff. Once abroad, you will have the opportunity to reflect as a team on what you read versus what you encountered. The following are examples of questions you can consider for each category—but you are encouraged to dig deeper!

a. Geography: In what region of the world does your host country lie? What are the neighboring countries? What is the climate in each of the host country’s main regions? What are its major natural resources (e.g., forestry, fishing, mineral)? What are the names and locations of the country’s major states/provinces? What are the names of the major urban centers in each? What is the national capital?

b. Political History: What are the major periods and watershed events in your country’s history? Was there a classical era or “golden age”? Describe the experience of colonialism or foreign domination: How was the colonial rule imposed? How was independence won? What historical events are annually commemorated? Who are the nation’s heroes and heroines? For what are they best known?

c. Economy: What percentage of the labor force is involved, respectively, in agriculture, industry, services, and the military? What is the country’s annual per-capita income and gross national product? What are its primary agricultural and industrial products? Where are they produced? What are the leading exports and imports?
d. Groups/Ethnicities: What are the various groups in the country called, and where are they concentrated? What groups occupy the service sector and which make up the elite? Is there an indigenous population? Are there any intergroup tensions based on race, religion, territory or language? Among what group(s) will you be living and serving?

e. Current politics: What is the form of the national government? What are the majority and minority parties, and what issues and perspectives do they represent? Who are their leaders? Does any one group or family dominate local politics? What is the political relationship between your host country and your homeland? What countries are important to them and why?

f. Religion: What religions are practiced? What proportion of the people are followers of each faith tradition? Is there one national religion? What are the most important religious ceremonies? Have you read any of their sacred writings?

g. Arts and sports: What are some of the most popular music and dance styles? What traditional or popular sports are regularly played? What cultural festivals will be held during the time of your residence in country?

h. Environment: What factors affect the productivity of the land and the quality of life of those who farm it? (Consider climate, overpopulation, pests, land ownership, farming methods, indebtedness, seed varieties, deforestation, and desertification.) What environmental factors—like climate, rainfall, calamity, and land productively—negatively affect the country?

i. Education: What indigenous, pre-modern institutions and practices have historically served educational functions? Currently, what are the major divisions in the public and private education system? How many grades are there in each division? Is the school system modeled after that of another country? What are the most pressing issues facing modern education?

j. Current events: Judging from current newspaper articles, what are some of the most important issues and problems engaging the minds of the people?

k. Languages: What languages are spoken in your host country? Are these official or unofficial? Do these languages represent any ethnic, geographically, or socioeconomic divisions? List and learn five essential phrases in the local language.
Food for Thought

You are passionate about making a positive impact this summer, 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. The following are a list of questions taken from First, Do No Harm: Ideas for Mitigating Negative Community Impacts of Short-term Study Abroad (Schroeder, Wood, Galiardi, and Koen, 2009). 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 on these types of questions 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 appropriately, 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 results 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 to. 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).
Food for Thought

*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 towards 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; and
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.


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

PART II

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Letter from SEC

Ahh, the island of Hispaniola: part of the Caribbean or Latin America? Tropical or temperate? Touristy or untraveled? In-your-face or elusive? Welcome to a land of contrasts, contradictions, nuances, and overlaps – there is truly no place like it, and its complexity will keep you on your toes throughout your stay on the island.

Don't let this challenge scare you – it is a wonderful place for learning, problem-solving, and experiencing life from a vantage point that may be different from your own. The approximately 20 million people who share the twenty-second largest island in the world will teach you anything from how to harvest a cocoa pod to how to fit a family of five onto a motorcycle. In your time with us, you will see various types of terrain (coast, mountains, urban sprawl), interact with a myriad of people (of different ages, races, professions, educational levels...just to name a few), and attempt countless approaches to economic and community development. You may not play soccer, but you may try your hand at baseball (or at least mention your favorite MLB team and find out that Dominicans know its line-up better than you do!).

In short, while we could provide you with a bunch of statistics on the DR and Haiti's political, economic, social, and environmental climate, to truly understand how the island functions you will have to live through it. Your host families, our trainings, and your day-to-day work will help you think through innovative tactics for tackling poverty rates (40% in DR), and in doing so you will work with us to turn obstacles into opportunities through our MicroConsignment Model, grassroots consulting, and other tools in our toolkit in a diversity of contexts and areas.
About SEC

Program Overview:
Through participation in innovative rural development work within a challenging cultural, language learning and grassroots environment, Social Entrepreneur Corps ensures that students will:
• Gain insights into the opportunities, inherent risks and limitations involved in world development
• Have ample opportunities to significantly increase language proficiency
• Observe, learn and live in a diversity of cultural settings
• Experience homestay living with local families
• Have the opportunity to visit an array of development and relief organizations
• Be offered the opportunity to make a significant contribution in a highly structured manner, working side-by-side with field based social entrepreneurs

It is the mission of Social Entrepreneur Corps that the selected students participating in this exclusive program leave the program 100% satisfied in their time and financial investment having gained the desired knowledge and experience in a secure, enjoyable and truly enlightening manner. Through classes, case studies, discussions, analysis, living with the local population, as well as through visits and active participation with local NGOs and social entrepreneurs, students will make a profound community impact whilst gaining an in-depth knowledge of rural economic development.

The desired outcomes for the program are that students:

Culture
• Will have gained an understanding of challenges confronting the rural and marginalized urban populations
• Will feel comfortable interacting with the local population on a general, family, and individual level
• Will have gained an understanding of the cultural and professional “do’s” and “don'ts” of living and working in development environments such as those of the Dominican Republic
• Will understand how low income populations live, work, and aspire to achieve

Spanish Language
• Will have significantly improved their conversational Spanish capabilities
• Will have gained an understanding of the nuance of language in developing country environments
• Note: Students may also learn basic expressions in Haitian Creole

Social Entrepreneurship
• Will have gained an understanding of the key differences, advantages and disadvantages of varied international relief and economic development models
• Will feel knowledgeable with regards to the challenges and opportunities inherent in the creation of successful social entrepreneurship models, implementation strategies, and tactics
• Will have learned and practiced effective strategies for training, mentoring, and supporting local social entrepreneurs
• Will have contributed to the identification and design of new social entrepreneurship
In-Country Program Outline

Structural Summary:

The SEC program is divided into six segments: pre-arrival, orientation and foundation building, initial field work, reflection and analysis, follow-on field work and conclusion, delivery, and presentation.

1. Prior to Arrival
Prior to arrival in-country, students are divided into groups of participants based on language capabilities, age, school and interests. These groups will work as short term “Virtual NGO’s” (VNGO). Once in-country, each VNGO will be tasked with assigned projects pertaining directly to the organization, Soluciones Comunitarias and micro-consignment or grassroots consulting for local associations, Asesor por Favor. Additionally, they will be given funding to invest in projects that they learn about and deem compelling as they travel to and work in different parts of the country.

2. Orientation and Foundation Building
Upon arrival in country, all participants will be picked up at the airport and will spend the first segment of their time at an ecolodge in the mountains of Jarabacoa, participating in orientation sessions, development discussions, language training, and participating in project content and technical training. The focus of this first orientation and foundation building segment is to provide participants with the necessary knowledge and skills for the field work segment and to begin outlining and working on pre-designated projects. This “ramp up” segment is essential to ensure that participants can work as effectively as possible with our development professionals and constituents in the field.

Continued on next page
In-Country Program Outline

Structural Summary (continued)

3. Initial Field Work
Upon conclusion of the first segment at Foundation Building, the team will travel to different satellite work-sites around the Dominican Republic, staying with two homestay families for the majority of the program (in rural campo or small town pueblo, sites). In addition, students may stay in hostels or ecolodges, as the work requires. Through this structure, students will have the opportunity to experience various cultures and development focuses within different regions. Students will work with Peace Corps Volunteers, local community service organizations, local businesses, and Social Entrepreneur Corps’ sister organization, Soluciones Comunitarias entrepreneurs.

SEC utilizes an innovative, modified Logic Model Framework to design and implement its programs. The field work that the participants conduct within their projects is designed using the community-based goals as the starting point. In general participants engage in six categories of activities:

• Needs Analysis: Participant investigations and recommendations about how to address community and organizational challenges;
• Feasibility Analysis: Study of the practicality of recommendations once needs are ascertained;
• Project Launch: Initial implementation of the project;
• Support: Assisting entrepreneurs and organizations as they execute new/ongoing projects;
• Expansion: Working to geographically replicate a project that is working;
• Evaluation: An ongoing process during every phase.

With certain projects there is a linear progression of these activities; with others, the activities are highly integrated.

4. Reflection and Analysis
At the conclusion of this first segment of field work, all GESI-SEC students will gather for approximately three days to decompress, share best practices, problem solve, and further work on projects.

5. Follow-on Field Work
Next, the team will return to the field and visit additional satellite sites working in the same manner as the first segment of field work.

6. Conclusion, Delivery and Presentation
Finally, all students will return to the headquarters site for the final days of the in-country program at which point projects will be completed and presented. “VNGO” recommendations will be presented and funding decisions and allocations are made.

Note: Meeting Friends on Days Off
If you have friends in the Dominican Republic, you can certainly meet them on your free days with the Country Director’s approval, if logistically feasible.
Safety & Security

Social Entrepreneur Corps places the highest priority on health and security issues. To date, SEC has been fortunate in that no participants have suffered from any notable health or security problems. SEC continuously maintains leadership in the field with participants to oversee security and health issues continuously. These leaders live and work in the communities and as such have deep knowledge regarding their regions. All participants are equipped with a cell phone upon arrival in country, check in with the proper authorities and are provided with the training and information necessary to appropriately minimize health and security risks. **Leadership is available on a 24-hour basis and has a full database of health facilities and police stations/contacts.** In addition, SEC maintains strong relationships with the Peace Corps and the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo.

In addition to the support provided by GESI and Northwestern University, SEC will do its utmost to provide a safe environment and support system to you throughout your experience. The following is an outline of the Emergency Action Plan for participants which Social Entrepreneur Corps maintains and which has contributed to the well-being of participants in the past. During the orientation session risks and risk mitigation procedures are discussed in depth and agreed upon.

**Conditions that contribute to risk:**
- Being out after dark
- Being alone at night in an isolated area
- Being in a known high crime area
- Being with unfamiliar people
- Being out after a local curfew
- Being intoxicated

**Strategies to reduce risk:**
- Listening for what is being said around you
- Keeping watch for suspicious people and vehicles
- Knowing what hours of the night are most dangerous
- Staying in and walking only in those areas that are well lit
- Avoiding being alone in unfamiliar neighborhoods
- Knowing where to get help (stores, phones, fire station, etc.)

**Policies to keep you safe and reduce risk:**
- Notify all parties involved in Social Entrepreneur Corps of any perceived or real current or potential risk
- Have all participant information on hand including passport, medical and emergency contact information
- Carry a cellular telephone
- Carry a map of the region they are visiting and review the local area with participants
- Have all US Embassy, local hospital, clinic and transportation information on hand and in phone
- Have phone numbers of all leadership staff on hand
- Have cash on hand

**Summary Emergency Action Plan:**
1. Upon the either perceived or real incidence of any risk situation on an individual, group, local, regional or national level, all leadership and participants are to proceed to the nearest designated “Safe Spot” and stand down while contacting the directors of Social Entrepreneur Corps. As such, if the directors of Social Entrepreneur Corps become aware of any risk either perceived or real, they will contact leadership to advise them of next steps. When appropriate the directors will contact the US Embassy and US Peace Corps to receive advice as to how to proceed.
2. Upon communication, leadership and participants will be advised by the directors as to next step and at all times the most cautionary steps will be taken.
3. If necessary, Social Entrepreneur Corps will terminate the program in the most appropriate manner and return participants to their destination of origin on an expedited basis.
Health Preparations

As a GESI student, it is your full responsibility to identify and take all necessary health precautions prior to, during, and following the program. Please start your health preparations early, as some vaccinations must be taken as far as eight weeks or more before departure. Providing detailed medical advice is beyond the expertise of GESI and SEC so it is very important to consult the resources below as well as medical professionals such as your doctor or local travel health clinic.

Resources:
Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Recorded information about health risks and precautions for international travelers: 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747)
CDC Malaria Hotline: 404-332-4555

Topics to talk to your doctor or local health clinic about:
- Any pre-existing conditions. Please note that pre-existing conditions—even those that don’t impact you on a regular basis in the United States—can flare up while in a new environment due to altitude, allergens, new food, etc.
- The symptoms of the most common illnesses contracted by travelers and the appropriate treatment
- Medicines and supplies for preventing and treating common illnesses and maladies (diarrhea, dehydration, sunburn, food poisoning)
- Rabies
- Food and water-borne diseases
- Malaria
- Dengue fever
- Chikungunya (Normally found in Africa and Asia, Chikungunya has not yet been identified in the DR, but it is still a good thing to consult with you doctor about)

Use your best judgment for vaccinations and immunizations - make sure you are up-to-date.

In-Country:

Leadership is available on a 24-hour basis and has a full database of health facilities. Participants must not be treated by a local doctor without first consulting with the Social Entrepreneur Corps leadership. Should any medical emergency arise which precludes the participants ability to consent to emergency treatment when such authorization is required, Social Entrepreneur Corps leadership will endeavor to communicate with the person(s) previously designated by the participant as the “Emergency Contact” to request permission for any necessary treatment. If Social Entrepreneur Corps personnel believe, in their sole discretion, that time or circumstances do not permit such communication, the participant authorizes Social Entrepreneur Corps to consent on his or her behalf to any medical treatment, including all types of medical examinations, diagnosis, medication, treatment, or physician or hospital care, that is deemed advisable by, and is to be rendered under, the general or special supervision of any physician and surgeon.
The recommendations provided here are subject to change at any time. As a GESI student, it is your full responsibility to secure the appropriate visa and ensure the full legality of your stay in the host countries during the program. To do so requires consultation of the following resources beyond the information provided by SEC and GESI.

Guidance (subject to change at any time):

Dominican Republic
• Past GESI students have purchased a tourist card upon arrival for $10. To see the most current requirements for U.S. citizens, visit: Dominican Republic visa requirements from U.S. Department of State and Dominican Republic Embassy website (websites in the teal box to the right).

• If you are not a U.S. citizen, you will need to contact the embassy or consulate of your GESI host country to obtain the visa requirements for entry. It is very important that non-U.S. citizens notify us immediately if they require any documentation from us to obtain a visa.

Important Resources:

U.S. State Department: Information for U.S. travelers to the DR
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1103.html#entry_requirements

DR Embassy in the United States:
1715 22nd Street, NW
Washington DC 20008
http://www.domrep.org/
Packing List

Note: Interns must be able to physically lift and carry their bags for short distances on dirt roads. Do not overpack! Most items can be acquired or replaced in-country.

Practical Supplies:
- Traveling backpack/duffel and daypack
- Umbrella
- Hat for sun
- Reusable water bottle
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Ear plugs
- Travel alarm clock
- Towel (quick dry towels are most convenient)
- Handheld mirror
- Shower sandals
- Body powder
- Plastic bags (ziploc)

Health and Hygiene:
- Sunscreen (spf 30 or higher)
- Bug spray (with deet recommended)
- Any medications you use in their original containers and a copy of your prescription
- Toiletry bag and personal hygiene products (tampons, extra contacts and solution, eye drops, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.)

Clothes:
Interns should have 4-5 professional outfits. Even in rural settings, you should present yourself professionally. For men, closed toe shoes, pants/jeans, collared shirt (long/short sleeve), and belt. For women, summer professional attire with dress sandals (with a back) or flats.
- Jeans/long pants (2-3)
- Short sleeved shirts (7-8)
- Long sleeved shirt/sweatshirt (2)
- One nice shirt/outfit for work or events
- Capris, modest shorts, and/or skirts (not too short, please!) (3-4)
- Sunglasses
- Bathing suit (1-2)
- Underwear and socks
- Running shoes/sneakers
- Flip flops
- Nicer sandals/shoes for events
- Raincoat
- Modest sleepwear

Practical Supplies:
- DR Guidebook (SEC recommends Other Places Publishing)
- Spanish-English dictionary
- Laptop (and surge protector if you have one)
- Back up your files before leaving for DR
- Download software you might need for work, like Powerpoint or Photoshop
- Camera with rechargeable batteries (optional)
- Personal journal (optional)
- Small locks for your backpack/duffel
- Money belt
- Reading materials and movies
- Granola bars
- Deck of cards or other leisure items
- Small gifts for your host families (Examples: A picture frame; knickknacks for the house; pictures, books, or calendars of American scenes; souvenirs from your area; games, a hat from your school... gifts are good icebreakers!)
- Photos of family to show your host family

Documents & Money:
(include in your carry-on luggage)
- HTH Insurance Card
- Flight itinerary
- Valid Passport and 2 copies (leave 1 copy at home)
- $10 in US Dollars for DR Tourist Card + $20 for exit fee
- Spending money for free time, extra food, and souvenirs (around $100 initially)
- ATM Card (be sure to clear foreign ATM use with your bank before departure)

“What I wish I brought to the DR”
Packing tips from 2012 SEC-GESI students:
- Anti-diarrhea medicine/Pepto Bismol
- Fiber pills
- Antibacterial handgel and/or wipes
- Bandana (you get pretty sweaty and it helps to be able to wipe your face off)

Word to the wise: Even though it can get quite hot, there are gnats that bite your ankles if you’re standing in the grass. Some students didn’t get affected by the bites at all, but others wore pants or shoes with socks to defend against them.
Money
SEC suggests budgeting approximately $50 for every week you plan to be in the Dominican Republic for spending money. You may want to add a bit more if you are going to buy a lot of gifts. That being said, you do not need to change money in the US before arriving. You also do not need to bring money all in cash as there are ATM machines in country that are accessible. Our suggestion is to bring $100 or so in cash and bring down an ATM card for the rest. If you do want to bring travelers checks, please be aware that cashing them may not be as easy as withdrawing money from a checking or savings account.

Luggage
No need for a sleeping bag. Our suggestion is that you bring a big backpack or duffel, as well as a day backpack. Suitcases can be a bit unwieldy, and rollers don't really work as the streets are not the smoothest. Please note that you will be moving around a lot – we recommend that you travel as light as possible.

Clothing
No need for any extremely formal attire; however, we do recommend bringing one “nicer” outfit in the event that a special occasion arises (i.e.: a sundress and nice sandals, a button down and shoes that are not sneakers/flip flops). Please note that long pants or capris will call less attention than shorts (which are not appropriate for any work activity), better protect your legs from bug bites, and make it easier to travel. No short skirts.

Please note that Dominicans take a lot of pride in their appearance; regardless of socioeconomic status, Dominicans dress neatly, cleanly, and are well groomed--so don't wear your rattiest t-shirts. Jeans and other pants, capris, collared shirts, blouses, and the like are the norm. Please do not bring any expensive jewelry (inexpensive jewelry is okay). You will need a bathing suit, as you will go swimming a few times. Athletic/extremely casual wear is appropriate for recreational activities and downtime. Sneakers or another form of comfortable walking shoe are highly recommended, as the terrain you'll be working on will often be rocky and rustic.

It tends to rain a lot in the Dominican Republic, so please also pack a retractable umbrella and raincoat. It also tends to be hot and sunny, so please bring a hat and sunscreen. One to two sweaters or sweatshirts is a good idea, but you should not need more than that.

Remember, you will be able to do laundry in country... so don't over pack! If you forget anything, you can most likely purchase it in country.
Electronics & Communication

• Should I bring my laptop?
In the past, students have found having a laptop extremely helpful. That said, it’s a personal decision and you are responsible for taking care of your laptop. SEC and GESI are not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen personal items, including laptops.

• Communication
Each of you will be given your own cell phone when you are in country. You can use this to call locally or internationally, and calls are fairly inexpensive. Please note, however, that you will be responsible for purchasing prepaid minutes to cover your calls. There are no charges for in-coming calls, so we would encourage your parents etc. to buy a few phone cards at their local convenience store or call your phone via Skype.

• Internet is fairly accessible in small towns and cities. You will not have access everyday or necessarily in the communities where you live in your home stay, however, Internet cafes are cheap and plentiful, so you will be able to communicate through this means often.

• Electricity
The DR is on the same current as the US, so no need for adapters.
Rules & Regulations

Transportation
Participants fly into Las Americas International Airport in Santo Domingo where they will be met by an SEC staff member. For in-site travel, students will be using public transportation after receiving an orientation session on norms and safety guidelines. GESI/SEC participants will not be permitted to operate vehicles throughout the duration of the program (including days off).

Operation of vehicles by SEC interns raises several concerns. The safety and security of participants can be jeopardized by unsafe roads or vehicles, lack of familiarity with local conditions, or other situations.

SEC policy mandates that participants MUST wear a helmet when riding on the back of a motorcycle (motorcycle taxis, called motoconchos, are a common form of public transportation). Violation of this policy requires immediate expulsion from the program. The participant will not be reimbursed for any of the program unattended, and will be responsible for buying or changing his or her plane ticket in order to leave the country.

Participants are NOT authorized to drive a motorcycle. This includes mopeds and other motorized two or three-wheel vehicles. Participants are NOT authorized to ride on the back of a motorcycle in the cities of Santo Domingo and Santiago. Violation of this policy also requires immediate expulsion from the program, without any reimbursement or financial assistance for changes to the participant’s itinerary.

If a participant chooses to ride a bicycle, he or she must wear an appropriate helmet AT ALL TIMES. Participants are not permitted to ride bicycles in Santo Domingo or major highways. Failure to follow these rules result in immediate expulsion from the program, without any reimbursement or financial assistance for changes to the participant’s itinerary.

Alcohol
Inappropriate or unprofessional behavior resulting from misuse of alcohol may be cause for the participant to be terminated from Social Entrepreneur Corps.

Firearms
Participants are not allowed to possess or use firearms at any time.

Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for programmatic decisions or decisions regarding a participant’s status or service; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s program or performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may be physical, verbal, or graphic. It may result from the actions of supervisors, coworkers, participants or affiliated individuals. It may occur during program hours or during designated free time. It may victimize members of either sex. It includes conduct that is not intended to be harassing by the person who acts, if such conduct is reasonably perceived by the recipient to be harassment.

All Social Entrepreneur Corps managers, supervisors, employees, contractors, volunteers, and participants are responsible for ensuring that their own actions do not constitute or contribute to sexual harassment. Managers and supervisors are responsible for correcting behavior that may constitute sexual harassment; taking immediate action to investigate all allegations of sexual harassment; protecting against retaliation against any individual who raises a complaint; and taking appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action, which may range from a reprimand to removal.
Rules & Regulations

Political Expression
Participants shall not participate in political activities or manifestations while participating in the program.

Local Law and Customs
Participants are required to conduct themselves according to the local laws and customs.

Religion
Participants are forbidden from proselytizing.

Emergencies
Upon any real or perceived emergency or at any time when there is concern with regards to a health or safety situation, participants are required to communicate with one or more of the Social Entrepreneur Corps designated leaders and await instructions. Leadership will communicate with one of the directors of the program to consult and advise as to appropriate next steps. If for any reason a participant is separated he/she will return to the nearest of the office, hotel or home stay and communicate with leadership via telephone. The participant will wait in such place until leadership provides further instructions.
Family Homestay

All homestay families are trained by Social Entrepreneur Corps. As such, these families understand the needs of the participants and specific expectations of Social Entrepreneur Corps and GESI. The homestay is an essential step in helping participants gain an understanding of how local people live and work. It is an invaluable way to improve on classroom Spanish. The vast majority of GESI-SEC participants end up forming great friendships during this process.

Criteria for Social Entrepreneur Corps homestay certification:

- The house is maintained in a clean and orderly state.
- There is a private room for the participant with the minimum of a bed, light, flooring, and window.
- There must be a bathroom with a door.
- The house has an outside door with a lock.
- The family creates a kind, safe, welcoming, and supportive living environment.
- The family agrees to provide three meals a day, a constant supply of bottled or filtered safe drinking water, and the participant should be offered to have their laundry done weekly.
- The host mother completes training on safe food handling and preparation, water sanitation, keeping clean and healthy homes; furthermore, they learn how to provide language, emotional, and cultural support for participants. This training consists of the following key elements:
  - Emergency Plan and 24/7 Communication Chain—Who to call and what to do in an emergency
  - Expectations and standards of hygiene and security of the house, and in particular, the room where the participant is living.
  - Specific best practices for keeping a healthy and safe participant (i.e. food preparations and curfew)
  - A formal contract in which families agree to provide the participant with the services required. All families must undergo continuous training on an annual basis and receive positive/participant/leadership evaluations as a requirement for renewing the contract.
  - The family understands the importance of disinfecting fruits and vegetables and preparing food in a way that keeps in mind a participant's stomach.
  - The family understands the responsibilities and challenges that come with hosting a foreigner, and is willing, capable, and excited to do so.
Headquarters - El Seibo, DR: “Cultural Cradle of the East”
El Seibo, DR: “Cultural Cradle of the East” Host of bullfights, patronales and a variety of fiestas, El Seibo is a fountain of culture in the Eastern region of the DR. Here, you’ll find a bustling community set on rolling terrain. Though the city’s official name is Santa Cruz del Seibo, it is more often referred to as simply, “El Seibo.” The province of El Seibo (in which the city is located) was one of the original provinces of the Dominican Republic and was initially covered much more territory than it covers today. Other provinces have slowly been carved out of El Seibo, including Hato Mayor in 1992.

Monte Cristi, DR - “Hidden Treasure of the North”
A region defined by a line that runs through it, the northern border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti seeks its identity through international exchange. Commerce defines and intertwine the Haitian city of Ouanaminthe and the Dominican town of Dajabon where the binational market opens up for vendors on Mondays and Fridays. Monti Cristi is a relatively small province situated on the periphery of the country both geographically and economically. Christopher Columbus wrote in his journal about El Morro, an arresting plateau jutting out over the bay, just outside the modern day provincial capital city. He named it Monte-Christy, “Monte” meaning mountain and “Christy” as a reference to the awe inspiring power of this geological formation. When you make it to the beach, you’ll see why!

Barahona, DR - “Gateway to the South”
Located in the southwest, Barahona and the surrounding areas offer the greatest biodiversity in the country. This is the region in which nature’s most marked contrasts occur. Where else can you find yourself in a desert at one point, then drive one half hour to a leafy pine forest? In Barahona, Bahoruco and Pedernales, you can visit the Pit (Hoyo de Pelempito), the Lagoon (Laguna de Oviedo) and Cachote, each a very unique ecological spot. Also located here are the beaches at Cabo Rojo and the famous Bahía de las Águilas beach, probably the most beautiful beach in the entire country.
The following excerpts have been borrowed from Peace Corps Dominican Republic’s “Welcome Guide” that prepares American men and women to live and work in the Dominican Republic for two years. Although Social Entrepreneur Corps interns will be spending the vast majority of their time in the DR, they may find that they encounter similar perspectives and reactions on the other side of the island as well. (For more info where this came from, check out: http://www.peacecorps.gov/welcomebooks/dowb517.pdf)

On being foreign...
Outside of the Dominican Republic's capital, residents of rural communities have had relatively little direct exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles. What people view as typical American behavior or norms may be a misconception, such as the belief that all Americans are rich and have blond hair and blue eyes. The people of the Dominican Republic are justly known for their generous hospitality to foreigners.

On being female...
Dominican society has elements of machismo. Men often hiss and make comments to women walking by, and women must learn to deal with this by completely ignoring men who behave in this way. Most female students never fully accept this sexual harassment, but they develop a tolerance within which they are able to function effectively.

On being non-white...
Black and African-American students may sometimes be mistaken as Haitians or Dominicans. If seen as Dominican, this can lead to an expectation of Spanish fluency; if seen as Haitian, it can sometimes result in mild racism by Dominicans. Please keep in mind that many of these situations are due to lack of education, and the history of the Dominican Republic. On the other hand, misidentification with black ethnic groups other than Haitians, such as members of the English-speaking Eastern Caribbean population, may lead to faster acceptance.

Hispanic-American Volunteers may be surprised to find that some Dominicans are unaware that not all Hispanic Americans are of Mexican origin.

Because there is a small population of Dominicans of South Asian descent, some Asian-American Volunteers have been misidentified as Dominicans, especially in urban areas.

Most students of color say that despite initial confusion regarding their nationality, they are well-received in their communities.
LGBTQ & Religion

On LBGT considerations...
Sexual orientation is not a topic that is openly discussed in the Dominican Republic. Please realize that any affiliation or experiences you have at home (especially in the LGBTQ community) may not be regarded with the same understanding or sensitivity while abroad. Please do your best to take this into consideration when discussing such issues with your host family or other members of the community. Although some Dominicans consider same-gender relations immoral, their view of same-gender relations amongst foreigners is sometimes quite different than their view of same-gender relations among nationals.

For more information and resources you can contact:
• The GESI office
• Visit Northwestern's Study Abroad website, LGBTQ Students and Study Abroad: http://www.northwestern.edu/studyabroad/resources/onlineguide/identity-and-diversity/lgbtq-students-study-abroad.html
• Gender Abroad: http://www.northwestern.edu/studyabroad/resources/online-guide/identity-and-diversity/gender-abroad.html, or get in touch with NU's LGBTQ Resource Center.

On religion...
Students are frequently asked about their religious affiliation and may be invited to attend a community church. Students not in the practice of attending church may be challenged to explain their reluctance, but it is possible to politely decline if the church or religion is not one of your choice.
Language Resources:

http://www.byki.com/free_lang_software.pl (for Spanish and Haitian Creole)
Free language learning software Before You Know It (byki), based on the flash-card system. The free version of the software contains 17 lists of words and phrases, which include sample phrases for polite conversations, meeting and greeting, and food and beverages vocabulary.

http://www.studyspanish.com/
A free Spanish tutorial, Learn Spanish provides a good opportunity for self-study. It contains lessons, audios, and exercises corrected instantly. A section of the site is free, while additional exercises are provided with a subscription.

http://www.miscositas.com/
Short stories, links, and other exercises for learning Spanish, French, and English.

http://www.e-spanyol.hu/en/
A helpful summary of online Spanish study resources with links.

http://www.colonialzone-dr.com/language.html
A good explanation of what makes Dominican Spanish so unique, with accompanying vocabulary.

http://www.thatsdominican.com/
A humorous website that features short videos, jokes, interviews and slang that make light of Dominican cultural and linguistic quirks.

Curious about how Dominican Spanish differs from other dialects you studied in school?

Curious about how Dominican Spanish differs from other dialects you studied in school? Read the following description from “Colonial Zone DR” (http://www.colonialzonedr.com/language.html), but have no fear: you’ll learn it quickly, and soon be proud that you can use slang like a pro!

“Some words are the same as Spain Spanish but many are very different. Even the way words are pronounced are different. For example, most Dominicans do not use the “S” at the end of a word....One very noticeable difference in the language is the way certain consonants and vowels change. In the capital area of Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo, the R sound is changes to an L sound. For example the word ¿por que? changes in sound to ¿pol que?. In the north part of the country they make the R sound like an I which makes ¿por que? sound like ¿poi que?. The southern region makes the R sound like an L making the word Miguel sound like Miguer. Also they do not add the letter S to the ending of words. In fact, they cut off many of the last letters in a word.”

To read more from this guide, click visit: http://www.colonialzone-dr.com/language.html
Reading & Film Guide

Recommended books on the Dominican Republic and Haiti:

How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents
In the Time of the Butterflies
La Fiesta del Chivo (The Feast of the Goat)
The Brief and Wonderous Life of Oscar Wao
Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola
Muddy Cup: A Dominican Family Comes of Age in a New America
Haiti: The Tumultous History - From Pearl of the Caribbean to Broken Nation
The Big Truck that Went By
Haiti After the Quake
The Comedians

Recommended books on social entrepreneurship:

How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas
Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty
Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business & the Future of Capitalism
The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for our Time
The Blue Sweater: Bridging the Gap Between Rich & Poor in an Interconnected World
The Search for Social Entrepreneurship

Recommended films on the Dominican Republic and Haiti:

In the Time of the Butterflies
Aristide and the Endless Revolution
Black in Latin America Haiti and the Dominican Republic: An Island Divided
La Fiesta del Chivo
Moloch Tropical
The Price of Sugar (focus on Haitian workers/bateys in the DR)
http://www.thepriceofsugar.com/about.shtml
Website Guide

Recommended websites about the Dominican Republic and Haiti:

- US Embassy in the Dominican Republic: http://santodomingo.usembassy.gov/
- WHO summary of DR country data: http://www.who.int/countries/dom/en/
- Information about events and news in/around Santo Domingo’s colonial zone that may be of interest to expats: http://colonialzone-dr.com/colonialzonenews/
- Link to buy Dominican Republic Guidebook on Amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Dominican-Republic-Other-Places-Travel/dp/1935850091

Recommended sites about Social Entrepreneurship/MicroConsignment:

- Community Enterprise Solutions: www.cesolutions.org
- Social Entrepreneur Corps: www.socialentrepreneurcorps.com
- Soluciones Comunitarias: www.solucionescomunitarias.com
- MicroConsignment: http://microconsignment.com/
- NDSG Social Media: Facebook Group - Social Entrepreneur Corps; Twitter - @MCMimpact
- Ashoka Innovators for the Public: http://www.ashoka.org/
- MicroConsignment Story: http://youtu.be/4ctI0xoA5Uk

Local News Sites about the Dominican Republic:

- Listin Diario: www.listin.com.do
- Hoy: www.hoy.com.do
- El Caribe: www.elcaribe.com.do
- Diario Libre: www.diariolibre.com

Local News Sites about Haiti:

- Haiti en Marche: http://www.haitienmarche.com/com/
- Haiti Progres: http://www.haiti-progres.com/
- Le Matin: http://www.lematinhaiti.com/
- Le Nouvelliste: http://lenouvelliste.com/