GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT STUDIES INSTITUTE
offered by Northwestern University

PRE-DEPARTURE PACKET

SUMMER 2018 | GHANA
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Dear GESI Student,

Welcome to the 12th 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 nearly 600 students from almost 100 colleges and universities to ten 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 Information

The Global Engagement Studies Institute (GESI) is a study abroad program that provides undergraduates with the knowledge, tools, and experiences to confront shared global challenges. Through service-learning in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, Uganda, or Vietnam, teams of students join the efforts of local organizations to advance community-driven change.

GESI was created in response to undergraduates' desires to understand global challenges through an academic lens, and then put that learning into action. The result is an interconnected set of initiatives across several key areas: community-engaged scholarship, project and research funding, and professional development. Learn about the full history of GESI on our website: gesi.northwestern.edu/about/history

Who does what in GESI?
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 GESI.

Global Engagement at the Buffett Institute
At Northwestern, the Buffett Institute is the office that runs GESI. We include people you've met or spoken with when applying to the GESI program, and others that you'll be meeting along the way:

- Noelle Sullivan and Paul Arntson, GESI Instructors
- Patrick Eccles, Meghan Ozaroski, Corey Portell, Jessica Smith Soto, Abby Engle, GESI Staff

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 assistance 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.
- **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.

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.

Program Partners

In addition to Northwestern staff, GESI works with a variety of people to run the program. All GESI partners have unique offerings based on their networks and development models. 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.

The GESI team works directly with the global headquarters of five partner organizations in six locations in order to manage the logistics and coordination of the program. These organizations have a long-standing history of preparing and hosting students in communities abroad. Our partners include:

- Amizade in Ghana
- Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) in Bolivia and Uganda
- Institute for Central American Development Studies (ICADS) in Costa Rica
- Kaya Responsible Travel in Vietnam
- Social Entrepreneur Corps (SEC) in Guatemala

Each partner has a site team that consists of one to two local people who act as both your 24/7 on-the-ground student support, as well as the long-term relationship builders with their organization and/or an organization where you will work. These staff members will assist you in everything from in-country orientation to homestay placements, from work plan advising to community development consulting. Some site teams hire international coordinators who are not from the local community specifically for the summer to act as cultural liaisons.

In each location, regardless of partner organization, you will have a supervisor for the duration of your summer. This supervisor is employed by your host organization and will work directly with you and your team to learn about, plan, and develop your summer work. Your supervisor is most often a local person, though sometimes they can be individuals from other countries who have worked with the organization for a long time. More often than not, GESI teams will also work with other individuals who also work at the host organization.

Another key partner in your time abroad are your homestay families! While they may not contribute directly to your work, your homestay family relationships are integral to your success. Families offer invaluable perspectives on culture, tradition, history, and life experience in your location and community.

We would be remiss if we did not include members of the community as partners in GESI. Community is a complex and multifaceted word you will consistently hear throughout the program. Who this includes (and excludes) depends upon the situation. We encourage you to think about this word and phrase broadly; in any given site, there are a wide variety of communities with whom you will interact. Sometimes who “they” are will be clear, sometimes it will be very murky. Remember that organizations and your supervisors are members of the community, as are the community members the organizations serve. Relationships are at the core of GESI partnerships; understanding, building, and maintaining them are how GESI defines success.

Learn more about GESI’s partners on our website at gesi.northwestern.edu/about/partners
Pre-Departure Academic Information

The core of GESI is the collaboration and relationship building that takes place through students’ in-country work and experience. What makes GESI unique is how these interactions are shaped and understood through the rigorous preparation and reflection which provides an academic foundation for their fieldwork. Furthermore, students develop the analytical and interpersonal tools to engage, critique, and understand the challenges of community development at an international level. View program syllabi for GESI’s required coursework, Doing Development: The Theory and Practice of Community Engagement and Development in the Global Context: Participation, Power, and Social Change, on our website at gesi.northwestern.edu/logistics/academics

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
The GESI pre-departure coursework at Northwestern University is an intense eight days of class. During Pre-Departure, you will often be in class from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. with breaks for meals. GESI alums will serve as student instructors, facilitating class activities and discussions. We will also have many guest speakers supplementing class lectures; 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.

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 - 12 p.m.</td>
<td>Lecture by Noelle Sullivan on International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Language lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 - 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Lecture and group activities with Paul Arntson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 - 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Guest speaker on your host country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 - 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner with group with discussion 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>
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 abroad. 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 team

4. **Field notes**: You will be given a spiral-bound notebook upon arrival to campus. It is your responsibility to complete the essays and reflection activities outlined in the notebook each week. You will be assigned some prompts and be able to choose others 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 for it.
Final Summit Academic Information

What to expect at the Final Reflection Summit
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 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.
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 well before 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 community members. Just be careful not to pay high prices for basic goods because it may harm local people. If 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 other countries.
• 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?
Make the Most of Your Experience

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 aside as often as possible. 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 local people do things differently from the way you are accustomed. Speak with local people 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).
When Things Get Tough

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 local people 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.
PART II

WINNEBA, GHANA
Welcome

Dear GESI Ghana Summer 2018 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 from our friends in Winneba, Ghana. During your stay in Winneba you will have the opportunity to work closely with our site facilitator, Serge Akpalou. Serge serves as the Partners in Development Officer at Challenging Heights, the organizations you will be assisting during your time in Ghana. You will also spend time learning about Ghanaian culture and history with, Reverend Chris Nyame, Kwame Appiah, and Francis Nyame. Together they run and operate Peace Humanity International, a volunteer organization based in Accra and Jukwa, Ghana. My name is Tyisha Burroughs, I am a Program Coordinator for Amizade, and I look forward to supporting you, as you spend the summer 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 community development and youth engagement. You will assist local organizations, led by activists who seek to improve the 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 Winneba, 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 Winneba, 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 others 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 2018
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 growth.

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 tend to endure daily hardships, including recurrent droughts that severely affect the fishing and agricultural activities, water pollution; and inadequate supplies of potable water. Despite all of this, Winneba is filled with incredibly resilient people with an important history and culture. From rain forests to beaches and lagoons to dry savanna 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 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.

Participants will live in the village of Winneba, about 90 miles East of Cape Coast. Winneba is a historic fishing port in southern Ghana, lying on the southern coast. While in Winneba, participants meet, work with, and learn from leaders on the front lines of ending modern day slavery.

Beyond meaningful service work, while staying in Winneba, participants will also get the opportunity to visit with local leaders, a local rain forest canopy walk, Cape Coast Castle, local cultural and religious events, and much more.
Community Partners & Service

Challenging Heights
Challenging Heights (CH) aims to protect and improve the lives of young people and their communities affected by child trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. The organization believes education and the economic empowerment of women are the most important things for eliminating child slavery.

By working with Challenging Heights Amizade volunteers learn about community organizations and gain important organizational and management skills. Past volunteers have worked on research projects, advocacy 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.

Peace Humanity International
Peace Humanity International (PHI) is a community volunteer organization based in Accra, Ghana. PHI organizes volunteers, both domestically and internationally, 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 service opportunities for the region.
Approach to Service

Ethic of 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
At its inception, Challenging Heights mobilized children into rights clubs to take action against forced labor, leading to the rescue of 8 children. Later, Challenging Heights built a school for at-risk children to save them from being trafficked and within 6 months, 181 at risk boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 14 were admitted.

Today, Challenging Heights runs 7 different projects including a 65-capacity survivors’ rehabilitation center, and a child trafficking survivors support network aimed at providing protection for children, and giving them opportunity to go to school. Participants will engage in a variety of activities including, but not limited to:

- Working with the Grants Team to identify organizational funding needs and opportunities
- Work with the librarians to create a tutoring schedule for students
- Collaborate with teachers on students tutoring needs
- Collaborate with teachers to identify students who are in need of tutoring services
- Provide in-classroom support to students as needed by the classroom teachers
- Help students to identify local resources for self-directed learning after completion of internship
- Work with the Advocacy Team to carry out identified research
- Compile and analyze results of research into a report to be used by Challenging Heights Advocacy Team
- Support the Advocacy Team to create a plan for community engagement around research results
- Support Advocacy Team to begin implementation of community engagement plan

Participants will also engage in cultural and educational activities to supplement their learning within Winneba. 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 will provide 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!
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 Winneba 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, other's don't. Some have televisions, other's 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:

• All vehicles and drivers have proper licenses and certifications. This should be apparent on the window of the bus.
• Vehicles are in excellent working condition and be equipped with all regionally appropriate safety mechanisms.
• If a driver is ever driving in a way that makes participants uncomfortable or could be considered remotely dangerous, speak up or get off the bus.
• If weather or road conditions are hazardous, speak up or get off the bus.
• Try to ensure that you travel during daylight hours.

Internet Access
Winneba 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 1 hour 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.
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 18 - June 25</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>• Pre-program health, safety, and security orientation.</td>
<td>Readings, journals, presentations, Skype meetings, group conversations.</td>
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<td>• Cultural sensitization and preparation.</td>
<td>Led by GESI, with support from Amizade.</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 26 - June 28</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,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Visit local historical and cultural sites, such as the Kwame Nkrumah</td>
<td>journals, group conversations, guided tours.</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>• Students meet with NGO leaders and community partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 28 - July 8</td>
<td>Winneba, Ghana</td>
<td>• Students are welcomed to Winneba by local partners and host families</td>
<td>Site director leadership, GESI faculty leadership, Amizade Site Liaison,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to the cultural environment of Winneba</td>
<td>readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours, community leaders</td>
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<td>• Training begins for in and out of classroom activities.</td>
<td>presentations.</td>
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<td>• Twi lessons and additional cultural activities begin.</td>
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<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 9 - July 14</td>
<td>Winneba, Ghana</td>
<td>• Service continues</td>
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<td>• Cultural activities continue</td>
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<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</td>
<td>Site director leadership, GESI</td>
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<td>leadership,</td>
<td>faculty leadership, Amizade Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Amizade Site</td>
<td>Liaison, reflection, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours</td>
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<td>Liaison,</td>
<td>reflection, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<td>**Site director leadership, Amizade Site Liaison, reflection, readings,</td>
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<td>journals, group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<td><strong>Site director leadership, GESI</strong></td>
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<td>Liaison, reflection, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours</td>
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<td><strong>GESI and Amizade leadership, group conversations, reflection.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 16 - July 20</td>
<td>Winneba, 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</td>
<td>Site director leadership, Amizade Site</td>
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<td>Site Liaison, reflection, readings, journals, group conversations, guided</td>
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<td>Liaison,</td>
<td>reflection, readings, journals, group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<td><strong>GESI and Amizade leadership, group conversations, reflection.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 20 - August 20</td>
<td>Winneba and Accra,</td>
<td>• Students continue service with community partners</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
<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</td>
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<td>faculty leadership, Amizade Site</td>
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<td>faculty leadership, Amizade Site Liaison, reflection, readings, journals,</td>
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<td>group conversations, guided tours.</td>
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<td><strong>GESI and Amizade leadership, group conversations, reflection.</strong></td>
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<td>August 21 - August 23</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,</td>
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<td>Winneba, and community partners</td>
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<td>GESI</td>
<td>GESI and Amizade leadership, group conversations, reflection.</td>
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Visa Information

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 AT LEAST 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, track-able 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.

Getting to Ghana
An Amizade staff person will meet you and the group at the airport to transport you go 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.
GESI and Amizade are deeply committed to student health, safety, and well-being. Our experience in risk assessment and emergency response has enabled us to maximize safety and security for GESI students. We arrange medical insurance with full coverage abroad and emergency evacuation services, and we actively monitor international events that may affect students. We work in cooperation with a team of risk management and legal professionals to ensure comprehensive measures address potential health and safety issues while providing students with 24/7 in-country support. Learn more about health and safety during GESI at gesi.northwestern.edu/logistics/health-safety

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 administered as far as eight weeks or more before departure. Providing detailed medical advice is beyond the expertise of Amizade or GESI staff 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)
• Country-specific traveler’s health info: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/
• 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.
• Symptoms of the most common illnesses contracted by travelers and appropriate treatment
• Medicines and supplies for preventing and treating common illnesses and maladies (diarrhea, dehydration, sunburn, food poisoning)
• Yellow fever and typhoid fever
• Malaria (if participants plan to travel to at-risk areas)
• Rabies
• Food and water-borne diseases

What happens if I get sick?
For serious illness that may occur during your program, there are public and private clinics and hospitals available in most areas. If you should become sick, please alert the site team and your host family immediately and they will ensure that you receive appropriate medical care.

GESI’s cost includes comprehensive medical coverage through GeoBlue; your enrollment will be completed for you, and your member number will be provided to you at the start of the program. The illnesses and medical issues you are more likely to encounter may require medical consultations and prescriptions that will generally incur an out-of-pocket cost between $25 and $100; these types of expenses are reimbursable through GeoBlue. Please plan for emergency medical expenses and seek reimbursement directly from GeoBlue. Amizade and GESI are not responsible for up-front costs or cash-related medical fees.
Safety & Security

Amizade and GESI never anticipate significant issues related to safety and security during the program, but we understand that emergencies sometimes occur. We have had experience dealing with a variety of issues for which we can prepare and respond to appropriately. During local orientation, students will hear from program staff about pertinent safety and security precautions specific to the area.

All of our sites are in safe areas. However, similar to any location in the US, certain common-sense safety measures must be taken (i.e. not walking alone at night or wearing expensive/flasy jewelry or clothing). We emphasize that the most important ways to stay safe are to exercise good judgment, to have a strong network of local contacts, and to have a strong awareness of the potential for harm.

Amizade will do its utmost to provide a safe environment and a responsive support system to you throughout your experience. We depend upon our staff to serve as a barometer of the local political, social, and economic climates. We depend on our participants to act prudently and to be receptive of instructions and suggestions regarding safety and security.

Amizade’s responsibilities:
• A safe and secure host community. Amizade is run by staff and trusted colleagues who live locally and often have years of experience with us. While the political climate varies, we feel that our extensive local networks of host families and partner organizations provide us with a good barometer of the climate in relation to the safety of foreign volunteers.
• Inform you about safety and security in your host community through materials like this pre-departure guide. We equip you with the information and tools to be aware of the realities of your host community, to avoid situations that would put you at risk, and to manage these situations should they arise.
• Take you to a preferred medical facility in the case of an emergency.
• Support you logistically and emotionally through any emergency situation.

Your responsibilities
• Follow the guidelines and rules your site team and host family provide; they exist to help keep you safe!
• Learn about the history and current events of your host country and community.
• Secure all recommended vaccinations.
• If you are a US citizen, GESI will register your travel with the State Department. If you are not a US citizen, you should register your travel with your home country’s equivalent.
• Avoid volatile or risky situations (especially protests).
• Travel with someone you know, and avoid being out alone after dark.
• Be aware of your surroundings. Walk purposefully and act as though you know where you are going.
• Notify your site team of any incidents of harassment, illness, accident, or any other serious event as soon as possible.

The safety and security of our program participants and staff is our first priority. We have rigorous and conservative safety and security procedures, including triaged security measures for students (such as restricted travel, curfews, and buddy systems) should any emergent or potentially emergent event occur. Every site has an emergency evacuation plan (supported by our travel insurance partner) that identifies safe houses, identifies on-call transportation, and provides a variety of options for moving participants out of unsafe area via land and air routes. The vast majority of safety and security incidents are those of petty crime, such as leaving a bag on the table and returning to find it missing and of street harassment, which will be discussed during Pre-Departure and at your on-site orientation.
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/

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
- Books
- Lap top
- Digital films/T.V. shows for downtime
- Music
- Entertainment tools
- 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 skirts 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
- Laundry line and plastic clothes pins
- 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 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 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.

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 choose to enter:

• There is likely to be a power dynamic that you need to be cognizant of and honest about;
• Think about how your relationship may impact the rest of your group;
• You’re time in Ghana is brief, but you will have plenty of time for courtship once your return home;
• 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. A loaner prepaid phone will be given to you for your use upon arrival in Ghana; you will purchase and reload minutes yourself. 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
- Iyer, Pico. (March 18, 2000). “Why We Travel.” Published at Salon.com. [http://www.goliards.net/Why%20We%20Travel.htm](http://www.goliards.net/Why%20We%20Travel.htm)
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- 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/
- http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/ghana.html
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqB5LYNPes4

Film Guide

- Bronx Princess. Dir. Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed. 2009. Documentary
- The Cursed Ones. Dir. Nana Obiri-Yeboah.2015. Film
- Nakom. Dir. Kelly Daniela Norris and Travis Pittman. 2016. Film
- Sankofa. Dir. Haile Gerima. 1993. Film