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Welcome

Dear GESI Student,

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

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

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

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

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

Best of luck,

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Program History

Global Engagement at the Buffett Institute:

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

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

GESI History:

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

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

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

Who does what in GESI?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Emergency Contacts

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

1. Patrick Eccles  
2. Meghan Ozaroski  

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

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GeoBlue Health Insurance:  
001-610 254-8771

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What happens after GESI?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cultural norms and adjustment:

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

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

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

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

Encountering culture:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• Risk making mistakes.

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

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

Think About the Six Skills of Intercultural Communication:

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


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

PART II

GUATEMALA
Letter from SEC

It is difficult to imagine that any other country in the world can offer such a diversity of wonders as Guatemala. Despite its relatively small size, (roughly that of Tennessee) Guatemala boasts landscapes ranging from tropical beaches to highland sierras, jungles to dry lowlands. Sharing this land are dozens of ethnic groups, all with unique cultures and customs, speaking over 20 different languages. The wonderful strength and vibrancy of Mayan culture has survived remarkably well, and its richness and colorfulness will delight any visitor. Between its dramatic landscapes and warm inhabitants, Guatemala will be a country you will never forget.

The majority of the population lives in the Highlands of the western part of the country where we will be working. The highlands offer incredible mountain ranges, interspersed with towering volcanoes upon which fall clouds and mists. Here is your opportunity to truly live ‘above the clouds’. The average altitude in the Highlands is over 1500 meters above sea level, producing a climate ideal for the cultivation of all sorts of crops, especially maize, the sacred corn of the Mayans. This altitude also ensures a delightful climate of warm, sunny days and cool evenings, earning Guatemala the name “Land of Eternal Spring”. One could spend years exploring the highlands and still not tire of its scenery and cultural richness. Guatemala is truly a special place.
About SEC

Program Overview:
Through participation in innovative community 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
• Be offered the opportunity to make a significant contribution

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 organizations and social entrepreneurs, students will make a profound community impact whilst gaining an in-depth knowledge of community economic development.

The desired outcomes for the program are that students:

Culture
• Will have gained an understanding of challenges confronting the rural population specifically
• 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 Guatemala
• 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

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 opportunities for local constituents
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
These groups will work as short term Social Innovation Teams. Before pre-departure at GESI, interns will be expected to do initial pre-work (estimated 6 hours total) from our Participant Toolkit to learn about social entrepreneurship theory and our approach empowerment local communities. By reading articles and reviewing modules, we’ll make sure you have the theory down beforehand so we can hit the ground running once you arrive! Each team will be tasked with pre-identified projects serving the priorities of our sister organization, Soluciones Comunitarias (SolCom), as well as consulting for local associations and entrepreneurs whose needs align with your abilities, in the Grassroots Consulting or “Asesor por Favor” program. Project outlines will be delivered to your groups at least one month before departure so you can conduct basic research and generate initial ideas and questions.

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 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. Note: During this time, the entire GESI team will still be working and living in the same location.

Continued on next page
3. Initial Field Work

Upon conclusion of Foundation Building, the group will split into smaller Social Innovation Teams and travel to its first host-community. Here you will meet your first homestay family. Communities range from rural “campo” (country) villages to medium-sized towns, or “pueblos”. Through this structure, students will have the opportunity to experience the local culture through immersion and grassroots consulting work. Students may collaborate with Peace Corps volunteers, local community organizations, small businesses and Social Entrepreneur Corps’ sister organization, Soluciones Comunitarias (SolCom).

SEC utilizes an innovative, modified Logic Model Framework to design and implement its programs. The fieldwork that participants conduct with their projects is designed using the community base goals as a starting point.

SolCom Regional Coordinators in Guatemala are Guatemalan citizens, work year-round to support teams of active entrepreneurs in the field, and assist with project-related work for SEC programs. Regional Coordinators identify the national and regional needs for SolCom and generated project requests around those priorities. Grassroots Consulting (APF) partners identify their needs and request specific consulting services during initial meetings with our Regional Coordinators. For Asesor por Favor (APF) projects, you’re most likely to engage in capacity building, analysis or tool creation. In this way, we work backwards to assure that all inputs and activities are necessary to meet our desired outcomes. Project identification is done before you arrive to save time and be purposeful in our execution. This way, we make sure whatever service you provide to the organization is definitely meeting one of their needs.

Five Categories of Activities:

Needs & Feasibility Analysis: You help us to understand the dynamic of real, perceived and felt community needs through research, observation, surveys and informal conversations. You learn how to ask the right questions, in the right way. And then you listen, record what you learn and communicate your conclusions to our team.

Innovation Design: You help us to modify and design appropriate, dignified, systematic and scalable solutions. Whether it’s a new way to reach and educate people, or an innovative technology with measurable impact, it should empower community members to break the cycle of poverty for themselves and their families.

Capacity Building: You will deliver workshops, facilitate trainings and work one-on-one with local constituents and beneficiaries, providing them with critical skills, knowledge and tools that were previously inaccessible.

Scaling Impact: When we find a social innovation that works, we want to scale our impact by teaching it to others. You play a critical role by reaching out to organizations and communities so that we can share our best practices.

Evaluation: Can we do better? You’ll find out by talking with individuals, families, communities and organizations that we support. You will help us to better understand what’s working, what’s not, and how we can improve.
Most projects are not linear but highly integrated. You may find yourself conducting eye exams at a vision campaign, but also surveying former clients and conducting feasibility studies for mass exams in schools. While you will be given an outline with desired outcomes and suggested deliverables as well as local staff who serve as project mentors, the direction of the project is really up to you as interns. You are given independence and expected to decide the way in which your team approaches the task, delegates responsibilities, and identifies priorities to build out an action plan and work schedule. While you receive more support and structure from SEC in the beginning, after the first few weeks you will be expected to let us know what you need and coordinate your activities as a team. Since APF projects are site-specific, they are presented to local stakeholders at the conclusion of your first fieldsite.

4. Reflection and Analysis
At the conclusion of the first segment of fieldwork, interns reunite for to decompress, share best practices, lessons learned and problem-solve. You may be assigned new APF projects for your next fieldwork segment. Typically the larger, SolCom-focused projects are carried on throughout the total duration of the program so that you'll have time to receive ongoing feedback and better plan for your second phase of fieldwork. Lodging may be an ecolodge or retreat center.

5. Follow-on Field Work
Again you will divide back into the same Social Innovation Teams and return to work. Depending on the needs and priorities of local stakeholders, groups may venture out to a new region and satellite site with another homestay family and new APF consulting projects, or they may return to the original community and the same same homestay family. You will continue your SolCom project work, similar to the first segment of fieldwork. You'll also wrap up APF round-table discussions with local partners before leaving your site.

6. Conclusion, Delivery and Presentation
Finally, all teams will reunite for the final days of the in-country presentation and which point projects will be completed and presented. Recommendations of the Social Innovation teams will be reviewed with the local SolCom and SEC teams. Wrap-up sessions will be conducted to prepare you for the transition back home.

Note: Meeting Friends on Days Off
If you have friends in Guatemala, you can meet them on your free days with the Country Director's approval, if logistically feasible. You will need to sign a waiver. Visiting program participants assigned to other regions is typically not allowed during your times in fieldsites.
Safety & Security

Social Entrepreneur Corps – Safety and Regulations Policy
The following is a policy that outlines the key rules and regulations for participants that Social Entrepreneur Corps maintains and have contributed to the safety and well being of participants in the past. Participant's health and safety is of paramount importance at all times. All rules and regulations are covered in-depth during the orientation and continuously throughout the participants' time in country. Violation of any regulations in this policy could result in Social Entrepreneur Corps ending the participant’s service and early departure. Social Entrepreneur Corps participants must agree to these regulations and policy and sign a document acknowledging to participate in the program.

Social Entrepreneur Corps – Regulations

Travel Healthcare
Social Entrepreneur Corps requires all participants to have travel/health insurance while in country paid at the participant's expense. All travel/health insurance information as well as standard health insurance information must be provided to Social Entrepreneur Corps leadership before arrival in country. Your GeoBlue Insurance policy meets this requirement.

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 participant's 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.

Travel and Transportation

Participants fly into Aurora International Airport in Guatemala City where they will be met by a staff member and driven to Antigua in a rented microbus.

Participants shall not operate vehicles. Participants may be passengers in a car upon prior consent, but are forbidden from being passengers on motorcycles or riding bicycles without prior consent. Participants are forbidden from visiting Guatemala City.
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)

Traveler’s Health for Guatemala:

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
• Zika Virus

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.
Visa Info

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):

American Citizens:
ENTRY and EXIT: A valid U.S. passport is required for all U.S. citizens to enter Guatemala and return to the United States, regardless of age. U.S. citizens do not need a visa for a stay of 90 days or less. That period can be extended for an additional 90 days upon application to Guatemalan immigration (if the initial period of stay granted upon entry is less than 90 days, any extension would be granted only for the same number of days as the initial authorization). U.S. citizen travelers should have at least 6 months of validity remaining on their U.S. passports after the date of entry or they may be turned back by the airline or immigration.

For questions, consult the Guatemalan Embassy website: http://guatemalaembassyusa.org/

• If you are not a U.S. citizen, you will need to contact the embassy or consulate of your country of origin 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 Guatemala
https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/guatemala.html

Guatemala Embassy in the United States:
2220 R St NW
Washington, DC 20008
http://guatemalaembassyusa.org/
Packing List

Note: Interns must be able to physically lift and carry their bags on dirt roads and up and down multiple flights of stairs. Do not over pack. Most items can be acquired or replace in-country and your homestay families will do your laundry once a week. The lighter the better!

Before Arrival
• GeoBlue Travelers/Health Insurance and 2 copies
• Flight Itinerary
• Valid Passport and 2 color copies (always keep one at home)
• Spending Money (for free time/days, extra food and souvenirs)
• ATM card (be sure to clear foreign ATM use with your bank before departure)
• Any special snacks that you love (trail mix, power bars, etc)

Resources
• Guidebook/ Other publishing
• Laptop (required) and USB
• Camera
• Journal/ Pens
• Books (for downtime, bus rides - bring one, you will be able to trade

Equipment and Clothing
• Traveling backpack/duffel
• Daypack (regular or drawstring bag)
• Money belt
• Raincoat/ Poncho
• Small umbrella
• Reusable water bottle
• Flashlight/headlamp
• Toiletry bag and toiletries
• Pepto Bismol or fiber snacks/pills (recommended)
• Antibacterial Hand-gel or Wipes
• Prescription meds
• Sunscreen
• Insect Repellent (recommended with DEET)
• Towel
• Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)
• Long pants (khakis, jeans, etc) (2-3)
• Long sleeved shirt (2-3)
• Sweater/sweatshirt (2-3)

Equipment and Clothing (continued)
• Short sleeved shirts (3-4)
• One nice shirt/outfit for special events (guys - collared shirts; girls - blouse or other nice top/shirt)
• T-shirts/tanks: girls - you can bring tank tops, but spaghetti straps are not appropriate for work days (3)
• Shorts (most people wear long pants. Bring shorts, but note that they’re not appropriate for work activities. Leave short-shorts at home! (2-3)
• Bathing suit (1-2)
• Undergarments
• Socks
• Hat
• Sunglasses
• Bandana (opt)
• Nicer pair of dress shoes (girls-nice sandals, flats, guys-loafers, etc)
• Running shoes/sneakers
• Flip flops
• 2 small gifts for homestay family
• Pictures/postcards of your family/state/university to share with people and use as conversation starters
• Playing cards/ small games to share

Note: We are not going to be in tropical parts of Guatemala; the highlands are quite a bit colder, expect the temperature to be 40°F - 80°F with sun, rain and wind. It tends to get chilly at night so clothing that you can layer is recommended. Most of all, remember that comfort is the most important! Pack a bit more than you’d need for a week (laundry service is included).

Please include both clothes that are perhaps not your favorites (shoes may get muddy), but are presentable and professional (not torn, stained, or old t-shirts). Homestay families do laundry, and there are laundromats in towns where we stay in hotels, so don't bring an enormous suitcase to last the whole time; however, clothes take some time to dry on the washline and you'll need to plan around field work and travel. Also, please be sure to bring clothing that is relatively modest; a good rule of thumb is to bring things that cover your shoulders and cover your knees, for both men and women.
Money, Packing & Clothes

Money
SEC suggests budgeting approximately $50 for every week you plan to be in Guatemala 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 no more than $100 in cash and bring 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 formal attire whatsoever. As well, few people wear shorts. No short skirts please. The key is to be comfortable. Jeans, pants, collared shirts and the like are the norm. You will need a bathing suit as you will go swimming a few times. You will also want to bring T-shirts. In the afternoon it may rain so bring a retractable umbrella and raincoat. Also, bring a few sweaters and sweatshirts. With regards to laundry, you will be able to do it in country so don’t over pack. Also, wearing the same clothes a few times without washing is certainly not unheard of in our line of work. The “sniff test” will serve you well.

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?
Yes. While much of your time will be spent in the field, initial research, analysis and final crunch time for deliverables will require a computer. In the past, tablets have not been able to meet students’ needs effectively and sharing devices is difficult when everyone is working towards the same goal at the same time.

• Communication
Each of you will have your own cell phone when you are in country. You can use this to call locally or call internationally and calls are fairly inexpensive. There are no charges for in-coming calls so we would encourage your parents etc to buy a few phone cards at the local convenience store. Internet is ubiquitous and cheap so you will be able to communicate through this means often.

• Electricity
Guatemala is on the same current as the US so no need for adapters.. That said, it’s recommended to bring a small surge protector for valuable electronics like your laptop.
Rules & Regulations

Travel Healthcare
Social Entrepreneur Corps requires all participants to have travel/health insurance while in country paid at the participant's expense. Your GeoBlue Insurance, through Northwestern, meets this requirement.

Participants must not be treated by a local doctor without first consulting with the Social Entrepreneur Corps leadership. See pages 24-25 for more information; additional health and safety information will be covered during in-country orientation.

Travel and Transportation
• Participants shall not operate vehicles. Participants may be passengers in a car upon prior consent, but are forbidden to ride on bicycles, MOTORCYCLES and MOTORIZED SCOOTERS, ETC.
• For in site travel, students will be using public transportation after receiving an orientation session on norms and safety guidelines.
• For between site travel, students will use a variety of public transport and will be accompanied by field staff at all times.

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 by Social Entrepreneur Corps. 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, co-workers, 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.

Communication
All participants will receive a cellular phone upon arrival in country so as to facilitate contact with leadership and other participants as well as with family and friends in the United States. Participants are responsible for maintaining this telephone in good state.

Participants will be assigned a “buddy” whilst in country and are responsible for communicating with leadership if there is any concern as to the “buddy’s welfare. The rules regarding the “buddy system” will be stated upon arrival in country.

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

Guatemalan Family Homestay

All home stay families are trained by Social Entrepreneur Corps. As such, these families understand the needs of the participants and specific expectations of Social Entrepreneur Corps. The home stay 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 Social Entrepreneur Corps participants end up forming great friendships during this process.

All of the Guatemalan host families that SECorps works with are enthusiastic about receiving interns in their homes and will treat you like a member of the family. They like to include you in many activities such as cooking, birthday parties, weddings, and occasionally travel. They are concerned with your health and safety and will provide you with lots of advice and recommendations for what to/not to eat and where to/not to go and who it's okay to hang around with. They have been trained on our Emergency Action plans and know it is not their place to offer you medicine, etc.

Learn from your host-mother and do as your family does. Spend time with them. The more you put in and be outgoing yourself, the more you'll get out of it. Be prepared for a fun, yet challenging, experience.

The way to make the most of your Guatemalan living experience is to come with an open mind. Although your time is limited, participate in family life, play games, share stores and share in the responsibilities of being a family member when appropriate. The homestay experience you have will largely depend on you, your attitude, and your friendliness.

The first few days with a new family may, at times, be challenging. You may feel homesick and frustrated with your new environment and the language. This is natural. Give yourself time to adjust to your new surroundings. The families who host GESI participants are carefully selected and offer their homes out of a genuine sense of generosity and the wish to learn about another culture as well as share their own. Your host family will view you as a member of the family and treat you as such. We hope that you will feel equally at home with your family but we ask that you never forget you are a guest in their home. Please always be respectful of their rules and help out the best you can. Things like offering to help in the kitchen, or making your bed, keeping your room tidy, will be appreciated.

• What will my host family provide?
Your family is required to provide you with a private room, three meals a day, purified water and weekly hand or machine-washing of your clothes and sheets. Toiletries and a towel are not provided; you must bring your own but their bathroom should always have toilet paper available. If you know you are someone who needs to eat more frequently or has particular tastes, bring some granola bars from home or extra snack money to pick up chips, cookies, ice cream, etc at the corner store.

• What are the living accommodations like?
Living accommodations range depending on each host family’s specific situation and the area where they live. You will live in the communities where you work where there is need for SolCom products and services. For this reason, housing and homestays may be a jump outside of one’s comfort zone for some. In the rural settings, you will experience more poverty. Houses may be made out of wood, tin, block or a combination of materials. In larger pueblos, most homes are made of block and cement.
Family Homestay

• How are families structured in Guatemala?
Like many countries in Latin America, Guatemalan households may consist of a nuclear family, a single-mother household, a retired couple, or multiple generations. It is common for children to live with their parents until they are married, and sometimes afterwards, so parents, grown children and grandchildren may live in the same home. Children in Guatemala, like children anywhere, can be both adorable and annoying, but try to maintain your patience with them in order to integrate into the household. Sometimes young children will be afraid of you for the first few weeks because you are a stranger. Please don't take this personally – be patient and they'll warm up to you with time. More often, younger children will be excited by your visit and want to play. If you have valuables like laptops and smart phones that you don't want to share, keep them locked in your suitcase out of site. Otherwise don't be surprised if your siblings ask to borrow them. If you share once, expect that they will ask again, so know what you feel comfortable with set boundaries from the beginning. If you aren't keen on sharing, don't make a display of using your electronics and keep it for private use in your room.

Some families also employ a housekeeper (empleada) who may support the female householder a few days a week. Common duties include cooking, laundry and cleaning. An empleada's hours and relationship to the family vary - some empleadas may simply maintain a business relationship with the family, while others become more like adopted family members. This won't be seen in the rural areas since families don't have that disposable income, but may be present in some pueblo households.

• Do I need to help out with chores?
We ask families to treat you as another member of their family and we ask that you behave correspondingly. This means you will pick up after yourself, keep your area neat, and help out where appropriate. Some families may initially treat you as a guest, but offering to partake in activities like cooking and cleaning will help you to further integrate.

• Will I receive my own set of keys?
Each family is different. You may in some instances receive your own set of keys but most likely you'll need to rely on your family to let you in. That's why it's important to communicate what time/where you'll be coming back to the house, at night and for meals. If you are going to be out later than normal, it's polite to ask when is the latest you can be back. There is not an official curfew per say, but you should check with your family first to see what their rules and expectations are. SECorps leadership will give you more specific guidance once in country.
Family Homestay

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 ventilation.
• 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, toilet paper, 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.
• All members of the household have undergone Sexual Harassment Training and are aware of how to form appropriate relationships with students.
Location Overview

*Exact locations subject to change*

Headquarters: Antigua -“Colonial Capital”
The tight-knit communities in the Sacatepéquez region of Guatemala are best known for their strong traditions, home to the biggest Catholic Holy Week festivities as well as skilled leatherworkers, metalworkers, and furniture makers. The heart of this area is Antigua, an exquisitely pretty colonial town situated in a spectacular setting, nestled below the three imposing volcanoes of Agua, Fuego and Acatenango. It is one of the finest surviving examples in Latin America of colonial town planning, laid out on a grid pattern emanating from the central park, whilst the many fine examples of Spanish Colonial architecture have earned it the position of UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Satellite Site: Nebaj - “Mountain Hideaway”
Nebaj is the home of the Ixil, one of the most distinct Mayan cultures. The Ixiles are world famous for their stunning, intricately woven traditional clothing. The local culture feels uniquely traditional and vibrant in this region. Nebaj is far from the cosmopolitan sophistication of the capital, but it is also a bustling, lively town. The people are warm, and offer participation in traditional customs such as the local sauna, a tamascal, or the cooking of the traditional food, boxboles. Nebaj is a heavenly place to visit for those who enjoy hiking, sitting as it does in a beautiful valley surrounded by verdant mountains. Exploring the villages around Nebaj will take the intrepid visitor to some of the most remote places in the Americas. The combination of spectacular landscapes and local culture makes Nebaj the favorite spot in Guatemala for many visitors.

Satellite Site: Lake Atitlan - “Nature’s Gift”
For many, there is no more spectacular site in the world than the sun setting over the Lake Atitlan as the evening mist descends. English novelist Aldous Huxley described the lake as like “Lake Como with the added embellishment of several immense volcanoes” and decided it was the most beautiful lake in the world. Once one gets their breath back after the first look at the incredible view of the lake, you can begin to explore the trails and nature parks that surround it. The lake itself is great for swimming. Dotted around the shore of the lake are dozens of towns, from busy Panajachel, with its international scene and restaurants, to sleepy indigenous towns such as San Juan La Laguna. Whether for a short visit or a longer stay, the beauty of the Lake will stay with you forever.

Satellite Site: Xela - “The Highlands”
Quetzaltenango, or Xela as it is more usually known, is fast becoming one of the most popular places in Latin America to learn Spanish and do volunteer work. Offering the advantages of a city, with cinemas, good restaurants, bars and entertainment, Xela has much more the feel of a large town- easy to navigate and get to know. It’s a friendly place, with the typical bustle of highland Guatemala very much present, and the beauty of the surrounding mountains is always visible. What’s more, within easy reach are many beautiful rural areas, such as to the hot springs of Fuentes Georginas. Many even attempt to climb Central America’s largest volcano, Tajumulco.
Race & Gender

The following excerpts have been borrowed from Peace Corps Guatemala's “Welcome Guide” that prepares American men and women to live and work in Guatemala for two years. Although Social Entrepreneur Corps interns will be spending the vast majority of their time in Guatemala, 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://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/welcomebooks/gtwb520.pdf)

On being foreign...
Outside of Guatemala's capital, residents of rural communities might have had little direct exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles. What people view as typical U.S. 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 Guatemala are known for their generous hospitality to foreigners; however, members of the community where you will live may display a range of reactions to cultural differences that you present.

On being female...
In rural Guatemala, there is a genuine division between the roles of women and men. The degree of separation frequently leads people to rely on stereotypical beliefs about people of the opposite sex—men with respect to women and vice versa. This dependence upon stereotypical images lends itself to the dehumanization of relations between men and women and to a situation in which people are viewed as objects. Unfortunately, the image of American women portrayed in many popular television programs suggests that they are sexually available. Additionally, in some regions of Guatemala, male virility is identified with power and social dominance. Many women find the numerous sexually explicit invitations they receive to be intolerable and offensive. However, during foundation building, SEC staff and will help students develop appropriate and effective strategies to deal with these issues.

On being non-white...
Volunteers of color sometimes, but not always, have a different experience than white counterparts. Because of limited exposure, some foreign nationals will expect to see U.S. citizens who are white. Cultures of the world do not typically envision the States as a place of rich diversity with various culturally acceptable perspectives, personalities, and characteristics. Thus, a Volunteer of color may be questioned as about their U.S. citizenship.
On LGBTQ considerations...
Sexual orientation is not a topic that is openly discussed in Guatemala. 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 Guatemalans 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 Guide

Language Resources:

http://www.byki.com/free_lang_software.pl (for Spanish)
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.

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

Recommended books on Guatemala:
The Art of Political Murder
I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala
Blood of Guatemala
Last Colonial Massacre
Paradise in Ashes
Eternal Spring Eternal Tyranny (Photo Book)
Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala
For Every Indio Who Falls
Bitter Fruit
The CIA in Guatemala
Unfinished Conquest: The Guatemalan Tragedy
Francisco Goldman
Elizabeth Burgos
Greg Grandin
Greg Grandin
Beatrice Manz
Jean-Marie Simon
David Stoll
Betsy Konefal
Steven Schlesinger
Richard Immerman
Victor Perera & Daniel Chauche

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
Drown and This is How you Loose Her
Breath, Eyes, Memory
The Farming of Bones
David Borstein
Muhammad Yunus
Muhammad Yunus
Jeff Sachs
Jacqueline Novogratz
Paul Light
Junot Diaz
Edwidge Danticat
Edwidge Danticat

Recommended films on Guatemala:
Puro Mula
Toque de Queda
Marimbas del infierno
Ixcanul
Website Guide

Recommended websites about Guatemala:

- US Embassy Website: http://guatemala.usembassy.gov
- InGuat (Guatemala Department of Tourism) Official Website: www.visitguatemala.com/
- State Department International Travel Information: http://travel.state.gov/travel
- State Department Website (social/political information): www.state.gov
- Guatemala general information: www.countrywatch.com/
- Travel advice and information: www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations
- Official Government Website Links: www.psr.keele.ac.uk/official.htm
- Geographical information and Maps: www.geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm
- Statistical Information from the UN: www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/info.asp
- Current World historical and cultural information: www.worldinformation.com
- Database of Information on Guatemala: http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/ca/guatemala/

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 Guatemala:
- Prensa Libre: www.prensalibre.com
- Siglo Veintiuno: www.sigloxxi.com
- La Hora: www.lahora.com.gt
- El Periódico: www.elperiodico.com.gt
- Daily/Weekly Updates: plazapublica.com.gt
- Twitter:
  - Policia Nacional Civil (@PNCdeGuatemala)
  - CONRED Guatemala (@Conredguatemala)
  - US Embassy Guate (@USEmbassyguate)
  - El Periodico (@El_Periodico)
  - Prensa Libre (@prensa_libre)