



GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT STUDIES INSTITUTE

GESI PRE-DEPARTURE PACKET

SUMMER 2019 | BOLIVIA



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Welcome

Dear GESI Student,

Welcome to the 13th 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 650 students from almost 100 colleges and universities to 13 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:

- Diego Arispe-Bazan and Paul Arntson, GESI Instructors
- Patrick Eccles, Corey Portell, Jessica Smith Soto, and Hà Nguyen, 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 support 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, as well as Canvas resources and assignments.
- **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.

Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning Across the Disciplines. Ed. Christine M. Cress, Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer and Associates. Stylus, 2005: Sterling, VA.

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 community-led 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 host 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 at large, 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

Adapted from Cress, Christine et al. Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning Across the Disciplines. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2005.

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 vital 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.

9:00 - 12 p.m.	Lecture by Diego Arispe-Bazan on Intl. Development
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	Language lesson
2:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Break
2:30 - 5:30 p.m.	Lecture and group activities with Paul Arntson
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Guest speaker on your host country
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Dinner with group with discussion or on your own
7:30 p.m.	Back to hostel for evening reading and sleep

In-Country 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. Many students will also be required to submit a budget along with their proposal and work plan, while others will have no budget, only 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 issues 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 their challenges and opportunities

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 team 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. Your host family and site team are great resources from which you can learn what may be a fair cost for you.

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.

Economic and Environmental Impact

- 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?

Cultural Impact

- 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?

Identity Impact

- 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:

Be Present

- 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.
- Recognize the value of play and lightheartedness in cultivating friendships.
- Observe, listen, and inquire rather than criticize, rationalize, or withdraw.
- Risk making mistakes.

Own the Power of Your Words and Actions

- 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-developed realities") (Johnson, 184).
- 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.
- When confronted with a language barrier, speak English as little as possible. Expand your vocabulary, if necessary, actively engaging community members with nonverbal communication.

Keep an Open Heart, an Open Mind

- Take advantage of opportunities to interact with people who are different from you.
- 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.
- "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).

Stay Flexible, Mindful, and Adaptable

- 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.
- 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.

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...

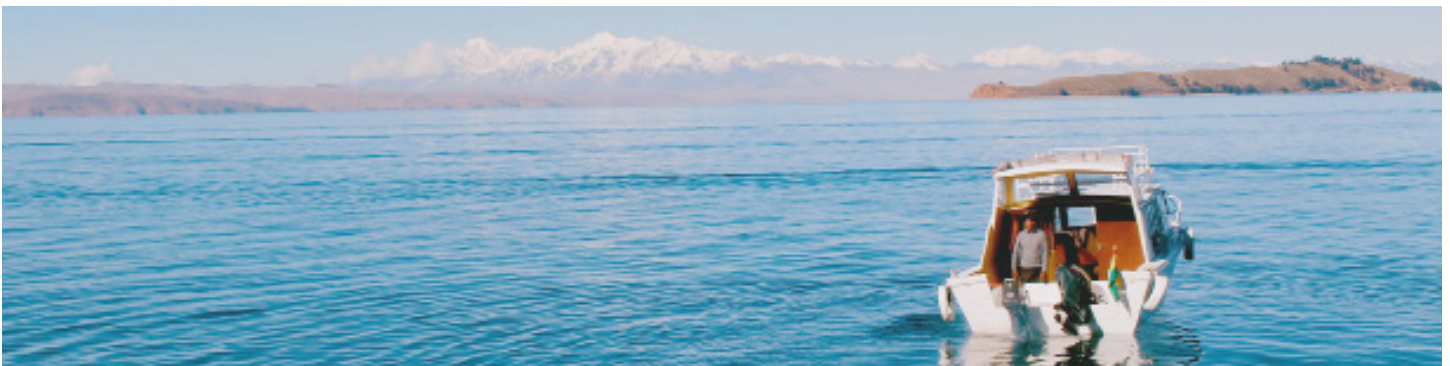
"Doing so justifies our escape from the culturally disagreeable environment into behaviors where we can feel protected and affirmed: calling home frequently, sleeping either too much or too little, reading romance novels, blogging or listening to music for hours, movies...We may not 'return home' in 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. Use Open Letters to channel some thoughts, they're designed to provide an analytical space. If you have other thoughts you don't want to share, use a personal journal.

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



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PART II

COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA



Letter from FSD

Congratulations again on your choice to work abroad on sustainable development projects in conjunction with Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) and Northwestern University!

For many of you this experience will spark a lifelong interest in development. For others, it will be a chance to gain insights into other cultures that can only be obtained through direct experience. For all of you it will be a chance to make a lasting impact on people and communities in your host country, and an opportunity that will make a lasting impression on your life.

Many challenges await you. It is likely that the most difficult obstacles you face will not be the ones that test your technical skills or knowledge. More often it will be the difficulty of gaining the cultural competencies necessary to do successful work in a community. It will be learning to see the problems facing a region from the eyes of a community member rather than through the eyes of an outsider. Remember that culture, community, and language should guide your work as much as your own knowledge.

During your program you will represent both yourself and FSD in your community. Many people in the region that you will work in have had very little experience with people from outside their country. As such they will develop opinions of you and the work of FSD through their interactions with you or what they hear about you. We ask that you take your visibility into consideration when you make decisions about your actions in your host country.

It is the intention of FSD to provide you with a broad support network to best position you for success, but at the end of the day, it is your effort that will most influence the success of your experience with FSD. You will need to take initiative and put yourself in situations that stretch your comfort levels. You will have to work within cultural contexts that can cause extreme frustration. Many other challenges await, but at the same time you face these challenges you also have an incredible set of opportunities. Go into the experience with the willingness to listen and learn. You will find that through this willingness you will increase your ability to give to your community.

This guide has been developed to help make clear what FSD expects of our interns and volunteers and what you can expect of us. We look at your internship or volunteer program as a partnership. It is our hope and belief that clear expectations are the foundation for a solid working relationship. Please read this guide thoroughly; it contains information that is crucial to the success of your experience and our partnership.

Above all, you should feel comfortable contacting us in the San Francisco office if you need any additional support or have any questions.

Good luck!

About FSD

At the center of the internship experience are the core values, vision, and mission that make FSD the organization that it is. We ask that as an FSD participant, you understand and remember these tenets throughout your time abroad, in order to make your program a meaningful experience for both you and the communities in which you serve.

Vision

FSD envisions a world where all people have the opportunity and capacity to direct economic, social, and environmental resources toward sustainable outcomes that improve their lives and communities.

Mission

FSD achieves community-driven goals through asset-based development and international exchange in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Core Values

Start with Assets, Not Problems: We take an asset-based approach to development work. We begin by listening to the priorities set by our community-based partners at our international program sites. We then identify and utilize existing assets and capacity to address those priorities.

Motivate Community Ownership: We partner with leaders, organizations, and stakeholders committed to change, action, and social justice. We stress community ownership and participation before launching initiatives, especially in our volunteer and student programs.

Generate Enduring Results and Impact: We ensure the outcomes of our support have long-lasting benefits for our partners. We think hard about how to participate appropriately and effectively in development, and on how to become redundant so that our initiatives outlast our involvement.

Focus On The Site Teams: We are headquartered in San Francisco, but our 10 Site Teams direct our programs across Africa, Asia, and Latin America on the ground, 365 days a year. These teams build partnerships based on trust, respect, efficacy, and alignment with an asset-based approach.

Build Capacity: We strengthen the skills, competencies, and abilities of the leaders of our community-based partners and of our students and professional volunteers. We educate and train, facilitating the sharing of best practices across all of our stakeholders to support our partners' priorities.

Be A Bridge: We relentlessly build a network of students, professionals, and passionate advocates for our community-based partners to access. We connect this network of assets and volunteers with the work of our partners through our international exchange and grant-making programs.

Change Perspectives: We share our experiences and learning about the complexities of development with friends, family, and colleagues. We promote cultural exchange and sensitivity, encouraging a reflective approach to navigating cross-cultural issues, confusions, and tensions.

Promote Reciprocity: We operate on our founding principle that producing strong community outcomes must be the priority. We base all partnerships, strategies, and decisions on the Fair Trade Learning concept that we must be ethical and reciprocal in our planning, implementation, and outcomes.

About FSD

Web of Support

FSD is a key partner in your experience in Uganda. FSD work with you and with the organizations that host you. Below are the two main players on FSD's team, with a description of exactly how they will support you.

Site Team Roles

Program Director

FSD's program directors are local experts in the field of community development. Their experience and strong community ties make them a great resource to support you in your in-country project work. The program director develops and maintains FSD's relationships with our host organizations and is heavily involved in the process from the time you apply to FSD to the end of your term of service.

Program Coordinators

Your program coordinator(s) provides ongoing support to you, FSD's host families and our partner organizations. During the application process, they advise the program director about your placement. Once you're in the field, they serve as a bridge to the local culture and language and as lifeline when culture shock inevitably sets in. They are also available to advise you as you develop your program workplan. One of the Coordinators is from a developed country to support technical and psycho – social issues of cross-cultural nature.



About FSD

Cochabamba Site Team

Mauricio Ramírez Parra | mauricio@fsdinternational.org Program Director

Mauricio has served as the Director of FSD's Bolivia program since it was initiated in 2000. A native Bolivian, Mauricio has extensive experience with the international community. He has been involved with various agricultural and environmental projects and has served as the coordinator for Farmer to Farmer, financed by USAID since 1996, in Cochabamba. In this capacity he supported projects that provided agricultural producers with technical assistance in the areas of beekeeping, livestock, and the production of fruits and vegetables. He is currently the President of Partners of the Americas in Bolivia, an organization that incorporates volunteers from North Carolina and Bolivia. Together, volunteers address the areas of health, agriculture, art and culture, search and rescue, women's issues, rehabilitation, and justice. Mauricio has experience working with volunteers since 1995.



Juan Pablo Vargas Llanos | Local Program Coordinator

Juan Pablo was born in Vallegrande, Bolivia. He graduated with a B.A in Business Administration from the Universidad Mayor de San Simón in Cochabamba, and has an Executive Master's degree in Development, Policies and Practices from the Graduate Institute of Geneva. While at the University, Juan joined AIESEC, an international NGO run by students and recent graduates from 125 countries and territories. He was the president of AIESEC in Bolivia. Because of his experience working with young people he has had the opportunity to travel to many different countries including Chile, Colombia, Panama, Peru, Brazil and Taiwan to represent Bolivia in different conferences. He has a passion for volunteering, community development, and working with youth. He is proud to have the opportunity to join FSD and contribute to the development of Cochabamba. In his free time he enjoys playing volleyball, walking, and watching documentaries.



Health Preparations

GESI and FSD 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 FSD 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)
- Medicines and supplies for pre-existing conditions (especially important if you need a specific brand or dosage which are not always available abroad, i.e. anti-anxiety or depression medication)
- 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. Don't be embarrassed to speak to your host family or site team about your medical issues; they are there to support you (and have seen worse!), so do not postpone the conversation.

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. FSD and GESI are not responsible for up-front costs or cash-related medical fees.

Safety & Security

FSD 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/flashy 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.

FSD 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.

FSD's responsibilities:

- Ensure a safe and secure host community. FSD is run by staff and trusted colleagues who live locally and have years of experience with international students. 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, demonstrations, or politically motivated gatherings).
- 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.

Visa Information

The recommendations provided here are subject to change at any time. As an FSD participant, it is your full responsibility to secure the appropriate visa and ensure the full legality of your stay in the host country during the program. To do so requires consultation of resources above and beyond the information provided by FSD. Please check with a Bolivian consulate or embassy for the most current information.

Guidance: (subject to change at any time)

It is required that you obtain a tourist visa for travel in Bolivia (including participation in the FSD program). The Site Team strongly suggests that you purchase this visa upon arrival at the airport Bolivia rather than before you leave the US. Previous FSD participants recommend that purchasing the visa at the airport is much more efficient and simpler than purchasing it ahead of time. Visit the State Department and Bolivian Embassy websites (listed below) to review the information you will be required to provide upon arrival, as well as any new information regarding travel in Bolivia.

- The fee for the tourist visa is \$160 USD and must be paid in cash to the immigration authorities upon your arrival. The money should be in crisp, new bills and exact change.
- Besides the fee, you must also provide your passport and an address for where you will be staying (provided in a letter from the site team).
- Compile all the requirements and have them readily available in your carry-on baggage.

U.S. State Department: Information for U.S. travelers to Bolivia:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1069.html

Bolivian Embassy in the United States: 3014 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008 T: 202.483.4410
F: 202.328.3712 <http://www.bolivia-usa.org>

Bolivian Main Consulate in the United States: 2120 L Street NW Suite 335
Washington, DC 20037
T: 202.232.4827
F: 202.232.8017



Packing List

Clothes:

- Several pairs cotton underwear and socks
- Light waterproof jacket & umbrella
- Warm jacket and 2 sweater(s)
- 2-3 Long-sleeved warmer shirts/tops
- 3-4 Short-sleeved tops/t-shirts
- Long pants/capris (1/3)
- Shorts (1/2)
- Skirts, knee-length or longer for women (1/3)
- Light sports attire if you are interested in sports, running, hiking, etc
- Shorts or sweats for around the house
- Multiple shirts appropriate for work, leisure, travel
- At least one nice outfit for special occasions
- Sneakers and sandals (“nice” footwear optional)
- Close-toed comfortable shoes for work and/or special occasions
- Bathing suit, sarong and other beach gear
- Modest sleepwear
- Hat for sun protection/warm hat, gloves and scarves (season appropriate)

Health and Hygiene:

- A supply of hand-wipes and/or anti-bacterial hand lotion (some places will not have restrooms with running water)
- Any medications you use in their original containers and a copy of your prescriptions, eyeglasses, contacts, saline solution
- Personal hygiene products—soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tampons, floss, etc. (these can be purchased locally to save room in your luggage, but you should pack travel sizes to use until you can go to the store the first week)
- Strong insect repellent and Calamine lotion or other itch-relief cream (you will get bitten by insects at some point during your stay)
- Vitamins
- Antibiotics for travelers’ diarrhea
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Contact lens solution (is prohibitively expensive in-country)
- Feminine hygiene products (sanitary pads are widely available, tampons are not)

Practical supplies:

- Steel or plastic water bottle
- Travel alarm clock
- Towel (families may not have them, and they are useful for beach days. Hostels in Bolivia almost always offer towels).
- Medium-sized pack for day and weekend trips
- Flashlight/headlight (remember that power outages are relatively common)
- Earplugs (notably if you have trouble sleeping with noise)
- Lock for luggage (can also be used at lockers in hostels if traveling)
- Money belt (around the waist is more secure than around the neck)
- Utility knife

Documents and money:

- Airline ticket
- Passport
- Vaccination booklet
- Insurance Card
- Visa or Mastercard
- Photocopies of all documents
- Cash—be sure to bring new bills, as even slightly ripped bills will not be accepted (US dollars are accepted in large stores in Bolivia)

Other:

- Pictures of your family, friends, school, neighborhood, work, etc.
- Small gifts for your host family
- Books and other reading materials

Packing tips from previous students:

“What I wish I brought to Bolivia”

- More warm clothes (coats, jackets, etc.)
- More dressy clothes (for evenings and weekends)
- Jar of peanut butter
- Other American snacks
- Tampons

“What I wish I brought less of...”

- Adventure gear (headlamp, hiking gear, etc.)

Packing FAQs

What kind of luggage should I bring?

Don't overdo it — pack lightly so you can travel easily and store your bag in small places. Think in terms of a backpack, duffel bag, or moderate-sized suitcase and a daypack. Bags with shoulder straps are preferable to suitcases because they're easier to carry. Backpacks are a plus to have for easy traveling and weekend excursions once you're in Bolivia.

What should I bring in my carry-on luggage?

We recommend that you carry all valuables (money, credit card, passport, identification, immunization booklet, insurance card, etc.) and a complete set of clothes (change of shirt, pants/skirt, underwear) in your carry-on luggage in case your checked bag is temporarily lost or delayed.

What documents should I bring?

You should bring your passport, vaccination booklet, insurance card, and list of FSD contacts in Bolivia and two copies of each. During the program, keep the originals and one copy safe in your suitcase and keep the other copy on your person at all times.

What items are difficult to get in Bolivia?

Although most things can be purchased in Bolivia (with limited selection), books in English, some comfort foods that you are used to and feminine hygiene products (like Tampax) are also hard to find.

What kinds of weather should I expect?

Cochabamba is located in the central valley region of Bolivia and is known for its pleasant year-round climate, reaching few extremes throughout the year. The seasons are the opposite of those in the Northern hemisphere, with winter being from June to August and summer being in September. The average winter temperature is about 61 degrees Fahrenheit, with warm days and cool nights. Surrounding rural areas such as Punata and Anzaldo tend to be cooler than Cochabamba. As for other regions of Bolivia, La Paz and the altiplano regions of Bolivia are significantly cooler and require warm clothes year round. As you head east of Cochabamba into the tropical region of Chapare, and beyond to Santa Cruz, the climate becomes warmer and more humid.

Should I bring donations?

Donations are not required. If you choose to bring donations, please think about the practicality, sustainability, and durability of those items. Email your Site Team to find out the best types of donations to bring with you.

How are clothes washed?

Most host families have washing machines, and some host families will hand-wash your clothing. In both cases, clothing is line-dried. Please keep in mind that since your clothes will be hand-washed and line-dried they will definitely endure some wear and tear. Please also note that there is some social stigma surrounding thong underwear, and so it may be more comfortable with some families to bring non-thong underwear, or to dry thong underwear out of public view.

What should I wear?

To avoid uncomfortable stereotypes and feel safe (this is especially important for women), dress conservatively. For women, it is typical for clothes to fit snugly but not show much skin.

At work: Bolivian men and women generally wear business casual attire to work, making nice jeans or khakis appropriate. Knee-length or longer skirts are also appropriate for women, and short-sleeved dress shirts are fine for men. For both genders, comfortable, sturdy, closed-toe shoes or nicer sandals are appropriate for work. For both genders shorts and rubber flip-flops are inappropriate. Old t-shirts and jeans are recommended in case of building projects.

At home: Comfortable clothing and sandals are commonly worn for lounging and informal activities. Bring a pair of modest pajamas to sleep in.

What type of clothes should I pack?

Bring cool clothes for hot summer temperatures, a lightweight waterproof jacket for showers, and warm layers for the winter and cooler nights. Keep in mind that darker colors are easier to keep clean, and that your clothes could endure a lot of wear and tear from being washed by hand. Also consider clothes that will breathe in the heat and dry quickly. You may also want to bring a nice, formal outfit, as participants are often invited to celebrations such as weddings or baptisms by their host family and friends. Bathing suits are optional but may come in handy during the Midterm Trip.

Electronics, Food & Water FAQs

Electronics FAQs

Should I bring my laptop?

Personal computers and especially laptops are not particularly common in Bolivia. The majority of participants find having a laptop to be extremely helpful during their internship. Many participants say that they wish they had brought their laptops to Cochabamba. Access to computers at your host organization is likely to be limited, and only a handful of families have a computer in their home. The FSD office in Cochabamba has an extra laptop with internet connection for participants to use.

The advantage of bringing a laptop is the ability to work on documents at home without paying for internet/computer time. You can then save your work to a USB drive and email/print it at a ciber. If you do decide to bring your laptop, please take the necessary precautions! It should be in your carry-on bag to take on the plane and you should keep it at your host family's home. Bringing a laptop entails the risk that it could be lost, stolen or damaged. FSD is not responsible for your possessions. Instead (or in addition to) of a laptop it may be a good idea to invest in a cheap USB drive. You can get low volume USB drives for \$20 or up to several GBs for more money. These are an excellent way to cart around your documents and email, print or fax them from a ciber.

Should I bring my smart phone?

Smart phones are very rare here – you should generally not walk around using a smart phone; they automatically advertise your wealth and set you apart. Keeping it at home and using it with your family is perfectly fine. MP3 players are also great for long bus rides, but you should exercise the utmost caution when traveling with items of value. An FSD cellphone may be borrowed from the site team.

Voltage Converters:

If you decide to bring your laptop or other American electronic devices, check to see if they work with 220V. If not, you will need a converter. Most people find that their two-pronged electronics work without a converter or adapter. However, if necessary, converters and adapters are easily purchased in Bolivia.

Food & Water FAQs

Can I drink the tap water?

NO. Do not drink the tap water. You are only to drink bottled water or water that has been boiled.

Where can I get safe water?

Cochabamba is at 9000 ft in altitude, so please pay close attention to your hydration at all times and be sure that you're getting plenty of (safe) water. Your host family will make purified water available to you. Bring your own bottled water with you at all times; when visiting other families or communities, and when in doubt, drink a bottled beverage. The most sustainable way to ensure that you always have a supply of purified water available is to bring a reusable water bottle and re-fill it each morning from your host family's supply (most families will buy a large jug that is refilled each week). You may also consider bringing water treatment tablets for backup. Bottled water is available in any "tienda" or grocery store. However, in rural areas it isn't odd to find tiendas that don't have bottled water, since drinking water isn't a big priority to most Bolivians. It is always recommended to bring large bottles of water with you when traveling to rural areas.

Can I eat fresh fruit from street stands and trees?

In Bolivia you are likely to encounter an abundance of fresh fruit. As a rule, if you can peel it, you can eat it. Avoid peeled fruit served on the street unless you watch the vendor peel it.

Are there any US-style restaurants?

In Cochabamba, the only US chain is Burger King, however, there are many restaurants that serve US style food. There are restaurants called Dumbo's and Globos that are very similar to a Denny's or IHOP and there are hamburger and pizza joints everywhere. Cochabamba has an excellent selection of food, you can find almost anything; Italian, sushi, kebabs, etc.

Food & Water

What is typical food?

The main staples of the Bolivian diet are potatoes and rice, usually accompanied by meat and llajwa, a spicy locoto (Bolivian chili pepper) salsa. Meat soups are also very popular. It is likely that you will have rice, potatoes and bread at least once a day. Other principal foods include plantains, fava beans, salty fresh cheese, eggs, meat, corn, fruit, pastries and mates (tea). Bolivian food tends to be very greasy with very little use of vegetables and even less use of raw vegetables. Breakfast is normally a small meal that consists of tea or coffee and fresh juice, accompanied by bread with butter and jam. Lunch is the most important meal of the day and is eaten together with the entire family at around 1 p.m. It is usually a very heavy meal, eaten at a very slow pace and accompanied by much conversation. Dinner depends on the family; some Bolivians eat big meals similar to lunch while others typically have a mate and a pastry such as an empanada.

What do most people drink?

Many host families will make juice from fresh fruit – these are delicious. Soda, or “gaseosa” is very popular, usually the substitute for water in most homes, and is drunk much more than foreigners are accustomed to. Milk is safe to drink in Bolivia, as it is almost always pasteurized. Likewise, when coffee is available it is usually Nescafé, although fresh coffee may be purchased from local producers. Beer, Singani and Chicha are the popular alcoholic drinks in the Cochabamba region. Singani is an alcohol fermented from grapes and usually mixed with juice as a trago (cocktail), while Chicha is a drink made from fermented corn, consumed in its pure state and a core of Cochabamba social events and culture.

How vegetarian/vegan-friendly is the local cuisine?

Meat is a big part of Bolivian culture and celebrations. In Bolivia, vegetarianism is often related to people who have some sort of illness and cannot eat meat. However, in recent years, some Bolivians have adopted vegetarian diets. Much of the local food is vegetarian although it does not carry that title. Potatoes to the Huancaína, phiri de quinoa, noodles with cheese, and salpicon de verduras are just a few examples of traditional vegetarian dishes. FSD also works with host families who are vegetarian and some of them, despite not being vegetarian, adapt to the students who have these preferences. It is important to let the FSD Site Team know about your dietary restrictions prior to your arrival so they can match you with a host family that will be able to accommodate. Please be specific as to your preferences (i.e. whether you eat chicken but no red meat, or no animals, no dairy, etc.) with your host family and Site Team. You may have to reiterate at some point during your stay what your preferences are, and if your host family is having difficulty preparing food for a vegetarian or vegan diet, please let the FSD Site Team know. Veganism is not well known in Bolivia and there are very few options in restaurants or supermarkets for vegan products, however, FSD has several host families who have been trained in vegan cooking and will accept vegan students.

Are there foods for people with gluten allergies?

Local businesses offer gluten-free products, however, there are still not many restaurants that offer alternatives for people with these restrictions. In the city there is a business that offers pizzas, cakes, empanadas and other products if ordered in advance. FSD has trained several host families to receive students with these restrictions.

What foods should I avoid?

Avoid uncooked food, street vendors, and restaurants that have not been recommended by FSD. Do not eat fruits or vegetables that have been washed with water unless they are peeled or the water was treated beforehand. Other foods likely to be offered that you should avoid, unless your host family prepares them properly, are juices, quesillo (fresh salty cheese), salad, milk drinks, and anything raw. To prevent parasites and diarrhea, you will want to eat lightly upon arrival and stay away from raw vegetables and street food.

How should I express my preferences, or turn down unsafe food that is offered to me?

In many places food is an important form of hospitality and it is cultural practice to offer food and drink as a welcoming, friendly gesture. Never put yourself at risk, but please be diplomatic in expressing your needs. Take care not to offend your hosts with negative comments or facial expressions. Your host family will be notified of what you can and cannot eat or drink, but you should also be sure to tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. You should feel comfortable politely asking your family for food to be less greasy or salty, to put salt on the side, to mention that you like fruits and vegetables, or to be given more or less food. Families understand that your body is simply used to a different diet, so the best thing to do if there is a food bothering you is to say that, although it is delicious you are not used to eating like that in your country and it is making you ill. Most Bolivians know that foreigners are generally more susceptible to getting sick from the change in diet and are accustomed to being more cautious with the food they serve them.

Communication

What is the best way for friends and family at home to reach me?

Email, Whatsapp or Skype are the most reliable ways to be in touch with your friends and family at home. We also suggest that you call your friends and family from an internet café or a phone company office. If your host family has a phone, you can ask them if it is all right for your family to call you on that line.

Phone communication is often interrupted by bad weather, local technicalities or overloaded circuits, and sometimes lines are cut in the middle of a call. Please ensure that your friends and families are aware of this and understand that it is best not to schedule international calls at exact times.

Is there access to internet and email?

You can find an internet café (ciber) anywhere in Cochabamba. Many are open late, and most all have the capacity to call home to the US for much cheaper than other methods. Internet access costs about US \$0.50 per hour. Additionally FSD's Cochabamba office has free internet access and an extra laptop for students.

Can I make and receive phone calls at my host family's home?

All host families have a telephone. Never make any long distance calls from the phone of your host family or that of your employer, and ask permission from your host family before making any local calls on their phone. It is also best to check with your host family before receiving long-distance calls on their phone.

Are cell phones available?

FSD provides participants with an inexpensive cell phone during their program. The phone will have minutes at the beginning of your program, and then you are responsible for purchasing any additional minutes. Friends and family can call you on your phone with no cost at your expense. Calls to cell phones can be relatively expensive (2-4 bolivianos/minute, US \$0.25-0.50).

Where can I make and receive phone calls?

Local phone calls to fixed lines can usually be made from your host family's telephone. Phone calls to cell phones are more expensive and should be made from telecommunications offices (such as Entel, Viva, etc.) for about US \$0.06 per minute. For long distance calls there are several options:

- Call from a telecommunications office. These can be as expensive as 4 bolivianos (US \$0.50) per minute, but are usually a reliable connection
- Call from a booth at a call center or internet café using an internet phone connection. This is a fairly reliable and quite cheap option, at as low as US \$0.06 a minute
- Buy a prepaid phone card in the U.S. or in Cochabamba to use with landlines (check with your host family to make sure they won't be charge for the call)
- Use internet services such as Skype for low rates per minute or for free with other Skype users

How do I make a call within Bolivia?

From one landline to another in Cochabamba, you can simply dial the 7-digit number. To call a cell phone, all you have to do is dial the 8-digit number anywhere in the country. From a cell phone or a landline outside of Cochabamba to another landline, you must dial Cochabamba's city code (4 or 04).

How do I call the U.S.?

To call the U.S. from a call center, dial 001, the area code, then the 7-digit number. From other phones or using a calling card, there are several different possible prefixes, some of which are cheaper than others depending on promotions – if you plan to call this way, you should research your options. There are direct numbers to call AT&T and Sprint to make calling card or collect calls to the US, which you should verify before your arrival. Some call centers in Cochabamba will give you the office's number so that whoever you are calling can call you back.

Money & Flight

How much cash should I bring with me?

You should plan on bringing about US \$200 in cash when you arrive, (in addition to the \$160 cash in new bills for your visa), an ATM card, and a credit card for emergencies (however there are very few places to use credit cards). There will be opportunities to exchange money during the orientation in Cochabamba.

How much money should I plan on spending in country?

GESI covers all of your necessary expenses, including room and board, in-country transportation, mid-term retreat expenses (if applicable), orientation and debriefing sessions. You will want additional money, however, for entertainment, snacks, books, gifts, newspapers, weekend excursions, additional transportation and health emergencies. You should budget for about US \$4/day for normal days, and more for weekend trips: \$200 for Salar de Uyuni, \$100 for Chapare, \$150 for La Paz or Santa Cruz. Bring more if you plan to go out often (eating out, coffee, dinner, drinks, theater) or buy gifts. Never carry a large sum of cash or your passport on public transportation; if you must, please do so with caution. Bring only what you need for the day and use a nondescript bag to carry books or papers.

How can I get cash?

ATM machines are recommended because they are available, secure, and get a good rate of exchange. Traveler's checks are not recommended: they do not get a good exchange rate (cash is much better) and are not widely accepted. Do not exchange money with street dealers; banks or exchange bureaus are much more secure.

Are credit cards accepted?

It is very difficult to find places that accept credit cards, as they are only accepted in the more expensive shops and restaurants. Do not plan to rely on your credit card for the majority of your transactions in the country; if you choose to bring a credit card, we advise bringing no more than one for emergency purposes, and bringing a Visa or MasterCard since they are the most commonly accepted.

What is the local attitude towards bargaining?

Bargaining is part of the culture and expected at local markets.

Monetary unit: Boliviano/Peso

Exchange Rate: Rates fluctuate, be sure to check them online before you leave, at websites like:
www.xe.com

Flight Info

Flying through La Paz El Alto Airport (LPB) en route to Cochabamba

Upon your arrival at LPB: You will have to collect your checked luggage, get your visa, and go through customs before returning to the domestic departures check in.

Your Arrival to Cochabamba

The Site Team or a trusted FSD transportation service with an FSD logo sign will meet participants at the Cochabamba Airport.

Your Departure from Cochabamba

The Site Team will work with you to arrange for your departure. They will accompany you to the airport as well.

Arrival & Transportation

Arrival

How should I contact my site team if my flight is delayed, canceled, etc?

As mentioned above, prior to your departure you should print a copy the site team contact information. Keep it in your carry-on luggage at all times. In the event that you need to contact your site team while in transit, we recommend text message or calling from your US cell phone, emailing from a kiosk in the airport (Punto Entel), or using a pay phone to call the site team on their cell phones. If your bag gets lost, use the FSD site team member as a contact.

How far is the orientation site from the airport?

The average travel time from Cochabamba airport to the orientation site by taxi is approximately 15 minutes but can vary greatly with traffic. During all your travels, please be vigilant with your personal belongings, especially in El Alto airport, the bus stop in El Alto and the bus Terminal in Cochabamba. And lastly, once you have arrived and settled in, be sure to make contact with your families back home - they will want to know that you arrived safely!

Transportation

What are the most common modes of transport and are they expensive?

•**Buses:** In Bolivian cities the most common form of public transportation are trufis. There are three types of trufis: Micro-trufi, trufi, or a trufi taxi. All work the same, having a fixed rate of 1.9 bolivianos and a specific route depending on their number. However, the difference between the trufis lie in their size — Micros are comparable to a bus, regular trufis are much like a mini-bus, and trufi-taxis look like a taxi (a compact car).

•**Payment:** With some public transport you pay when you get on and with others as you get off; the best is to ask and you will learn as you go. For longer bus trips, it is advised to go to the bus station and buy your ticket early.

•**Safety:** It is easy to get robbed on a bus so be vigilant about your possessions. However, appearing nervous about your possessions makes you a target so try to be calm and composed. Don't travel with more money than you'll need and don't carry important documents like your passport unless you have to. It is preferable to choose a seat next to a female or child.

•**Stay Informed:** Know where you are going: Always know where you are going and the name of the stop before you get on the bus. If you are going to an unfamiliar location always ask the driver (chofer) before getting on the bus. Transport choferes are very friendly and are always willing to help you find the right bus or trufi.

•**Taxis:** Taxis are ubiquitous and cheap in Bolivia, and are thus good for transportation to area buses do not travel or when you are traveling with luggage or with a group. Most taxi rides are about a dollar unless you are going long distances or traveling at night.

•**Payment:** Most taxi rides are about two dollars unless you are going long distances. Ask how much the fare will be before you get in the taxi. To ensure not being overcharged, always ask someone who is familiar with the city how much a taxi ride should be to your destination point before traveling somewhere for the first time, and negotiate the price with the driver at the beginning.

•**Safety:** You should always use radio taxis. These are taxis that are run by a company and they will have this company logo on the door of the car, accompanied by the company phone number. You can always ask your host family to recommend a taxi company to use.

Is it safe to go out at night?

Make sure to not walk after 9 PM, or in unknown and/or dark areas, especially if you are alone. Consult with your host family about safety information specific to your neighborhood. Plan ahead and be cautious. If traveling within Cochabamba, it is always best to use a taxi service at night. If you plan to go out at night, never go alone. Hanging out in the plazas is very unsafe after dark and it is always best to avoid crossing plazas at night. However, Cochabamba's city center, where most of the restaurants and bars are located, is generally safe at all hours. But even while hanging out in the city center, you want to make sure you are with a friend or someone from your host family when it is dark out. Consult with your host family as to safety information specific to where you plan on going during nighttime hours. Plan ahead and be cautious!

Family Homestay

A typical Bolivian host family includes one or two host parents, children, and extended family members of various ages and relations. It is very common for movement in and out of the household of relatives, either as they come for a brief or extended visit, or if they need a place to live. All of the Bolivian host families that FSD 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. Be prepared for a fun, yet challenging, experience full of Bolivian cariño!

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in Bolivia is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. Host families offer the rare opportunity to truly integrate yourself into the local culture and build meaningful relationships that will last long past your stay. 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. 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.

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. Toiletries and a towel are not provided; you must bring your own.

What are the living accommodations like?

Living accommodations range depending on each host family's specific situation and the area where they live, but most are comfortable by U.S. standards. Families tend to be middle class, and family members are usually professionals or stay-at-home mothers. Water is most often heated electrically in Bolivia as it passes through the shower head. This results in variable water pressure and temperature – usually, water becomes hotter as less is let out of the shower head. Never touch the shower head or wires attached to the shower head while in the shower, and be very cautious if you have to touch the lever to turn on the electricity in order to avoid being shocked. Most neighborhoods are fairly quiet at night, although those concerned about barking dogs and occasional amplified house parties may want to bring earplugs.

How are families structures in Bolivia?

Bolivian 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 as well, so parents, grown children, and grandchildren may live in the same home. Children in Bolivia, like children anywhere, can be both adorable and annoying, but try to maintain your patience with them in order to integrate smoothly into the household. Sometimes young children will be afraid of you for the first few weeks because you are a stranger and you look and act differently than the people they're used to. Please don't take this personally- be patient and they'll warm up to you with time. Some Bolivian families also employ a housekeeper, called an empleada. Common duties include cooking, washing laundry and general cleaning. An empleada's hours and relationship to the family vary -- empleadas may come once a week, every day, or work full-time and live in the house. Likewise, some empleadas may simply maintain a business relationship with the family, while others become more like adopted family members. These sorts of arrangements are much more common in Bolivia than in the United States.

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?

You should receive your own set of keys to the house so that you are free to come and go as needed.

Family Homestay

Can I bring/store valuables at my host family's house?

There is no need to bring many valuables. We require that you keep items of value locked in your luggage at all times. This is extremely important because friends and relatives are often in and out of the house. In the past, there have been incidents when a student thought something was stolen only to find that s/he had misplaced it. This kind of "scandal" is hard on the host family who take great care to protect you and your things. If something unusual of this nature does happen, please speak with your host mother and/or the FSD Site Team immediately.

What are standard meal times?

Meal times are a morning breakfast, lunch usually at 1 p.m., and a dinner sometime between 6-9 p.m. Breakfast usually consists of bread with fresh cheese, butter or jam and coffee or tea. Lunch is the biggest meal of the day for which everyone returns home, and usually consists of a soup, a meat dish with rice and potatoes and fresh juice. Some families cook a smaller dinner in the evening, while others simply have a snack or bread with coffee or tea.

How should I tell my family that I'd like less food, or different kinds of food?

Don't be shy about asking your family for particular foods or for the amount of food you want to eat. You should tell your family what you do and do not like to eat – ideally in your first week, when it's easiest to broach the subject. Vegetarian food is always available, but in order to avoid getting lots of eggs, it's important to explain your concept of vegetarianism to your family.

How much time should I spend with my host family?

One of the most meaningful experiences during your time in Bolivia is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. You will learn a great deal about Bolivia through the people, so cultivate a habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing. Ask questions and share your perspective. Be sensitive to the feelings of others and embrace the different viewpoints, lifestyles, experiences and company your family provides. Host families are eager to get to know you and learn about your American life so be ready to talk about your interests, culture, family and plans. We encourage you to share pictures and stories from your life at home.

How often should I check in with my family?

You are entrusted in your host family's care, and just like your own family, they will worry about you if you don't check in. Please advise your family in advance if you do not plan to be home for a meal. Likewise, be sure to notify your family in advance of any weekend excursions you take other than those in the scheduled program.

Can I have visitors come over to the house?

Please advise your family before you invite anyone to the house, especially someone of the opposite sex. Overnight guests are NOT appropriate and are unacceptable during the program. Protect your family's safety and privacy. Do not give out their home number. Remember: Even though you will be treated as part of the family, you are still a guest in their home and must be respectful of their rules.

How do people spend their free time?

Families in Cochabamba enjoy chatting with family and friends at the dining room table and other common areas for long hours. Extended family birthday parties and celebrations may be frequent, and some families may attend church or have religious traditions. Watching television, especially telenovelas, is another popular pastime. Bolivian youth have a nightlife similar to American youth – they often go to friends' houses, restaurants, bars, parties, movies or spend the evening at home with their family.

Can I travel after dark?

You should plan ahead, be cautious, and always know the areas you are traveling in at night. It is not advised to walk alone at night, especially in the dangerous areas of the city.

Family Homestay

Can I go out at night?

Yes. If you do make plans to go out at night, please advise your family of your transportation, who will be accompanying you, your return time, and arrangements for getting home and into the house. Exercise good judgment: As anywhere, it is best to go out with family members, co-workers or friends that you meet. Simply being a foreigner makes you more of a target for theft, harassment, etc.

How should I handle requests for money?

GESI program fees subsidize all of your room and board expenses so there is no need for you to discuss money with your family. They should not ask you to borrow money and if this happens, tell them it is against your program rules to lend money. If children ask for money, gently remind them that it is against the rules, and let your Site Team know about the incident.

What types of gifts are appropriate to bring for my host family?

We suggest that you bring small and modest gifts for your host family as a token of goodwill and gratitude for their hospitality. Ideas: souvenirs of your hometown or state (photo calendars/books, university apparel, etc.), chocolates/candies, inexpensive jewelry, or school supplies for the children, etc. It is possible to purchase small gifts in Bolivia too, but regional gifts are special. Use your imagination!

A GESI 2011 student's reflections on her experience in Bolivia

by Danielle Moehrke

It's amazing how you can enter an organization as an obvious outsider, wide-eyed with culture shock, and depart the organization with heart-felt goodbyes, teary-eyed to leave a place that has become a second home.

Although spending 10 weeks gallivanting across Europe and periodically throwing in class attendance seemed mildly appealing when I was searching for a study abroad program, I realized I wanted to gain a global perspective rather than an appreciation of French wine. I was drawn to GESI for the complete cultural immersion, that chance to step so incredibly far out of my comfort zone through the homestays and direct community development work. GESI was a way to learn more about myself and a new culture and to hopefully do a little good in the process.

Centro Integral Warmi, the NGO at which I worked in Bolivia, was founded as a soap factory with the intent of providing jobs to women in the community during the severe economic recession of 1982. Soon after that, they added a childcare center for the women's children, which eventually expanded. This organization is an incredible asset; now it operates primarily as a low-cost daycare, and continues to employ five women that produce and sell soap.

Through interviews and observations, we decided that there was much potential for growth in the soap factory, particularly in the marketing and selling of the soap. Thus, our project consisted of designing an effective marketing strategy to increase the organization's soap-selling brand. By creating a promotional video to put on Youtube, developing a new logo that better demonstrated the connection between the kids and the women, designing the packaging for the new detergent soap, contacting potential funders, working with the women in the factory through a workshop, and helping the staff develop a soap press conference at the mayor's hall, we increased the visibility of the organization. More importantly, we instilled the community with confidence in the value of their work.

I learned the importance of humility when you are an outsider coming into a community. GESI shattered my idealistic view of single-handedly "saving the world." I realized that in the grand-scale of things, we did little to help the developing nation of Bolivia; however, I still believe our actions made an impact on individuals. Warmi staff members now recognize the good they are doing and the incredibly positive effects they have on the children who see the organization as a second home. No one GESI group drastically derailed the world and set it on an upward path toward complete equality, but together the combination of all the little things we did this summer and the little things these organizations do on a daily basis, has a great impact and shapes the world's trajectory toward a positive future.

Cultural Practices & Beliefs

For the most part, you will gain insight into Bolivian culture through your own experiences, but here are a few common questions that are likely to arise:

How do people in Bolivia view time and/or punctuality?

The concept of time is relatively flexible in Bolivia, and somewhat unpredictable. For example, everyone at your workplace might show up a half-hour late one day, or your bus to Sucre might be delayed 45 minutes. But don't count on this as a rule, because the next time you travel the bus will probably leave right when it's supposed to. Your best bet is to be on time and be prepared to be as patient as possible when your surroundings aren't working on the same schedule.

Do people in Bolivia have different beliefs about privacy?

While your physical privacy will be respected, you might be asked personal questions or find others more comfortable getting involved in your "personal" business than what you're used to. Likewise, be prepared for lots of advice on the right and wrong way to do things!

What are some common greeting gestures in Bolivia?

Formalities are important in Bolivia, and it is customary to greet each and every person in a room when you enter. Between women as well as between women and men, this may be a kiss on the cheek, sometimes in combination with a handshake. On special occasions or in close relationships, a greeting might be a kiss on the cheek, followed by a hug, and finished with another kiss on the cheek. Greetings between men consist of a handshake, or in closer relationships, a handshake combined with a firm pat on the upper arm. Don't be surprised if people greet you or refer to you with characteristics like gringo, gordito, etc. – these terms, while possibly offensive in English, are meant to be affectionate in Spanish. When asking someone for information, or entering in rooms in formal situations, it is important to use the appropriate greeting – buenos días in the morning, buenas tardes in the afternoon, and buenas noches in the evening.

How are children treated in Bolivia? Is it common for children to be reprimanded physically at home or school?

Children are expected to unquestioningly respect their elders and authority in Bolivia. Expect parents to be strict with children when they disobey and to hear lots of threats about the chicote (whip). Usually this is just talk, but it is not taboo to physically reprimand children and may occur in certain households. It is neither common nor acceptable for children to be physically reprimanded at schools.

How are animals treated in Bolivia? Do people keep pets?

Many families keep pets, especially dogs, in Bolivia – in almost all cases, they are kept outside and don't receive overwhelming care and attention. Many are considered a sort of house guard.

How do people in Bolivia socialize and how important is it?

The most important element of socializing in Bolivia is simply talking, telling stories and listening to others, usually over food or drink. Games like loba (cards) and cacho (similar to Yahtzee) are also common in social settings. In bigger celebrations, be prepared for an amplified sound system, dancing to national music, and alcohol. There may be extreme pressure to eat and especially drink in these social settings, and you will find it hard to say no. Respect your limits and be firm when you don't want to consume anymore, but prepared for lots of protest on the part of the person treating you to food or drink! If you are concerned about not wanting to drink any alcohol and are afraid you won't be able to say no, you can plan in advance to say you are on antibiotics, in which case people should understand and not continue to insist.

What place does religion have in Bolivia?

Approximately 80% of Bolivians will claim Catholic faith, but there are varying degrees of practice. Religious holidays play an important role in the country, and some families may attend church or special masses on the birthdays or anniversaries of the death of relatives who have passed away. You will probably be asked about your religious affiliation.

How should I approach photography?

You should always ask permission before you take someone's photo. People may ask you to send copies or to give them a tip ("propina") for taking their photo. Please oblige them.

Workplace

What is a typical work day in Bolivia?

A typical work day (subject to variation depending on the field of work) is 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 2:30-6:00 p.m., with a long lunch break. A common alternative is called *horario continuo* in which ones works with a short break straight through 4 p.m. This is most common in public institutions such as government offices and banks, so that people can conduct business during their lunch hour.

How is personal initiative viewed? Is it appropriate to voice my opinions?

Personal initiative is valuable in NGO work and is viewed positively in the organizations with which GESI students work in Bolivia. However, at times you may have difficulties finding an audience for your unique ideas and will have to be persistent and well planned in order to effectively communicate them. It is important to above all observe and learn in your first weeks with your organization, before voicing strong opinions.

What is the appropriate way to address colleagues and supervisors in Bolivia?

How you address colleagues and supervisors is highly dependent on the workplace and the individual. For example, some professionals prefer to be addressed with their title, such as *ingeniero* (used with engineers and technicians) or *licenciado* (referring to someone who has a college degree), while others might prefer to put these formalities aside. The best bet is to start out being very observant of your office dynamic and the relationships between coworkers, erring on the side of “usted” and feeling out the situation as you go along.

What are common practices for socializing with colleagues?

The best way to socialize with colleagues is to talk with them (and learn from them) in relaxed moments in the workplace, take breaks with them over coffee or go out for drinks after work. Participate in as many meetings, workplace activities and outside get-togethers as possible to establish rapport with your coworkers.

Tips for working with the organization

As an intern with a local organization, you will be working with people from the community. As a member of your organization’s team, you will find yourself sharing your concerns and difficulties and celebrating your achievements and successes. The best place to learn about local development issues is within your organization. Your knowledge and abilities are appreciated and must be used to improve, develop, and expand current and new projects. Remember to listen and respect the people you are working with and your combined efforts will result in meaningful and successful projects. Your internship is the foundation of your experience with FSD and you will be expected to work 30-40 hours a week with your host organization.

Practice professionalism and respect. You must consider your internship as a serious job, respect your organization and your supervisors, perform your tasks within the organization with great respect for others. You are an ambassador and representative of the people of your country, your gender, your university, FSD and other groups with whom you identify. Although it is not your intention, your actions will have an effect on the vision and conception that your hosts have of the volunteers. Be very respectful with your co-workers and your supervisor. They have invaluable experience and knowledge about the issues and challenges that are found in your field of work. Think of your internship as the best participatory course you can take.

Participate in a full week of work with your organization. This varies greatly depending on the place and the host organization. Although other staff members do not always arrive on time, keep a defined schedule to gain respect in your organization and demonstrate your dedication to the job.

Reevaluate your concept of the work ethic. In many western countries, work ethic is frequently evaluated according to efficiency, productivity and punctuality. In Bolivia, where things move more slowly, work ethic is sometimes evaluated by other standards-such as quality, ability to integrate into the culture, friendships and relationships you cultivate, and your ability to work within a cooperative structure. However, your host organization is not responsible for changing their work schedule or behavior to accommodate your standards.

Be patient. Time works in a different way in other countries. Appointments and meetings are not always on time or follow your schedule. Be patient and persistent and you will realize your goals in the end. Do not be discouraged if you feel unproductive during the first weeks; Finding your place in your organization takes time. Work in Bolivia moves slower than in other cultures. The projects that you think should take a day, here may take a week.

Be flexible. Not all internships have fixed tasks and the level of order and management varies. Things are not going to unfold as you expect, the interactions and work styles of different people may be new to you and your past experience. Relax and learn from each situation, unexpected disappointment are a step in learning. Go ahead and give positive and constructive answers to the challenges you are facing. Remember that you are a visitor and do your best to follow the customs and procedures of your community and organization.

Focus first on relationships, and second on “productivity”. Spend time chatting with your supervisor, your colleagues and the clients of your host organization, especially during the first week. This is a key way to learn from your organization and begin to know the needs and opportunities. Taking this time to get to know these individuals well will be decisive in gaining trust and mutual respect and in establishing your good intentions to learn and collaborate. This investment in relationships with other people will help ensure that your ideas and suggestions are interpreted as a collaboration, rather than something self-centered or culturally imposed.

Ask. Your colleagues and supervisors have a lifetime of experience from which you can learn. Do not be afraid to ask for advice. In addition to your organization, your local FSD team is here to help you and find the answers to questions or doubts you have regarding your internship and organization. If you do not communicate your needs to them, they cannot help you.

Be proactive! Participate and get involved in the projects of your organization. Maybe you do not have a defined work schedule or plan - take initiative and organize a list of projects or activities that interest you. Talk to your organization, the program director and the program coordinators for reactions and suggestions. Share the skills and knowledge you have gained over the years at school, at work, etc.

Ideas for your first week of work

- Learn as much as you can about what your organization does. Past, current and future projects, their vision and mission, their strategies. You can do this by talking to your boss and colleagues, asking for materials to read, browsing through the organization's database (if available), and researching on the Internet.
- Learn the vocabulary related to the work of your organization.
- Befriend your supervisor and your colleagues. Be open, to initiate conversation, to ask questions and to participate in the activities to which they invite you. You do not have to always discuss only work.
- Take *tecito*! Before starting a good friendship or working relationship with someone you have to earn their trust. Therefore, sometimes “*tecito*” with your co-workers is more important than the work you initially do. Better to spend quiet time drinking tea with your colleagues than being connected to the Internet intensely looking for work! You must be a good worker and have an interest in the organization, but show interest in the culture and in the people as well.
- Start to organize your thoughts on what the organization will need. Take notes so you can present a well thought-out plan later.
- Maintain a sense of humor. It is normal to make mistakes with the language, to say strange things and to lose the jokes that others tell you from time to time. The more you learn to laugh at yourself and move on despite the language barrier, you will advance in the language simply because you are trying.
- Do not wait for your supervisor to give you specific tasks. Ask and offer to help where you can.

Managing Expectations

An important part of ensuring you have a positive experience in Cochabamba is to manage your expectations from the very beginning. Remember that you are arriving to learn and be a small step in the overall sustainable development process. It is normal to feel lost and perhaps even without purpose at the beginning. Our suggestion is to follow the 3 Ps:

BE PROACTIVE

- Good relationships lead to good projects, not the other way around. Take the initiative to begin to form relationships in your organization and with other people that you meet in Cochabamba.
- Your supervisor will often not give you specific tasks. You may feel you are without direction. Take a moment and think of something you can be doing or working on. Think of possible obstacles and solutions in advance. Accept that you may have more free time than you are used to; relax and do something for you.

BE PERSISTENT

- You may need to ask for things you need more than once. You are your own best advocate. Even if it takes a few tries, don't give up on asking for what it is you need.
- Things may not work out on the first try (or second, or third, etc). Analyze what did and did not work and try again.

BE POLITE

- No matter how frustrated or confused you are, always be polite. Remember that you are not at home and that rash reactions can often offend. Learn a few stress management techniques and see which works best for you. Learn the difference between being firm and being rude.
- Development is often a painfully slow process. Take the time before you arrive to mentally prepare yourself for a different pace of life and work. Keep in mind you may need to change your definitions of productivity and success. Even small accomplishments and projects require significant amounts of time. Be prepared to be frustrated at times; adjustment and adaptation can be difficult, especially at first. If you ready yourself for these realities before you arrive, the process will be easier once here.



Race, Sexuality, & Gender

How you interact with others will initially have a lot to do with preconceptions. You'll feel more comfortable once the inevitable "getting to know you" period is over, but keep some of these cultural norms in mind.

Race and Ethnicity

In Bolivia, you may not encounter the same level and/or kind of awareness and sensitivity surrounding race relations and conceptualizations of heritage as you may be accustomed to finding in the U.S. If you have features associated with an Asian heritage, kids and adults may shout out, call, or greet you as "Chino/a" or "Japones/a." If you have dark skin or features associated with an African heritage, people may refer to you as "Negro/a," or "Moreno/a." If you have fair skin, people may refer to you as "Gringo/a" or "Yanki". If you have features associated with a Middle Eastern heritage, you may be referred to as "Arabe". If you have features associated with an Indian or South Asian heritage, you may be referred to as "Hindu." In most cases, these names are not necessarily derogatory terms; many people use them simply because your skin color or features are unusual or intriguing within that context. Besides using generalizations to refer to the appearance of foreign looking persons, Bolivians also refer to their brothers and sisters with these racial "nicknames" if they look Asian, Middle Eastern, North American, etc.

In addition to "nicknames" for foreign looking people, there is also a strong language used for referring to Bolivians from different regions, from different classes and with different color skin. They refer to indigenous Bolivian women that still wear their traditional clothes as "cholitas" and indigenous looking men "campesinos." People from the Bolivian oriente or tropical regions who have fairer skin are called "cambas" and anyone else with darker skin is called "colla." Unfortunately, because of the class/racial tension in Bolivia, these last two terms are used derogatorily more often than not. However, all of these terms are used in regular conversation and you shouldn't be offended when hearing them, but should always be aware of the context in which they are used.

Sexuality

Sexual orientation or preference is not a topic that is openly discussed in Bolivia. However, there is a large and an active LGBT community that organizes events on a regular basis. 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 in Bolivia. Please do your best to take this into consideration when discussing such issues with your host family or other members of the community.

Gender

If you are a woman, expect to get a lot of unwanted attention. Men will whistle and talk to you in the street. Do not be surprised if men often try to start conversations with you on the street, on the bus, waiting in line, or shopping. Use your common sense. The best thing to do is to ignore them. Do not give out your phone number to people you don't know. You can explain that you are living in someone else's house and are not allowed to receive calls or visitors.

Note on Harassment

We would like to affirm that those who are harassed should not have to feel the responsibility to protect themselves against any type of harassment and that it is not considered their fault or responsibility to avoid it. It is important to note, especially when interacting across and between cultures, that facing harassment of any kind can be confusing. As such, site teams are well-suited to orient you to area norms (including safety precautions and local ways of being), offer a variety of responses (to harassment or other concerns), and are there to support you throughout your experience. Their suggestions come from a long-informed understanding of cross-cultural engagement and local information.

Language Guide

Practice

Speaking a language is the best way to learn, so don't be afraid to practice your Spanish with as many people as possible. Your best resource in learning the local language will be your host family and co-workers at your host organization. Depending on your language ability, this may be extremely frustrating at times. Relax and remember that the key to learning (or improving your skills in) a language is the ability to laugh at yourself.

Dictionaries and Phrase Books

These can be expensive and difficult to find once you are in-country, so you might want to purchase one before you leave. Oxford and Collins produce good pocket dictionaries.

On-line:

www.google.com.bo is the Bolivia edition of Google.

The following websites also have good language assistance resources:

- o Spanish: <http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/guides/spanish.html> and <http://wordreference.com>
- o Quechua: <http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/guides/quechua.html>
- o Duolingo: <https://www.duolingo.com/>

Tutoring

If you are interested in tutoring upon arrival, let your Site Team know. They will help you set up sessions with a tutor, at your own expense. Sessions usually cost US \$7/hour.

Local Language Variations

Bolivians generally speak Spanish slowly and clearly when compared to other South American Spanish speaking countries. However, their vocabulary may be different from other countries. Upon arrival, the FSD site team will provide you with common slang, important phrases, and the most drastic vocabulary changes that a student might encounter.

Some Bolivians, especially in rural regions, tend to pronounce the sound 'rr' as 'ja'. For example Roberto would be pronounced 'jo-berto' or perro would be pronounced 'pejo'. In addition, the word vos is used in place of tu; however in Bolivia they don't conjugate the verb into the vos form as they do in most South American countries. An example is the following, "¿Cómo estás vos?" or "¿Y vos, qué tienes?" Quechua is also a dominant language in the Cochabamba region. In the city, Spanish or castellano is the overriding language, but most people understand and/or can communicate in Quechua as well. When walking in the streets it is normal to hear as much Quechua spoken as Spanish. However, when in the rural areas, Quechua is the principal language; most native Quechua speakers either speak fluently or have a basic understanding of Spanish, so it usually isn't that big of a problem. Quechua sounds nothing like Spanish, nor does it have a similar grammatical structure, so those interested in taking Quechua courses are encouraged to do so. The FSD site team can assist you in finding a class.

Language at Work

Familiarize yourself with the vocabulary you'll need at work. Bringing a dictionary with you is vital, but a specific list that addresses terms specific to your organization (health, microfinance, education, etc.) can help a lot. To review vocabulary, you can Google the relevant words in Spanish (salud, microfinanzas, educación, desarrollo sostenible, etc.). To address adults in general, use the prefix Don or Doña (Sr. and Sra. are not used as prefixes here).

Film Guide

*Filmmaking is not a significant industry in Bolivia and most of the movies in theaters come from Hollywood – major Bolivian films make appearances a few times a year, at best. Because of this, it's hard to come across Bolivian cinema internationally, although this may change with the success of *¿Quién mató a la llamita blanca?* and *American Visa*.*

¿Quién mato a la llamita blanca? (2006) – The *llamita blanca* “destroys the stereotypical image of the abused, victimized, desolate Latin American, irreverently presenting the first ever story with black humor and indigenous superheroes.” So states the official website’s synopsis of this utterly unique and highly entertaining movie, which is invaluable for learning about Bolivia’s internal dynamic as well as its relationship with the United States. The movie is Bolivia laughing at itself, mocking public figures and stereotypes, and a satire of the U.S. role in the drug war. Since the story is based on a road trip, you’ll also see shots from many of Bolivia’s important regions and cities, including Cochabamba.

Bolivia (2001) – In fact, this movie doesn’t take place in Bolivia, but rather follows Bolivian illegal immigrants in Argentina. The story tracks the loneliness of living apart from one’s family and the difficulties of dealing with immigration officials. In this film, a Bolivian immigrant working illegally as a cook in a small restaurant in Buenos Aires suffers abuse and discrimination from its customers.

Los Hermanos Cartagena (1984) – The film portrays the 1952 revolution and the 1980 coup in Bolivia through the lives of two brothers, Juan Jose and Martin. Juan Jose, the legitimate son of Luis, is transformed, by his experiences as a youth in the 1950s, to become a boss of ones of the groups of paramilitaries during the 1980 coup. Martin, the illegitimate son of Luis and an indigenous peasant, becomes a trade union leader during that period. The film details the process by which the brothers’ divergent childhood situation drives them towards the definitive clash.

Tambien La Lluvia (2011) – This film, shot on the streets of Cochabamba throughout 2009-2010 and starring Gael Garcia Bernal, helps to provide context to Cochabamba’s Water War in 2000, in which a local citizen’s movement served to demand the expulsion of a foreign and US owned water company, Betchel Enterprises. Although the film is not historically accurate, it was filmed on the streets of Cochabamba, and does provide a picture of the atmosphere during this historic moment in the city’s recent history

En Busca del Paraiso (2010) – This film tracks the lives of Felicity, an illegal immigrant working in Spain, and her brother who moves to Santa Cruze with the plan to reunite with her sister in Spain. After many mishaps and setbacks, while navigating through the shift from the pueblo to the big city, he falls in love. Meanwhile in Spain, Felicida shares a house with a group of Bolivian girls, each searching for success in their lives in a foreign country.

Zona Sur (2009) – In La Paz – as opposed to many other cities – the rich live below, which is the Southern District. Life goes on without major mishaps in a large house surrounded by a beautiful garden. It is a wonderful world, a great bubble of comfort, where different personal spheres coexist: the mother, along with her three children and the Aymara inhabitants of the house. The drama surfaces slowly, without narrative ploys, observing day-to-day activities until internal and external forces make the bubble burst. The film relates the story of the final days of an upper-class family, at a time when the country is undergoing social changes.

American Visa (2005) – An award-winning movie about a Bolivian professor’s unsuccessful quest for an American visa and the chain of events this provokes. After being denied an American visa, a Bolivian professor becomes involved in a web of criminal activities, holds-up the American consulate and falls for a beautiful prostitute from the Bolivian lowlands.

El día que murió el silencio (1998) – Handsome entrepreneur Abelardo Rios Clarios arrives in the sleepy little town of Villaserena, rigs up speakers throughout the village, and begins broadcasting “Radio Nobleza”. For a small sum of money, they can now buy the opportunity to express publicly what they couldn’t say before. Villaserena’s closets are quickly emptied of their skeletons, old quarrels are revived and secrets are no longer. Abelardo soon discovers the beautiful Celeste, a beautiful young woman virtually imprisoned behind the walls of her father’s house, and romance ensues.

La nación clandestina (1989) – In this Bolivian story, a man remembers his life while on a journey which will help him expiate his sins and which will result in his death. The focus is on a man who has betrayed everyone he knows. He is planning to perform an ancient ritual dance, which will end with his life being taken. He journeys from where he was living back to the village where most of the people he wronged still live. As he journeys, carrying his dance costume, his story is told in flashbacks. Once he gets there, he gets involved in the affairs of the villagers once more.

Reading Guide

My Mother's Bolivian Kitchen: Recipes and Recollections

Jose Sanchez-H

Written by a Cochabambino living in the United States, this cookbook-cum-memoir will help to prepare you for the culinary delights you can expect to find on your plate at your host family's home. Recipes are provided in English and in Spanish, and can be a fun and helpful way to jump start conversation and interaction with your host family.

The Price of Fire: Resource Wars & Social Movements in Bolivia *Benjamin Dangl*

This book gives a blow-by-blow account of recent social movements and their battles to fight neo-liberal economic policies; it analyzes what has caused these battles, while also contextualizing them regionally and historically. From the first moments of Spanish colonization to today's headlines, it traces the story of a small nation whose natural resources helped fund the rise of capitalism and that has spent the subsequent four centuries suffering the consequences.

Impasse in Bolivia: Neoliberal Hegemony and Popular Resistance *Benjamin Farthing and Linda C. Kohl*

This book explores the tensions between markets, democracy, neo-liberalism, state restructuring and citizenship. In this regard, the balance of citizen rights has been shifted away from providing citizens with social rights to privileging the property rights of private, mostly transnational, firms. Impasse Bolivia throws light on the reasons and processes behind the rising opposition in country after country in Latin America to the currently fashionable, internationally prescribed economic development strategy of neo-liberalism.

Dignity and Defiance: Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization *edited by Jim Shultz and Melissa Crane Draper*

Published in 2009 by the Democracy Center in Cochabamba, this book provides a good summary of recent social and political movements in Bolivia.

Marching Powder *Rusty Young*

A fictional account of the author's experience in a Bolivian Prison. This book gives the reader a better idea of the penitentiary and judicial system in Bolivia, one very different from that of the United States.

Coca, Cocaine, and the Bolivian Reality, *Madeline Barbara Leons (Editor), Harry Sanabria (Editor)*

This series of essays explores coca trade, and its effect on agriculture and society. Coca takes its place within the historical context of a country that has relied on products for export for economic survival, and the exploitation that has accompanied this economic status.

Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society *Herbert Klein*

This detailed history of Bolivia spans the centuries from conquest and colonization to the modern day. This historical resource seeks to shed light on the economic, social, political, and cultural evolution of Bolivia, and is key to understanding current events such as the illegal economy that sparked the U.S.'s coca eradication program, and other issues of modern significance.

Fire from the Andes: Short Fiction, by Women from Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru *edited by Susan E. Benner, Kathy S. Leonard*

This anthology provides an opportunity for English-speaking audiences to read previously untranslated fiction by women from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Much of this work is inspired by an awareness of social injustice —particularly for women, indigenous groups, and other marginalized members of society and by a desire to transcend that injustice through personal revelation. Most of the stories focus on women's inner lives and their struggles to make sense of experience

Llamas, Weavings, and Organic Chocolate: Multicultural Grassroots Development in the Andes and the Amazon of Bolivia *Kevin Healy*

An excellent introduction to the world of grassroots development projects in Bolivia. Each chapter describes a different development project in various fields and various parts of Bolivia.

The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara *Ernesto Che Guevara, Mary-Alice Waters (editor), Michael Taber (translator)*

This book holds the journal entries of the beloved leftist guerilla Che Guevara. When killed in Bolivia, his journal was found and entries were later compiled into this edition.

Website Guide

Andean Information Network

www.ain-bolivia.org

The Andean Information Network is an NGO that currently focuses on examining the effects of the U.S. and international War on Drugs. AIN's overarching goals are to change the U.S. anti-drug policy in the Andean region by seeking to replace them with policies that address the underlying economic, social, political, and cultural needs of the region. Their website offers articles that do in-depth analyses of current Bolivian social and political issues.

Los Tiempos

www.lostiempos.com

Local Cochabamba online newspaper

Opinion

www.opinion.com.bo

National Bolivian newspaper

bolpress

www.bolpress.com

Bolivian current events and news analysis

Upside Down World

www.upsidedownworld.com

An English written alternative news and a more leftist resource that offers articles on Latin American current events and News Analysis

The Democracy Center

www.democracyctr.org

The Democracy Center is an NGO who's mission is "to work globally to advance human rights through a unique combination of investigation and reporting, training citizens in the art of public advocacy, and organizing international citizen campaigns." The Democracy Center has an office in Cochabamba and their director, Jim Shultz, offers a blog that intelligently critiques the current ongoing events in Cochabamba, as well as in Bolivia.