

# Social Impact Immersion (Eight Weeks)

## Program Overview

Through participation in innovative rural development work within a challenging cultural, language learning and grassroots environment, Social Entrepreneur Corps ensures that participants will:

- Gain insights into the opportunities, inherent risks and limitations involved in third world development
- Have ample opportunities to significantly increase language proficiency
- Observe, learn and live in a diversity of cultural settings
- Experience home stay living with local families
- Have the opportunity to visit an array of development and relief organizations
- Be offered the opportunity to make a significant contribution in a highly structure manner working side by side with field based social entrepreneurs

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

## Social Entrepreneurship

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

## Culture

- Will have gained an understanding of the challenges confronting the rural population specifically
- Will feel comfortable interacting with the local population on a general, family and individual level
- Will have gained an understanding of the cultural and professional "do's" and "don'ts" of living and working in a rural development environment such as Guatemala, Ecuador and Nicaragua
- Will understand how the rural population lives, works and what they aspire to achieve

## Spanish Language

- Will have significantly improved their conversational Spanish capabilities
- Will have gained an understanding of the nuance of language in developing country environments



## Structural Summary

The eight week program is divided into six segments: pre-arrival, orientation and foundation building, initial field work, reflection and analysis, follow-on field work and conclusion, delivery and presentation. Below we have summarized the program sequence.

### Pre-Arrival

Pre-arrival, participants are provided with all itineraries, orientation, safety and project specific information. As well, per the "Virtual NGO Team Breakdown," participants are divided into groups of up to nine participants based on language capabilities, area of study, age, school and interests. These groups work as short term "Virtual NGOs" (VNGO). Each VNGO is tasked with assigned and optional projects and as well as \$400 in funding to invest in projects that they learn about and deem compelling as they travel to and work in different parts of the country.

### Orientation and Foundation Building

Upon arrival in country, all participants spend the first segment (two weeks) of their time in the headquarters site participating in orientation sessions, living with homestay families, studying Spanish intensively, participating in development discussions, visiting nearby development and relief organizations and participating in project content and technical training. The focus of this first orientation and foundation building segment is to provide participants with the necessary knowledge and skills for the field work segment and to begin outlining and working on pre-designated projects. This "ramp up" segment is essential to ensure that participants can work as effectively as possible with our development professionals and constituents in the field. Upon completing this two week course, Social Entrepreneur Corps interns are deemed "Consultores Comunitarios" (Community Consultants/CCs) and work both individually and in groups within their VNGOs in distinct regions of the country. CCs work under the guidance and leadership of experienced Social Entrepreneur Corps expatriate and local field personnel to effectuate positive change on specific projects for pre-determined clients in order to be able to complete designed activities and present specific deliverables.

### Initial Field Work

Upon conclusion of the first segment in the headquarters site, each VNGO travels to different satellite work sites, staying with additional homestay families, in group living settings and/or in hotels. Each group visits up to two distinct satellite work sites during the first segment of field work (approximately two weeks). The idea is that working in smaller groups is more productive and that each VNGO should have the opportunity to experience the different cultures and development focuses within different regions. As well, as each participant brings different skills and perspectives, this strategy ensures that our constituents in the field can take advantage of working with as many different individuals as possible. At all times each VNGO is accompanied by two local development professionals whose role it is to facilitate success in the field. VNGOs work with Peace Corps Volunteers, local community service organizations, local businesses and local Social Entrepreneur Corps entrepreneurs. All activities and logistics are structured with anticipation.

### Reflection and Analysis

At the conclusion of this first segment of field work all participants return to the headquarters site for approximately five days to decompress, revisit their homestay families, take additional Spanish classes, share best practices, problem solve and work on projects.

### Follow-Up Field Work

Subsequent to the reflection and analysis period, VNGOs return to the field and visit two additional satellite sites for approximately two weeks working in the same manner as during the first segment of field work.

### Conclusion, Delivery and Presentation

Finally, all participants return to the headquarters site for the final days of the program. At this time projects are completed and presented, Spanish evaluations are conducted and participants stay with their homestay families one last time. VNGO recommendations are presented and funding decisions and allocations are made.

