

IMPACT GLOBAL HEALTH ALLIANCE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



Expedition Guatemala: Service-Learning & Cultural Exploration

Expedition Overview

- Dates:** Traveling to Guatemala year-round is easy to do. We can work with you to set travel dates that work well for both you and our partners abroad.
- Location:** Impact Global Health Alliance's rural project communities in the Department of Huehuetenango in the mountains of Guatemala's northwest region. The team will stay in the community of Calhuitz, San Sebastian Coatán, Huehuetenango.
- Goals:** Through this trip, we will seek to:
- Participate in mutually beneficial educational exchange with local health workers by visiting health facilities, training staff, providing medical and clerical support, accompanying workers on home visits, and learning about local health issues and initiatives.
 - Improve and maintain local birthing centers by providing construction labor.
 - Experience Guatemalan culture and learn about its history, health issues, socio-economic and political issues.

Impact Global Health Alliance

Founded in 1983 at Lake Junaluska by a Methodist Missionary, Impact Global Health Alliance has worked to save the lives of women and children in forgotten communities. We have reached over 1.6 million people in the most rural parts of Latin America and Africa across 37 years and seven countries. Nearly 5.9 million children will not see their fifth birthday due to preventable and treatable illnesses like pneumonia and diarrhea. We all know that good health directly affects education, income and family and community wellbeing, so Impact Global Health Alliance uses evidence-based solutions to bring about sustainable changes to the healthcare system in the communities with whom we partner.

Service, Learning and Cultural Exploration

Service: Volunteers will conduct community outreach with local health workers. Outreach may include visits to homes and schools as well as assisting during community events. Work can include distributing vitamins/medicine, weighing, and measuring children, performing hand-washing demonstrations. Volunteers will support a local birthing center by providing labor to assist with the construction, maintenance, and improvement of buildings as well as assist with the creation and upkeep of community gardens.



Learning: By interacting with local health workers, receiving informational presentations, touring health facilities, and participating in home visits, volunteers will have the opportunity to take part in a real community-based, rural healthcare program in a developing country. They will learn (from the workers themselves) about local health problems and initiatives, as well as the various cultural, religious, governmental, and socio-economic factors which affect health care in Guatemala's rural Mayan communities.

Culture: In the project area, volunteers will have the unparalleled experience of being immersed in a unique mixture of ancient Mayan and rural Guatemalan cultures. We will be working in an isolated mountain settlement where the view is breathtaking. Many of the local women speak only Mayan dialects and still dress in traditional clothing. The trip will also include time for additional cultural activities, such as visiting the local weekly market in San José, exploring Lake Atitlan, and shopping in Artisan markets.

[The Impact Global Health Alliance Experience in Guatemala](#)

Support: All food, lodging, transportation, and activities will be coordinated in advance by Impact Global Health Alliance. A facilitator will travel with the team to interpret, coordinate logistics, and provide support as needed. Teams also receive extensive orientation materials such as travel guidelines, packing lists, cultural and safety orientation, and area information to help prepare for the trip.

Safety: Impact Global Health Alliance and all our partners consistently make safety the highest priority for volunteers. The primary way we ensure safety is through partnership with local organizations. Through these established partnerships, our Guatemalan friends know where to go, when to go, and how to get there and keep us safe. In addition, group facilitators have extensive international travel experience along with a familiarity of Guatemala. Extensive risk management practices are in place in coordination with the local US Embassy, the Peace Corps in Guatemala, Emergency Evacuation companies in Guatemala, and Travel Insurance from the US.

Lodging: In the project area, volunteers will have simple, secure, dorm-style accommodations with modern yet rustic toilets and showers. During travel and sight-seeing days, reservations will be made in clean, modest, reputable hotels.

Food: Local cooks will be hired to prepare three meals a day, ensuring that food will be safe and plentiful. Abundant purified water will be always provided. All efforts are made to accommodate food allergies and vegetarian preferences. While travelling through Guatemala, meals will be taken at reliable and safe restaurants.

Schedule: While onsite, volunteers generally work for 3-4 hours in the morning, take a leisurely lunch break for 1-2 hours, and work for 1-2 hours in the afternoon. Evenings offer time to relax, reflect, and interact with neighbors. We plan all our expeditions with the goal of balancing service to the community with time for cultural exploration and exchange. Cultural nights occur in the community as we explore various topics from the mouths of local community members, including the 36-year civil conflict, health care in rural Guatemala, the education system, and Guatemalan customs

[Tentative Itinerary](#)

Tentative Itinerary (10 days/9 nights) Please note that this is an example itinerary.



- Day 1 Fly from U.S. to Guatemala City
Airport pick-up and travel to San Juan la Laguna; lunch en route
Stay overnight at Hotel Uxlabil in San Juan, dinner at hotel
- Day 2 Breakfast at hotel
Tour of San Juan, including visits to local co-ops
Dinner at hotel
- Day 3 Breakfast at hotel
Travel to project site (~10 - 12hr drive)
Stop in Huehuetenango for lunch
Dinner at project site
- Day 4-7 Workdays in Calhuitz
May include Clinic visits, home visits, height and weight checks, immunization clinics, visiting local schools, participating in women's groups, construction and painting projects.
Friday morning visit to local market.
- Day 8 Breakfast at project site
Travel to Antigua (~12hr drive), with stops for lunch and visit to Zaculeu Mayan Ruins
Dinner in Antigua
- Day 9 Tour of Antigua in morning + free time in afternoon
- Day 10 Breakfast at hotel or airport
Flight home

Cost Estimates - \$3,000

Volunteers pay a flat-rate fee which covers all in-country travel costs including flights, meals, lodging, transportation, and activities, plus translations services and accompaniment by an Impact Global Health Alliance Facilitator, travel insurance, and support before and after the expedition. Please note that exact costs depend on food and gas prices at the time of trip, team size, and tourist activities.

Per-person travel costs, include the following:

- Flights
- Lodging
- Three meals per day, snacks, and water
- Private Transportation
- Cultural/Sightseeing activities
- Curamericas Global Trip Leader
- Translator
- Miscellaneous Costs
 - Donation to the project site
 - Tips for hotel staff/driver
 - International travel insurance



Additional Costs

\$0.00 - \$150.00 Travel Vaccinations and medications (depending on medical history and medical insurance).

\$100 Spending money

Thank you for your interest in working with Impact Global Health Alliance.

We look forward to working with you to plan this exciting and worthwhile experience. For any questions or more information, feel free to contact Lisa Hoskins at lhoskins@curamericas.org or 919-649-2851.

