



Manna Project International
Communities Serving Communities

MPI Campus Ambassador Program





Manna Project International
Communities Serving Communities

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. What is a Campus Ambassador?
- II. What do Campus Ambassadors do?
- III. What are the Benefits?
- IV. About Manna Project
- V. History
- VI. Vision
- VII. Approach and Objectives
- VIII. Where we Work
- IX. Current Programs
- X. Contact Information

I. What Is A MPI Campus Ambassador?

Campus ambassadors are college students who have previously volunteered with Manna Project International as summer interns or spring break participants. As a campus ambassador, you will work closely with MPI staff to spread the word about MPI on your campus. The main objective of the position is to help recruit potential volunteers for our spring break, summer intern, and program director positions at our sites in Nicaragua and Ecuador. You know your campus better than anyone, so you will be able to help connect MPI with groups of student who may not have heard of us or know how volunteering with MPI can help prepare them for their future careers. The campus ambassador opportunity is open to undergraduate and graduate students on any college campus across the U.S.

II. What Do Campus Ambassadors Do?

Campus ambassadors promote MPI through a variety of forms of student outreach. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Distributing flyers before upcoming application deadlines
- Communicating with your career center/key departments
- Setting up information tables at special events or your campus' student center
- Participating in MPI directed social media campaigns
- Contributing to MPI's blog
- Submitting a story about your MPI experience to your campus newspaper
- Participating in career/volunteer fairs at your school on behalf of MPI

Campus ambassadors must engage in a minimum of three outreach efforts per semester (approx. 15 hours) and participate in the program for at least two semesters. Although most campus ambassadors will likely only have personal experience at one of our two sites, you will be responsible for recruiting for both.

Upon being accepted for the campus ambassador position, you will participate in an initial training session with MPI's recruitment coordinator. Following this, you will have regular check-ins with our recruitment coordinator to discuss progress and new ideas for connecting with students on your campus. MPI will also regularly provide updated materials and information for you to use in your outreach.

III. What Are The Benefits?

While this position is unpaid, campus ambassadors have the chance to take on an important leadership role with MPI and gain resume-building experience. You will also be connected to the growing MPI alumni network that consists of over 230 former program directors and over 1,800 former volunteers. Upon completing the two semester minimum time commitment, campus ambassadors can also receive a letter of recommendation from MPI.

IV. About Manna Project

As an MPI campus ambassador, it is important for you to have a solid understanding of MPI as an organization, our history, and the programs we offer. This will allow you to provide better information to interested students on your campus when promoting MPI.

Manna Project International (MPI) connects college students, recent graduates and young professionals with international opportunities where they can apply their passions, experience, and education. Our mission is to foster communities of talented young leaders to become the next generation of social change agents by engaging in collaborative, on-the-ground service with international communities in need. MPI's model is a collaborative community-based approach to development and is founded on three organizational pillars:

- **Holistic Approach:** MPI's holistic approach to development recognizes that the challenges faced by the communities we serve are multifaceted and must therefore be addressed through a variety of disciplines.
- **Community Focus:** By focusing on a specific community, we are able to effectively pursue holistic development through the vital foundation of building relationships and trust with community members.
- **Leadership Development:** Investing in the personal and professional development of MPI's Program Directors is a core element of our organizational structure. Program Directors on the ground are supported and trained while simultaneously receiving a large amount of responsibility and autonomy, providing them with the opportunity to learn through both firsthand experience and the mentorship of established development professionals.



MPI builds community to serve communities through a wide range of initiatives. We take a grassroots approach to development, assessing a community's needs through relationships, community feedback, and data collection before responding with targeted, specific actions designed to effectively meet established needs. By working hand-in-hand with locals and other international organizations, we are able to raise awareness of community needs and attract student and graduate volunteers seeking to pursue a specific call to service. Our volunteers receive first-hand exposure to the global issues that match their interests and further individual career paths.

The luxuries of growing up in a country of high standards of peace, justice, liberty, and prosperity inhibits some Americans from realizing the uniqueness of their lifestyle. Although many college students across the country are informed of the social realities of foreign countries, most have not had the opportunity to leave the confines of national borders to experience life in another culture. International opportunities bring students in contact with global issues, allowing them to identify with foreign cultures and gain perspective into their own lives. MPI participants broaden their horizons through first-hand contact with a foreign culture and gain valuable work experience by leading community development programs in areas of their education and career interests.

V. History

Manna Project International was started by a group of four Vanderbilt University students who wanted to harness the creative energy of college students and recent graduates to work with populations in need. As interest grew, they established an on-campus service organization to bring the university campus into greater contact with the local immigrant community, and to provide international service opportunities for students.

After visiting Nicaragua several times and making connections with others on the ground, the four friends established Manna Project International as an IRS-recognized nonprofit organization, and began recruiting other college graduates to commit to working in Managua for one year. In September 2004, MPI's first group of eleven recent graduates arrived in Managua. The experiences and friendships from that first year of service forever changed their perspectives and outlooks on life. As the year drew to a close, students from the next class of graduating seniors arrived to transition into the community and the Program Director position was born. While the faces have changed, MPI's Nicaragua site now reaches more than 2,750 people through 13 programs and two health clinics, serving the communities of Cedro Galán, Chiquilistagua and Villa Guadalupe.

In September 2007, Manna Project's second international site was launched in Ecuador, one hour outside the capital of Quito. MPI Ecuador started as an after-school program for over 30 children in the small, high-needs community of San Francisco, and was operated in partnership with another non-profit. The first Ecuador group worked closely with a local financial cooperative to better understand the circumstances and prevalent needs in the community and its surrounding areas. After a year of research and relationship building, MPI leadership made plans to open a community center and library in nearby Rumiloma. In March 2009, the center opened. Today it is a vibrant gathering place and serves more than 1,700 community members through 12 programs and many local partnerships.

In January 2010, a feasibility team identified Chaquijyá, Guatemala as the next community with needs fitting MPI's service model. During MPI's first year in Guatemala's, a team of six Program Directors taught 230 students in two primary schools, implemented a health program for 500 elementary school children, and initiated a bottle school project using recycled bottles filled with trash as building materials. This project brought the community together, taught environmental stewardship and provided additional classroom space. The founding team partnered with 20 hard-working teachers, half a dozen local institutions, as well as several other Latin American organizations in order to conceive and implement these programs. In its third year, MPI Guatemala completed construction on the bottle school project, which doubled the capacity of one of a local primary school. In 2013, MPI ended its work in Chaquijyá due to low volunteer demand for programs in Guatemala. Though MPI is not currently operating in Guatemala, strong community relationships remain.

VI. Vision

MPI seeks college students and recent college graduates to design and implement development programs in our partner communities in Latin America. Domestically, MPI serves through college Campus Chapters, University Partners and Alumni. These stateside participants complement MPI's international initiatives by raising awareness and support while working toward similar goals in their local communities. Internationally, MPI offers three types of opportunities.

- **Program Directors** serve for **five, seven, or thirteen** months and are responsible for the long-term growth and sustainability of the organization and its programs.
- **Summer Interns** work under the guidance of Program Directors at each site for four or eight-week terms, helping run daily programs while developing new initiatives.
- **Spring Break Groups** of six to twelve students spend one week at one of MPI's international sites, completing a project of their choice.

MPI directs its efforts towards communities in need: communities with inadequate access to basic educational, medical, and livelihood resources. MPI aims for a holistic approach to community development, working with people of all ages in various aspects of their lives. This broad approach enables our volunteers, who come to MPI with diverse career paths and skills, to work together and provide each target community with the resources to serve its specific needs. Not sure what it means to take a holistic approach? Here's an example. If a community's healthcare needs are not being met, a linear approach would be to build a health clinic. A holistic approach might involve:

- Community-wide preventative health education
- Nutrition classes and lessons in healthy cooking
- Access to medical check ups and procedures
- Recreational activities that increase physical and mental health

VII. Approach & Objectives

MPI aims for a holistic approach to community development, with an emphasis on personal relationships. Recognizing that aspects of development are interrelated, MPI operates a variety of types of programs and projects, working with people of all ages in various aspects of their lives. MPI focuses its efforts on a defined geographical community, encouraging its volunteers to become a part of this local community. This broad approach enables those with diverse passions and skills to work together towards addressing the specific challenges and assets of the targeted community.

VIII. Where We Work

Nicaragua

In the heart of Central America lies a beautiful land of untouched rainforests, pristine crater lakes and rugged volcanoes. Nicaragua is a country of contrasts, known throughout the region for its diverse cultural history, vibrant art, and grand literature. Visitors find themselves welcomed by a passionate people living at their own pace, where age-old traditions combine with deep faith for a strong, authentic character.

Nicaragua's vast potential springs from a past as varied and dramatic as its landscape. A long history of political turmoil, violence and natural disasters has slowed development. Furthermore, the social constructs the Nicaraguan people have inherited present them with many additional challenges. The country is now the second poorest in the Western Hemisphere, with 76% of the population living on less than \$2.00 a day. This environment is an opportunity for successful and sustainable development through long-term, holistic service.

MPI Nicaragua works in three different communities: Cedro Galán, Chiquilistagua, and Villa Guadalupe. Cedro Galán and Chiquilistagua are neighboring, semi-rural communities where MPI has had a presence for over ten years. Families live in open-air homes with dirt floors, and imported cars share the road with ox-drawn carts. These communities, located on the outskirts of Nicaragua's capital city, Managua, have extremely limited access to even the most basic services. Opportunities for advancement are rare. While few ever leave, families are strong and committed to finding a better future for their children and grandchildren.

For many years, Manna Project served families living in La Chureca, Central America's largest municipal trash dump. Incredibly, the dump was home to more than 1,000 people who survived by sorting and selling trash. When the Nicaraguan government closed the dump and relocated these families to Villa Guadalupe, along with 3,700 people who were left homeless by flooding in 2010, we moved with them. The community faces unemployment, constant food insecurity and malnutrition. In the absence of outside resources, motivated leaders are emerging, and neighbors give what they can to support one another.

Ecuador

Located in the northwest corner of South America, Ecuador is one of the region's richest and poorest countries: overflowing with natural resources, but struggling with a poverty rate of over 23%. The poverty rate has decreased over the past few years with better regulations and more job opportunities. Its capital, Quito, lies in between the two ridges of the Andes Mountains. The mountain ridges divide Ecuador into four distinct areas, the Pacific coastal plains flanking the highlands on one side, the Andes region in the middle of the ranges, and the Amazon jungle spreading eastward towards Brazil on the other. Roughly 600 km to the west, you find the Galapagos Islands, the fourth region of Ecuador. Such geographic diversity does not imply size: tiny Ecuador is only the size of Colorado. The Andes region where MPI works is a mix of Spanish, indigenous, and American influence, with an increasing number of immigrants from Ecuador's coast, Colombia and Cuba adding to the mix.

MPI Ecuador serves the Chillos Valley, specifically the adjacent communities of Rumiloma, Tena, San Francisco, Fajardo and Santa Isabel. The Manna Community Center and Library are located in Rumiloma, a formerly rural agricultural community that is being beginning to be influenced by developing urban areas nearby. The community is a mix of small family farms and local businesses, with suburban housing developments rapidly cropping up. As development advances nearby, these small neighborhoods are being overlooked and are the last to receive basic education, sanitation and utility coverage. This area is a perfect example of the overwhelming income disparity in Ecuador.

IX. Current Programs

Ecuador:

Community Center & Library:

MPI Ecuador runs a public lending library in Rumiloma, which doubles as our community center where the majority of our programs are run. The library has a full range of books for children, teens, and adults, as well as a reference section. Community members are invited to check out books and read them in the comfort of their own homes. The library opened in 2009, and continues to grow through grants and other book donations. Recently we have added reading incentive programs for kids who come to the library and a reading hour on the weekends for parents to bring their small children to. In the future, we hope to add an adult reading club.

Teen Center:

The Teen Center is a special space within the library, where only kids who are 12 years of age or older are allowed to enter. The exclusivity of the space makes it more enticing for teens, and younger kids are eager for the day they can pass the threshold. Within the space, teens have access to video games, ping-pong, board games, speakers, guitars, and a comfy reading space. They also get to hang out with one another and have access to the Program Director's guidance and knowledge. The Teen Center is a safe space for teens, providing them with healthy forms of entertainment away from alcohol and drugs. In addition to the daily resources available in the Teen Center, we also hold monthly movie nights and regular field trips for the teens.

Adult English:

We currently have five levels of English classes for adults. Classes are taught in the Manna library for three hours on Saturday mornings, with an additional one hour club on Wednesday nights. We also host Adult English parties at the center or at our house in Sangolqui twice every quarter, after the midterm and final exams to get to know our students better.

Children's English:

We offer four levels of Children's English: basic, intermediate 1, intermediate 2, and advanced. PDs teach Children's English twice weekly in the library, for an hour and a half each class. There

is an additional English Club on Saturdays for kids to come and do fun activities to reinforce what they learned during the week.

Program Directors also host weekly English Clubs at local public schools in the Chaupitena and Fajardo neighborhoods. By offering the club format, Program Directors are able to teach English through fun, dynamic activities and the students learn more about MPI's other program offerings.

Children's Art & Adult Drawing:

Children's Art is held on Friday's from four to five pm during Library hours. Past semester topics have focused on art in South American countries. The current semester is covering famous artists and their styles. There are occasionally art projects set up during Library hours for everyone to participate in to offer something different for the regulars.

A local community member recently began a once a week Adult Drawing Class for older teens to adults. He is a trained artist who taught at the university in Cuba. This class is held on Wednesdays from 4:30 pm to 5:30 PM (before Adult English Club).

Exercise:

Two days a week, Program Directors lead different exercise classes for adults in the community. The classes, based off of Program Directors' experience and passions, often include Yoga and "bailoterapia" or dance therapy. In June 2012, Program Directors organized MPI Ecuador's first annual 5k race in Rumiloma, which has continued annually.

Children's Healthy Living Class (Health & Nutrition):

Program Directors teach a weekly healthy living class to children who come to the Centro. The class begins with a topic about preventative health such as good hand washing skills, oral hygiene, etc. and then the children are introduced to a healthy recipe that they prepare and eat together. This is one of the Centro participants' favorite classes - they get a snack!

Adult Cooking & Nutrition:

The Adult Cooking & Nutrition class is held weekly on Saturdays in our Centro kitchen space. Class begins with a discussion on preventative health measures through healthy eating habits. Each week's discussion is designed to address common health issues and nutrition problems in Ecuador. After the discussion, the class prepares a healthy recipe, made with ingredients that are affordable and readily available in the area. Participants get to eat the food they prepare, and take the recipe home to use with their family. The last Saturday of every month we ask the Ecuadorians to share a recipe with us and learn their cooking techniques.

Preventative Health Program (PHP):

The Centro has a lot of written information related to preventative health topics available to people who visit the space. This information includes topics such as how to improve their health, how to care for themselves when suffering from certain diseases, and what other health resources are available locally. Program Directors obtain information from the Ministry of Health and other organizations providing healthcare nearby. The PHP acts as a bridge between health resources and the community with which we work.

Program Directors collaborate with a local public hospital and their Diabetes Club to offer weekly sessions that cover healthy recipes and exercise routines. Program Directors meet off-site with the participants at a country club donated by the Ministry of Sports. Participants learn exercise techniques, share a healthy recipe and talk about different strategies to manage their diabetes.

Business Development / E-Gap:

E-Gap stands for Education Global Access Program and is a non-profit with which MPI partners to offer no cost training to local community members focused on entrepreneurship and job skills. Computer skills include word processing, spreadsheets and navigating the Internet, all in the context of creating a mock small business. Students build confidence and learn the soft skills they need to succeed in business such as multi-tasking, communication and presenting. They learn how to market a business, manage an inventory and budget, maintain client relations, and understand the sales process.

Environment & Science Education:

The Environment & Science Education class meets weekly at the Centro with children and youth. Projects and activities focus on recognizing the rich biodiversity of Ecuador and teaching recycling and other techniques to kids to honor the environment.

Nicaragua:

English (Level 1-5):

MPI currently runs five English classes spanning five levels that serve adults, teenagers, and children. All English programs meet at the community center in Cedro Galán. Currently all of the PDs are involved in one or more of the English classes. Holding these classes in the late

afternoons and evenings provides opportunities for individuals to further their education following work or school.

Child Sponsorship:

MPI has developed a child sponsorship program to address undernourishment in children ages 0 to 5 who live outside the city dump in a community called Villa Guadalupe. Working in Villa Guadalupe, MPI seeks out and matches each child with a financial sponsor in the U.S. MPI currently has spots for 50 children (or expectant mothers) in the program that receive milk formula, vitamins, and oatmeal/cereal on a monthly basis at Milk Day. PDs are responsible for visiting families in their homes throughout the month to build trust, maintain relationships, and recognize emergent needs. Other PD responsibilities include writing to sponsors and organizing monthly Milk Day.

Girls' and Boys' Health:

Our health programs target pre-teen and teenage students at the local public schools. We hold classes for both boys and girls on a variety of topics ranging from goal setting to human development sexual health to basic nutrition. The goal of this program is to give students a safe space to talk openly about sensitive issues that affect them on a daily basis. PDs are responsible for developing curriculum, administering classes and working in conjunction with school administration and faculty to further the program.

Lacrosse the Nations:

Lacrosse the Nations (LtN) partnered with Manna to ensure at least one PD would assist in the oversight of its two programs in Nicaragua. At Club Hope in Villa Guadalupe, morning and afternoon lacrosse practices are held 3 times a week for approximately 35 kids aged 10 to 18. At the public school in Chiquilistagua, LtN provides PE classes to grades 2 through 11 twice a week. The LtN/Manna PD is responsible for implementing the curriculum, managing the coaches, building relationships at the school(s), and expanding the program(s).

Public School English:

Our public school English classes target 6th grade students. Starting in 7th grade, students in public school begin receiving English education from local teachers, and both the Chiquilistagua and Pedro Davila Public Schools requested to have MPI Nicaragua provide preliminary English education to students before they enter secondary school in order to ensure they are better prepared to succeed in their secondary English courses. It is of particular use for the students to

begin learning English from native speakers, giving them a solid start in their journey of learning English to improve their lives.

Cedro Clinic:

The Cedro Galan Health Clinic opened in October 2013. The clinic provides affordable primary care to the community for only 20 córdobas (less than \$1.00 USD) for a consultation and medication. Our doctor, Wendy, and nurse, Selma, work for the clinic three days a week. PDs who take part in this program are able to work in the clinic conducting intakes and basic vital signs and accompany the nurse on patient home visits.

Generation:

Generation is a program run in Cedro Galan where youth 14-18 interested in a career in the health professions are able to learn about healthcare, biological and medical topics, and university and career options. PDs who take part in this program are expected to plan and administer lessons for the Generation class and help organize support for students wishing to pursue a health career. Generation students are able to assist in the clinic and participate in community health initiatives in Cedro Galán.

Villa Guadalupe Clinic:

MPI's clinic in Villa Guadalupe, formally known as Clinica Medica Manna Project International, is one of our newest initiatives although we previously operated another clinic in Villa Guadalupe in partnership with a Nicaraguan NGO. The Villa Guadalupe clinic provides primary-care and gynecology services to over 2,000 community members. The clinic operates with permission from the Ministry of Health (MINSa) and is staffed by a local team of practitioners including a health promoter, general doctor, nurse, pharmacist, and gynecologist.

Camp J.A.M.:

This program was started in August 2013 by a group of incoming PDs as a way to offer creative and recreational opportunities to the children of Cedro Galán. Camp activities are changed on a rotational basis based on the letters in JAM: juegos (games), arte (art) and musica (music). When short-term volunteer groups visit, we at times put on larger Camp JAM events, involving many members of the community. In January 2014, the program was expanded to 2 days per week.

English Vocational Training:

The goal of English Vocational Training is to provide training in practical job skills to allow English speakers in the Cedro Galán area to obtain gainful employment in an English language professional field. This program serves as the culmination course for many of our top level English students, as well as for several other English speakers in the community. Under the English Vocational Training umbrella, we currently have one course focused on preparing students for jobs in English language call centers, a field with many available positions at several companies in Managua. This course meets for 2 hours on Wednesday nights, February – July. In the future, we hope to expand English Vocational Training to include courses in the areas of Translation and Hospitality.

Community Health Promotion:

In Nicaragua, many suffer from preventable disease. MPI works to improve health outcomes by training local volunteers to act as health promoters within their community. Through home visits and group activities, our dedicated health promoters equip their peers with the resources needed for healthy lifestyles. In the Spring of 2017, we will be training health promoters on prevention of chronic disease through nutrition and exercise.

X. Contact Information

Sam Church

Executive Director

samantha@mannaproject.org

Dana Hanley

Senior Program Director, Nicaragua

dana.hanley@mannaproject.org



Manna Project International
Communities Serving Communities