



Learn Spanish, assist vital community projects and explore this unspoilt Central American gem

Översikt

Volunteers joining this project live in Esteli, an old Sandinista stronghold 150km north of Managua in the Segovia Mountains, which is surrounded by beautiful valleys and waterfalls. Here volunteers travel to rural communities nearby for project work, where you can immediately immerse yourself in the local culture and learn the language. Volunteers joining this project will be working with children from nursery through initial primary school levels and will be typically working with children from the ages of 4 and upwards concentrating on basic education and literacy. This is an amazing opportunity to volunteer, live and explore this wonderful country in Central America.

Projektet

Please note our education projects in Nicaragua are unique to Global Vision International. All funding of these projects comes directly from Global Vision International and volunteer contributions, included in the programme fee. We receive no other outside source of income, apart from that raised through GVI and volunteer contributions. Suffice to say, without this funding from GVI and the volunteer contributions, the projects simply would not exist.

Working with rural communities around Estelí

In rural Nicaragua, education and literacy levels are depressingly low, despite the 'Year of Literacy' in 1980 when the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) government concentrated on tackling the country's high levels of illiteracy. In the rural communities we aim to help around Estelí, the present day problems with education are economic and affected by a lack of teaching materials and teachers themselves. The large majority of families rely on agriculture and working in the tobacco fields, though due to changeable climate and erratic harvests, poverty levels are extremely high. There is a huge need for help within these communities where the local understaffed schools are sometimes an hour's walk from the children homes. Many lack regular basic medical care and education. Some of the communities have schools but only for children up to the third (of six) primary level; others have secondary schools but no teachers, so many children end up leaving school all together. The general problem facing the rural communities of Estelí is that the level and availability of education is very low.

This education project involves working within a small rural school built by GVI in a community called La Thompson. GVI gives classes from preschool up to grade five with ages ranging from three to fourteen years old. In the afternoon, GVI aims to offer adult literacy classes as well. The goal is to provide a more efficient and helpful learning environment and increase the number of children attending the school within the community. Living conditions in La Thompson are extremely poor, with approximately 160 families living in houses made out of scrap metal, wood, and plastic sheets with no electricity. One of the main sources of income is the nearby tobacco fields where many of the parents and the children themselves end up working for less than four dollars a day.

Tidigare volontärer berättar

"Being in the small school for me was one of the greatest moments of my life, knowing just how far each child has to walk each day just to be there. Their enthusiasm for learning puts some of my country's children to shame – these children literally have nothing though their wish to learn makes my job so much easier. Being able to be part of the community in the afternoon, actually IN the community, giving the adult classes was also an amazing experience, not least because now it was our turn to make the journey the children make each day, only this time, the other way round!

Nicaragua for most people is an unknown, therefore one immediately thinks negatively, though having been there and seen it first hand, being made to feel at home both in Estelí and in the communities, really brings home what is really important in life. I loved every minute and can't wait to return in the future."

Robbie King

"Another day in La Cruz begins as we step of the bus and start the walk through the ram shackle of houses up to the school. Shouts of 'Adios' come from doorways as we pass and the kids run out to join us for the half-hour walk up to the school, it's probably the best way to start a day to be welcomed like this, and everyday in La Cruz starts this way! Once up at the school the chaos begins and it takes a good few minutes to get the pre-school children sat on chairs with pencils in hands ready to start practicing writing the vowels.

Although the 'lapices' and 'cuadernos' are prize possessions for the kids sometimes the excitement of school is just too much and they are less than keen to use them! After a good half an hours writing we can begin the much more favourable activities of colouring, singing, dancing and drawing. Half way through the morning we have a fruit break sometimes accompanied by rice and beans cooked by one of the parents. Then its time to play outside, if it's a Friday we play our version of Nicaragua's most popular sport; Baseball. We play on the gravel track just next to the school and take frequent breaks for the passing rubbish trucks but its one of the highlights of the week! Attendance varies in the school, there are the regulars, and a steadily increasing number of others showing interest but that can't make it every day because they are working on the rubbish dump.

By turning up consistently we're starting to provide structure for the children and they're learning they can rely on coming to school everyday, something they're not very used to. In the afternoons the parents come in for classes and any of the children who want a bit of extra tuition. This is when you really start to feel at the heart of the community and can even end up teaching a whole family!"

Allison Williams



*Ett av barnen som kan dra nytta av
volontärernas undervisning*

Vilken skillnad gör detta projekt?

In rural Nicaragua, education and literacy levels are still depressingly low, despite having a 'Year of Literacy' in 1980 when the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) government concentrated on tackling the country's high levels of illiteracy. In the rural communities we aim to help around Estelí, the present day problems with education are due to economic constraints and a lack of teaching materials and teachers themselves. The large majority of families rely on agriculture, and with the country's changeable climate and erratic harvests, poverty levels are extremely high. There is a huge need for help within these communities where the local understaffed schools are sometimes an hour's walk from the children homes.

Höjdpunkter

Working in the heart of a Nicaraguan community; teaching children, living with a host family; learning Spanish (optional); and exploring the local region by enjoying hikes, horse treks and visits to nature reserves.

Plats

Estelí, also known as 'El Diamante de las Segovias' (the Diamond of the Segovias) is situated 150km North of Managua, surrounded by mountains and valleys dotted with small agricultural communities in which the project work will be undertaken, all within 10-15 kms from Estelí.

Inkvartering

Living with local families in Estelí in comfortable but basic accommodation gives volunteer an enriched cultural experience and provides them with the valuable opportunity to practice their Spanish! All accommodation provided is private, has washing facilities and includes three meals a day; packed lunches will be provided when working in the communities.

Förkunskaper

Spanish classes are ESSENTIAL for those Volunteers with no previous Spanish experience and highly recommended for those who want to brush up on their Spanish language. The Spanish course is 40 hours, with four hours a day one-on-one tuition for the first two weeks. The Spanish courses available in the school range from beginner and intermediate, to advanced levels. The classes have an emphasis on grammar and conversation. During these first two weeks, you will concentrate on Spanish homework in the afternoons. See dates and costs for prices

Activities during your Spanish classes include lectures covering various topics from history, culture, politics and social issues and visits to local places of interest including historical monuments and museums. Estelí has a rich and at times very bloody history, being an important Sandinista stronghold during the Revolution.

Livet på projektet

Volunteers work in La Thompson from Monday to Friday. You begin the day eating breakfast with your host family before meeting up with the other volunteers 7.30am, to leave Esteli on the bus at 7.50am. After arriving at the school at 8.20am, classes commence until 10am, at which point there is a mid-morning break when we give out fruit to the children as a snack. Classes then resume at 10.30am until around midday, when we clean up the school and make our way back to Esteli for around 12.30pm. After lunch, you then plan classes for the next day at the GVI house at 3.00pm until 4.30pm. Some afternoons a week we will probably stay up to give adult literacy classes and further reinforcement.

Volunteers have the option to take their own class, or assist other volunteers or GVI staff until they feel they could take their own class. It is hoped that a new volunteer will work with an experienced volunteer for one to two weeks with the aim to take over that class once the experienced volunteer has left. Each class size can range from 10-20 children, depending on the collective ability or the attention needed by the children. Lessons range from basic literacy and numbers to educational reinforcement, help with homework, some English, games, sports and other activities.

We aim to help those children who are struggling in their classes, and also to take the classes which don't have a teacher. Rural schools tend to have one or two teachers for all grades, thus the teacher is only able to give his/her attention to one class at a time. We aim to have all classes with a teacher. We will also take smaller groups of children to allow more attention for them to learn and to allow the teacher to continue with his/her class. It is hoped that with more personal reinforcement, the child will learn quicker and be able to adapt better to the classes being given by the local teacher.

One of our initiatives is to introduce, fund and run 'aulas abiertas' (open classrooms) in the afternoons, whereby children, teenagers and adults can come on a regular basis to receive reinforcement, additional education or in most cases, first time education. We provide all the necessary utensils for the 'students' and these lessons will include basic literacy, maths and English.

No formal teacher-training is required as each volunteer will be supported by GVI project managers and staff or existing volunteers for the first few days. Teaching manuals, resource books, the Nicaraguan curriculum and many other teacher resource books are available for the volunteers' use. A daily meeting is held to discuss structure, swap ideas and to work on the following day's classes.

Adventure Trips

Included in your package, if you choose, are various guided excursions. These include a weekend trip to the Miraflor Natural Reserve, an area richly filled with all types of flora and fauna, as well as exciting hikes, waterfalls and rustic accommodation! You will also spend a day hiking to the Salto Estanzuela waterfall and horse riding.

Further Travelling Opportunities

Nicaragua offers year round trips and adventures so you will always find something to do. A few examples include; trekking and climbing around the Maribios Volcanic Chain, diving or snorkelling through the coral reefs of Corn Islands, visiting the Cloud Forests of the Reservas Natural Miraflor and Cerro Tisey-Estanzuela, discovering one of the finest collections of museums and churches in León, touring the organic coffee farms of Ruta De Café, and many more.

Foton från projektet



För startdatum, priser och bokning, se www.blueberry.nu