

Compas de Nicaragua

77 Meetinghouse Hill Road
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Compas de Nicaragua Internship Program

Description:

Compas de Nicaragua provides hands-on, service learning internships for those looking to gain international development experience and make a genuine impact on a local community. Participants spend their time living and working directly in the community. Interns acquire skills in international development, project design and implementation, grant writing, and Spanish language. Interns also have the experience of a lifetime and make long-standing relationships with their host families, host organizations, and the communities they serve.

Highlights:

Compas' mission is to promote cultural exchange and improve lives through service trips and sustainable community development. This is accomplished through our highly adaptable programs which involve:

- * Uniqueness of Compas' Programs: Compas has been working in Nicaragua since 1993. We have extensive networks in Nicaragua and have built strong ties with the communities where we work. This provides volunteers a very intimate experience with the community, families, and people with whom you will work.
- * Total Immersion: Each participant will be the only English-speaking foreigner with his or her host family. This allows interns to more efficiently learn and adapt to the community they are serving.
- * Support: Compas support staff in Nicaragua will assist Participants. Staff members work in tandem with interns to ensure a comfortable and productive work environment.
- * Individually Constructed Programs: Participants' experiences, interests, and skills are thoroughly evaluated and included in the program.
- * Values and Sustainability: Participants' learn, through first hand experience, that development solutions must first recognize the delicate nature of the culture and community they are working in. Disrupting the existing system with temporary solutions or hand-outs can often do more harm than good. Compas strives to empower participants with a sustainable approach to their project work that recognizes the long-term impact and viability of their efforts. This is done through collaboration with the local community, whereby participants listen and learn from the community before acting on its behalf.
- * Language Training: Compas' programs feature intensive language training at one of the oldest and most respected Spanish immersion language schools in Nicaragua.
- * Flexibility: Internships run year-round for 4 to 12 weeks, depending on your time and schedule, and the breadth of experience you wish to attain. The internship program application

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includes options for 4, 8, and 12-week internships and space provided for volunteers to request specific activities to be included in the internship.

Program Structure: The structured program consists of several components that prepare and provide you with the support and guidance needed to implement successful projects in a sustainable manner. Internships include the following elements:

Orientation (two days) – You will begin your internship at the Compas de Nicaragua visitor center in Managua. Compas' support staff will get you acclimated to your new surroundings and deliver essential information to ensure a safe and comfortable entry. A variety of activities and educational sessions will comprise the orientation phase, including basic history of Nicaragua and current conditions, a tour of Managua, and an extensive orientation about life and cultural issues in Nicaragua.

Language School (two weeks) – After the two day orientation, interns will spend two weeks at Horizonte Spanish School in Esteli, Nicaragua (www5.ibw.com.ni/~horizont). Horizonte is one of the oldest and most respected Spanish language schools with over 20 years of experience. The first week is spent in Esteli, a mountain town north of Managua, and the second week in a rural community outside of Esteli.

Accommodation – After the language school component, interns will live individually with host families for the remainder of their time in Nicaragua. These accommodations ensure your full immersion into the local language and culture while providing a chance to form relationships with an extended family and community. Many interns stay in close contact with their host families for years after completing their internship because of the bonds that are formed.

Host Organization Introduction – Compas staff will introduce you to your direct supervisor at the host organization. During this stage, you will familiarize yourself with the organization and its staff, interviewing them and gaining a full understanding of the resources, people, and projects currently in progress.

Project Work (two to ten weeks) – After language school, interns will return to Managua to work with Women in Action for half of their remaining time in Nicaragua. Work projects include backyard gardening and gray water systems. Activities include English classes, reproductive health workshops, newsletter and child sponsorship reports, grant writing, etc. The other half of the internship will be spent in La Paz, a rural town an hour and a half from Managua. Work projects include bio-gas system installation and reforestation projects.

Internship Evaluation Session (two days) – Compas staff will prepare you for your trip home and the culture shock you might feel after this intense cultural immersion program. Interns will have the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback about their internship experience. Compas will also help interns process their experience and give them ideas about how they might continue to support the work they started after returning home.