



The Humanity Exchange

international volunteer, research, and language learning opportunities.

Pre-Registration Information



Colombia

Step out of your world... and into ours!



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Pre-Registration Information

This booklet contains information to help you decide if you would like to volunteer, intern, and/or learn Spanish with The Humanity Exchange (THEX) in Colombia. THEX is committed to placing volunteers where they are needed most. Your placement is arranged based on a combination of your skills & background, and local needs at the time of your placement. This ensures the best possible experience for both volunteers and host organizations, and leads to truly effective sustainable change.

We maintain the lowest fees possible given our expenses. We think international volunteering should be affordable. At the same time, we make sure our host families and local staff are fairly remunerated. Investing in the local economy is an important way that our presence contributes to long-term development in the countries where we work.

From now until the end of your time abroad, we are always here to support you. If you have any questions which are not addressed, feel free to contact us at anytime. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Allison Fedorkiw,
Director



Colombia

Colombia es pasion! Many of those who have never been to Colombia associate it with drugs, violence, guerilla fighters, and paramilitaries. Fortunately, it only takes a few glances upon the warm, smiling faces of Colombia's 44,000,000 citizens to understand the pride felt for how different life is in Colombia today. Following nearly forty years of insecurity, Colombia has emerged in the last decade into a leading Latin America country, equipped with a rapidly developing economy, modern cosmopolitan cities, gorgeous Caribbean beaches, the luscious Amazon rainforest, quaint and charming colonial villages, buzzing night-life, and much more. The only risk is wanting to stay!



In Colombia, we work in Medellín, a city of 2.5 million. Medellín, the City of Eternal Spring as it is affectionately known, rests in a narrow valley. With the railroad, the boom of the coffee industry, and profits made by mining investors, Medellín grew into a major metropolis over the twentieth

century. Medellín has had a colourful history. Despite a past disrupted by violence, today it is one of the safest cities in all of South America.

The Need

Despite Colombia's newfound levels of peace and prosperity, Colombia still bears many scars from the past. Nearly 10% of Colombia's population has been displaced due to the many years of armed conflict, making it the country with the second highest level of internal displacement in the world. In addition to displacement, one in every three Colombians has in some way been negatively

The Need

by the armed conflict. Colombia also suffers from great wealth disparity, leaving much of the country in poverty. In fact, one fifth of the population lives on less than two dollars per day, and nearly half of the Colombian work force derives income from the small scale informal economy, working as street vendors and garbage recyclers.



Focus Areas

1. Economy & Environment

In 1996, a new development project that would unite North and South America began to take force in Latin America. The "Panamerican Road" would cut across the "Tapon del Darien," a tropical rainforest between Colombia and Panama which is part of a broader eco-region called the Choco Bioregion; a world reservoir of biodiversity which goes all the way from Panama to Ecuador and from the Pacific Ocean to the Andean mountain range.

The proposition of this mega project led to critical debate of the effects that such a road would have on the region, in particular the potential social and environmental problems. As a result, our partner, AMICHOCO was founded.

As a volunteer or intern with The Humanity Exchange, you will work with our AMICHOCO, whose two-fold mission is: to communicate the natural wealth of this bio-diverse hotspot, and to create awareness about increased poverty levels and marginalization of its inhabitants. Our partners are devoted to the sustainable use of natural

1. Economy & Environment

resources and the life quality enhancement of the people of the Biogeographic Choco region. For over ten years, our partner has been working in 3 main areas which include:

- Fair and Green markets
- Communication and environmental education
- Capacity Building



A woman holds freshly roasted coffee from her organic coffee farm. Growing coffee for export is a major source of income for many family farmers in Colombia.

Examples of Intern Assignments

Oro Verde Intern

AMICHOCO produces gold and platinum, both raw and refined, which is extracted under the strictest socially and environmentally responsible rules. Profits generated are invested into development initiatives in local mining communities. Metals are sold under the Oro Verde brand. Oro Verde Interns will:

- Conduct market research
- Develop marketing campaign in consultation with local staff
- Identify new clients for the Oro Verde metals
- Assist Commercial Executive in the commercialization of AMICHOCO's service portfolio
- Assist Commercial Executive in developing Oro Verdes marketing strategy

1. Economy & Environment

Translator

AMICHOCO works in both English and Spanish. Much of the work done on-the-ground and with locals of the Choco bioregion is in Spanish, yet many funders require reports in English. Therefore, a translator is needed to translate documents, primarily annual reports, from English to Spanish. This position requires an excellent level of English, and a basic to intermediate Spanish. This position is ideal if your goal is to improve your Spanish skills. The very nature of this position will allow you to progress rapidly.

Evaluation Officer

It is incredibly important that all programs are monitored and evaluated. Therefore, the evaluation officer will be responsible for ensuring that AMICHOCO's main programs are evaluated for economic, environmental, and social impact. The role of the intern will be to:

- Conduct needs assessment with local staff
- Develop a sound and comprehensive evaluation tool
- Implement evaluation tool as pilot project
- Revise evaluation tool to ensure it gathers all information sought.

Intern Profiles

Our interns who work in planning and development usually have at least a pre-graduate degree or are studying a pre-graduate course in international business, international relations, business administration, project management, international development, or political science. Due to the nature of the work that the interns develop, we usually require them to speak English, have excellent communication skills, be pro-active, and work well with others. Basic knowledge of Microsoft Office programs and the internet is needed. In addition, it is essential that volunteers can cope with several tasks at the same time and work well under pressure.

We require at least a two month commitment from interns. Spanish is not necessary for positions with AMICHOCO.

2. Journalism

Colombia Reports (CR) is South America's largest online English-language newspaper. Headquartered in Medellin, the CR team is dynamic and growing. In this fast paced environment, interns work alongside resident journalists to deliver transparent Colombian news to global readers. CR produces original news material, and fact checks news written in Spanish, translating it for an English-speaking audience. In doing so, CR delivers unbiased news that is free from association with political or business interest groups.

Examples of Intern Assignments

Interns generally fill one of two roles when working CR, as described below.

Newspaper Content Contributor

The intern will be a full-on member of the newsroom. During the first two weeks, our interns receive intensive training on how to write articles and the best techniques for the writing that we do. All interns receive excellent supervision from our website editor. *This position requires excellent English, and intermediate Spanish.*

Description of Activities:

- Produce news through translation and research
- Conduct on-the-ground interviews
- Please note: Experience in writing or publishing is a plus

Copy Editor & Integrity Officer

The intern will be a full-on member of the newsroom. During the first two weeks, our interns receive intensive training on how to write articles and the best techniques for the writing that we do. All interns receive excellent supervision from our website editor. In this position, the intern will have the final responsibility of checking articles for accuracy, and ensuring perfect grammar, spelling and punctuation of articles published. *This position requires excellent English & basic Spanish.*

Description of Activities:

- Optimize publications by checking for accuracy and verifying facts
- Rigorously check for grammar, punctuation & spelling
- Write captivating headlines
- Please note: Experience in writing or publishing is a plus

Intern Profile

Above all, CR seeks interns who are ready and willing to learn. Interns must be open-minded, flexible, able to work well on their own or in a team setting, and able to work well in a fast-paced environment.

Excellent English is required, and basic or intermediate Spanish is also required depending on the position. For interns without basic Spanish, we arrange a combined program in which an intern takes one month of Spanish classes prior to starting their internship with CR.

In order to work with CR, you must submit a resume, and be available for an interview via Skype with CR Editor-in-Chief, Adriaan Aselma.

3. Children Living with HIV & AIDS: Childcare & Community Development

Positivos por la Vida, also known simply as Positivos, is a leading organization providing care to children and their families living with HIV & AIDS in Colombia. It was started in 1992 when individuals living with HIV/AIDS realized there was a gap in services in Medellin. Sadly, many founding members have passed away. But Positivos remains strong, restoring fundamental human rights to children affected by HIV & AIDS through their social and humanistic strategy.

Positivos runs a program called Dulce Corazon. Started in 2006, it provides permanent housing to 20 children from ages 0-18. The children are living with HIV/AIDS, have lost one or both parents, and may have been exposed to family violence, drug abuse, poverty, prostitution, and displacement. It is through this program that the basic human rights of children are restored, and children learn to maximize their life potential by taking a positive response to their diagnosis of HIV or AIDS.

There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace."

-Kofi Annan

Example of Intern & Volunteer Assignments

International Cooperation Executive

This role can be filled by either a volunteer or intern; exact tasks will be determined upon the background of the individual. In this position the volunteer or intern will be engaged in both childcare and administration, with a focus on the latter. The tasks included are:

Childcare

- Dress and feed children
- Tutor children in various academic subjects
- Assist staff in the nursery school
- Mentor children
- Run extracurricular programs for children

Administration

- Update website
- Write and submit grant proposals
- Network with potential international funders

In this position individuals have the opportunity to learn about child and family poverty, and the socio-economic determinants of health, through working with the children. In addition, volunteers and interns play a key role in building capacity and enabling the work of Positivos to flourish.

Education & Child Development Assistant

Buen Comienzo: Centro Infantil Dulce Corazón is a childcare facility for children aged 2-4 in an extremely poor neighborhood in Medellín. Families struggle to meet basic needs, and there is an emergent need for volunteers to assist with childcare.

Examples of tasks include:

- Dress and feed children
- Assist local staff in recreational and educational activities

By working together with local staff, volunteers can help ensure children are healthy and cared for. This is an essential element in ensuring their future success.

Volunteer & Intern Profile

Positivos seeks volunteers and interns who are experienced and comfortable working with children. It is also important to have internet and computer skills. All volunteers and interns working with Positivos must have at least an intermediate level of Spanish, and be in Medellin for at least one month.

No Spanish? No Problem!

We receive many requests from individuals who would like to volunteer and intern in Latin America, but do not have the required level of Spanish. We will not arrange for you to pursue a placement where you do not have the necessary language skills. This will lead to frustration for both you and your host organization.

However, we can arrange for you to take Spanish lessons before and/or during your placement. These can be done virtually (yes, even before you leave home), or in language classes in Medellin. Contact us if you would like to pursue this option. We will arrange a unique program according to the amount of language learning and interning/volunteering that you would like to do. We will give you clear information on the program cost and details.

Is it safe?

Your safety and security is our priority. By volunteering abroad in a developing country, you are choosing to spend time in a nation with widespread poverty. Therefore, it is important to be well-informed about how to stay safe, as well as volunteer with an organization like The Humanity Exchange that understands the importance of safety for participants. While it would be unrealistic for us to “guarantee” the safety of all volunteers and interns, we take every measure possible to make sure you are safe.

How do we ensure safety?

- Every volunteer is assigned an in-country Exchange Manager (EM) who is available 24/7. This is not simply an emergency phone number. Rather, your EM will be there from the moment your plane arrives. Your EM is responsible for helping you to learn how to live abroad, and how to stay safe.
- Our volunteers live with host families. We know our host families well, and you will be living with a welcoming and trusted family.
- Our volunteers live in the safest areas of the cities where we work, no exceptions.

Our Commitment to Integrity

At THEX, our two most important relationships are those with you, and those with our overseas partners. International volunteer organizations are plentiful, and each has its own way of conducting work. How do we ensure integrity?

1. We do not impose on communities. We only send volunteers when and where they are truly needed.
2. We look for participants with an open mind, a willingness to learn, and adaptability. We always provide pre-placement support and cultural education. This ensures the smoothest transition possible into your time abroad.

How Do I Get Involved?

If you have any further questions, you can get in touch with us at any time by emailing

admin@thehumanityexchange.org, or calling +1 250 552 1667.

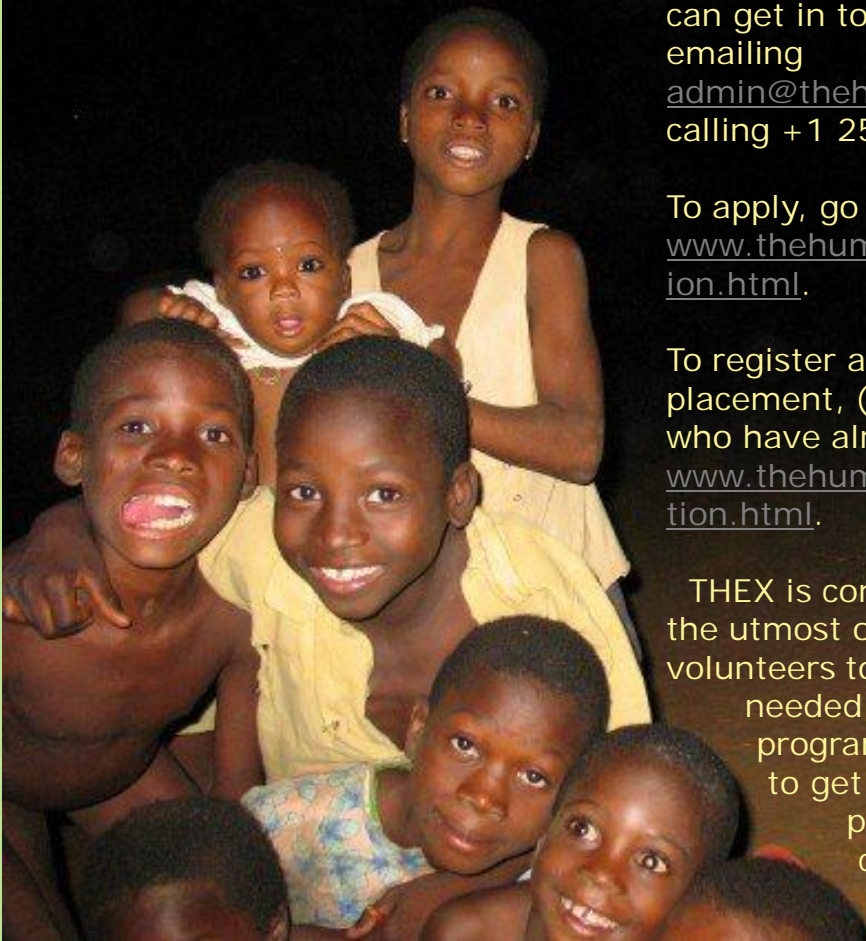
To apply, go to:

www.thehumanityexchange.org/application.html.

To register and confirm your volunteer placement, (only applicable to those who have already applied), go to:

www.thehumanityexchange.org/registration.html.

THEX is committed to working with the utmost of integrity, placing volunteers to work where they are truly needed, and providing affordable program options. We enable you to get involved and have a positive impact as a global citizen.



We look forward to hearing from you!