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Cross-cultural solutions volunteer handbook

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Cross-Cultural Solutions Volunteer Handbook

An Honors Program Project Presented to
the Faculty of the Undergraduate
College of Arts
James Madison University

by Alexa Barbara Senio
May 2016

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Communication, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors Program.

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Cross-Cultural Solutions Volunteer Handbook

CARTAGO, COSTA RICA



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Hello There!



My name is Alexa Senio and I am an Alumni Representative and a former volunteer for Cross-Cultural Solutions (CCS). When I volunteered abroad with CCS, I had never been out of the country before, and I was entering a new world all by myself. I was excited but also scared to start this adventure on my own! But, my experience is one I will never forget. You, too, are about to start an adventure that will stay with you for the rest of your life. That is in part why I decided to create this handbook. For my honors thesis project at James Madison University, I decided to partner with CCS to design and create a handbook that would be helpful in preparing for volunteering abroad.

As someone who has been through the process of volunteering, I am able to offer some of the expectations you should have entering this new world!

When I volunteered, my placement was at El Pueblito, an orphanage in Cartago, Costa Rica. While much of the information presented in this handbook references El Pueblito, some of the information carries over to other placements. As a volunteer, you might be placed in a senior home, a hospital, or another location in need of help. You will be assigned your placement a few weeks prior to your trip. Many volunteers are placed at El Pueblito or other orphanages, but feel free to reach out to your assigned Program Director for more information on your specific placement.

The following chapters outline what to expect when [Traveling to Cartago](#), [Volunteering in Cartago](#), and [Getting to Know Cartago](#). Much of what you see in these chapters will also be covered on your personal profile on the CCS [website](#). There are hyperlinks throughout the document; you will have to login to your CCS profile page to review some pages. Later, I will also talk about different [Developmental Stages in Children](#) and how to manage an [English Language Learning Classroom](#). I will reference an Activity Bank hosted on [Pinterest](#) that is specifically made for volunteering with kids at El Pueblito. Also look out for the green sidebars! Those indicate a personal story or recommendations. I suggest you read through this handbook as you start planning for your trip. Handbooks will also be available in print form at Home Base. I hope I can help you prepare for your adventure! Pura vida!

Alexa Senio
James Madison University ('16)

Introducing El Pueblito

El Pueblito is an orphanage located in Cartago, Costa Rica, that cares for abandoned children and adolescents with the goal of integrating them into productive lives. There are over 100 children, ages 3-18, cared for at El Pueblito. There are 16 houses with approximately 8 children in each. Children live with "substitute mothers," or Doñas, who direct, supervise, and support them. These mothers have limited English-speaking skills, so you will have to brush up on your Spanish to communicate with them. During the day, the children attend school and return to the Pueblito house afterward for homework, chores, and games.

Many of these kids come from backgrounds where they have been abandoned or abused by their families. Prostitution is a huge issue in Costa Rica, leaving families unable to care for their children. Please be wary of the different backgrounds and situations the kids might be coming from as you won't know their stories. If there is any situation that you are uncomfortable with, make sure you tell Juvel, the Program Officer, immediately. He should be on the orphanage grounds while you are volunteering.

Every night before you volunteer, you will need to prepare activities and games for the kids. There will be some days where you will be doing different chores around the orphanage, such as painting, cleaning, cooking with the Doñas, or doing homework with kids. Other days you will lead activities and games in the gymnasium. You won't really know what you will be doing until you arrive that morning, so plan to have back up games and activities for different age groups. You also won't know how many kids will be there each day since they have different school schedules. I always planned to have enough supplies for 30-40 kids each day. Some days you may have more and, some days you may have less. It's hard to predict from day to day, so make sure you have options! You can refer to the Pinterest Activity Bank introduced in [Chapter 6](#) of this handbook for inspiration and ideas.

On the first day at the orphanage, you can expect to take a tour of the grounds and meet all of the Doñas! You will be dropped off from the CCS bus around 8:30 and can expect to stay busy until you return back to Home Base for lunch at noon each day. Refer to the [Volunteering in Cartago](#) chapter for more information about volunteering such as suggested attire and a [typical daily schedule](#).





Traveling to Cartago

It takes a lot of planning and preparation to travel to a new destination, and we're here to help you every step of the way! Whether you're purchasing your plane ticket, applying for a visa, or getting ready to pack, this guide (along with your assigned expert Program Specialist) is your ultimate resource for a successful experience. So read on to learn more. And remember that we're always available to answer any questions that you may have, and to share our personal expertise.

Adventure Awaits!

"Differences don't seem that different to me anymore."

-Nell, volunteer

Flights

Regardless of the flight that you choose, your arrival airport for Costa Rica is Juan Santamaría International Airport (SJO) in San José, Costa Rica. Your fellow volunteers will be from all over the world, and some of you may even end up on the same flight.

Arrival in Costa Rica

If you're volunteering for two to twelve weeks, arrive at SJO between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Volunteers who are only staying for one week must arrive between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on your program start date. All programs start on a Sunday. Make sure to wear the CCS Program t-shirt you received in the mail so we can spot you! Once you arrive at the airport, you'll be greeted by a friendly CCS driver, Alan, or another staff member.

One of our representatives will be waiting for you right outside of the arrival gate, so keep an eye out for a smiling face with a "Cross-Cultural Solutions" sign! It's a one-hour drive from the airport to our Home Base, so you'll be able to take in some of the sights of Costa Rica as you relax after your journey.

Departure from Costa Rica

Depart SJO between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on your program

end date. Many volunteers choose to arrive early, or stay a bit longer, in order to experience all that Costa Rica has to offer. You may stay in the Home Base only during your program dates. If you plan to be in Costa Rica prior to your program start date or have any questions about scheduling flights, just let us know.

Reminder! There's an airport departure tax you need to pay at the airport when you leave Costa Rica, so save the equivalent of around US \$30 to pay this fee. Both American and Colones are accepted.

Immunizations

We want to make sure you're healthy during your CCS experience, so take a moment to review the recommended vaccinations for your destination at the [Center for Disease Control](#), or by visiting or calling a travel doctor.

Visas

As long as you're traveling in Costa Rica for less than 90 days, you don't need to obtain a visa if you hold a passport issued from the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom. Is your passport issued by a country other than those listed above? [Find out](#) if a visa is required for your travel!

Insurance

As a CCS volunteer, you'll automatically be covered by our comprehensive Travel, Medical, & Emergency Evacuation Insurance while you're participating in our program. If you're traveling before or after your program, you may choose to extend your insurance so that you're covered every step of the way.

What does your insurance include?

- Up to \$50,000 of medical expenses (with unlimited Medivac services), benefits allowing you to speak with mental health professionals, and \$1,000 trip cancellation insurance in the event of illness or injury.
- In the event that you do need medical assistance, keep in mind that you'll need to pay the medical costs directly and claim for reimbursement once you return—so budget an additional \$100 just in case.
- Learn about all the details of your insurance in the [Insurance FAQs](#).

Need to upgrade your insurance? The travel website offers alternate plans, which can increase your medical expense limits to \$500,000 and your trip cancellation insurance up to \$5,000. Just log on to the [Core Travel website](#) to print your insurance card, extend your insurance, or upgrade!

What to Pack

Cartago has moderate/subtropical weather, averaging around 76°F year round. Cartago is also located at the highest elevation in Costa Rica, so it can get a bit chillier here than the rest of the country. In the summer, you can expect it to rain and be chilly almost every night. Make sure you pack appropriate clothes for this weather. The warmest months are between March and May (which is also part of the dry season), and the coolest are December to February (the wet season). No matter when you're traveling, we think you'll love the weather in beautiful Costa Rica.

As international travelers, we love everything about preparing for our next adventure—but we must admit, packing can sometimes be a bit overwhelming. We're here to help you figure out what to bring and what to leave at home, and we've even created a handy packing list as a general guideline. The packing list is based on a two-week volunteer experience, and

Before You Arrive



Enroll in the CCS Program online



Contact your Program Specialist



Learn about your Program



Confirm Valid Passport



Purchase your Plane Ticket



Review Immunizations



Obtain a Visa (if applicable)



Complete Training Sessions



Pay Program Fee



Complete Volunteer Profile

Packing List

- 7-8 pairs of socks
- 12 pairs of undergarments
- 2-3 pairs of jeans
- 1-2 pairs of pants, skirts, or capris
- 2-3 changes of sleepwear
- 12 t-shirts/tanktops
- 3 pairs of conservative shorts
- 2 sweatshirts for chilly nights
- 1 dressier outfit
- 1-2 sport/activewear outfits
- 1 swimsuit (if you're visiting the beach)
- Hat
- Belt (if needed)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals (back straps are preferred)
- Flip-Flops (for showers/free time)

CLOTHING

- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Soap/Body Wash
- Face Wash
- Sunscreen & Bug Repellent
- Shaving Supplies
- Brush/Comb
- Deodorant
- Glasses/Contacts & Solution
- Toothpaste/Toothbrush/Floss
- Washcloths
- Lip Balm
- Hair Ties and Clips
- Feminine Hygiene Products (if needed)

PERSONAL

- Umbrella or Rain Jacket
- Sunglasses
- Alarm Clock
- Medication, in original bottles
- Small Towel
- Luggage Lock for Home Base
- Cross Body Bag or Drawstring Bag
- Refillable Water Bottle

MUST HAVES

- Journal
- Camera & Charger
- Phone/Laptop/iPad & Chargers
- Books or eReader
- Passport (and a separate photocopy)
- Flight Itinerary
- Credit Card and Cash
- CCS Handbook with Home Base Address

CARRY ON

assumes you're doing laundry around every 10 days, so feel free to make adjustments based on what is right for you. You can check off items online as you go.

Packing Tips

Pack Light!

You don't want to drag around heavy suitcases. And remember, you can get toiletries and other essentials in-country.

Save Some Room

We're sure that you'll fall in love with some amazing keepsakes during your time in-country, so feel free to bring along an extra, empty bag to cart it all home or leave some space in your bag for them.

Spending Money

Costa Rica's currency is the colón—you can exchange your currency into colones when you arrive at the San José airport, or withdraw colones at one of several ATMs within a 5-10 minute walk of the CCS Home Base. You can also exchange your money prior to your arrival if you prefer. Remember to contact your bank and credit card companies before travel to let them know that you'll be out of the country!

While everyone's spending habits are different, you might want to budget for around \$50 to \$75 USD per week for keepsakes and free time activities. The costs of weekend trips, should you choose to travel around the country, can vary—it can be \$150 USD for a weekend at the beach, or up to \$500 USD for a more luxurious, action-packed, adventure getaway. CCS has access to special travel agents for our volunteers, and we can contact them to help you plan a trip once you are here if you would like.

Please also complete your Volunteer Profile. To do this, fill out the following required forms on your personal profile page: Personal Data Form, Health Form, Skills & Interests Form, Flight Information Form, Passport Information Form, Drug & Alcohol Policy Form, Agreement & Release Form, and Donations & Gift-Giving Policy Form. You must complete all of these forms prior to your arrival in Cartago.



Your experience is what you make it! Make sure to review the Training Sessions so you are fully prepared to volunteer with us.

Emergency Contact Information

It's helpful to inform family and friends of your travel plans so they know how to reach you. Just input your flight information and you have a handy [Travel Contact Sheet](#) to email or print for your family and friends.

Remind friends and family that if they'd like to make an international call to reach you at the CCS Home Base, US and Canadian residents should dial "011" before entering your phone number, and UK residents or residents of other countries should dial "00" before the number. You may also want to contact your cell phone provider and make arrangements for a temporary international plan.

Training Sessions

If you're ready to start learning more, review the required [online Training Sessions](#) (each under 30 minutes). Just log in and watch the three videos at the bottom of the "Getting to Know Cartago" page. About two weeks before your program begins, you'll join your final pre-departure call with your group. We can't wait for you to join us, meet your fellow volunteers, and explore all that CCS has to offer!



Welcome Home! We can't wait to welcome you into your home away from home, the CCS Cartago Home Base.



2

Volunteering in Cartago

Now on to the core of your experience: your volunteer work. Cross-Cultural Solutions staff and volunteers are working to address critical global issues by providing meaningful volunteer service to communities abroad and contributing responsibly to local economies. As a leader in the field of international volunteer travel for 20 years, we know that the best approach to international volunteering—the only approach—is one designed by the community. In every community in which we work, we have long-standing relationships with local organizations who communicate real-time needs and objectives to the CCS team so that our volunteers can work alongside local people and make a sustainable impact.

Your Impact

"The volunteers show love, dedication, and attachment to the boys, girls, and adolescents at the orphanage. It's an incredible opportunity for individual attention and cultural exchange."

–Representative from El Pueblito

Volunteer Resources

Now that you have the basics in place, let's talk about your individual volunteer work assignment. The tools you'll need to be successful (flexibility, initiative, and learning) are the building blocks across all assignments, but it's also helpful to dig in deeper and think about creative activities and projects, and to understand the population you'll be working with. While your individual volunteer work assignment is based on the most immediate needs of the local community (you will get your assignment a week or two before your program begins), you can start reviewing this information now, and continue to use it as a resource when you're in-country.

Volunteering with Kids

Whether you're helping out in a daycare, teaching in a school, or assisting with a local women's group where kids are cared for, volunteering with children puts your creativity, enthusiasm, and energy to work. It's all about individual attention and engagement, so prepare yourself by learning about the stages of child development, and start brainstorming your project ideas on the [CCS Pinterest page](#). More information about this page is in Chapter 6. (And please, share your success stories to continue your impact worldwide!)

Read more about working with English Language Learners and different age groups in Chapters 4 and 5: [Developmental Stages in Children](#) and [English Language Learning Classroom Management](#).

When you enroll with CCS, what lies ahead is an experience that's sure to end up on your list of life-changers, a one-of-a-kind adventure. By combining meaningful volunteer work, a rich variety of eye-opening cultural activities, adventures, real opportunities to engage with local people, and a safe and comfortable home away from home, CCS guarantees that your time abroad will be genuine and immersive. With CCS, you can expect to get the complete experience. To read about a typical day as a volunteer, refer to page 12.

Rules at the Home Base

Located in a quiet residential neighborhood, the CCS Home Base was designed with your safety and comfort in mind. We know the importance of a cozy bed and a nutritious and authentic meal to help fuel your volunteer work, and that's exactly what we'll have waiting for you when you arrive.

A Typical Day as a Volunteer



As soon as you walk through the gate, you'll be greeted by colorful handprints, messages, and memories from the volunteers who have come before you. Your home away from home comes complete with swinging hammocks to kick back and relax.

Just a short walk from Home Base, you'll find yourself in the heart of the old capital. Whether you're looking for the latest tico trends or some keepsakes to take home, wander down to the indoor market or grab a cab to the mall, because Cartago has you covered!

Can't wait to share your experience? Staying connected at the Home Base is easy with a landline for incoming calls (or pick up a phone card for international calls), and there's always Wi-Fi available. You can get the best signal in the hammocks!

Additional Policies

As part of the CCS community, you'll not only represent your home community, you'll also be representing the CCS mission, vision, and values, not to mention a community of over 35,000 intrepid alumni. CCS's mission is to operate volunteer programs around the world in partnership with sustainable community initiatives, bringing people together to work side-by-side while sharing perspectives and fostering cultural understanding. We are an international nonprofit organization with no political or religious affiliations. We value shared humanity, respect, and integrity. And our vision is of a world where people value cultures different from their own, are aware of global issues, and are empowered to affect positive change.

This is not a typical travel experience—it's an opportunity to make a real impact and real connections with the local community in a truly unique way. The safety of our volunteers is essential to our programs, and our policies are designed not only to keep you safe, but also to ensure that your experience is comfortable and as impactful as possible.

Please note that breaking a CCS in-country policy is a serious infraction, as these policies are designed for your safety and to maximize community impact. If a policy is broken, it may result in the immediate termination of your volunteer program. In the case of a less severe infraction, at the discretion of CCS, a warning may be issued before a termination if the policy is broken again.



We know you're going to have an impact in Costa Rica, but we also hope the experience impacts you. Make sure to leave your mark and write your memories in the Home Base.

Drug & Alcohol Use

The use of illegal substances is not permitted on any Cross-Cultural Solutions program worldwide. Any volunteer who uses or distributes any illegal narcotics will be immediately terminated from the program, and may face local legal action.

Alcohol use is also not permitted in any of our Home Bases worldwide. In Costa Rica, alcohol cannot be consumed by any individual of any age in the local community, whether during free time or as a part of the program activities. Many of the people you'll work with at your volunteer assignment have been negatively impacted by the use of alcohol, so out of respect for the community, all volunteers are not permitted to consume any amount of alcohol in Cartago. Any violations of this policy will result in immediate termination from the program. Please review the full [Drug & Alcohol Use policy](#).

Donations & Gift-Giving

Our impact in-country is based on volunteers offering love, care, attention, and support to the organizations with which we partner. For that reason, we do not allow donations or gift-giving on CCS programs, as this alters the motivations and sustainability of our work. Please do not bring supplies for your placement. There is a designated supply area at Home Base and representatives will be glad to stock up on supplies if you need them. Review the full [Donations & Gift Giving Policy](#) for more information.

Meet the Staff!



Jose Hernandez-Ugalde Country Director

Jose brings with him extensive experience in the field of international development through his work with the University of Costa Rica's International Programs department, the Foreign Service Foundation for Peace and Democracy, the United Nations Conference on the Environment, and the Close-Up Foundation in Washington, D.C. Born and raised in Costa Rica, Jose is deeply involved in his community and especially committed to eliminating child abuse. A lifelong learner, Jose speaks fluent Spanish, English, and Portuguese, is currently studying International Relations and Diplomacy, and has set his sights on moonlighting as a DJ so he can make people dance. Basically, he does it all.



The staff at the Cartago Home Base is eager for your arrival!



Juvel, Program Officer



Katia, Housekeeper



Bernadita, Chef



Alan, Driver

Safety is our #1 Priority



Home Base Safety

- The CCS team regularly inspects all aspects of the Home-Base. From furniture to electrical and emergency exits, we've got you covered.
- CCS supplies lockers so your valuables are safe. These lockers are small, so we suggest you leave bigger items such as laptops at home. Don't forget to bring a lock! You and your roommates will also have a key to your room so you may lock this as well.
- Fire extinguishers are installed in every Home-Base with instructions in local languages and in English.
- Smoke alarms and CO2 detectors are in all Home Bases.
- Each Home-Base contains at least two fully stocked first aid kits.



Food & Water Safety

- We provide volunteers with clean, safe drinking water per World Health Organization standards.
- CCS practices safe handling of food including: hand washing, appropriate clothing, cleaning, preventing cross-contamination, proper cooking temperatures, and storage.
- CCS cooks are trained to cook for individual dietary needs including food allergies, dietary restrictions (religious, vegan, etc), or dietary intolerance. If you have eating restrictions, we suggest you notify a CCS representative at the time of enrollment.



Transportation Safety

- The gas tank in the van will always be at least half full before travel.
- Tire pressure will always meet accepted safe vehicle operating standards.
- All vehicles are equipped with fully-functional seat belts.
- There is one fully equipped first aid kit available in all CCS vehicles.
- Brake and brake lights are regularly inspected.

Curfew

As an international volunteer, it's important to be well-rested for each day of work, and to be in Home Base at a reasonable time so as not to disturb your fellow volunteers and to remain safe. In Cartago, all volunteers must be in Home Base by 11:00 p.m. each night preceding volunteer work assignment. On Friday and Saturday nights, if you are staying in Cartago, you must be in Home Base by midnight.

Sexual Relations

On CCS programs, out of respect for the in-country staff and fellow volunteers, sexual relations are not permitted in the CCS Home Base.

Weapons

To protect the safety of all volunteers, weapons are not permitted in the Home Base.

Expectations at Your Project Site: El Pueblito

As noted on page 4, El Pueblito is an orphanage that cares for abandoned children and adolescents with the goal of integrating them into productive lives. There are over 100 children, ages 3-18, cared for at El Pueblito. There are 16 houses with approximately 8 children in each. Children live with "substitute mothers," or Doñas, who direct, supervise, and support them. These mothers have limited English-speaking skills, so you will have to brush up on your Spanish to communicate with them. During the day, the children attend school and return to the Pueblito house afterward for homework, chores, and games.

Your Role

Each day at El Pueblito is very different! You can expect to do any of the following while volunteering:

- Share your love and attention with the children without preference without putting anyone down or picking favorites
- Plan recreational activities and games.
- Plan arts and crafts activities, as no art classes currently exist in local schools.
- Teach aerobics, or other physical activity, to the house mothers as they experience a lot of pressure and need some personal time to de-stress.
- Stimulate the development of children through reading, counting, singing, playing, etc.



A mosaic displayed outside one of the buildings at El Pueblito.

- Assist in teaching English and mathematics and helping kids with their homework.
- Assist the mothers with any additional chores they might need such as cleaning, preparing lunch, wiping down furniture, etc.
- Assist the maintenance man with any tasks he needs such as collecting trash, sorting supplies, painting the houses, hosing the houses down, sweeping the gymnasium area, etc.

TIP! Ask the children if they would like to help you complete your chores. Giving them tasks keeps them busy and makes them feel important!

Attire

Your clothing should be conservative, yet comfortable. Please do not wear shorts, skirts, dresses, or open-toed shoes while volunteering. Long pants, such as jeans or khakis, and short- or long-sleeved t-shirts are appropriate. Please also wear comfortable closed-toed shoes, as you will be active all day.

We also suggest that you bring a refillable water bottle. This way you can bring some of the clean, filtered water from Home Base to the site.

Preparation

- Before arriving at the project site each day, you will need to have three to four different activities planned. Remember: that you're going to be volunteering for several hours, and you won't know which children will be there on which days, so make sure you are planning activities that are appropriate for boys and girls of all ages.
- When you're not doing chores, you can expect to spend most of your time in the gymnasium. We highly suggest you plan activities the night before at Home Base. We have a huge selection of supplies and games at Home Base that you can take from. Don't see what you need? If you need any other materials for a specific activity, ask one of the CCS workers and we can go to the market to get supplies. CCS cannot accept gifts. Check out the [CCS Cartago Pinterest](#) page for activity ideas.
- All of the children at El Pueblito come from very different backgrounds. Many of them are at El Pueblito because their parents neglected or abused them. Some of them may still be in the recovery process from these experiences, and they may express their emotions in ways that are difficult to understand such as anger, frustration, or shyness. If you find yourself in a situation where you don't know how to approach the child or deal with his or her behavior, notify a Doña or Juvel.
- Do not take pictures with the children. You are only allowed to take pictures if the children's faces are not shown. This is for the safety of the children. We take this rule very seriously. If you are unsure, ask one of the CCS workers.
- Make sure you aren't favoring or showing affection to one child in particular. This may make it harder for the children to see you leave the last day. Try to include everyone!

A Volunteer Tells the Story of Her Experience at El Pueblito

Pueblito has been such an amazing experience. It is arranged where a "mother" heads a household of about 8 children who come from different homes and different situations. Most of whom have been abandoned, abused, or taken from their homes and placed here. The mother treats the children as if they are siblings. She loves them, and dedicates her every moment to ensuring the children are loved and cared for. Pueblito itself is made up of 16 of these households and offer a community of support for the children. From the moment I stepped foot in this placement I was humbled. These mothers, to say the least, are strong, dedicated, and real life heroes.

Before coming to my assignment each day, we are required to have a game plan. The CCS staff review your plan and offer guidance and advice. My advice: come prepared for anything! There are children of all different ages and you aren't always sure who you will be interacting with that day. So have something that different ages can appreciate.

When we arrive in the morning it is a "divide and conquer." Some of us will help with maintenance of the homes or center while the rest of us work with the children. Halfway through our day, we swap! Since arriving, we have painted some of the houses, planted a garden, and helped the mothers with the daily chores. The activities with the children ranged from recreational activities to songs and arts and crafts.

Today is our final day and we have something special planned. We have arranged for a game day! We will have relay races, and games for the kids and finish the day with some songs. One of the volunteers is an awesome guitarist and he spent last night learning every kid song you can imagine!

I will miss the children terribly, but will take the spirit of the mothers with me.



3

Getting to Know Cartago

Costa Rica is the land of pura vida—the pure life. Sandwiched between Nicaragua and Panama and the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, this is a place where you will feel welcomed the moment you step off the plane. From the inviting smiles from all of your new neighbors to the breathtaking nature that makes every picture a postcard, Costa Rica has it all!

A New World

"When the volunteers are present, parents and families have more confidence in our work and therefore want their children to remain in school."

-Teacher from Hohoe, Ghana

Learn about Costa Rica

Like most countries in the region, Costa Rica was once a Spanish colony. However, once it gained its independence in 1821, Costa Rica quickly stabilized and has remained one of the most peaceful nations in Central America. In fact, in 1949, Costa Rica abolished its military and became one of the first democracies in Latin America. If you're a history buff, this chapter offers an introduction to some of Costa Rica's ancient and modern-day history.

At only about 20,000 square miles, Costa Rica is a powerhouse in Central America. Today, Costa Rica is a world leader in environmentally-conscious policy and practice. The country is known for its rich biodiversity, ecotourism, and successfully reducing its carbon-footprint. Socially, Costa Rica has outshone its neighbors in some aspects by offering universal healthcare and free education.

The discovery of the red coffee bean has contributed greatly to Costa Rica's economic independence. In fact Costa Rica has been caffeinating the world since the mid-1800's! Everyone in the country does their part to support this industry: ticos have a daily coffee break during which business stops for 20 minutes

around mid-afternoon so that everyone can enjoy a steamy cup of coffee. Many Costa Rican moms say that they'll start mixing coffee into their babies' milk as early as six months of age.

Nearly everyone has heard of the pilgrimage to Mecca, but have you ever heard of the pilgrimage to La Basilica de los Angeles (Our Lady of the Angels)? If not, you're in for a treat! Every year on August 2, over two million Catholics make their way to Cartago by bus, plane, bike, or even on their hands and knees. Traditionally, there is a 22km walk from outside of San Jose to the beautiful Basilica to pay respect to their patron saint, La Negrita. This is something you don't want to miss!

Cartago is THE place to be. All you need to do is stroll down the city streets, and within minutes, you've reached the vibrant epicenter for history, religion, and culture. Surround yourself with ruins from the late 1800s, stunning architecture harking to Cartago's status as the former capital, and a central market that will make your head spin with exotic fruits and handmade crafts.

In Costa Rica, you'll find plenty to explore, with rainforests, coastlines for the Atlantic and Pacific forests, cloud forests, mountains, and valleys. The diversity of species is just as



The Basílica de los Angeles, originally built in 1639, was restored and remains a huge attraction for Catholics. It is just a short drive away from Home Base.



When you're at Home Base, you will have authentic home-cooked Costa Rican food for every meal. You can also get a cooking lesson from Chef Bernadita!

stunning. As a volunteer in Costa Rica, you may come across lizards, gophers, and mice. On the outskirts of Cartago as well as in the jungles and beaches, mosquitos and spiders become more common.

If you're traveling to a beach area on the weekends, please be aware of currents and rip tides. Additionally, the beach areas

tend to be hot and humid, so ensure you remain hydrated and understand the signs and symptoms of heat stroke. In the mountains, all volunteers should take appropriate safety precautions and are aware of loose rocks. Finally, it's helpful to understand the symptoms of Dengue fever, a dangerous illness existing in tropical areas of the world. Some of the symptoms include sudden fever, fatigue, nausea, a skin rash, and joint or eye pain. If you experience any of these, notify a CCS representative immediately.

Cultural Do's and Don'ts

Entering a new culture is an exciting and challenging experience. And just as you bring your own culture to share, it's important to be open and respectful to the culture of those you'll meet during your travels. You'll often find that you have a much more positive experience if you are aware of and take into account cultural norms when meeting new people and getting to know your new community.

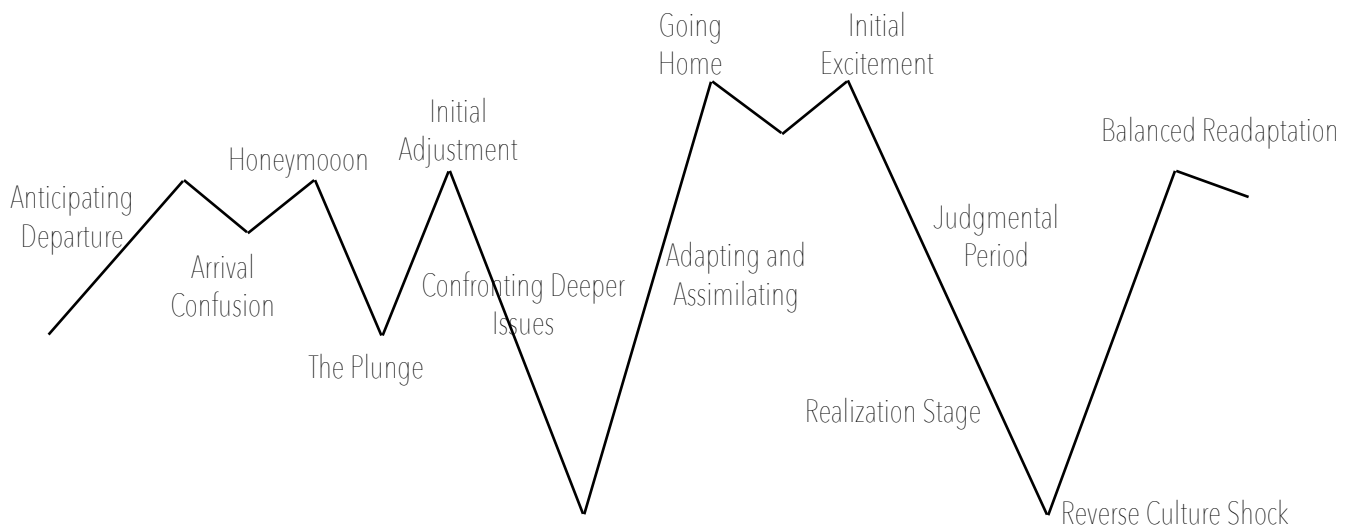
DO:

- Learn some basic Spanish phrases
- Address people with a formal title (Don/Doña)
- Greet those you meet with a kiss on the cheek
- End your conversations with Pura Vida!

DON'T:

- Tip in restaurants—a tip is already included
- Take a taxi without first negotiating the fare
- Be too affectionate in public (it's frowned upon)
- Shut car doors too loudly

For Fútbol Fanatics! Ticos are also extremely passionate about their fútbol! Here's what you need to know: Team Saprissa are the Yankees; Team La Liga are the Red Sox. You have to pick a side. The only way to be indifferent is if you choose to dislike both teams, and in that case, support the Cartaginés (Cartago's hometown team). Whichever team you support, choose wisely!



Culture shock can be a normal part of traveling to a new country, but it might surprise you that you can also encounter reverse culture shock when you return home. While everyone experiences some degree of culture shock, the impact that it has on your experience depends on how well prepared you are to handle its different phases.

Culture Shock

Picture this: You're living in a country far from home. You can't understand the language, and you're trying to order food, but everything seems to be moving so slowly! Why can't it just be like in your home country: fast and efficient?

Sometimes, these and other frustrations can build up, and you may even become angry or annoyed with this new and unfamiliar place, its cultural norms, and its people. If this happens to you, you might be experiencing culture shock.

Here are some tips and tricks to get you assimilated (and re-assimilated once you're back home) so you can enjoy every moment of your journey.

Have a Sense of Humor

Try to see something of value in every new experience you have. While it can be challenging in the moment, try to keep it all in perspective. The ability to laugh and go with the flow are two key tools to coping with initial culture shock.

Expect Differences

In any new culture, there will be some differences. If you're prepared to experience challenges and differences before you arrive in-country, it can make a world of difference in how you adjust.

...but look for what's the same

You will likely encounter differences in cultures, but you might not immediately realize the similarities. Take a moment to appreciate those attributes that make us more alike than different.

Keep learning

Immersing yourself in a new culture is a constant education. So continue making an effort to learn and understand what you're experiencing.

Language Skills

Living and working within your new community is a great way to learn the local language. Whether you're an advanced speaker or just learning a few key phrases, you'll enjoy CCS-organized language lessons during your time in-country to help you through your journey. On the next page, you will find a few important phrases to learn before you depart for your volunteer program. Even if your pronunciation isn't perfect (yet), give it a try! Your attempts to connect with new friends in the local language will always be appreciated.

Between volunteering, cultural activities, navigating a new language, and immersing yourself in a brand-new culture, you'll still have plenty of time to explore the local area and even the country during evenings and weekends. Free time is an important part of your experience for independent exploration



Make sure to check out the Ujarrás Ruines in the Orosí Valley! It was built in the 1580s and mass is still held in April to celebrate the feast of La Virgen de Ujarrás.

and self-reflection, and our in-country staff will always have some great local tips to share. Check out my favorite spots on the next page!

Start your planning with a few of our favorite suggestions, but also remember that you can plan most of your trips once you arrive in-country (especially if flights aren't required) with your fellow volunteers:

- Explore one of Costa Rica's 112 active volcanoes, many of which are located within beautiful national parks and wildlife centers, with opportunities for incredible hiking and hot springs.
- Spend some time in Cartago to get to know your community even better. Visit the famed basilica, explore ruins, visit the valley, and check out local coffee plantations. Top your day off with some of Cartago's delicious helado (ice cream)!
- We also have organized activities each week. Some of these might include Costa Rican dance classes, learning how to cook Costa Rican cuisine, history lessons, and Spanish lessons.
- Costa Rica is a prime spot for adrenaline-pumping adventure. From whitewater rafting and ziplining to canopy tours and rappelling, Costa Rica is an adventure-lover's dream.
- Staying for longer than one week? Organize a weekend getaway with your fellow volunteers! Travel to one of Costa Rica's famed beaches and spend a weekend improving your surfing skills, learning about turtle habitats, or simply relaxing at the beach with monkeys! We can put you in contact with a travel agent so you will be getting the most out of your trip!

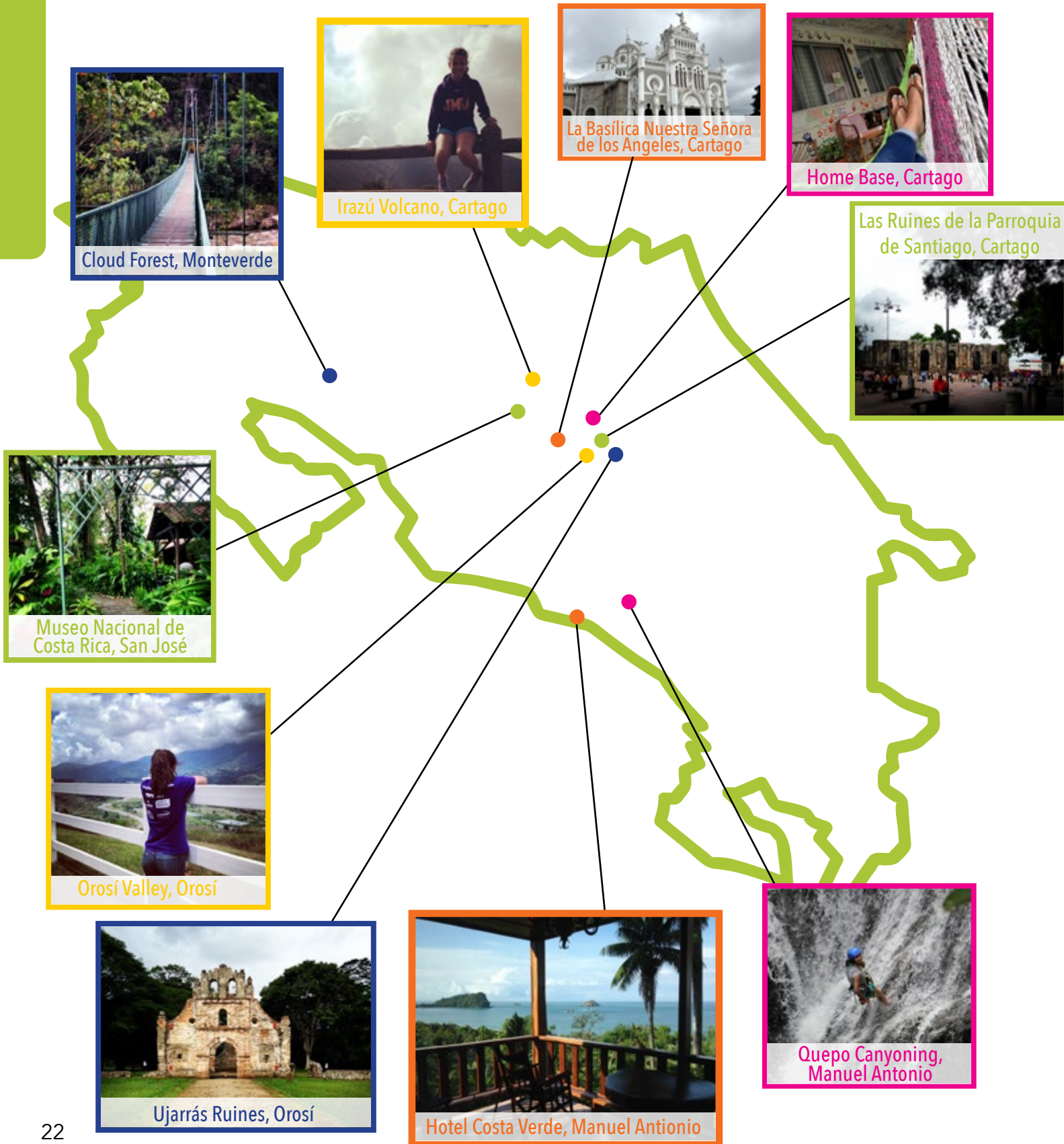
Spanish Phrases

Hello	Hola/Buenos dias
How are you?	¿Cómo está usted?
I'm fine	Estoy bien
Please	Por favor
Thank you	Gracias
May I...?	¿Puedo...?
It's a pleasure	Con mucho gusto
Do you speak Spanish?	¿Habla usted español?
What time do you have?	¿Qué hora tiene?
Do you understand me?	¿Me entiende?
Where do you live?	¿Dónde vive usted?
I live in...	Vivo en...
How much does it cost?	¿Cuánto cuesta?
Where can I find...?	¿Dónde puedo encontrar...?

Translated Costa Rican Spanish Phrases

Pura Vida!	Literally "Pure Life"
Con permiso	Pardon me
Con mucho gusto	You're welcome
Plata	Money or cash
Pesos	Common terms for colones
Por dicha	Luckily or Thankfully
La Buseta	Little Bus (CCS Van)
Abuelito(a)	Little grandparent
Tico	Native of Costa Rica
Largo	Long, but in Costa Rica, also means "far"

My Favorite Spots in Costa Rica





4

Developmental Stages in Children

It's important to know and understand the different age groups you are working with. These children come from diverse backgrounds, but one thing that can link them all together is their age groups. By grouping the children by age and finding activities that fit each age group, you can encourage them to play and work together. The stages outlined in this chapter are general observations and may be different, especially when working with kids with difficult pasts that may have affected their developmental processes. However, keeping these stages in mind can help as you create lesson plans and leading activities.

The Children

"During the period when CCS volunteers teach, more children attend school. Our teachers get experience in the English language, which will help them teach the children. And volunteers build good relationships among children and teachers."

-Teacher from Kilimanjaro, Tanzania

Working with Children

At El Pueblito, you will be interacting with kids of all ages who have come from a variety of backgrounds. You will need to keep age groups and developmental stages in mind when creating activities for the kids. We expect volunteers to have inclusive activities available that can involve all ages. Use the chart on page 25 for guidance in creating activities for different age groups. Keep in mind that every child develops at their own rate!

For instance, you can see on the chart on page 25, children ages four to six tend to want to have new experiences and are eager to learn to be more independent decision-makers. They engage in more complex and imaginative pretend play, and can move about. They can recognize written numerals, count to ten, and begin to learn simple addition and subtraction problems. They know months and seasons, but generally cannot tell time. The best activities for this age group can include pretend play, reading, writing, and basic math. If you need inspiration, check out the Pinterest activity bank in Chapter 6.

If you are working with children aged 8-12, it's important to know they are capable of engaging in more complex

conversations and can concentrate on specific tasks for longer periods of time compared to the younger children. They are becoming more creative and proactive in their problem-solving abilities. Children in this age range begin to feel comfortable seeking out peers or adults for assistance. Their reading, writing, and mathematics skills are more refined and improve greatly with proactive and formal education as they become eager to learn more and build on their various skill sets. To read more about learning with young adults, refer to [page 28](#).

Abandonment and Behavioral Issues

Since you will be working at an orphanage, another issue to keep in mind is working with children with abandonment issues. Many of the children who are at El Pueblito have come from families that have neglected, abused, or mistreated them. The loss of a parent can lead to abandonment issues which can affect the child's psychological development as well. For instance, many children who have experienced abandonment have issues with low self-esteem, anxiety, attachment, depression, as well as other behavioral issues (liverstrong.com).

According to the *Encyclopedia of Children's Health*, infants and toddlers won't understand much about abandonment, but they

Typical Developmental Growth

Here are some general guidelines that might help you understand developmental growth stages when planning activities.

Example Themes for Activities

1

- Babies aged 0-6 months old can begin to relate what they feel with what they see. They can also imitate certain sounds. They have very limited movement but can recognize familiar objects and people.
- Between 7-12 months, babies learn to form more coherent sounds such as "mama" and "dada," and learn to stand without support.

Building Trust
Physical Movement
Imitation

2

- 1- and 2-year-olds are able to crawl or run unsteadily, as well as push and pull toys, dance, and climb.
- They are often able to speak single words and experiment with simple word combinations, although pronunciation can be quite difficult.
- They are able to understand common phrases and simple directions used in routine situations.

Repetition
Textures, Shapes, Colors
Sounds and Rhymes

3

- Children ages 2-3 enjoy using their senses and motor skills to explore the world, are highly curious, and are laying the groundwork for reading and writing.
- They explore all forms of movement from rolling and crawling to jumping and climbing. They begin to play with other children and show new emotions.
- They are gaining control over their voices and can sing the A-B-C song, but will not understand the relationship between the letter names and symbols.

Memory
Song, Dance, and Art
Letters

4

- 3- and 4-year-olds are building on their abilities in terms of language, motor skills, social skills, and concentration.
- They have improved ability to run and climb, and may begin learning to ride a bicycle, throw and catch a ball, and do other large-muscle activities.
- Language skills improve vastly for children ages 3 and 4. They have better pronunciation, a larger vocabulary, and begin to initiate conversations.

Movement
Storytelling
Social Interaction

5

- Children ages 4-6 want to have new experiences and are eager to learn to be more independent decision-makers.
- They engage in more complex and imaginative pretend play, and can move about. They can recognize written numerals, count to ten, and begin to learn simple addition and subtraction problems. They know months and seasons, but generally cannot tell time.
- At age 4, children can communicate in complex compound sentences, expand their vocabularies rapidly, and have fewer pronunciation errors.

Pretend Play
Reading, Writing
Numbers, Basic Math

6

7

- Children ages 6-8 have refined their motor skills enough to perform in sports activities, play musical instruments, etc. They are learning teamwork, while also gaining more confidence in their own skills.
- Six-year-olds may use increasingly more sophisticated methods to solve addition and subtraction problems.
- At this stage, most children begin formal schooling and learn to read aloud with fluency, accuracy, and understanding to enjoy simple texts.

Skill Building
Simple Math Problems
Simple Reading
Sports, Music, Crafts

8

can understand emotional conditions surrounding them. At this stage, "the parent-child relationship continues to be central to the child's sense of security and independence" ([Health of Children](#)).

Preschoolers tend to blame themselves for issues related to abandonment ([Health of Children](#)). This abandonment can sometimes lead to other fears such as being afraid of the dark or of being alone. This can result in behavioral issues where kids will take out their frustration through anger and temper tantrums.

By the time children are in school, they are fully aware of the conditions and emotions that come with abandonment. This can affect their performance in school, their ability to learn, and their relationships with their friends ([Health of Children](#)). It is common for 9-12 year-olds to experience "sadness, loneliness, guilt, lack of self-worth, and self-blame" ([Health of Children](#)). Thirteen- to eighteen-year-olds experience similar feelings but they are more pronounced. This population tends to also experience sexual activity and drug and alcohol abuse early on.

Since abandonment is such a big issue for these children, we ask that volunteers not be overly affectionate or "choose favorites" at the orphanage. Remember that you will be leaving at the end of your trip and that you do not want the kids to get overly attached before you have to go.



You will be working with many different children who all come from different backgrounds.



5

English Language Learning Classroom Management

Some volunteers are placed at local elementary schools in Cartago which primarily contain English Language Learners (ELLs) or special education students. Even if your specific work assignment is not in an education setting, you will find that English instruction is a sought-after skill in many other areas of volunteer work as well. Depending on your placement, you may need to organize more developed lesson plans focused on teaching English to students whose first language is Spanish. We understand that not everyone who will be placed at these locations will have a background in teaching, but don't worry, we have a few resources to get you started!

Our Approach

"Volunteers help with basic English classes. They have a very positive impact on the lives of students, increasing their self-esteem and happiness. It is a great impact! People are proud to say they are learning English."

-Community Center Member in Salvador, Brazil

Classroom Environments

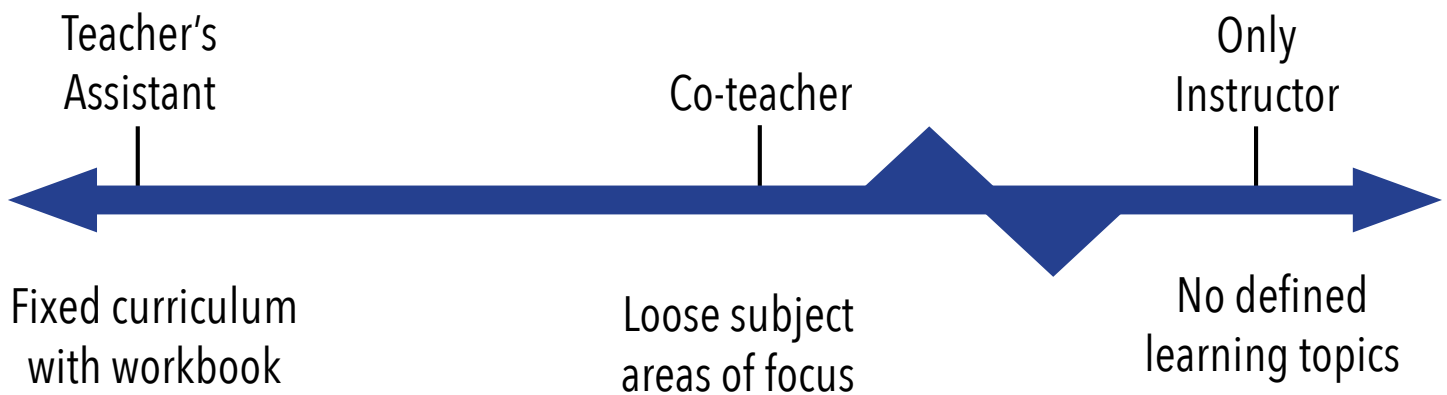
We want to address the different classroom environments you can expect to be immersed in first. Different factors can affect your teaching experience. Think about the following variables and how they would change your experience: the ages of the learners, the classroom setting, and the teaching assignment.

Age of Learners

Each age group has a unique set of abilities. For instance, younger learners can be energetic and more open to learning and young adults can grasp bigger concepts and might be curious about your culture and how it compares to theirs. However, each age group also presents different challenges and you will need to keep these in mind when developing appropriate lesson plans for the particular age group. For instance, younger children can have a short attention span, so they will need lesson plans that are engaging and stimulating. Young adults will also need to be motivated as they might be more hesitant if they make mistakes. Play to the strengths of each age group: use high-energy activity with kids, and practice real-world dialogues and scenarios with young adults.

	Children	Young Adults	Adults
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiastic • Energetic • Open to learning • Unafraid to make mistakes • Excited to show off what they learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More mature than children • Can grasp bigger concepts • Broader world view • Curious about your culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More life experience • Self-motivated to learn • Want to apply their learning • Appreciative of your time
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short attention span • May be shy at first • Will need lots of stimulation • May not be able to place into real-world context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be motivated and engaged • Self-esteem/peer group is more important • Easily embarrassed and hesitant to make mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May get easily frustrated with failure or workload • May be insecure about learning a new language • May second-guess your teaching style

A Volunteer's Role in the Classroom



A volunteer's role can vary depending on his or her location, but it can also change from day to day. Some days you may be asked to lead a lesson, while other days you might assist.

Classroom Setting

Your classroom may not be a classroom at all; some locations may require that you teach lessons to be taught outside or in the gymnasium. Several factors can affect your teaching style: the number of students, the size of the space, the resources available, and the classroom environment. If you are unsure what your typical classroom setting might be while you are in-country, try to brainstorm different ideas and approaches for teaching in different situations.

Teaching Assignment

Depending on your setting, you might be asked to take on different roles. Some locations may require you to act as a teaching assistant while at others you may be the only instructor. Again, there will be variety when it comes to the teaching structure of your class. You may be given set tasks tied to the curriculum or you may be asked to come up with a direction and instruction on your own. Your role may change, even day to day.

As you prepare for your volunteer experience, take into account the various factors that make your teaching assignment unique: the ages of the learners, the classroom setting, and your teaching role. Once you arrive, it'll make it easier to assess what your role as a teacher will entail, but try to research your placement if you can.

It's important to remember that this is where the community has asked for your help! The best advice is to plan for a more unstructured/unsupervised setting than you expect. It's easier to adapt to a more structured setting than vice versa. Plan to have more activities than you think you need.

Your impact as a volunteer

One of the most common requests from countries is to send volunteers who can assist with teaching English. Organizations and their needs can vary widely from community to community and from country to country.

Volunteers' impacts from around the world:

- Volunteers gain self-confidence and reinforcing the excitement of learning
- Volunteers provide support and increase the teachers' morale
- The excitement volunteers bring often increases school attendance
- Volunteers improve the reputation of the school/organization within the community
- Volunteers model a native speaker's accent

The more confident and enthusiastic you are, the more effective you'll be!

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is “a research-based and validated instructional model that has proven effective in addressing the academic needs of English learners throughout the United States” (CAL). The [SIOP website](#) is a good resource for developing lesson plans. One of the resources they have is the [SIOP Interactive Activity Design Template](#). The template focuses on developing lesson plans that revolve around interaction and engagement between the teachers and the students. By using the template, volunteers will be able to create lesson plans that meet curriculum objectives and allow students to have opportunities to clarify concepts they have learned.

SIOP offers lesson plans using a number of strategies and activities that promote interaction:

- Mix and match
- Meet and greet
- Inside-Outside Circle
- Traveling Sorts
- Picture Sequencing
- Stations
- Retelling
- Concept Personification
- Role Play
- Think-Pair-Share

Strategies for English Language Learners

Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share is one good strategy to ensure that everyone is included and engaged. Come up with activities students can work on in groups of two. Then pair the students up and ask them to share their responses and work together. This is a good activity for practicing vocabulary, particularly with colors, time, weather, etc. Some students are hesitant to share what they know to a bigger group because they are unsure or are afraid of getting embarrassed. Pairing them up with each other is a good way for students to share in smaller groups, and it gets everyone engaged. You can then walk around and address developmental needs in the small groups, if needed. To further extend the Think-Pair-Share lesson format in other variations, read some of the suggestions SIOP has [here](#).

Total Physical Response

Another way to get everyone involved is to lead an activity in front of the students and have them physically respond to questions or statements. For instance, you can hold up cards and ask the children to point to which color is red. You can also use whiteboards to get the students writing and participating. This is a good way to get the children engaged and moving and you will be able to identify which students aren't understanding the concepts without them feeling like they need to speak up.

Use Visuals to Contextualize Learning

Using images and symbols gives students a picture to associate with words. A good activity to test understanding is to include a picture with a word in English and ask your students to fill in what the word would be in Spanish. You can also have the older students help the younger students do the writing to get all age groups involved. Incorporating Spanish into these lessons can help the students hook on to what they already know and practice their native language as well.

Smile

Make sure you are enthusiastic, engaging, and smiling! Your positive personality establishes trust and safety and makes the children feel more comfortable. If you're excited to be there, they will be excited to learn with you.

Interactive Design Example

This template was adapted from the SIOP website and is intended for nonprofit educational use. Use these templates as guides when coming up with lesson plan designs for your class. The template is also located [here](#).

Lesson Goals: What is the purpose of this lesson? What should students learn by the end?

Content Goal: Help younger students to demonstrate an understanding of simple vocabulary (colors, animals, etc).
Language Goal: Have students identify pictures in Spanish and English.

Interactive Activity: Describe the activity. Use the list on page 30 for help in including everyone.

Think-Pair-Share: Partner up the students. Give each pair either a whiteboard or paper and a marker. Hold up flashcards with images of colors, animals, body parts, etc. The cards can have the word listed in Spanish too, but have the students identify the word in English and write them on their boards. Have the students hold up their white boards or paper when they have their answers.

Group Configurations: Who is working together? What age range is the activity intended for?

Have the kids partner themselves up. If there are younger and older kids within the group, try to match up older kids with younger kids so the older ones can do the writing for the younger ones. If you know the students' reading levels, you can also match up the more advanced English speakers with the ones that are still learning.

Ideas for Academic Interactions: What questions will you ask? How should you and the students be interacting?

Let's hold up the boards. What word did you write down?
Let's say this word out loud in Spanish.... (repeat)
Let's say this word out loud in English.... (repeat)
How would you spell this word?
Can you use it in a sentence?

Blank Design Example

This template was adapted from the SIOP website and is intended for nonprofit educational use. Use these templates as guides when coming up with lesson plan designs for your class. The template is also located [here](#).

Lesson Goals: What is the purpose of this lesson? What should students learn by the end?

Interactive Activity: Describe the activity. Use the list on page 30 for help in including everyone.

Group Configurations: Who is working together? What age range is the activity intended for?

Ideas for Academic Interactions: What questions will you ask? How should you and the students be interacting?



6

Activity Bank

Look us up on [Pinterest](#)! You can also search "CCS-Costa Rica" on Pinterest, and you will find account that has several boards containing information and resources that might be useful for your trip abroad. You will find five boards: Crafts, Coloring Pages, Learn Spanish, Teaching English, and Inspiration. In order to view these boards, you will need a Pinterest account. Upon searching for the account, you may be prompted to make an account. All you will need to do is input your email and you can view the boards. We suggest you browse through these boards prior to your arrival in Cartago.

Inspiration

"I brought my passion and my energy to this amazing place; that was my gift to them. I just never expected to get so much in return."

–Stephen Thompson, volunteer

CCS-Costa Rica Pinterest

Pinterest is a social network that allows users to post and explore various topics other users have "pinned." Once a user creates an account, they develop their own lists of boards based on their interests. If the user wants to post items that interest them, they can "pin" them to a specific board. Items can include anything from pictures to activities, videos, or websites. If users want to search for items that interest them, they can then collect other posts pinned by other users on their specific boards. This allows users to share and collect various resources that interest them.

The CCS-Costa Rica Pinterest is mainly an activity bank that contains different ideas for activities for the children as well as resources for teaching and learning Spanish. Home Base should have most of the supplies you need for these activities. If there are supplies that you need that Home Base doesn't have, let a CCS representative know and they can purchase whatever you need at a nearby store. Please also keep the [Donations and Gift-Giving Policy](#) in mind.

Please do not bring or donate any supplies to Home Base.

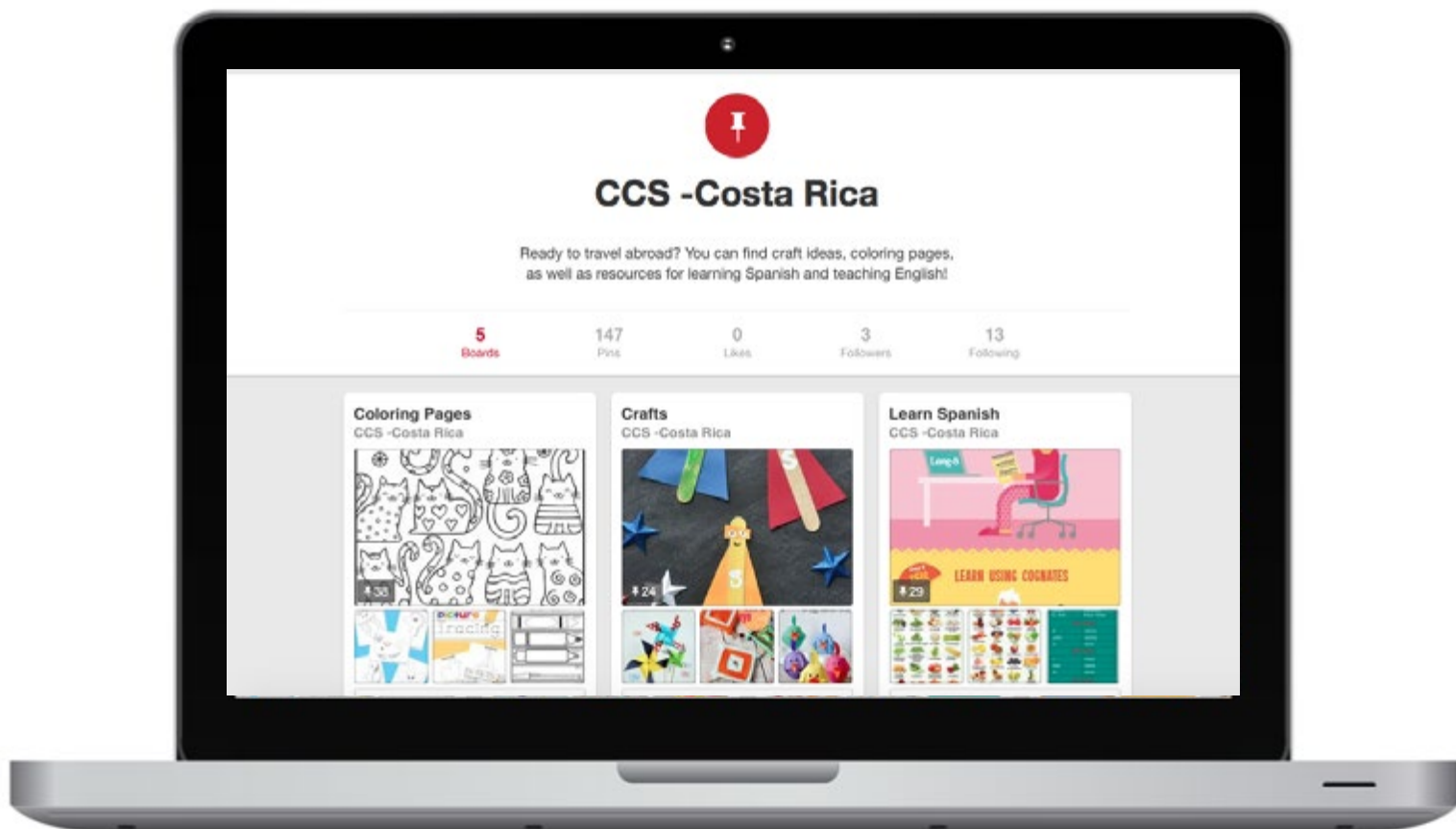
Coloring Pages

The Coloring Pages board consists of many resources for finding free printable pages the kids can color. The description for each pin will tell you a suggested gender and age range for the coloring pages, but can vary. Just make sure you bring coloring pages that would interest boys and girls of all ages! The description will also tell you about how long the activity will take.

You should have these coloring pages printed by a CCS representative at least one day before you go to El Pueblito. Make sure to bring enough for everyone too! I suggest to bring 30-40 pages just to be safe. Don't forget to bring along coloring supplies such as markers, pens, pencils, and chalk as well. This is a great activity to get the kids to wind down after playing or just to have for those that don't want to participate in physical activities. Try to encourage involvement, but if the kids are resistant, see if Juvel can help.

Crafts

The Crafts board also lists various activities and crafts that volunteers can bring to the orphanage. Similar to the Coloring Pages board, each description contains a title, a suggested



gender and age range for the activity, an estimated amount of time for how long the activity will last, and what supplies are needed for the activity.

You will want to plan ahead for these activities. Make sure that you have all of the supplies needed for each activity. If the Home Base doesn't have all of the supplies you need, notify a CCS representative and her or she can get them from a nearby store. We suggest that you pack your bags for these activities the night before.

Learn Spanish

The Learn Spanish board contains resources for you to brush up on your Spanish before arriving to Cartago. There are resources for all different levels of Spanish speakers. You may want to learn some vocabulary specific to educational activities for your lesson plans and activities at El Pueblito. You will have Spanish lessons at Home Base to help with communicating in-country, but these resources might help you expand your vocabulary.

Being familiar with the language will help you communicate with kids and Doñas at the orphanage, locals around town, and CCS workers at Home Base.


Teaching English

Some of the activities you lead at the orphanage will involve teaching English to the kids. This board contains some activities directed toward English Language Learners and primarily focus on teaching English as a second language. There are activities for different ages and levels of knowledge of English.

You may also be asked to work with the students on their homework. This board also includes resources for teaching strategies and the importance of learning a second language.

Inspiration

Finally, there is an Inspiration board that has quotations and pictures about traveling abroad and teaching. Some of these quotations and pictures are from former volunteers. Read about



the difference you can make with your trip abroad.

Cross-Cultural Solutions Pinterest

In addition to the CCS-Costa Rica Pinterest page, Cross-Cultural Solutions runs a Pinterest for the entire organization. It contains more inspiration boards as well as pictures from each Home Base location. Cross-Cultural Solutions aims to create a sense of improved understanding and shared humanity in the world through international volunteer opportunities. Check out or follow [this account](#) for more inspiration and information about what we do!



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