



## **Program Director Handbook** **2018-2019**

Manna Project International's Program Directors lead a variety of impactful programs designed to meet the specific needs and opportunities of underserved communities in Nicaragua or Ecuador. MPI's Program Directors live and work together in their country of service, partnering with other young leaders and community members for periods of 5 to 13 months.

MPI's model creates a one-of-a-kind, impactful experience for our Program Directors and the communities we serve, and provides a unique opportunity to expand and build upon leadership skills while experiencing the challenges and rewards of international community development. The successful Program Director candidate is a self-starter, flexible, patient, creative, and proactive in problem solving. If these traits describe you, you are perfect for this job – apply today!

### **Why become a Program Director?**

Gain international experience.

Learn another language.

Improve your leadership abilities.

Learn about another culture and customs.

Apply your passions, skills, and knowledge.

Learn about yourself and others from the shared living/working environment.

Gain hands on experience with community development.

Immerse yourself in another culture.

Surround yourself with interesting people.

Use your passion to impact a community.

Change your life.

Change someone else's.

Many Program Directors go on to work in medicine, law, development, the greater non-profit sector, education, business and international politics. All alumni find the experience relevant to both personal and professional growth.

## I. About Manna Project

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

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

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

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



# Manna Project International

Communities Serving Communities

## II. History

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

After visiting Nicaragua several times and making connections with others on the ground, the four friends established Manna Project International as an IRS-recognized nonprofit organization, and began recruiting other college graduates to commit to working in Managua for one year. In September 2004, MPI's first group of eleven recent graduates arrived in Managua. The experiences and friendships from that first year of service forever changed their perspectives and outlooks on life. As the year drew to a close, students from the next class of graduating seniors arrived to transition into the community and the Program Director position was born. While the faces have changed, MPI's Nicaragua site now reaches more than 4,200 people through 13 programs, including two health clinics, serving the communities of Cedro Galán, Chiquilistagua and Villa Guadalupe.

In September 2007, Manna Project's second international site was launched in Ecuador, one hour outside the capital of Quito. MPI Ecuador started as an after-school program for over 30 children in the small, high-needs community of San Francisco, and was operated in partnership with another non-profit. The first Ecuador group worked closely with a local financial cooperative to better understand the circumstances and prevalent needs in the community and its surrounding areas. After a year of research and relationship building, MPI leadership made plans to open a community center and library in nearby Rumiloma. In March 2009, the center opened. Today it is a vibrant gathering place and serves more than 1,200 community members through 16 programs and many local partnerships.

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



# Manna Project International

## Communities Serving Communities

### III. Vision

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

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

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

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

### Ways To Partner with MPI

#### International Involvement

- Work with fellow members of the international team to implement community development programs
- Create opportunities for growth and education in our partner communities
- Broaden your understanding of current global issues
- Define your personal career goals
- Focus on your professional development through hands-on experience

#### Domestic Involvement

- Establish MPI chapters in U.S. universities and colleges
- Build bridges between universities and communities
- Engage with current students and faculty through local service opportunities
- Take part in short-term international development opportunities
- Encourage community programming events



# Manna Project International

## Communities Serving Communities

### Partner Organizations

- Network with international organizations on behalf of MPI
- Assist in supporting and sustaining the efforts of partner organizations also working with MPI's partner communities

## IV. MPI Program Director Roles

Program Directors (PDs) run the day-to-day operations of MPI's community programs on the ground in Ecuador and Nicaragua. PDs live and work together with a team of up to twelve other Program Directors. Program Directors contribute to the organization's program design, implementation of new projects, monitoring and evaluation, short-term volunteer oversight, recruitment, financial oversight, grant writing, fundraising, social media, public relations, and donor relations. Program Directors have five primary roles for the:

1. Running community programs
2. Managing organizational operations
3. Raising awareness in the U.S. of international issues
4. Hosting short-term volunteers and training incoming Program Directors
5. Building relationships with local organizations and community members

### 1) Program Directors Run Community Programs

MPI believes in the initiatives of its Program Directors, and grants them a large amount of responsibility and independence. While working as a team, Program Directors implement projects and hold each other accountable. Future MPI Program Directors are responsible for the continuation of all existing programs. Therefore, education, experience and interest in specific programmatic areas are especially useful. It is also imperative that Program Directors have a keen awareness of the background and purpose of each program. Each new Program Director has the ability to enhance programs throughout the year to ensure that MPI continues to meet the greatest needs of the community. Additionally, with a focus on sustainable impact, many of our programs are run hand-in-hand with local community leaders, giving Program Directors the opportunity to develop both personal and professional cross-cultural relationships.

### 2) Program Directors Manage Organizational Operations

Program Directors are given the unique and strategic opportunity to gain real-world experience in key areas of nonprofit management. As Program Directors are trained and select organizational roles in their areas of interest, MPI is able to continue organizational operations with a small staff team. Program Directors utilize their time and talents on site to assist with the ongoing operations of the organization, including but not limited to:

- Recruitment
- Marketing
- Fundraising



- Grant writing
- Record keeping

### **3) Program Directors Raise Awareness**

Since the ability to spend an extended period of time abroad is a privilege that few get to experience, MPI Program Directors act as a liaison between MPI's international sites and the USA by sharing their experiences with others. As Program Directors raise financial support they are also responsible for raising awareness of MPI's mission and the international issues it seeks to address. Program Directors are encouraged to keep in close contact with their supporters through social media, monthly newsletters, and journal entries published on the MPI blog, and to share about their work with MPI through presentations and slideshows at home.

### **4) Program Directors Host Short-term Volunteers & Train Incoming Program Directors**

To further raise awareness of international issues, MPI Program Directors act as hosts for short-term volunteers and groups visiting MPI's international sites. Program Directors are responsible for corresponding with interested individuals or groups regarding the realization of such trips. Short-term trips provide an opportunity for participants to see and experience both the beauty and the injustices of developing countries. Furthermore, this time gives potential MPI applicants a glimpse of what a long-term commitment with MPI would involve.

During the final month of a Program Director's commitment they are entrusted with the transition of programs to the incoming team. Current Program Directors must introduce incoming ones to the community, train them appropriately, and turn over the responsibilities of the existing MPI programs.

### **5) Building Relationships with Local Organizations & Community Members**

Relationships are at the foundation of who we are as an organization and all that we do. We believe that positive change and sustainable impact is most effective and abundant in the presence of mutual trust and respect. In order to build and gain trust, MPI's Program Directors must know the community members where they are working, and likewise, the community members must know the Program Directors. As such, we believe that spending time in the community building relationships is a vital part of the Program Director job.

## V. Program Director Timeline

	5-month (July 2018- December 2018)	13-month (July 2018- August 2019)	7-month (January 2019- August 2019)	12-month (January 2019- December 2019)
Contract and \$500 deposit due	Three weeks after acceptance	Three weeks after acceptance	Three weeks after acceptance	Three weeks after acceptance
Minimum funds raised	\$2000 by July 15, 2018	\$4500 by July 15, 2018	\$3000 by Jan 5, 2019	\$4500 by Jan 5, 2019
International site arrival* <i>(followed by language school and on-site orientation)</i>	July 15, 2018	July 15, 2018	January 5, 2019	January 5, 2019
Minimum raised	N/A	\$6500 by Dec 1, 2019	\$5000 by April 1, 2019	\$6500 by July 15, 2019
Winter break for personal travel	N/A	December 15, 2018 - January 5, 2019	N/A	N/A
Total raised/pledged	\$4500 by Oct 1, 2018	\$9100 by Feb 1, 2019	\$6300 by June 1, 2019	\$8400 by Oct 1, 2019
Group contract ends*	December 15, 2018	August 15, 2019	August 15, 2019	December 15, 2019

\*Exceptions to dates must be presented to the MPI office for approval

## VI. Structure & Responsibilities

### MPI Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has the legal responsibility and authority to oversee the affairs of Manna Project International, Inc. The Board is responsible for maintaining the mission and vision of the organization, including setting the direction and policies for the organization, overseeing finances and fundraising, and linking the organization to others in the nonprofit and business community.

### MPI Staff

MPI's staff includes our Executive Director, US support staff, and the Country Directors at each MPI site. MPI Staff report to the Executive Director, and the Executive Director reports to the Board. The Country Directors are responsible for local program oversight and the realization of MPI's organization-wide mission, vision, and near-term goals. The Country Director serves as executive



# Manna Project International

## Communities Serving Communities

director of the organization at his or her site, and is responsible for the daily and long-term management and administration of the organization there. Daily responsibilities of the Country Directors include any and all tasks necessary to maintain and improve the operations of the organization. This includes but is not limited to: legal operations, financial record keeping, community relations, program oversight, partner organization relations, and regular communication and accountability with Program Directors and short-term volunteers.

### On-Site Organizational Program Director Jobs

At the beginning of the year, the new Program Directors determine which organizational roles they are interested in pursuing, including Recruitment, Grant Writing, Donor Relations, Marketing and others. These roles help split up the responsibility of running MPI, and give our Program Directors the chance to see how nonprofits function internally.

### Decisions

MPI Program Directors are responsible for the daily operations of the organization on-site and have significant decision-making latitude within programs and projects. Most decisions are made collaboratively at weekly meetings.

### Vacation

MPI allots three weeks of vacation over Winter Break. During the year, Program Directors are allowed one to two weeks (5 to 10 days) of vacation time depending on the length of their commitment. Vacation days are days off from programs that must be planned in coordination with the rest of the team. Our international sites also observe 10 holidays, which can provide additional days off throughout the year as long as they don't conflict with the presence of visiting Spring Break groups or Summer Interns.

### Work Expectations

MPI is successful because of the self-motivation and self-discipline of its Program Directors. Although projects do not run an entire day, MPI Program Directors are expected to maintain a normal workday. This means spending time daily working on grants, fundraising, recruiting, lesson planning, project updates, personal updates, and various other jobs. There is always something to be done to further our organization, and we trust our growth to the Program Directors' ability to self-inspire. Through Program Directors are responsible for their own schedule and pacing outside of programs, they are expected to work a 40 hour week and to think and behave as professionals fulfilling the requirements of the Program Director job description.



## **VIII. Group Living Commitment**

MPI Program Directors live together in a designated MPI house. In Ecuador, Program Directors live fifteen minutes (by bus) from the communities Rumiloma, Tena, and San Francisco. In Nicaragua, the Program Directors live in a house located five minutes (by car) from Chiquilistagua and Cedro Galán. At both sites, the house serves as a home and office. This unique living/working environment demands a great deal of patience, but in return provides meaningful interpersonal and professional development opportunities.

### **Purpose**

Living and working with people who share the same interest in development provides a home-base support network and establishes a network of in-country partners. In living together, Program Directors are challenged to evaluate and appreciate many different motivations and approaches to international community development. In addition, the shared living and working environment helps prepare college graduates for future professional endeavors by strengthening their cooperation, communication, leadership and relational skills.

### **Personal Time**

House life provides a support network for Program Directors while simultaneously encouraging them to foster relationships in the community and outside of the MPI team. Since a great deal of time is spent at the house--eating meals, planning programs, and conducting meetings--flexibility, patience, and sensitivity are essential.

### **Cultural Immersion**

Outside of language school and short-term homestays throughout their service, the level of cultural immersion experienced by an MPI participant depends upon his or her own efforts. Program Directors have the unique opportunity of entering into an established, trusting relationship between MPI and the communities in which we work. As stewards of these relationships for future generations of Program Directors, participants have many opportunities to participate in local day-to-day life and become integrated in Nicaraguan or Ecuadorian life.

## **IX. Expectations & General Rules**

### **Attitude and Personal Presentation**

The actions and words of MPI's Program Directors reflect on our home country and on our organization. Program Directors are expected to be positive and open minded to local cultural norms. This requires flexibility when things are not easy or efficient, as well as enthusiasm and an openness to try new activities, foods, and experiences. It also means being respectful of others' beliefs and values, whether community members or other MPI staff.

### Living & Workload

MPI Program Directors live with the rest of the MPI staff for the entire duration of their program. A spacious and comfortable house with many conveniences will be provided. The Program Director position is a full-time, 40 hour/week job. Participants focus the majority of their efforts towards developing MPI's programs in partner communities. Additional personal projects are highly encouraged, but are to be pursued outside of working hours. Program Directors will hold themselves and their colleagues accountable to this expectation.

### Financial Responsibility

Program Directors are required to fulfill all financial obligations by designated deadlines.

### Lifestyle Habits

MPI participants must abide by all laws of the country in which they reside. Additionally, volatile habits such as drug use or excessive drinking are prohibited while working for MPI. Such habits create unnecessary problems within the team and the community. Drug use and excessive drinking will not be tolerated. MPI is authorized to terminate a contract with a Program Director, without refund, if this policy is violated.

### Marital Status

MPI Program Directors live in a group setting, with sleeping quarters divided by gender. Couples are discouraged from applying as MPI upholds this policy to prevent discomforts within the household and the community. For this reason, couples are discouraged from applying.

## X. Financial Obligation

### Finances

Program Directors raise funds to cover living expenses, travel insurance, professional development, and operational costs. Since expenses are distributed across the committed timeframe, the monthly cost varies according to the volunteer commitment length. The following monthly expense breakdown is an average across sites. Specific monthly breakdowns vary by international site and number of Program Directors on site each semester.

Monthly Expense Breakdown	Semester (5-7 months)	Full Year (12-13 months)
Living Expenses (room & board, transportation, visas)	\$600	\$500
International Travel Insurance	\$50	\$50
Professional Development	\$100	\$50
Operating Expenses (on-site & US)	\$150	\$100
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$900/month</b>	<b>\$700/month</b>

\*This monthly expense breakdown is an average across sites. Specific monthly breakdowns vary by international site and number of Program Directors on site.

### **Confidentiality**

Financial information will be kept strictly confidential between MPI's administration and each Program Director. Financial updates will be sent twice a month to each staff member aware of fundraising progress.

### **Donor Follow-Up**

Fundraising reports not only update Program Directors on progress; reports also provide donor contact information so that Program Directors may thank supporters in a timely manner. We do our best to thank every donor, but it is vital that the Program Director also personally thank their supporters. Program Directors are expected to follow up with thank you letters to their supporters.

### **Travel & Language School (*optional*)**

Program Directors may choose to raise additional funds beyond the minimum financial commitment for their term. Additional funds can be used to cover travel and extra language school. These funds may only be accessed by the participant on the basis of a reimbursement and cannot exceed \$3,000 in total.

To receive a reimbursement, receipts must be presented to MPI's Director of Finance with a description of the expense. Travel expenses will only be granted if the travel is MPI-related, with a maximum of two round-trip flights not exceeding \$2500 total. MPI-related travel includes traveling to and from your respective site at the beginning and end of the term, as well as one additional trip during winter break or another approved vacation time. For all other travel (i.e. job interviews, weddings, etc.), Program Directors must purchase their own airfare and may not be reimbursed by MPI. Excess and unused money at the end of the Program Director's term will go toward the MPI general fund unless designated to a specific program by the Program Director.

### **Designations**

Donations should be made out to "Manna Project International" and include the Program Director's name and site in the subject line. Contributions to the Program Director amounting to more than the required amount will automatically be available for reimbursements for travel and language school.

### **Fundraising**

MPI offers resources and support to Program Directors as they raise the necessary funds. We know fundraising can be an arduous process, and we have many years of experience helping Program Directors come up with fundraising options to meet their goals:



# Manna Project International

Communities Serving Communities

## *Personal Support Letters*

Although it can be difficult to ask for financial support, friends and family often find it a privilege to support the MPI experience. Fundraising brochures and examples of personal support letters are available to accepted applicants upon request.

## *Corporate Support*

Approaching small and large businesses is another proven and effective fundraising mechanism. Coupling your request with a detailed fundraising proposal can increase likelihood of success, and is a skill that many future employers deem valuable.

## *Fundraising Events*

Many MPI participants have hosted successful fundraising events such as golf tournaments, auctions, and dinners. With good organization and foresight, these events can raise significant support for individuals and for specific programs.

## *Grant Writing*

There are many third-party grants and fellowships available to individuals entering into long-term volunteering projects. Granting foundations are looking for qualified applicants, and funding is within reach. Researching individual grants and completing well-written, comprehensive proposals can be well worth the effort. MPI alumni experienced in grant writing are available to help Program Directors design effective proposals. For more info on grant opportunities, visit our [Scholarship and Grant Opportunities page on our website](#). MPI does not provide grant templates or sample applications, as each grant application is tailored to the requirements of the granting organization.

## **Financial Deadlines**

Program Directors are responsible for meeting all financial obligations by the stated deadlines. (Please review the Applicant Timeline on page 8. Participants who encounter problems fulfilling these deadlines may contact the Executive Director with their concerns. Any failure by a participant to meet the specified deadlines can result in the termination of their contract and they will forfeit their personal stipend until they are caught up.

**Note:** All donations to Manna Project International are tax-deductible. Upon receiving a donation, MPI's administration will send out the necessary receipt for claiming tax exemption. However, MPI participants can NOT receive tax-exemption for personal checks written to cover their own program expenses.



# Manna Project International

Communities Serving Communities

**All donations should be mailed from the donor directly to the MPI US Office:**

**Manna Project International  
PO Box 536144  
Orlando, FL 32853**

## **XI. MPI Program Director Contract**

Upon acceptance, MPI Program Directors will receive an MPI Program Director Welcome Packet. This packet includes a Program Director Contract, which must be signed and returned with the participant's initial \$500 deposit to secure placement.

## **XII. Final Words**

Manna Project is confident that its Program Directors will be forever changed through their experiences with MPI. We are passionate about helping our Program Directors discover and develop their personal and professional goals while simultaneously improving health, education and livelihoods outlooks in the communities we serve.

For additional information, questions, comments, or concerns,  
please contact us at:

615.290.5746 or [apply@mannaproject.org](mailto:apply@mannaproject.org)