MPI Young Leadership Committee
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. What is the MPI Young Leadership Committee
II. What does the committee do?
III. Requirements of a committee member
IV. What are the Benefits?
V. About Manna Project
VI. History
VII. Vision
VIII. Approach and Objectives
IX. Where we Work
X. Current Programs
XI. Contact Information
I. What Is the MPI Young Leadership Committee?

The MPI Young Leadership Committee is a group of young professionals (both MPI alumni and those who are newly familiar with MPI) committed to supporting MPI’s mission by raising funds and awareness for the organization, all while navigating a newly founded young leadership committee and their specific leadership role within the committee. Members will work within their communities and MPI’s community to energize and engage these networks to support MPI’s mission.

II. What Does the committee do?

- Organize and assist with MPI Events
- Come up with creative ways in bridging the gap between MPI alumni and MPI as an organization
  - Ideas: PD Scholarship, Alumni mentor program
- Raise awareness of MPI and its programs by volunteering time and expertise in social media, marketing, accounting, granting writing, etc.
- Raise critical funds by starting a new MPI fundraising event or campaign in your local community
- Engage your network with MPI’s work by encouraging others to volunteer, advocate, and raise funds

III. Requirements of committee members

- Sign and adhere to the commitment agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities of a Young Leadership Committee Member
- One year minimum commitment
- Time commitment of 3-5 hours/month
- Each committee member to commit to an overall minimum fundraising goal of $1,000 during the MPI budgetary year. Here are some examples:
  - 10k/ Half Marathon
  - Hosting a fundraising dinner/happy hour
  - Online campaign (MightyCause, Gofundme, etc.)
  - University alumni event
  - Get creative! We love new ideas!
- Participate in quarterly calls (more if necessary) with committee members
- Host or assist with planning an MPI event at least once a year
IV. What Are The Benefits?

Young Leadership Committee Members have the chance to take on a very important leadership role with MPI and gain resume-building experience. You will also be connected to the growing MPI alumni network that consists of over 250 former program directors and over 1,800 former volunteers that can assist you in furthering your career.

Other benefits include:

- Growth in leadership skills, international development, recruitment, fundraising and marketing
- Opportunity to have direct and lasting impact on MPI
- Leadership experience for your resume
- Access to the Manna Project International network of professionals, alumni and board members
- Opportunity to shape the direction of new committee
- Marketing/PR support from the MPI team
- Letter of recommendation or reference
- Learn how a nonprofit board operates

V. About Manna Project

As an Young Leadership Committee Member, it is important for you to have a solid understanding of MPI as an organization, our history, and the programs we offer.

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.

VI. 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 2,750 people through 13 programs and 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 1,700 community members through 12 programs and many local partnerships.

In January 2010, a feasibility team identified Chaquijyà, 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 Chaquijyà due to low volunteer demand for programs in Guatemala. Though MPI is not currently operating in Guatemala, strong community relationships remain.

VII. 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 three, five, seven, or 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

**VIII. Approach & Objectives**

MPI aims for a holistic approach to community development, with an emphasis on personal relationships. Recognizing that aspects of development are interrelated, MPI operates a variety of types of programs and projects, working with people of all ages in various aspects of their lives. MPI focuses its efforts on a defined geographical community, encouraging its volunteers to become a part of this local community. This broad approach enables those with diverse passions and skills to work together towards addressing the specific challenges and assets of the targeted community.

**IX. Where We Work**

**Ecuador**

Located in the northwest corner of South America, Ecuador is one of the region’s richest and poorest countries: overflowing with natural resources, but struggling with a poverty rate of over 23% in 2018. The poverty rate has decreased over the past few years with better regulations and more job opportunities. Its capital, Quito, lies in between the two ridges of the Andes Mountains. The mountain ridges divide Ecuador into four distinct areas, the Pacific coastal plains flanking the highlands on one side, the Andes region in the middle of the ranges, and the Amazon jungle spreading eastward towards Brazil on the other. Roughly 600 km to the west, you find the Galapagos Islands, the fourth region of Ecuador. Such geographic diversity does not imply size: tiny Ecuador is only the size of Colorado. The Andes region where MPI works is a mix of Spanish,
indigenous, and American influence, with an increasing number of immigrants from Ecuador's coast, Colombia and Cuba adding to the mix.

MPI Ecuador serves the Chillos Valley, specifically the adjacent communities of Rumiloma, Tena, San Francisco, Fajardo and Santa Isabel. The Manna Community Center and Library are located in Rumiloma, a formerly rural agricultural community that is being beginning to be influenced by developing urban areas nearby. The community is a mix of small family farms and local businesses, with suburban housing developments rapidly cropping up. As development advances nearby, these small neighborhoods are being overlooked and are the last to receive basic education, sanitation and utility coverage. This area is a perfect example of the overwhelming income disparity in Ecuador.

**IX. Current Programs**

**Ecuador:**

**Community Center & Library:**

MPI Ecuador runs a public lending library which doubles as our community center where the majority of our programs are run. The library has a full range of books for children, teens, and adults, as well as a reference section. Community members are invited to check out books and read them in the comfort of their own homes. The library continues to grow through grants and other book donations. On a daily basis, kids can be found doing crafts with Program Directors, playing UNO, or spending time on the computer games. The community center houses a variety of “in-house” programs, including reading hours, hosting community events, and a computer lab reserved for homework help for children. The weekly programs hosted under the umbrella of our community center are constantly changing based on the needs of the community and Program Director interest, but the main idea is that the space be a hub for adults and children alike to come together and grow as a community. Program Directors at the Ecuador site will have weekly shifts in the Community Center either leading games and in charge of the children, or hosting the homework hours and helping kids complete their homework. While daily community center functioning is always subject to change, some daily programs have included:

- Activity/Sports hour
- Reading hour
- Craft hour
- Chess Club
- Women's Group
- Professional Development trainings
- Workshops through our partner organizations and community members
- Adult Exercise
Teen Center:
The Teen Center is a special space within the library, where only kids who are 12 years of age or older are allowed to enter. The exclusivity of the space makes it more enticing for teens, and younger kids are eager for the day they can pass the threshold. Within the space, teens have access to video games, ping-pong, board games, speakers, guitars, and a comfy reading space. They also get to hang out with one another and have access to the Program Director’s guidance and knowledge. The Teen Center is a safe space for teens, providing them with healthy forms of entertainment away from alcohol and drugs. In addition to the daily resources available in the Teen Center, we also hold monthly movie nights and regular field trips for the teens.

Adult English:
We currently have five levels of English classes for adults. Classes are taught in the Manna library for three hours on Saturday mornings. Many of these classes reinforce the basics and help community members better prepare for job opportunities. These classes tend to be fun and interactive and involve lots of speaking and listening exercises.

Children’s English:
We offer four levels of Children’s English. PDs teach Children’s English twice weekly in the library, for an hour and a half each class. There is an additional English Club on Saturdays for kids to come and do fun activities to reinforce what they learned during the week.

Program Directors also host weekly English Clubs at local public schools. By offering the club format, Program Directors are able to teach English through fun, dynamic activities and the students learn more about MPI’s other program offerings.

Children’s Art & Adult Drawing:
Children’s Art is held on Friday’s from four to five pm during Library hours. Past semester topics have focused on art in South American countries. The current semester is covering famous artists and their styles. There are occasionally art projects set up during Library hours for everyone to participate in to offer something different for the regulars.

Exercise:
Two days a week, Program Directors lead different exercise classes for adults in the community. The classes, based off of Program Directors’ experience and passions, often include Yoga and “bailoterapia” or dance therapy. In June 2012, Program Directors organized MPI Ecuador’s first annual 5k race in Rumiloma, which has continued annually.
Children’s Healthy Living Class (Health & Nutrition):
Program Directors teach a weekly healthy living class to children who come to the Centro. The class begins with a topic about preventative health such as good hand washing skills, oral hygiene, etc. and then the children are introduced to a healthy recipe that they prepare and eat together. This is one of the Centro participants’ favorite classes - they get a snack! Similarly, this class often includes two hours a week of sports or active games for kids. This includes everything from playing dodgeball to yoga and allows the kids that frequent the community center a chance to get rid of some energy!

Adult Cooking & Nutrition:
The Adult Cooking & Nutrition class is held weekly on Saturdays in our Centro kitchen space. Class begins with a discussion on preventative health measures through healthy eating habits. Each week’s discussion is designed to address common health issues and nutrition problems in Ecuador. After the discussion, the class prepares a healthy recipe, made with ingredients that are affordable and readily available in the area. Participants get to eat the food they prepare, and take the recipe home to use with their family. The last Saturday of every month we ask the Ecuadorians to share a recipe with us and learn their cooking techniques.

Partner Organizations:
Antorcha de la Vida:
MPI partners with a local foundation, Antorcha de la Vida, where we work weekly with their students in their physical therapy. All students at Antorcha are special needs either through physical or mental disabilities. Program Directors assist in water therapy and activities alongside the visiting doctor or therapists.

ESPE (Escuela Superior Politecnica del Ejercito) and UNPK (United Nations Peace Keepers):
Program Directors lead weekly English Speaking Clubs at the local university (ESPE) and with the UNPK (military base). There is not a set curriculum for these clubs; each is designed to offer the participants an opportunity to practice their oral and listening English skills. Often Program Directors will bring an article related to current events or watch a short video or news clip and then discuss the information with the participants. Participants of each group are higher-level English speakers and therefore the Program Directors offer the opportunity for them to practice with native speakers.

Chaupitena (elementary/high school):
Ecuador PDs teach weekly Clubs and assist with English classes at local high school Chaupitenan, which is within walking distance of the community center. PDs offer fun, dynamic activities focused on improving English skills, or participating in whatever other club that will take place during the year. Previous examples have included chess club, nutrition club, and English club. Many of the students PDs work with are senior students who will go on to college and we hope to improve their chances of scoring high on the college entrance exams. Similarly, we have hosed college tours and events with graduating students to generate interest with the local university.

Hogar de la Madre Soltera:
This is a local foundation run by nuns from the Catholic Church that houses young girls who have been victims of sexual abuse. All of the girls have children or are pregnant as a result of their attacks and are living in this shelter either placed there by their families or by the court. We assist the women's house by providing morning hours twice a week, once a week teaching English and the other day spent on team-building exercises or providing workshops on how to play with children.

Gotitas del Saber:
This is a local Daycare center where a PD goes one morning a week to help preschool children learn English and essentially to play. The program is government funded and enjoys help and support from Manna. The program is really receptive to PD's and the previous PD put a lot of time into developing this relationship.

XI. Contact Information

Jackie Kinsella
Development Director
jackie@mannaproject.org