

GUATEMALA COMMUNITY TEAM TREK GUIDE

2019



Welcome Paperwork and Medical
Pre Trek Preparations About Guatemala
Articles of Interest In the Community
Post Trek

Next year's Trek Guide could have your Trek photo on the cover!

HOW TO ENTER: Please email your Top 3 Trek Photos to your Trek Leader after returning home. Winners are usually selected in October for the following year, and winning photos will be featured through buildOn's Social Media tools.

COVER PICTURE:

Photo by: buildOn Staff

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Chapter 1: Welcome to Trek



What is a buildOn Community Team Trek?

buildOn's Trek program is a unique opportunity for groups to travel to a buildOn partner village and volunteer to help with the construction of a school. Trek teams commit to raising the money to build the school prior to their travel and then spend a week working on the project in-country. Far from a vacation, Trek can be as challenging as it is rewarding. Volunteers stay with local host families and experience everyday village life. When you're not working in solidarity with the community to build the school, you will participate in Cultural Workshops arranged in partnership with the community to educate you about local culture and life. The beauty of the Trek experiencing is profoundly moving, as is the incredible strength over adversity displayed every day by the local people. Volunteers have a direct and lasting impact on the education of the community and come home with a positively, unforgettable experience.



Trek Covenant

The below Trek Covenant must be signed and agreed to as part of the Trek Paperwork Process.

The purpose of a buildOn Trek is to allow individuals to:

- Help break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and low expectations by volunteering in the construction of a buildOn school
- Be immersed in and learn about a new and different culture
- Bring buildOn and the Trek experience back to their communities

Volunteer commitments:

- Raise the necessary funds to contribute to the construction of the school (\$2000), cover the cost of the Trek (\$900), and airfare (costs depend on Trek location and dates). Funds are to be raised according to the following timeline:

Date: November 15, 2017 1st benchmark \$500 (includes flight deposit)

Date: December 1, 2017 2nd benchmark \$250

Date: December 31, 2018 3rd benchmark \$500

Date: January 31, 2018 4th benchmark \$250

Date: February 28, 2018 5th benchmark \$500

Date: April 15, 2018 6th benchmark \$900 (Trek costs)

****Flight costs are due 60 days prior to departure date** (may vary)**

All funds donated to buildOn are tax deductible and non-refundable. Failure to meet the fundraising benchmarks may compromise your trek participation. buildOn is a 501(c)3 organization. Our Federal Tax Identification number is 22-3128648.

- Complete all necessary paperwork 60 days prior to travel, and communicate in advance any potential health concerns that may limit a volunteer's participation
- Participate in all buildOn scheduled Pre Trek Orientations
- Live in a rural village and participate in the cultural exchange including:
 - Living and working alongside the villagers to build their school
 - Eating local foods
 - Sharing with the community and respecting the local culture and people
 - Respect buildOn's Trek Methodology and abide by buildOn's Guidelines for Responsible Trek Travel (See Trek Guide)
- Obtain a valid passport, necessary immunizations, and visas prior to departure
- Act as unofficial ambassadors for the US and buildOn while in the project country



buildOn commitments:

- Provide a Wilderness First Responder certified and experienced Trek Leader to accompany your group
- Arrange host families, supplies, and in-country staff for your group
- Arrange accommodations and transportation to/from the village
- Purchase International Medical & Evacuation Insurance for volunteers
- Provide a vehicle for emergencies to stay in the village at all times
- Coordinate travel dates with school groundbreaking and construction
- Offer support throughout the fundraising process
- Lead one Info Session and one Pre Trek Session prior to the Trek and provide assistance with paperwork, visas and all other logistics

**Flight policies:**

- Arrange & book international flights (High School groups only) with the following restrictions and limitations:
- buildOn will arrange International Airfare for Trek Teams to travel as a group with an Adult Chaperone
- Departure/return city will be determined by buildOn, except when a Community Team funds an entire school and does not combine with another Community Team
- Participants will be responsible to arrange airfare/transportation to/from the departure/return city at their own expense
- The group's meeting time is 4 hours prior to your group flight's departure time. Domestic flights should arrive no later than 5 hours prior to the group flight, and depart no earlier than 3 hours from the return of the Group flight. buildOn is not responsible for delays or cancellations of transportation arranged by volunteers.
- Participant's flights will be reserved and confirmed when a \$500 deposit is received
- buildOn will designate adult supervised modest hotel accommodations near the airport for participants needing to arrive the night before departure and/or depart the day after returning. Costs will be the responsibility of the participant.
- Participants will be responsible for the full cost of an international ticket if cancellation occurs less than 100 days before the scheduled departure day
- All volunteers must depart and return from the hub city as a group. Deviations from the group ticket are not permitted.

Why We Trek – buildOn’s Trek Methodology

buildOn’s Trek program was established in 1999, and thrives on a methodology that is intended to unite our diverse array of Trek volunteers. It is critical that all Trek volunteers recognize and understand this tie that binds, as it is critical to getting the most out of the Trek experience, and the success and sustainability of our International Programs depends on it. Please take the time to read and understand the following buildOn Trek Methodology.

Trek is an **experience** facilitated by buildOn staff to engage Trek volunteers in the construction of a buildOn school and **immerse** in a different culture. Trek is not a vacation, a cultural tour of poverty, a necessary labor for school construction, or a charity. Trek is an act of **solidarity** to live, work and learn together with our International community.

Trek is intended to **challenge** volunteers to step away from their daily routines and “**walk in the shoes**” of the host community. Volunteers live with host families, eat local foods and participate in all aspects of rural community life. Volunteers are expected to **work hard** on the construction site to demonstrate their compassion, commitment and belief in access to education for all. Volunteers should leave valuables at home and rely on human interaction to be driven primarily by local materials.

buildOn adheres to Guidelines for Responsible Trek Travel, including the buildOn Gift Policy, to ensure that every action of the Trek team is **sustainable and empowering**. All buildOn staff & Trek volunteers are expected to behave in a **culturally-sensitive** manner. buildOn promotes the importance of **gender-equality** through the covenant by requiring both boys and girls to attend the new school in equal numbers. Trek volunteers celebrate the role and work of women, and model **gender-balance**. The buildOn Trek Leader is responsible to ensure Trek Team members are following buildOn’s Trek Methodology, in addition, to ensuring the health, safety and security of the Trek Team. All Trek volunteers should defer leadership to the Trek Leader.

The success of the Trek depends on Trek volunteers’ **openness and willingness to embrace** and learn from the experience. buildOn staff encourage and push all Trek volunteers to immerse themselves fully in the experience in order to have the best Trek experience possible. Throughout Trek, the community and volunteers engage in a **genuine cultural exchange**; as volunteers seek to learn more about their host culture they also share aspects of their home culture. Reflections, discussions and cultural workshops conducted as a team are intended to enhance the exchange and help volunteers think critically while emphasizing the **importance and impact of education**.

Trek volunteers return to their home countries **empowered** with an **expanded sense of possibilities** and a greater sense of **civic and academic engagement**. Trek volunteers develop both personally and socially and return with an understanding that they gained more from the experience than they gave. Trek volunteers have a sense of responsibility to **share their experience** with others to multiply their impact and **spread the word** about the importance of education.

Guidelines for Responsible Trek Travel

Over the years buildOn has developed the following guidelines to protect both you and the community while on Trek. Of course, buildOn cannot predict every situation that may arise and create a guideline for every possible scenario. There is no substitute for sound judgment and an understanding of the heightened elevation of risk when faced with decisions on Trek. Listen to your Trek Leader, and let the following be a guide for how you will keep yourself and the community safe:

Clothing

Dress more conservatively than you might at home; you'll feel more comfortable and attract less unwanted attention this way. Skirts should be ankle length, and shoulders should be covered. Leggings, shorts and tight-fitting clothing are not appropriate. Please see the packing list for further details on appropriate attire for your Trek country.



Swimming

That river near your village may look like a great place to take a dip, but water often carries unpleasant diseases and pollutants that won't be so pleasant when you get sick. Due also in part to hidden currents, the threat of submerged objects, and the fact that buildOn staff are not lifeguards, swimming is prohibited on Trek.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

The possession or use of illegal drugs at any time during your Trek is considered unacceptable. The possession or consumption of alcohol by minors under the age of 21 is prohibited. Alcohol consumption is also strictly prohibited while in the community and during road travel for all Trek team members. buildOn understands that adults age 21 and over may choose to consume alcohol while in town. Rather than prohibit this potentially dangerous activity, we strive to foster a culture of personal responsibility so that the consumption of alcohol by legal adults may be done in a responsible manner. We strongly encourage that any alcohol consumption in town be done only at establishments recommended by buildOn staff.

Food

Food from home should only be brought to the community for special dietary needs and should be discussed with your Trek Leader beforehand. Keep in mind that part of your Trek is immersing yourself in the local culture and living like a member of the community. There will be plenty of fresh and healthy food prepared for you three times daily. Replacing meals with snacks from your bag may offend your host family, prevent your Trek Leader from keeping track of your health, and encourage insects. There may be a small store in the community where you can buy things like Coke and chips; it is fun to try the local junk food, but keep in mind that your

host family likely can only afford an occasional treat. Please be mindful to consume all the food on your plate and not to waste food.

Water

Drinking plenty of water is critical to your health on Trek, but make sure you are only drinking filtered or bottled water. Your Trek Leader will carry a Katadyn Expedition Water Filter to purify drinking water, and you will get to know it well as water is pumped every day in the village. When you are in towns, it's better to use bottled or filtered water to brush your teeth, and stay away from ice in your drinks.



Trash

On Trek, buildOn follows a leave-no-trace policy. All trash brought into the community must be packed out and disposed of in town, as there is no rural trash collection in the areas where buildOn works. Only toilet paper and feminine products can be tossed in the latrine.

Animals

That little puppy in the village may be adorable, but please do not touch! Animals in buildOn communities are not cared for like pets in developed countries, and they generally do not receive vaccinations. Feeding them should be left up to your host family and petting them is an easy way to contract fleas, parasites and other potentially fatal diseases such as Rabies.

Transportation

This is statistically the most dangerous part of any international trip, so it is important that you follow the instructions of your Trek Leader regarding vehicles in country. Riding in the bed of pickup trucks, though tempting, is not safe on Trek. Also, please refrain from riding motorcycles, horses, donkey carts, bicycles, etc. It just isn't worth the risk! Please stick to buildOn-approved transportation.

Worksite

Closed toed shoes are required at all times on the worksite. Work gloves may be required for some activities and are strongly recommended at all times. Additionally, we ask that participants refrain from sitting on the worksite (excluding medical justification). buildOn hopes to exemplify a strong work ethic, and sitting down will simply make you tired and send unintended non-verbal messages.

Punctuality

Being on time for Trek activities is a priority. Punctuality on the part of Trek participants sets a good example for the community members and sets the tone for a productive day. If you are late, it sends the message that something may be wrong, and you won't have a cell phone to be able to communicate to your Trek Leader.

Trek Itinerary

Depending on your departure city, additional travel time may be necessary- the below schedule is a typical Trek Itinerary in Guatemala . Community Trek Teams spend 6 nights in the community:

Day 1

- Arrive in Guatemala

Day 2

- Travel to village
- Welcome Ceremony and Covenant Signing
- Spend first night with host families

Day 3-7

- Work on the construction of the school
- Live with host families
- Daily cultural workshops
- Daily group reflection, journaling and reflection activities

Day 8

- Leave village
- Shopping
- Final Dinner
- Overnight in town

Day 10

- Depart Guatemala



A Typical Day on a buildOn Trek

On Trek, the day starts with the sunrise. By 5:30 am the houses are bustling with activity, the women are carrying water and preparing food for breakfast, while the children are busy with morning chores. Depending on the season, they may be very busy with their work in the fields. The villagers are almost exclusively subsistence farmers. After the morning rituals and breakfast, half the group will head to the worksite to begin work on the school and the other half of the group will assemble for a Cultural Education Workshop.



Worksite

The work consists of digging, picking, sifting, mixing concrete, making bricks, carrying water, and tying rebar. It is physically hard work. Everything is done by hand and you will surely have blisters and sore muscles.

Cultural Workshops

The workshops will consist of conversations and/or activities with the village leaders, the midwife, a group of the women, the schoolteacher, a visit to the local market, a trip to the fields, listening to local music, or attending a local cultural event. The workshops are different in each village based on the resources of the community and interest of the group.

Free Time

There is time spent enjoying your host family when you're not at a scheduled activity. You will get a chance to prepare food, play games with the children, do laundry, carry water, and learn the local language. After dinner, the favorite pastimes may include checkers or cards and everyone will crowd around to watch the fun. No matter what the activity or the time of day, many hours will be spent repeating simple local words and teaching basic English.

8:00 am	Breakfast (as a team)
9:00 – 1:00 pm	Worksite (Group A) Cultural Workshop & Water Pumping (Group B)
1:00 pm	Lunch (as a team)
2:00 pm	Group Reflection
3:00 – 6:00 pm	Worksite (Group A) Cultural Workshop & Water Pumping (Group B)
7:00 pm	Dinner (as a team)
8:00 pm	Return to host families
9:30/10 pm	Go to bed



On the Worksite

Each day we will spend about four hours contributing labor to the construction of the school. This is inevitably the most challenging aspect of the Trek for most participants. Physical labor is foreign to most of us so we need to prepare ourselves in advance for this challenge. Physical training between now and Trek is highly recommended. Any activity which builds strength or endurance will make your time on the worksite easier and more enjoyable. However, physical strength is not the only important quality to have on the worksite. Manual labor requires a lot of mental strength as well. **A positive attitude and a commitment to the construction of the school are essential.**

Possible jobs may include: digging the foundation, digging piers, digging the latrine, mixing cement, making bricks, clearing land, sifting sand, carrying rocks, sorting rocks, carrying water, watering bricks, turning bricks, tying rebar, cutting rebar, transporting materials, painting beams, and leveling the interior floor of the school.

Interacting with community members

The worksite is a meeting place, as many villagers will participate to help build the school and to interact with the team. We encourage you to work in partnership with members of the village. This is a great opportunity to practice your language skills and to connect through some non-verbal communication. Take advantage of this opportunity!



Safety on the worksite

The worksite can be a wonderful place to interact with the community, but it can also be the place with the greatest safety risks. It's important to remain alert at all times. There will be many people working at the same time, so be aware of what's going on around you. You don't want to be surprised by a swinging tool. There will also be deep holes for the foundation and the latrine; watch your step. Lastly, be sure not to overestimate your abilities. The villagers on the worksite are used to physical work, so don't try to match their strength. The villagers will be more impressed by your ability to work hard throughout the entire shift than they will if you exhaust or hurt yourself before the shift is out. Make sure to drink plenty of water! See the Trek Worksite Guidelines for a more detailed list of expectations.

Leave a good impression

As a result of stereotypes, and the nature of being a guest, community members will not always expect our team to work continuously and do the grueling tasks. Defy expectations! Even if you are not as strong, or not as experienced, a positive attitude and a desire to assist will go a long way. We want to leave the village with the impression that our team is hard-working and

committed to the school building process. Not only will this help inspire the community to complete the school when we depart, it will also leave a lasting impression on the work ethic necessary for the children who attend the completed school to succeed.

Living With a Host Family

In the village, you will stay with a family as a member of their extended compound. Family sizes vary greatly from village to village and country to country. There may be as many as 25 people, sometimes from as many as four generations, living harmoniously together, or you may be with a small family of 4-5 people. The families who will host you and your roommate in the village have volunteered to do so and they will regard this responsibility as a great privilege.

The buildOn Trek Staff will have discussed with host families our expectations and your needs before your arrival. Your host family will go far above and beyond our expectations to treat you as a truly honored guest. It is important for you to keep in mind that these families are very poor. However, the sacrifice that they will make to accommodate you is made with warm hearts and great pride. We hope that you will appreciate their exceptional hospitality and meager accommodations.



Most likely your accommodations will be a small section or room inside the family's home. The homes are typically small with dirt floors and earthen, brick, or wood walls. There may be a cot, hammock, mat, or bed to sleep on and the family will have gone to great lengths to give you as much privacy as they can. You will probably have chickens, cats, and dogs walking freely in and out of the house. buildOn will provide you with a mosquito net for your sleeping comfort and safety.

The struggle to communicate with the villagers will fill your days with endless laughter and yes, sometimes frustration. However, despite the language barrier, the connection will be profoundly rewarding and surprisingly intimate. Be prepared to laugh, sing, act, and be silly in your

attempts to communicate with your host family. Leave your self-consciousness at home and come with an open heart and open mind to experience the wonderful, fun-loving, and gentle local people.

BuildOn Trek Staff

There is a whole team of buildOn staff working to make your Trek experience a success!

Here are some of the folks you will be working with:

Guatemala-based Trek Leader/Manager: A buildOn Trek Leader from the U.S. will be your group leader while in-country. He/she is responsible to coordinate and lead the experience. He/she is a trained Wilderness First Responder and will help ensure the health, safety and security of the team. He/she will be in the country and community about a week in advance to prepare the host families, supplies and all the details for your arrival. He/she will meet you at the airport



International Trek Coordinator: Each country has an in-country Trek Coordinator who works in conjunction with the Guatemala Trek Staff to prepare the community for your arrival. He/she acts as a liaison between the team & the community. He/she is an excellent resource to learn more about the country, community and buildOn!



Translators: Each Trek team will have 1-2 translators to accompany them throughout the time in the community. Translators will be present at the worksite and cultural workshops and will also visit you in the evening when you are spending time with your host family.



Cook: Depending on the country, while you are in the village, you will have 2-3 meals daily prepared by a local cook (other meals will be with your host family). Your cook works hard to make sure you have local, healthy and SAFE food throughout the Trek.



Emergency Driver: An emergency car and driver will be in the community at all times, available and ready for any urgent needs that arise while in the community!

In-country Staff: Each country has a team of staff: Country Director, Finance Officer, Education Officer, Field Coordinators, Office Managers, etc. You may have an opportunity to meet and

work with some of them while you are on Trek. Take some time to learn more about buildOn from them and about the work they do building schools every day!

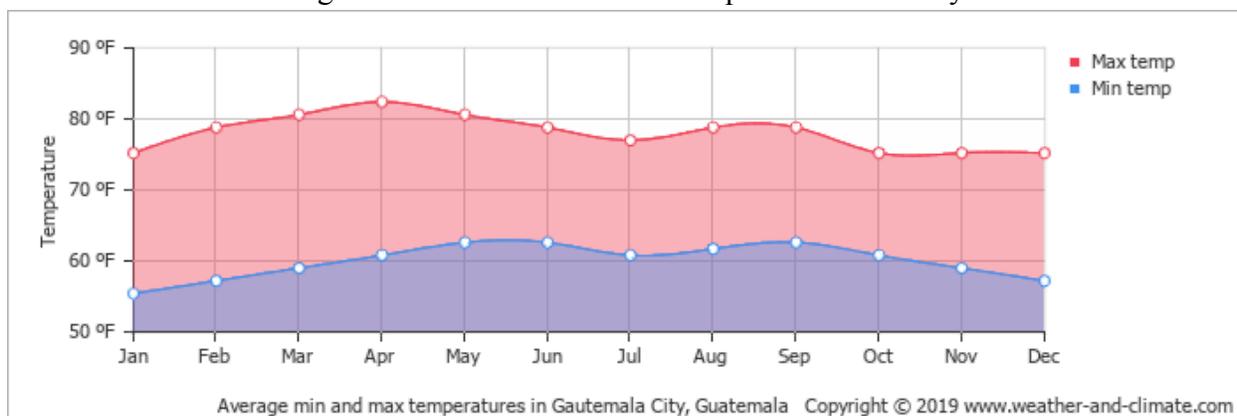
Preparing for the Weather

The weather in buildOn's Trek countries varies greatly depending on the time of year. Use the following as a general guide for what to expect, and talk to your Trek Leader about more detailed weather expectations. Please note the following statements are based on averages and may vary from the conditions on the ground. Check out weather.com for current weather conditions.

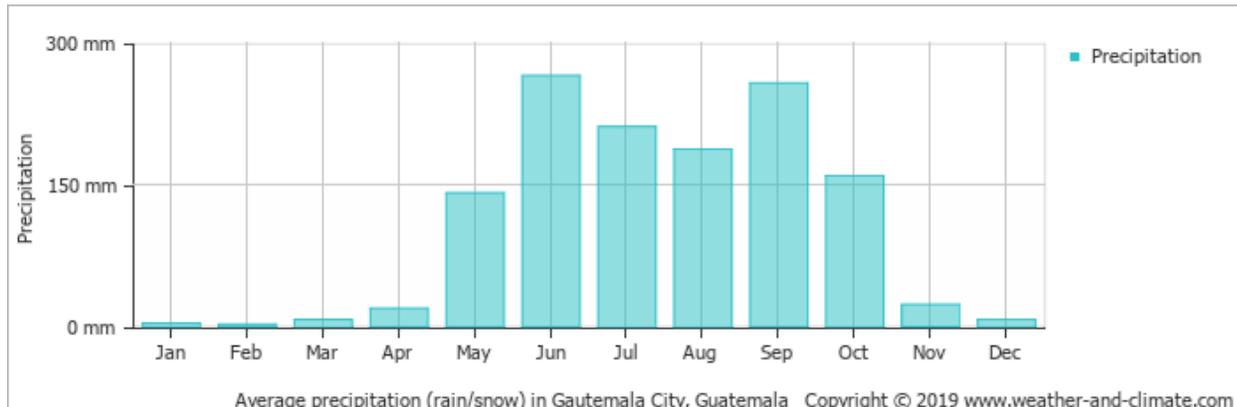
Guatemala

Temperatures in Guatemala remain generally consistent throughout the year, hovering in the 70's-80's during the day and 15-20 degrees cooler at night. Temperatures may drop well into the 50's-60's at night, especially in the mountains where nighttime temperatures tend to be cooler. The hottest months being March-May. The rainy season in Guatemala runs from June to October, but it is not uncommon for it to rain lightly at anytime of the year, especially in the mountains where buildOn tends to build schools. Participants are recommended to pack knee-high rubber boots for the rainy season, though they may be necessary at other times so always come prepared for rain. Boots may also be purchased in country, **though it is nearly impossible** to find sizes larger than a men's size 10.

Average minimum and maximum temperature over the year



Average monthly precipitation over the year (rainfall)



Trek Packing List

Some things to keep in mind:

- Leave ALL valuables at home; buildOn is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.
- Clothes should be lightweight and fast drying.
- You **will** be getting dirty every single day.
- You **will** have the opportunity to hand-wash your clothes.
- Read through the weather guide on the previous page to check the weather averages for the time you will be on Trek.
- We strongly **discourage** purchasing new clothes and equipment for this trip!
- **LESS IS MORE, please limit your packing!**

On a Cultural Note

Community members who live in the rural part of the country dress and act more conservatively in accordance with religious and cultural traditions. We, as visitors, will respect the modest dress code.

- No strappy tank tops.
- No tight-fitting clothing.
- No shorts or leggings.
- All shirts must cover your stomach and undergarments at all times.
- On a safety note, you must always wear something on your feet.



Whatever you pack you should be able to carry (not wheel) for ½ mile!

Carry-On Bag

- One form of I.D. other than your passport
- 1 empty 1-liter durable and wide-mouthed water bottles**
- Spending money (we will convert to local currency in country)
- Malaria medication and any other prescription medications
- Watch
- Basic toiletries (toothbrush, feminine products, etc. **Toiletries over 3 ounces should go in your checked bag!**)
- 1 set of clothes (in case your checked bag is lost)
- 1 lightweight jacket or long sleeve t-shirt (airplanes can be chilly)
- Sunglasses (make sure to have plastic lenses for safety on the worksite)
- Reading material or a deck of cards for the plane or layover time in airport
- Personal camera and replacement batteries
- Flashlight w/ **extra batteries** (Headlamps or wind-up flashlights are best)
- 2 small carabiners (optional – to hook water bottle or camera to belt buckle)



All liquids, gels and aerosols must be in three-ounce or smaller containers. Larger containers that are half-full or toothpaste tubes rolled up are not allowed. **Each container must be three ounces or smaller.**

All liquids, gels and aerosols must be placed in a single, zip-top, clear plastic bag. Bags that are not zip-top such as fold-over sandwich bags are not allowed. **Each traveler can use only one, zip-top, clear plastic bag.**

Checked Bag

- 2 pairs of lightweight pants for work (these will get very dirty!) **Please, no shorts.**
- 1 pair of lightweight pants for hanging out around the community. **Please, no shorts.**
- 1 ankle length skirt for hanging out (optional)
- 5 t-shirts (3 for getting dirty on the worksite, 2 for travel)
- Outfit for final dinner in town (something you keep clean!)
- 1 pair of sweatpants/pajama pants for sleeping
- Sneakers (these will get dirty!)
- Flip flops (for bathing)
- 5 pairs of socks
- 5 pairs of cotton underwear
- 2-4 bras (including 1-2 sports bras) for girls
- Work gloves
- Hat, visor or bandana
- Gift for your host family (see "Host Family Gifts")
- Small bath towel
- Sheet and light sleeping bag for sleeping
- Small sleeping pad (optional – buildOn will provide something to sleep on, but it may be a hard surface)
- Toiletries over 3 oz. (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, shampoo, feminine products)
- Sun block SPF 30 or higher
- Insect repellent with at least 30% DEET (NO aerosol spray cans)
- 1 roll of toilet paper
- buildOn Trek Guide and Personal Journal
- Small pillow (optional – you can always roll up a sweatshirt)
- 1 additional durable and wide-mouthed water bottle (1 liter)**
- Light drawstring bag to carry items around village (could use carry-on bag)
- Hand sanitizer or baby wipes (optional)
- small zip lock of powdered laundry detergent or laundry soap tablets
- 1-2 extra gallon zip lock bags for garbage
- Extra plastic grocery bag for dirty laundry
- Battery operated alarm clock (if your watch doesn't have an alarm)
- Powdered Gatorade or liquid water enhancers to flavor water



- ❑ Small combination lock for bag- avoid key locks if possible due to lost keys (recommended)
- ❑ Poncho or rain jacket!
- ❑ Knee-high rain boots (available in-country for \$8 but difficult to find sizes over male 10)

Remember, if you are buying new items to take on Trek (such as disposable cameras, toothpaste, or baby wipes), unwrap them before packing. The items will take up less space and, more importantly, you will have less trash to pack out of the village. Anything we bring in, comes out with us!

The exceptions to this rule are used toilet paper and feminine products.

Host Family Gifts

It is appropriate to give your host family a small token of appreciation for their hospitality. Remember, the key is to keep it simple, NOT EXTRAVAGANT, and enjoyable by all members of the family. The greatest gift you will be leaving behind is the school! The best gifts are often things you can do with your host family. **You will be allowed to leave behind a total of three items that you have brought with you that are in appropriate condition. Total value of all gifts should not exceed \$20.** Remember that you will also have at least one roommate, so they will be bringing gifts too. It's important to respect this policy so one host family doesn't receive significantly more than another. Before you decide on what to bring, please read "The Art of Giving" on the following page.

Here are some ideas for gifts:

- A photo (or small album) of you and your family
- A picture book from the US
- A game that you brought to play with the family
- (Jenga, UNO, deck of cards, soccer ball, or other games that can be played without English)
- Pencils, pens, erasers, notebooks, or paper for school
- Coloring books/crayons/colored pencils
- A small thermos
- Hair accessories (elastics, barrettes) or nail polish
- An apron, pot holders or dish cloths
- Water bottle, work gloves or boots (if relatively clean and useable)
- Favorite T-shirt (if clean)
- Hat (if clean)



PLEASE DO NOT BRING

- Money
- Candy/food
- Alcohol
- Packaged items (remove packaging of items in the US to respect our 'Leave No Trace' policy.)
- Technology or battery operated items – video games, electronic gadgets, battery-powered flashlights
- Items that will quickly become or create trash
- Violent or war-related gifts – toy guns, hand-cuffs, water pistols, etc.

The Art of Giving

On Trek, it is natural to want to give many of your possessions to your new family. However, it is important to remember that you will have already given something to every person in the community: the brand new buildOn school! The school and the commitment to education are a much larger and more valuable gift than anything else that you could bring from home or give from your bags. buildOn strives to keep the focus on the school that will last for many generations. Although you may be tempted to leave everything behind, we ask that you help keep the focus on education too.



Your families are not a dumping ground. This is not the place to leave behind things that you do not feel like carrying home. If you plan to leave something behind - besides the host family gift that you brought - make sure that it is something special to you, so it will also be special to them. For example, it is not appropriate to leave behind dirty white t-shirts and old socks. If you decide that you would like to give something to your host family, please make sure that it is clean and that you present it to them. Talk to your Trek Leader about when is the right time to present your gifts. If you leave something behind without telling your host family, it is likely that they will set it aside for you until you return.

As a reminder, under NO CIRCUMSTANCES, can you leave money for anyone in your family or in the community. buildOn takes great pride in our method of working with the community and asking them to provide the unskilled labor necessary for the construction of a school. If any money is left for anyone, it may be confusing to other community members or even to other communities throughout the country. Not only can this cause controversy and conflict within the community, it can also create more work for our international staff when past and future communities ask for money too. So please, be very careful in what you leave behind with your new families.

It is very important that we continue to focus on the school as the greatest gift we can give even after our Trek experience is over. Remember that you are traveling as a representative of buildOn, and buildOn is working to empower communities to develop a greater sense of self-reliance. By promising to send money, or even supplies and materials after your Trek experience, you could be unintentionally promoting a sense of dependency that will damage buildOn's work abroad. If you are motivated by your experience to continue supporting your host village, please speak with your Trek Coordinator about more sustainable ways to give. buildOn appreciates your help to support our mission, which focuses on the importance of education to increase independence in the communities where we work.

Chapter 2: Paperwork and Medical Concerns



Passports and Travel Documents – Guatemala

To Apply for a Passport

US Citizens

can apply for a passport at most post offices, a passport agency, or the county clerk's office. The most up-to-date information about applying for a passport can be found by visiting <http://travel.state.gov>. Passport applications can take up to 8 weeks; please apply ASAP, or consider expediting the process if you have less time.



Non-US Citizens

check with your government or local embassy to ensure your passport is valid for travel to your Trek destination.

If You Already Have a Passport

1. **Is it valid for at least 6 months from your dates of travel?**
 - a. If the answer is “no”, then you will have to renew your passport.
2. **Do you have 2 blank Visa pages?**
 - a. If the answer is “no”, then you will have to submit your passport to receive additional pages.

Visas & Entry Requirements

1. **US Citizens** - do not need a visa for stays of 90 days or less; and there is no tourist fee upon arrival. See the most up-to-date information about traveling to Guatemala for US Citizens here: <http://www.travel.state.gov>.
2. **Non-US Citizens** – please check the Consulate website in Washington DC: <https://www.embassypages.com/missions/embassy2069/> or your nearest Guatemalan consulate <https://www.embassy-worldwide.com/country/guatemala/>.

NOTE: The Visa entry form will require an address of where you are staying. Your Trek Leader or Trek Manager will send you this information before you depart. Make sure to include this in your carry-on bag for easy access.

For assistance with Passport or Visa issues, please contact a buildOn Trek Staff member ASAP. Failure to secure necessary travel documents may impact a volunteer's ability to participate on Trek. It is the volunteer's responsibility to secure all necessary documentation.

BuildOn Enrollment Form and Legal & Medical Paperwork

All volunteers will be required to complete buildOn's online Trek Enrollment Form and buildOn's Legal & Medical Paperwork in order to participate on a Trek. **Everything is required to be turned in at least 60 days before travel. Failure to meet this deadline may result in the removal of a volunteer from a Trek Team.**

Online Enrollment Form

Each Trek Team will receive a unique link to an online Enrollment Form prior to, or during, your scheduled Information Session. **We ask that this form be completed 48 hours after the Information Session as this form enrolls each volunteer into our system.**

Without this form completed, we have no record of your participation on the team. A unique form must be completed for each family member. **This form should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.**

Have the following documents ready when completing: personal Health Insurance card, Passport (if you do not yet have a passport, you can still complete the form without a passport, but you will have to go back later to submit your passport information).

Legal & Medical Paperwork

Upon completing the Enrollment Form, you will receive an automated email, which will include our most up-to-date Legal & Medical Paperwork. You must print this paperwork and some of the forms must be brought to a physician to complete. Here is an overview of the forms (this list is subject to change):

Paperwork	Important Things to Note
buildOn Medical Form	This form captures all of the required medical information including your prescribed anti-malaria medication name and any other prescription information.
buildOn Trek Travel and Release Form	This form must be signed in the presence of a notary.

Submitting Forms

The automated email received after completing the Enrollment form will also include an individualized link that you must use to upload your paperwork once completed. You should also submit a copy of your flight itinerary using this link. Please label the uploaded forms with your first and last names.



Vaccinations

To ensure safe travel, buildOn advises Trek participants to obtain vaccinations as recommended for international travel by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) @ www.cdc.gov. Please visit your family doctor (if they are familiar with travel medicine) and/or a travel medicine specialist to answer your questions and make specific recommendations for you. Recommendations for vaccines and medicines depend on many factors that are specific to each person.

Your physician must complete the **buildOn Medical Form**. Some travelers may receive an **International Certificate of Vaccination** otherwise known as the World Health Organizations WHO Yellow Booklet (photo below), but it's not required. buildOn provides general recommendations below, but cannot give you specific advice. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following for international travel:

** Please note that some vaccinations may not be required for your specific country.*

- **Hepatitis A** (all travelers)
- **Hepatitis B** (all travelers)
- **Typhoid** (all travelers)
- **Rabies** (travelers who may have direct contact with animals)
- **Yellow Fever** (varies, please check; required for all travelers to Burkina Faso, Mali, and recommended for Senegal) Required for Guatemala if traveling from a Yellow Fever epidemic country
- **Anti-malaria medication** (required for all travelers)

In addition, ROUTINE immunizations for the following should be **current**:

- **Diphtheria-Tetanus and Pertussis (DTAP)**
- **Influenza (Flu)**
- **Polio**
- **Varicella (Chickenpox)**
- **Rotavirus**
- **Hib**
- **Pneumococcal**
- **HPV**
- **Shingles (adult)**



*Per the CDC, routine vaccines are recommended even if you do not travel. Although childhood diseases, such as measles, rarely occur in the United States, they are still common in many parts of the world and are highly contagious. A traveler who is not vaccinated would be at risk for infection.

Please see your physician and visit the CDC website @ www.cdc.gov for country specific information.

IMPORTANT: PLEASE SEE YOUR PHYSICIAN AT LEAST 4-6 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR TRIP TO ALLOW FOR VACCINATIONS TO TAKE EFFECT.

VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

Information below is from the Center for Disease Control @ www.cdc.gov

* Vaccine recommendations are based on the best available risk information. Please note that the level of risk for vaccine-preventable diseases can change at any time.

Vaccine or Disease	Recommendations or Requirements for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases	Country
All Travelers: You should be up to date on routine vaccinations while traveling to any destination. Some vaccines may also be required for travel.		
Routine Vaccinations:	Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. These vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot. http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/routine	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Malaria	You will need to take prescription medicine before, during, and after your trip to prevent malaria. Your doctor can help you decide which medicine is right for you, and also talk to you about other steps you can take to prevent malaria. Ways to prevent malaria include the following: taking a prescription antimalarial drug & using insect repellent and wearing long pants and sleeves to prevent mosquito bites	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Most Travelers: Get travel vaccines and medicines because there is a risk of these diseases in the country you are visiting.		
Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG)	CDC recommends this vaccine because you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water, regardless of where you are eating or staying.	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Typhoid	You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water . CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Some travelers: Ask your doctor what vaccines and medicines you need based on where you are going, how long you are staying, what you will be doing, and if you are traveling from a country other than the US.		
Rabies	Recommended for travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, especially in rural areas, involved in activities such as bicycling, camping, or hiking. Also recommended for travelers with significant occupational risks (such as veterinarians), for long-term travelers and expatriates living in areas with a significant risk of exposure, and for travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats, carnivores, and other mammals. Children are considered at higher risk because they tend to play with animals, may receive more severe bites, or may not report bites.	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Hepatitis B	Recommended for all persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission, especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment (e.g., for an accident).	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Yellow Fever	Recommended for all travelers ≥ 9 months of age. Vaccination should be given 10 days before travel and at 10-year intervals if there is on-going risk. * Some countries REQUIRE this vaccination for entry into the country. Confirm with your doctor.	Burkina Faso & Mali (required), Senegal (recommended)
Japanese Encephalitis	You may need this vaccine if your trip will last more than a month, depending on where you are going in Nepal and what time of year you are traveling. You should also consider this vaccine if you plan to visit rural areas in Nepal or will be spending a lot of time outdoors, even for trips shorter than a month.	Nepal (seasonal)

Meningococcal (meningitis)	Recommended if you plan to visit countries that experience epidemics of meningococcal disease during December through June.	Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali
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Medical Concerns

Traveling in a developing country means that there will be an increase in the chance of contracting mild illnesses. Most of these illnesses are due to changes in diet and climate. Travel health is all about prevention and common sense: being aware of health issues that may arise and taking appropriate measures to prevent illnesses and injuries when you are travelling.

In order to ensure that volunteers remain healthy and safe, buildOn will do the following:

- Discuss in detail all necessary health and safety precautions with Trek volunteers to prevent illnesses (e.g. what foods to avoid, how to purify water)
- Eat in safe restaurants and in safe homes
- Carry an extensive medical/first aid kit; buildOn Trek Leaders are Wilderness First Responders and have undergone a 72-80 hour curriculum of the essential principles and skills required to assess and manage medical problems in remote environments
- Keep copies of all participant medical forms and insurance plans on file in the U.S.
- Require volunteers to carry original documents and turn in to Trek Leader in-country
- Establish regular contact between buildOn Staff in the U.S. and abroad throughout the trip
- Have access to an Emergency Vehicle in the village
- Have the ability to access our medical and evacuation provider 24 hours a day

SOME ADVICE FOR WOMEN

- Air travel, time changes, stress and heavy manual labor can bring on your menstrual cycle unexpectedly.
- You will not be able to purchase supplies in-country. Please bring everything you need for your monthly cycle with you. If you run out of supplies, there is usually enough to share within the group.
- In the community, it will be okay to drop used supplies into the latrine – some communities don't dig their latrines very deep so they don't like them loaded up with paper; be conscious about what waste goes in the latrine. Keep in mind that women in the community use cloth that they wash out and reuse so they have no waste.
- Wet wipes, not alcohol or anti-bacterial wipes, are recommended for the bathroom. These can be tossed down the latrine as can toilet paper.



MALARIA

Malaria is a serious disease that is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected female *Anopheles* mosquito. Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms may include fever and flu-like illness, including chills, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue. Individuals who have traveled to malaria infected regions and have these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

CHOOSING A DRUG TO PREVENT MALARIA

For many destinations, there are multiple anti-malarial medication options available. Factors to consider are the patient's other medical conditions, medications being taken (to assess potential drug-drug interactions), the cost of the medicines, and the potential side effects. For your convenience below is a list of possible medications. Please speak with your physician at least 4-6 weeks before Trek to determine which one is appropriate for you. Take anti-malarial medication on schedule without missing a dose before, during and after international travel.

Anti-Malaria Medications *information from CDC @ www.cdc.gov

Below is some general information on anti-malaria medications. Side effects vary from person to person based on your medical history. It is important that you and your physician discuss these options to determine the most appropriate medication for you.

Medication *brand name	Dosage	Reasons to Consider Use	Reasons to Consider Avoiding/Some Possible Side Effects	Country
Atovaquone/ Proguanil *Malarone	Begin 1-2 days before travel. Take daily at the same time each day while in malarious area and for 7 days after leaving area.	Begin only 1-2 days before travel, some people prefer to take a daily pill, you only take medicine for 7 days after traveling, well tolerated-side effects uncommon/rare.	Tends to be more expensive than others, some prefer not to take daily pill. The most common adverse effects, though rare, are abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and headache.	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Doxycycline	Begin 1-2 days before travel. Take daily while in malarious area and for 4 weeks after leaving area.	Begin only 1-2 days before, inexpensive, some prefer antibiotic to prevent other illnesses.	Must take 4 weeks after travel. Possible sun sensitivity, upset stomach & yeast infections.	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Senegal, Mali
Mefloquine *Lariam	Begin at least 2 weeks before travel. Take weekly on the same day of the week while in the malarious area and for 4 weeks after leaving areas.	Inexpensive, weekly pill	Must take 2 weeks before travel and 4 weeks after travel. Has been associated with rare but serious reactions (such as psychoses or seizures) gastrointestinal disturbance, headache, insomnia, abnormal dreams, visual disturbances, depression, anxiety disorder, dizziness, mood changes, panic attacks, forgetfulness, confusion, hallucinations, aggression, paranoia. Cannot be used by those with certain psychiatric conditions or seizure disorder. Use with caution in persons with history of depression, psychosis, or anxiety. Not recommended for persons with cardiac conduction abnormalities, or seizures.	Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Nicaragua, Guatemala Senegal, Mali
Chloroquine	Begin 1-2 weeks before travel. Take weekly on the same day of the week while in the malarious area and for 4 weeks after leaving area.	Weekly pill	Must take 1-2 weeks before travel and 4 weeks after travel. May exacerbate psoriasis. Reported side effects include gastrointestinal disturbance, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, insomnia, and pruritus, but generally these effects do not require that the drug be discontinued.	Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua
Primaquine	Begin 1-2 days before travel. Take daily while in malaria area and for 7 days after leaving area.	Begin only 1-2 days before travel, and continue for only 7 days after travel	Cannot be used in patients with glucose-6-phosphatase dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Cannot be used in patients who have not been tested for G6PD deficiency. There are costs and delays associated with getting a G6PD test. There are Some concerns about potential of an upset stomach.	Nicaragua

DENGUE

is a virus that is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. Dengue hemorrhagic fever is a more severe form of the dengue infection (DHF). It can be fatal if unrecognized and not properly treated. DHF is caused by infection with the same viruses that cause dengue fever. The general symptoms are high fever, severe headache, severe pain behind the eyes, joint pain, muscle and bone pain, rash, and mild bleeding. DHF is characterized by a fever that lasts from 2 to 7 days, with general signs and symptoms consistent with dengue fever. When the fever declines, symptoms may include persistent vomiting, severe abdominal pain, and difficulty breathing. There is no specific medication for treatment of a dengue infection. Persons who think they have dengue should use pain relievers with acetaminophen and avoid those containing aspirin. They should also rest, drink plenty of fluids, and consult a physician.

To Prevent Dengue:

Travelers should avoid getting bit by mosquitoes; both during the day and at night. See Preventing Mosquito Bites below. For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/Dengue/>

CHIKUNGUNYA:

Chikungunya is a viral disease that is transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes of the *Aedes* species. Symptoms usually begin 3–7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito, with the most common symptoms being fever and severe joint pain, often in the hands and feet. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. Most people infected by Chikungunya feel better within a week, but long-term joint pain can remain well after infection. People with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease are at increased risk of severe symptoms. There are currently no antiviral medicines to treat Chikungunya, but pain relievers with acetaminophen can be used to reduce fever and pain.

To Prevent Chikungunya:

There is no medicine or vaccine available to prevent Chikungunya virus infection. Travelers should take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitos; both during the day and at night. See 'Preventing Mosquito Bites' on the following page. For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/>



Preventing Mosquito Bites

Mosquitoes carry a range of diseases. Generally we protect ourselves against mosquitoes at night because that is the time they are most bothersome; however, it is just as important to keep yourself protected in the day as well as the night. Remember to take extra care all the time, but especially during early morning and early evening. Here are some simple and easy things that you can do to help prevent mosquito bites while on Trek:

- Wear light-colored clothing, long sleeve shirts, pants and a hat.
- Use an insect repellent containing DEET. Adults and children over the age of two months can safely use repellents containing up to 35% DEET. The higher the concentration, the longer it repels. Reapply after excessive sweating.

Note : Although there are repellents available with more than 35% DEET, the duration of protection does not increase proportionately to the DEET concentration.

- 10% DEET: 1-3 hours, 23% DEET: 4-6 hours, 35% DEET: 6-8 hours
- It is possible to protect yourself from insects and the sun at the same time. Apply sunscreen first, and follow with insect repellent. Note that combined use of repellent and sunblock appears to reduce the effectiveness of the sun block by 33%. Reapply sunblock more often and/or use a higher SPF when using in conjunction with insect repellent. There are also sunscreens that contain mosquito repellents.
- Pre-treat your clothes with the insecticide permethrin. *Do not apply permethrin directly to the skin.
- Use a mosquito net while you sleep. buildOn will provide you with a mosquito net while in-country.



Traveler's Diarrhea



Traveler's Diarrhea is the most common cause of illness during travel. People get traveler's diarrhea because their stomachs are adjusting to a new diet or to eating food or drinking water that contains microbes (germs). Traveler's diarrhea is rarely life-threatening for adults. It is more serious in children as it can frequently lead to dehydration.

Good personal hygiene practices (including frequent and thorough hand washing), proper food handling, and water purification are the most effective methods to prevent infection.

Your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic medication for the treatment of diarrhea. If you are prescribed a medication, please notify your Trek Leader before taking it.

The following recommendations can help prevent traveler's diarrhea:

Water:

- Drink water only that is filtered by buildOn.
- Do not use tap water for brushing teeth.
- Do not use ice made from tap water.

Other beverages:

- Do not drink milk or eat dairy products, unless they are pasteurized. Most milk and dairy is NOT pasteurized in buildOn villages.
- Drink bottled drinks only if the seal on the bottle hasn't been broken.
- Hot/boiled drinks are generally safe (tea, coffee).



Food:

- Do not eat raw fruits and vegetables unless they can be peeled, cooked or washed thoroughly in treated water.
- Do not buy food from street vendors.
- Eat hot, well-cooked foods.

Sanitation:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, including before every meal.
- Do not bite fingernails or put your hands in your mouth.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral infection transmitted through the saliva of infected animal bites and scratches which affects the brain and the spinal cord, and may be **fatal**. An animal bite is a serious incident and may require evacuation from the community and possibly from the country.

Awareness: Animal safety is different abroad than at home, even a small bite can be cause for evacuation and disruption of the trek.

Prevention: DO NOT TOUCH, FEED or APPROACH ANY ANIMALS. Even animals that look like healthy pets can have rabies or other diseases.

Response: Participants should notify Trek Leaders IMMEDIATELY if bitten. Rabies can be life-threatening and even with the rabies pre-vaccinations (which are expensive), additional treatment will be required.

Key Facts from the World Health Organization:

- Rabies occurs in more than 150 countries and territories.
- Worldwide, more than 55,000 people die of rabies every year.
- 40% of people who are bitten by suspect rabid animals are children under 15 years of age.
- Dogs are the source of 99% of human rabies deaths.
- Wound cleansing and immunization within a few hours after contact with a suspected rabid animal can prevent the onset of rabies and death.

Transmission: People are infected through the skin following a bite or scratch by an infected animal. Dogs are the main host and transmitter of rabies. Bats, foxes, raccoons, skunks and other wild carnivore species are rare.

Symptoms:

- Incubation period for rabies is typically 1-3 months, but may vary from <1 week to > 1 year.
- Initial symptoms are fever and often pain or an unusual or unexplained tingling, pricking or burning sensation at the wound site.
- As virus spread through the central nervous system, progressive, fatal inflammation of the brain and spinal cord develops.
- After a few days, death occurs by cardio-respiratory arrest.

Treatment: Any animal bite or scratch must be washed repeatedly with copious amounts of soap and water. Seek medical attention immediately. Effective treatment soon (within a few days, but as soon as possible) after exposure can prevent the onset of symptoms and death. Persons who have not received the pre-exposure shots need five (5) injections in addition to rabies immune globulin (RIG). **RIG is in short supply around the world and may not be available in remote areas.** If a traveler has had the three pre-exposure shots, they will only need additional two shots; they do not need RIG.

* Access to these shots vary from country to country and may require an evacuation from the country.

Food on Trek

You need to eat! We will be doing a lot of hard labor on the work site. Your body needs the nutrients and energy that comes from the food you eat. Even if you are not working on the worksite until after lunch, you need to eat a good breakfast and lunch. Your body depends on this to maintain good health. If you are not accustomed to eating three good-sized meals a day, you may want to start getting used to this now. Food is also a critical part of staying hydrated. You will learn about hydration on the next page, but remember, water alone cannot keep you hydrated and healthy!



The food will consist of 2 or 3 basic dishes – typically a carbohydrate such as rice or pasta with either a protein or a vegetable stew. We will be served a variation of these options at each meal. This food will be prepared by your host family, an in-country staff member or someone in the community. **Depending on which Trek country you are traveling to, 1-3 meals will be taken together as a team each day.**

It may be difficult for you to adjust to these new foods and eating habits, however it is very important that you make every effort to do so. Not only is it important for your health, but food can become a very sensitive issue with the host families and community members: 1) It is disrespectful not to eat the food that is prepared for you; 2) Your host family will become extremely worried if you are not eating and 3) Many of the people around you will be suffering from malnutrition and do not have the option or luxury of eating all the foods you will be given.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING SNACKS ON TREK!

buildOn Staff will occasionally provide snacks for the Trek team. By not bringing snacks we are also solving the problems of: 1) bringing more waste into the community, 2) flaunting inequity towards the community members and 3) monitoring exactly what team members eat.



NOTE: If you have dietary restrictions that require you bringing snacks, please inform your Trek Leader or Trek Manager prior to your departure so that they can accommodate you.

Water on Trek

Drinking enough water to keep your body healthy and hydrated is sometimes the greatest challenge on Trek. It is challenging both physically and mentally. Often the weather is hot, the water is warm, you might feel full, you might feel sick, etc. However, dehydration can quickly lead to life threatening situations, so drinking water becomes an absolutely critical part of the Trek experience.

Each Trek participant will drink approximately 5-8 liters of water a day!*

*Note- this amount may be adjusted by buildOn staff to reflect the environment

“The water in your body, the fluid that keeps you alive and active, leaves you at an alarming rate. It is estimated that an average person at rest on a normal day loses between 2 and 3 liters of water. However, the fluid lost in perspiration during periods of strenuous activity can be as high as 2 liters per hour.” – The Wilderness First Responder

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Thirst
- Infrequent urination
- Disorientation
- Irritability
- Combativeness
- Lethargy

To ensure that you remain healthy, water on Trek is not a joke! You will be expected to drink approximately one liter/hour while on the worksite. At home dehydration is rarely life threatening, but because of extreme heat, physical exertion, the remote location and lack of medical facilities, dehydration is absolutely life threatening on the Trek! buildOn Staff will work closely with each of you to monitor your health and hydration throughout the Trek. extremely important that you remain proactive and drink your water.

Helpful Tips:

1. You **MUST** bring 2 sturdy one-liter wide mouth water bottles.

* Nalgene is a very reputable brand. Their water bottles are virtually indestructible.

They can be purchased at many major sport stores or online (REI, EMS, Target, etc.)



2. **START PRACTICING NOW!** Start drinking more water. Save the environment too by purchasing your reusable water bottle and filling it up with water instead of drinking sugary soft drinks and juice. Try to drink 1 liter of water in a one-hour period. It will be difficult; you might have to build up to it.
3. Monitor how much water you drink on an average day. This will help you realize how much more you need to drink during Trek.

Chapter 3: Pre Trek Preparation



Pre Trek Preparation

How will you get ready for your Trek?

buildOn will help prepare your team for your Trek as follows:

- 1) Hosting a Parent Information Night (for High School Community Teams) or Trek Info Session at least 6-7 months before the Trek to discuss paperwork, safety, logistics, expectations, etc.
- 2) Providing a Trek Guide (this is it!)
- 3) Hosting a Pre Trek Workshop (for High School Community Teams) or Pre Trek Meeting at least 1 month prior to the Trek to discuss what to pack, country specifics, etc.
- 4) Answering any questions you may have throughout the process

Where and when?

Your Trek meetings may be held at school, on the phone, or in another location depending on the needs of your group. Stay in touch with buildOn Staff to make sure you don't miss any important meetings!

What else can I do to get myself & my team ready for Trek?

1. READ this Trek Guide!

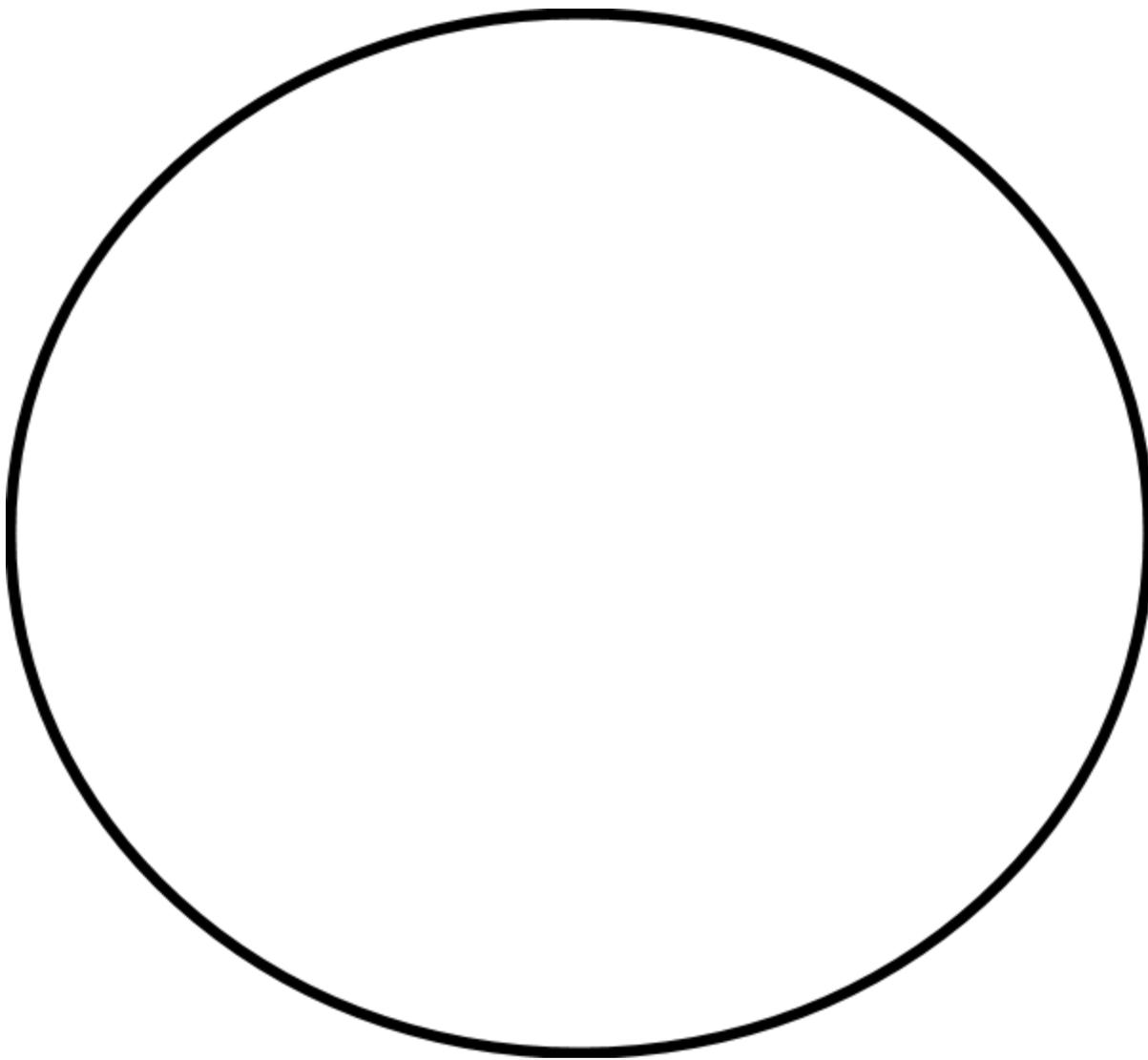
You're halfway there, keep reading! This Trek guide is an invaluable resource filled with information and answers to all your questions.

2. Take time to set goals for yourself & your team! What are your expectations of your Trek experience?
3. Be physically active and start drinking water regularly- these are skills you will need on Trek!
4. Go beyond the "Articles of Interest" in this Trek Guide and seek out books, films and web resources to learn as much as you can about the country you will be in!
5. Get to know your team! You will be journeying through this experience together; it's great to establish a strong support system amongst each other!



Circle of Trust

Use this circle to brainstorm guidelines for how your team plans to treat one another! Do's go inside the circle, don't outside. How can you support each other throughout this journey?





Personal Goals

Set some goals for what you hope to accomplish throughout the Trek experience!

Pre Trek Goals- *How will you prepare? How will you fundraise?*

Trek Goals- *How will you make the most of your Trek experience?*

Post-Trek Goals- *How will you use and share your Trek experience?*

Learning Service: A Volunteer’s Charter

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First there was “volunteering”. Then there was a movement called “Service Learning”, which identified the need to learn while we serve. To “serve” effectively we have to learn first so we’re advocating for volunteer experiences with a “learning first” approach. We call this “Learning Service” (see what we’ve done?).

Volunteering at home is less complicated. You know the culture and the community and you are more likely to have transferable skills. Find a group that is well respected amongst your peers, give your time, and see the results! If the group is dishonest or the projects fail, you will be there to witness the results. You can change your actions and let other people know about your experience. Even though international volunteer travel is rooted in the same good intentions, when we go abroad to volunteer, a lot of those self-checking mechanisms fall apart. We don’t usually understand the culture as well, we rarely stay long enough to see the long term impacts, and are less likely to realize if our efforts are being ineffective or actually causing harm. Plus, it costs a lot of money to go abroad! So when we do go, it is even more disappointing to find our

efforts were wasted than if we had been committing our time to a project around the corner from our home.

Unfortunately the trend of encouraging SERVICE abroad before we encourage LEARNING abroad has led to many misguided actions and damaging results. It's time for a change! But wait... I came to help OTHERS, not ME, you say. We understand! We felt the same way, but then we realized that only by learning and improving ourselves can we successfully help others. If we commit to learning first we'll be more likely to harness our good intentions for great impact, and this charter designed to help you do just that!

Learning Service

No matter if it is ten kilometers from our home or ten thousand, to be of service in a meaningful way we need to learn about the place we are in, the current issues and resources in the area, the culture, the players working to make change, what support they are looking for, and the history of what initiatives have already taken place. More importantly, we need to do this BEFORE we dive in to 'serve'. Once we understand the ecosystem of change around us, we can try to match our skills and experience to the solutions already in motion and the problems we now better understand.



Six Steps to Learning Service

Rather than entering a new situation with fixed ideas of what you are going to do and how you are going to help, try to extract a lesson from all aspects of the experience; especially the difficult parts! Being a sponge for new insights often means realizing that your original plan or attitude needs to be completely revamped. Though that can be frustrating, acknowledging your own limitations, dealing with the unexpected, and overcoming disappointment are lessons we can all use throughout our lives.

1. Adopt a 'learning attitude'.

Once your skills have been matched with the needs of the organization, agree on your 'job description' and get to know the office culture, hours, dress code etc. Setting expectations to ensure that both parties understand the limitations of the placement will allow you to be more realistic, both about what you can learn and how you can add value. Remember that sustainable change usually takes a long time. Aligning your actions to help support long-term changes, which might not all be visible before the completion of your work, will usually produce better overall



results than aiming for the satisfaction of short-term projects.

2. Ensure that both you and the organization's management have the same expectations

As you find ways to add value to the organizations or movements you are a part of, try to remember that you are not the only one investing time in these relationships. Your host organization is investing in you by supporting your learning, so take the time to acknowledge that. The best placements are ones where a culture of sharing and exchange is nurtured by all.

3. Foster a culture of sharing and highlight the two-way exchange.

Do the work that helps most, not just the work that is most interesting. For your contribution to an organization to be most valuable, ensure that what you are doing helps support its vision in the best way you are able to contribute. Though direct delivery work "in the field" sounds exciting, consider that your skills might not be best matched to that work. You may add the most value by simply editing documents in your native language or performing other administrative tasks. When analyzing your impact, consider the costs incurred for you to fulfill your role, eg. translation or transportation costs. Also consider the impression having a short-term volunteer in a higher level position might give to beneficiaries or co-workers.



Be flexible: remember that the needs and conditions may change and that you cannot be the central concern of the organization's management, or else they will not be focusing on their mission.

4 Your attitude is contagious: bring a positive one!

The energy a person brings with them is contagious. It spreads through a family, an organization, and a community. Sometimes

the best thing you can bring into an organization (or even a room!) is your positivity, your willingness to work hard, and your care for those around you. The impact of your attitude can spread further and faster than those infectious diseases your family is worried you might catch on your travels, so do not cause the spread of the whining disease! When comparing other work to Learning Service opportunities, many say that the highs are higher and the lows are lower so it is best if you know this going in!

5. Remember that "Learning Service" is a life-long commitment.

Hopefully, if you have committed to giving your talents where they can best be used, you should be able to provide useful support to your partner organization during your placement. At the very least you should have the opportunity to make new friends, learn valuable lessons, and perhaps create an opportunity for cultural exchange. However, the positive impact from your experience does not need to end when you leave your role. Learning Service provides opportunities to practice improving our impact every day and throughout our lives. Weaving the principles of learning first, caring about those around us, and voting responsibly with our time and money, allows us to turn a short-term impact into a lifelong one.

6. Spread the word!

Around the world right now there are millions of people volunteering, some of whom you probably know. Could they use this list of reminders around how to shift attitudes and actions towards more positive Learning Service opportunities? Scale up your own positive impact by sharing this tool: Tweet it, share it with your Facebook, Friends, print it, discuss it, and help us start a dialogue!



Culture Shock

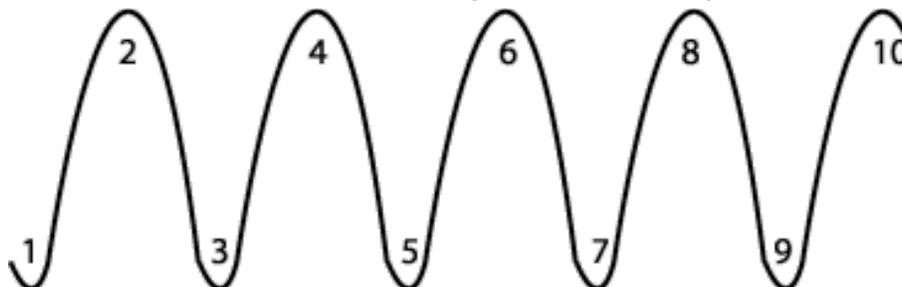
Source: US Center for Global Education

<http://www.studentsabroad.com/cultureshock.html>

In this section, you will learn what culture shock means and how you can overcome its effects. Experiencing new cultures, and obtaining a better understanding of your own culture, can result in some of the most positive, life-altering experiences students have while abroad. When going abroad, students will experience differences in manners, beliefs, customs, laws, language, art, religion, values, concept of self, family organization, social organization, government, behavior, etc. All of these elements combine to form your host country's rich and unique culture.

While the introduction to new and foreign cultures greatly benefits students, it can also be overwhelming. The new cultural elements a student encounters abroad may be so different that they seem "shocking" in comparison to cultural norms they are used to at home. As Bruce La Brack writes in his article, "The Missing Linkage: The Process of Integrating Orientation and Reentry,"

"Just as you can't really describe the taste of a hot fudge sundae to someone who has never experienced one, it is difficult to actually convey just how disorienting entering another culture can be to a student without any cross-cultural experience."



Rhinesmith's Ten Stages of Adjustment

Source: *Returning Home*, Canadian Bureau for International Education, 1984, p. 7.

Culture shock and its effects can occur in a number of stages. However, culture shock is not an exact step-by-step process; not every student experiences culture shock the same way or at the same time. The following 10 steps of cultural adjustment outlined by Steven Rhinesmith show how culture shock can be like a roller coaster ride of emotions:

1. initial anxiety
2. initial elation
3. initial culture shock
4. superficial adjustment
5. depression-frustration
6. acceptance of host culture
7. return anxiety
8. return elation
9. re-entry shock
10. reintegration



Riding the roller coaster of culture shock, a student actually follows a natural pattern of hitting peaks and valleys. The high points of excitement and interest are succeeded by lower points of depression, disorientation, or frustration. Each student will experience these ups and downs in different degrees of intensity and for different lengths of time. The process is necessary in order to make the transition from one culture to another; it helps a student or traveler to balance out and adjust.

Stages 1 through 5: Exposure to a new culture

Prior to going abroad, students may be excited about new adventures to come. A student arrives in the host country and perhaps begins to develop increasing independence as he/she starts to experience the local culture or another country's culture. At first, a student's expectations may be too high. He or she may see things almost as a tourist would during the first few weeks in a new country.

A student may be heavily comparing and contrasting his/her home culture with the culture abroad. It is common for students to focus on what they see as weaknesses in foreign cultures. Students tend to point out what a foreign culture lacks; this often leads to feelings of frustration over what is "missing" or what can't be obtained abroad in the same ways it can be at home.

Students may be challenged on a regular basis by different ways of living abroad (banking, eating, relationships, etc.). Negative feelings and frustrations may reach a level where you begin to recognize you are going through "culture shock".

Stage 6: Acceptance of a new culture

As a student gets used to the host country's ways, things that seemed like a "crisis" may now simply be seen as different ways of doing things. Most students gradually adjust their lifestyles to be balanced with a country's own cultural norms. The cultural traits that once annoyed or bothered a student generally come to be accepted as normal. Students usually begin to understand and appreciate the cultural differences between the United States and the host country. However, if significant problems arise, a student may briefly return to the "frustration" stage of culture shock. As a student begins to adapt more and more, he/she may have a new set of friends, may be traveling more, and may even be dreaming in another language. The "other way" may now become the "normal" way of living.

Stages 7 through 10: Leaving a new culture behind

As a student becomes integrated to the ways of the host country's culture, the more difficult it may be to re-adapt to the United States upon return home. The United States just won't look the same way it did before leaving to study abroad; a student may see home with new eyes and may also be more critical of U.S. cultural traditions once thought to be "normal". This is called reverse culture shock. Fear of experiencing reverse culture shock should not deter students from trying to integrate as fully as possible while abroad. No matter how integrated a student becomes while abroad, he or she will probably still be "shocked" by differences noted at home after so much time spent abroad and the other countries to which you will be traveling. However, over time, a student will learn to re-adapt and reintegrate into his or her home culture.

Homesickness

Homesickness is one of the most common adjustment problems related to culture shock and loneliness. Experienced by students from every country, homesickness is a universal side-affect to being away from home. Psychologists often refer to homesickness as "separation anxiety" because students—in particular those moving away from home—feel separated from all that is familiar.



Feelings of homesickness may even start before you leave to study abroad and you may find yourself mildly depressed or anxious several weeks before leaving. The anticipation and preparation for this major change of lifestyle can trigger pre-departure homesickness, or sudden feelings that you don't want to leave, or even a want to back out of your decision to study abroad.

Some students might experience homesickness within the first few days or weeks of being abroad, while others might not be hit by homesickness until later on, or closer to the holidays. Holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, family events or even family illness or death can all cause you to feel homesick, or make you wish you were at home. Also, many students report increased feelings of homesickness during the winter months when darkness, rainy weather and the cold can lead to feelings of depression.

The following are a few tips to help you cope with feelings of homesickness:

- Don't wait for homesickness to go away by itself. Confront your feelings by talking to someone (a counselor, family member, roommate, or another student, etc.) about your homesickness. Chances are that the other students in your program may be feeling the same way you are.

- Bring some of home along with you. Be sure to pack photos of family and friends.
- Make friends with locals and invite them to spend time with you. Creating such a support network can really help to alleviate homesickness while creating lasting friendships.
- Be patient with yourself as you adjust to the unexpected realities of being abroad, and how abroad is not like home.
- Get involved by seeking out opportunities that keep you busy and occupied so that you won't think about home.

Stress



Stress has many definitions. Stress affects everyone differently. The additional/new kinds of stress you may encounter while abroad may lead to anxiety/panic disorders, depression, paranoia, eating disorders, and other phobias. Any mental health challenges you have prior to going abroad may become more severe once you experience the effects of culture shock. Even mental fatigue from constant language immersion and time change may cause the symptoms of culture shock to seem overwhelmin

Chapter 4: Guatemala Facts and History



Being a guest

Your host family may feel more comfortable treating you as a guest, as a foreign "chele," rather than a part of the family. Some easy ways to make yourself "feel at home" are taking interest in the cooking, learning to do simple chores by yourself (drawing the well water for bathing), playing with the kids or helping them with homework, accompanying the father out to the fields, etc. It may take asking to help repeatedly, but, in time, your persistence will be rewarded.

Gender roles

Gender roles are traditionally defined in rural Guatemala: Women cook and clean and men tend the fields. These roles play themselves out on the work site too, where, for example, women tend to carry water and men hammer nails. Don't let this discourage you from doing your own thing. Challenging gender roles in a respectful fashion is a valuable learning experience for the community members about American values.

Female volunteers may find large groups of same-age Guatemalans paying them a lot of attention, while male volunteers may find themselves being encouraged to talk to girls their age. Nothing ill-intentioned is meant by it, so respond kindly but be sure to establish clear boundaries.

Animals

Animals are beasts of burden in Guatemala, not pets. Horses are for riding and dogs are for guarding the house. Animals are routinely and unacceptably mistreated. The house dog has probably never been petted and is more afraid of people than affectionate. Treat all house animals with more distance than you would in the US.

Dress

Even in the poorest and most rural communities, people will try to dress cleanly and nicely. The majority of indigenous women will wear native clothing called a huipil. You can usually tell where someone is from depending on the colors and designs on the huipil. Men sometimes will wear native clothing but more times than not will wear jeans and tshirt. When going to parties, church or visiting someone's house, they will wear a clean, tucked-in shirt, or a dress (women). Try to follow their lead. Stained and ripped clothing is fine for the work site, but clean and proper clothing at social occasions is polite.

Religion

Religion in Guatemala is fairly complex, with traditional Mayan spirituality still very much a presence, particularly in the highlands. Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism are the two most common religions in Guatemala. Be aware that Evangelicals follow a strict code of behavior that restricts things as innocent seeming as pants on women, dancing, and many kinds of music. There's no need for you to do as they do, but be respectful.

Country Profile

Source: Infoplease.com

Capital: Guatemala City

Currency: Quetzal

President: Jimmy Morales (since 2016)

Population: 16.91 Million (2017)

Former Colonial Power: Spain

Independence Date: September 15, 1821 (from Spain)



Language: Official language is Spanish. There are 23 indigenous languages spoken throughout the country.

Religion: Roman Catholic, Protestant, and indigenous Mayan beliefs.

Ethnic Groups: Mestizo 59.4%, K'iche 9.1%, Kaqchikel 8.4%, Mam 7.9%, Q'eqchi 6.3%, other Mayan 8.6%, indigenous non-Mayan 0.2%, other 0.1% (2001)

Literacy Rates: 71% (2003 est.)

Unemployment Rate: 4.1% (2011 est.)

Main Industry: Agriculture



Source:

<https://www.centralamerica.com/guatemala/history/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19636725>

History

Guatemala located in Central America has evidence of human civilization as early as 18,000 BC, about 12,000 years ago. Civilizations that have existed here are the Olmec empire as well as the Mayan empire. It was during their reign that several city-states were built like **La Mirador** and **Tikal** with populations of each city ranging as high as 100,000. It's the same cities that constructed the ancient temples that we see today as popular tourist attractions.

(paragraph of Tikal huge Mayan city)



Spanish Rule

In the year 1523-24 the development of this country was interrupted by Spanish **colonizer Pedro De Alvarado**, who defeats the Mayans and turns Guatemala into a Spanish colony. The Mayan civilization known for their strategic warfare made the conquest a difficult one. It took well over a decade before Spain could claim the country as one of their colonies.

The Spanish remained kept the population under their power until 1822, when Guatemala became independent in 1822 and joined the Mexican empire shortly after. This alliance then turns into the **United Provinces of Central America** which included neighboring countries like Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. This union was very short lived and ended later in 1838 due to the various differences and needs of the involved countries.

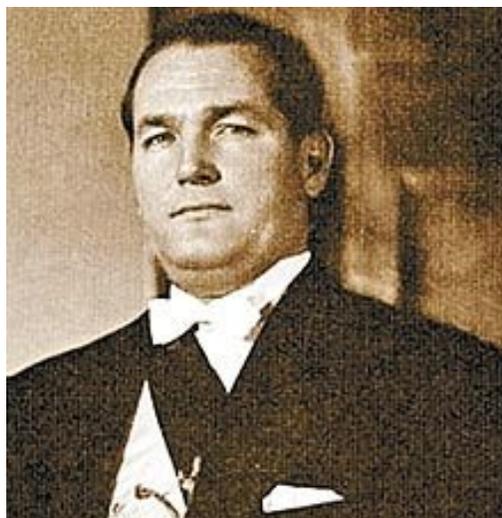
Independence

In 1839, Guatemala becomes fully independent but went through several tense political periods. The country had been plagued with constant tension between the liberal and conservative factions within the country. Shortly after gaining independence, **Rafael Carrera**, the first conservative dictator, rose to power. Carrera brought back governing and social practices reminiscent of the colonial period, such as favoring the church and a strict class structure.



After Carrera's death in 1865, a new dictator, **Justo Rufino Barrios**, rose to power. Barrios was a liberal compared to Carrera, and he immediately dismantled the antiquated social structure Carrera had restored. Barrios also separated church and state, secularized education and opened the nation's economy to foreign investment, therefore earning him the title "the Reformer." It is during this era when Guatemala's modern-day political and social structures truly began to take shape. The next significant dictator in Guatemala's political history is **Jorge Ubico**, a general who rose to power in 1931. Ubico was inspired by the other dictators around the world to run what would be considered a 'police state,' limiting the freedoms of press and speech. Ubico ruled in this manner until 1944, when protesters forced him to resign and flee the country in what would become Guatemala's most important revolution and is a result of the Guatemala we see today politically.

The uprising that occurred after Ubico's departure resulted in the country's first truly democratic presidential election and creation of a democratic constitution. **Juan José Arévalo**, a university lecturer, emerged as the new president with an 85 percent vote in his favor. Arévalo introduces several much-needed reforms to the country's education and health care systems.



In 1951, Arévalo's successor, Jacobo Arbenz, came to power. He continued with Arévalo's style of imposing liberal reforms, including a heavy land reform policy. Arbenz required that all of the country's unused land be redistributed to the peasants. A decision that did not make neighboring countries in the Western Hemisphere happy.

Foreign Intervention

Much of this unused land belonged to the United Fruit Company, an American corporation that traded and sold the tropical fruits grown in several Central American countries. Although the Guatemalan government promised to give a (small) compensation to the corporation, the United Fruit Company happened to be Guatemala's largest employer, and its sudden expropriation angered the company's owners in Washington.

As a result the U.S. government decided to take action by arranging for the CIA to secretly train an army of Guatemalan exiles in Honduras. Under the leadership of Carlos Castillo Armas, the small army invaded Guatemala through Honduras in 1954. The Guatemalan army did not put up much of a fight, and Arbenz escaped to Mexico while Armas rose to power.

Armas introduced a conservative regime to the country, which had long been ruled by a string of liberals, thus reversing nearly all the reforms that had been introduced since 1944. Despite Armas being assassinated three years later, Guatemala saw itself reverting back to a country of violence and unrest.

Languages in Guatemala

Source: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-guatemala.html>

Spanish, the official language of the country, is also the most spoken language in the nation. Nearly 93% of the population of Guatemala speak Spanish. The language was introduced in the country by the Spanish colonists and was taught to the indigenous inhabitants of the country by missionaries and the earliest Guatemalan schools. Today, Spanish acts as the primary medium of instructions in schools nationwide. Spanish is also used widely in both formal and informal occasions in the country.

Languages Spoken in Guatemala:

As most countries colonized, the language of Spanish was forced on the various indigenous populations of Guatemala. Presently it is the national language of Guatemala and the most spoken. After Spanish there are 23 languages, 21 of them being Mayan based. Of the two non Mayan based languages is **Garifuna**. The people who speak Garifuna are descendants of Arawakans who were chased out of the Caribbean in the late 1700's by French colonizers. They are a people who intermixed with Africans that were forced over as slaves to the Caribbean.

They were then pushed into Central America via Belize, and eventually migrated to Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala. The Garifuna we see today are their descendants and work diligently to keep their language and culture alive, as do most indigenous language speakers.

The second non Mayan based language is **Xinca**. This language is spoken by the indigenous populations with ties to the Xinca people. They have native speakers in bordering countries like El Salvador.

The following languages are spoken with # of people speaking it as their 1st tongue.

Sourced: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-guatemala.html>
<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/groups-organizations-global-african-history/garifuna-people/>

K'iche' 1,000,000	Q'eqchi' 555,461	Kaqchikel 500,000	Mam 480, 000	Poqomchi' 92,000	Tz'utujil 88,300
Achí 85,552	Q'anjob'al 77,700	Ixi 70,000	Akatek 48,500	Jakaltek 40,000	Chuj 40,000
Poqomam 30,000	Ch'orti' 30,000	Awakatek 18,000	Sakapultek 9,763	Sipakapense 8,000	Garifuna 5,860
Uspanteko 3,000	Tektitek 2,265	Mopan 2,000	Xincan Languages 16	Itza' 12	

Natural Disaster - Fuego Eruption

On June 3rd, 2018 Volcán de Fuego erupted in the southern region of Guatemala. It's recorded as one of the most active volcanoes by NASA in Central America. With its eruption the 1st in over 100 years, more than 200 people went missing, about 100 confirmed dead, entire villages wiped off the map, and more than 1.7 million people impacted. The two villages severely impacted were San Miguel Los Lotes and El Rodeo. Many people who lived off the slope of the volcano were caught by surprise and didn't react quick enough due to the volcanos frequent smaller eruptions which caused no harm. As a result many people passed away within their homes or in the surrounding areas. Rescue efforts were difficult to proceed with because another blast could erupt at any moment, which did happen.



Fuego Eruption June 2018, evacuation of 30,000 people, destroyed about 210,000 acres of land

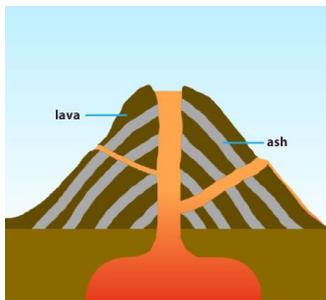
Volcanoes of Guatemala

Source: <http://www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/topics/typesvolcanoes.html>

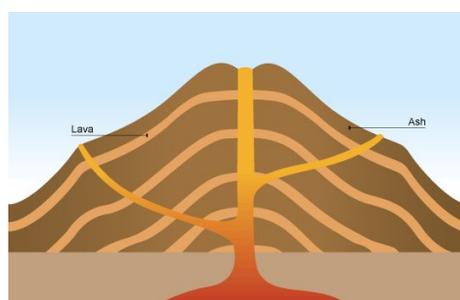
In Guatemala there are about 36 volcanos, 2 of them being very active the others being dormant. **Dormant volcano** means it is an active volcano that is not erupting, but can erupt again. An **extinct volcano** is a volcano that has not had an eruption for at least 10,000 years and is not expected to erupt again anytime soon in the near future.

There are 3 types of volcano; **composite/strato, shield and dome**. Composite volcanoes, sometimes known as stratovolcanoes, are steep sided cones formed from layers of ash and lava flows. The eruptions from these volcanoes may be a pyroclastic flow rather than a flow of lava. The Fuego eruption that disrupted the lives of millions was a stratovolcano. The volcanic material released was a mix of ash, rock, and volcanic gas.

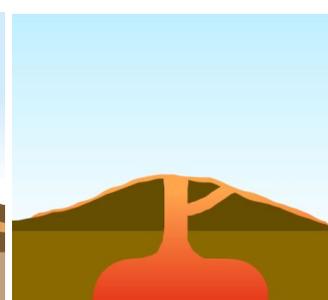
Composite Volcano



Dome Volcano



Shield Volcano



Chapter 5: Activities in the Community



No Regrets!

You will only be in this village for a few days, so make the most of it! Don't waste any time. You might be sitting around with your roommate (or by yourself) and feeling unsure about what you can do with your host family. Perhaps this thought crossed your mind, "How am I supposed to pass the time when we don't speak the same language?" Rest assured! Laughter is universal. The games to follow and the items in the To-Do List below will give you some ideas to get you started. Each of these things has been tested out by Trek team members who have come before you.

Don't be shy! Act silly. Leave your inhibitions behind. After all, this is not high school and no one is going to make fun of you. By the time you leave the village, try to accomplish as many things on the list below. Leave the village with no regrets!

**We have only this moment, sparkling like a star in our hand –
and melting like a snowflake.**

Marie B. Ray

- Help cook or prepare food with your host sisters/aunts/mothers
- Fetch your own bath water and carry it from the pump
- Carry a baby on your back (carefully!)
- Learn a traditional dance
- Teach a dance (think hokey pokey, the macarena, the chicken dance)
- Play hopscotch
- Learn a traditional game
- Create your host family tree
- Teach Dots and Boxes
- Play Tic-Tac-Toe
- Crow like a rooster! (and learn other animal sounds and teach them in English)
- Draw a map of the village
- Walk out to your family's farm or garden
- Learn a local song
- Herd the goats with your host brother
- Wash your own clothes with your host sisters/aunts/mothers
- Carry firewood
- Freeze tag
- Limbo
- Patty Cake or other hand clapping games
- Slap Game

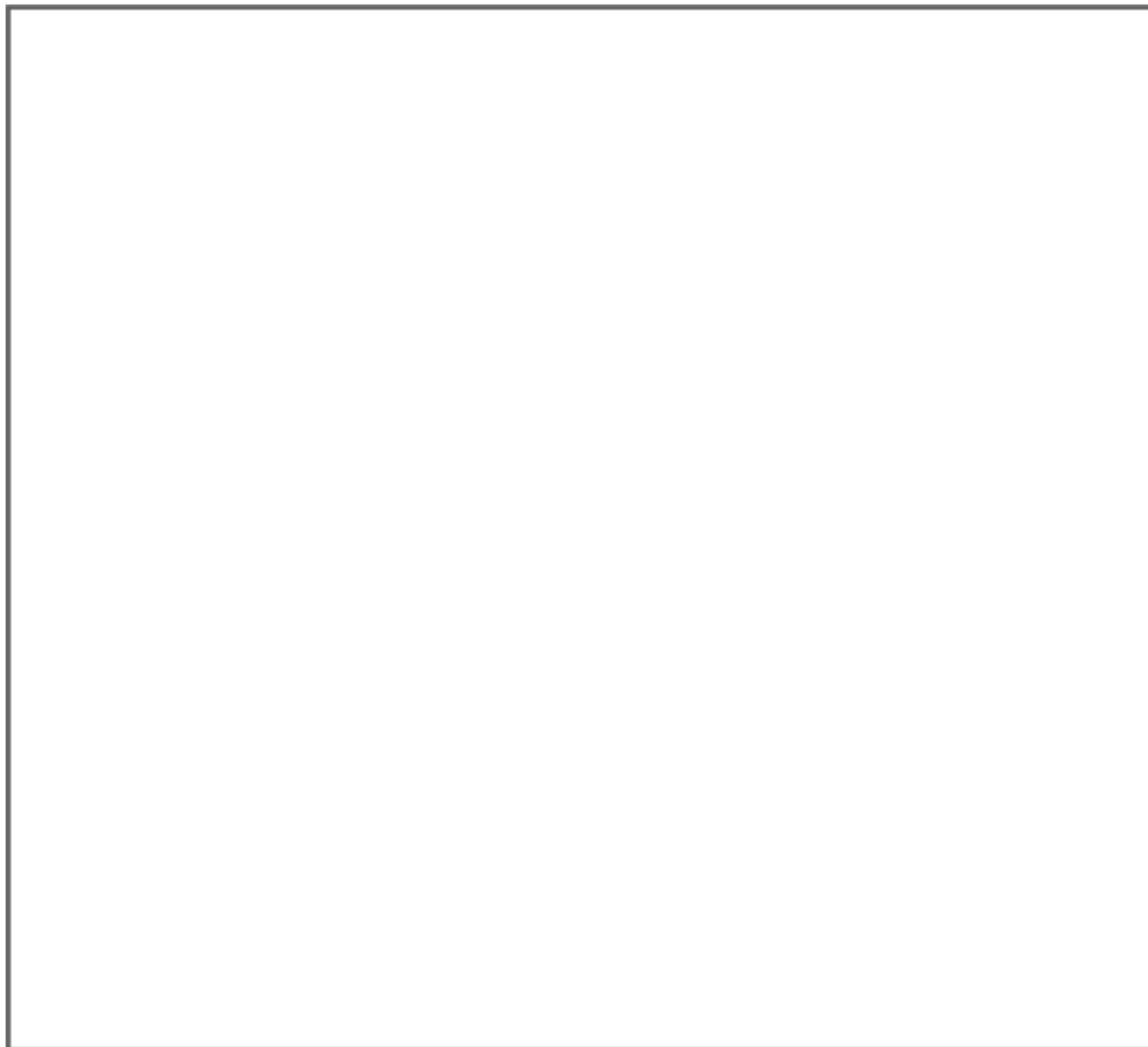


Community Mapping

This is a great exercise to introduce you to the village and village life. It consists of trying to get as much information about the village and villagers as possible. Don't worry if you can't get all the way through it; just do the best you can. Also, don't worry if you cannot understand everything. If there are some words that keep popping up try to write them down to ask a translator later.

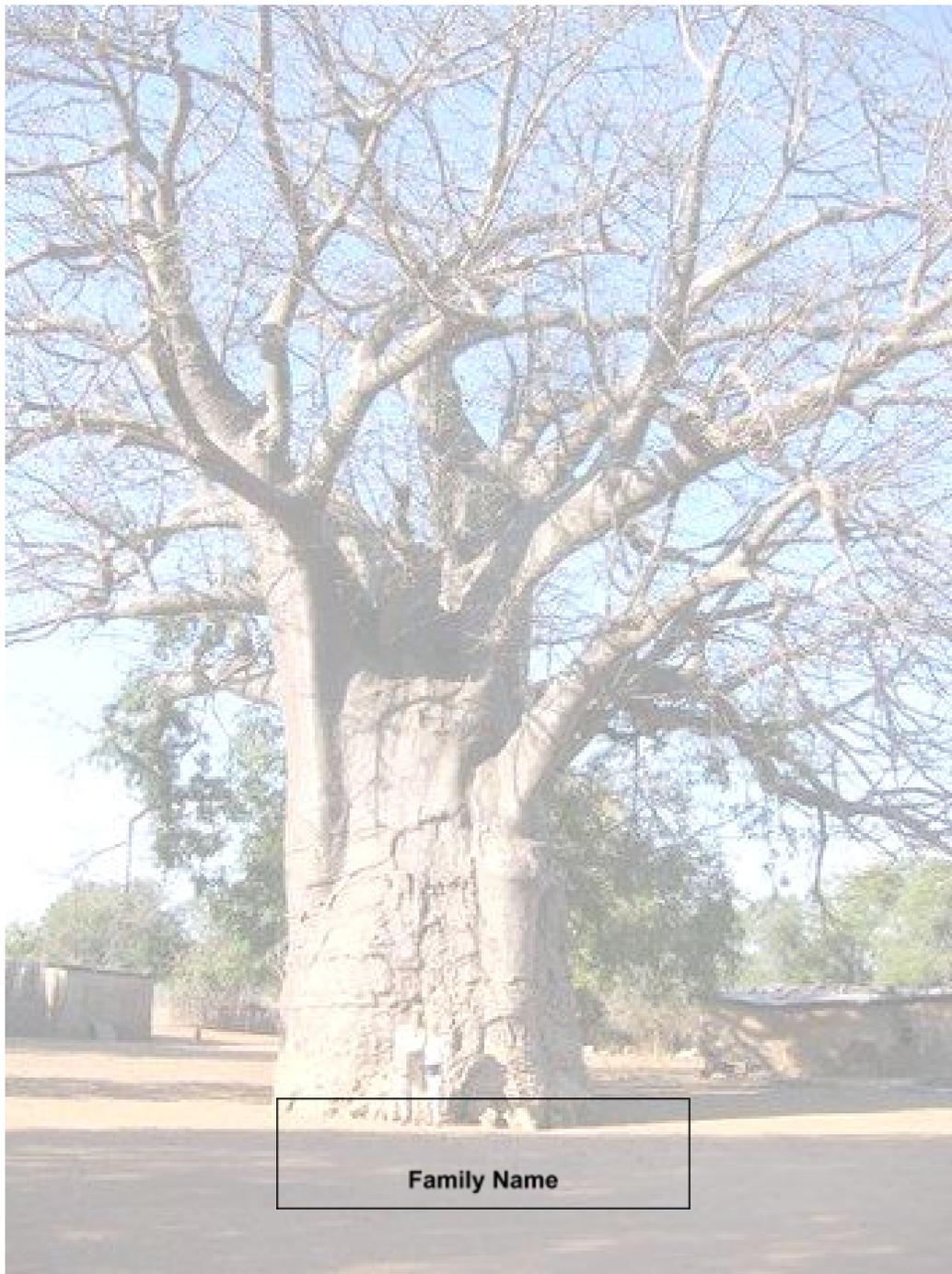
Map the village...this entails figuring out where different things are in the village. Start by having a host family member (or several for that matter) draw out on the ground (in the dirt) a map of the village. They should include houses, schools, government buildings, fields, water supplies, religious buildings, community centers, fields for sport, etc.

If they have something or do not have something ask yourself (and them) why. For example, they may not have a place for garbage... why is that?



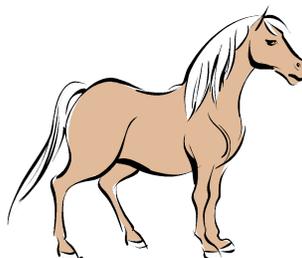
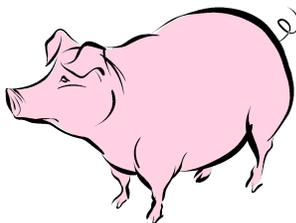
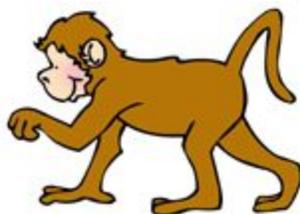
Family Tree

Use the space to make a family tree of your host family. Encourage your host family to take you to the homes of family members who are on the tree. Try making a family tree of your family to share!



Animal Sounds

What sounds do these animals make in the local language? This is a time to have fun and be silly. Start this activity off with your host brothers and sisters and see if you can get the adults involved too. Don't be shy! When is the next time you will have the opportunity to quack like a duck?



Local Language and English

With your host family, find out these words in the local language. At the same time, teach them the English words.













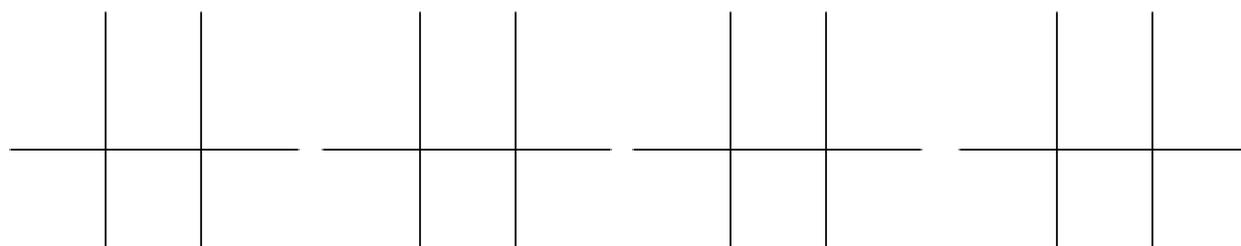
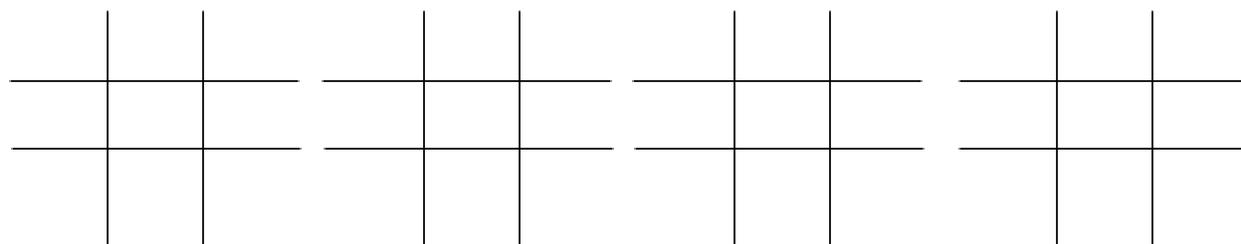
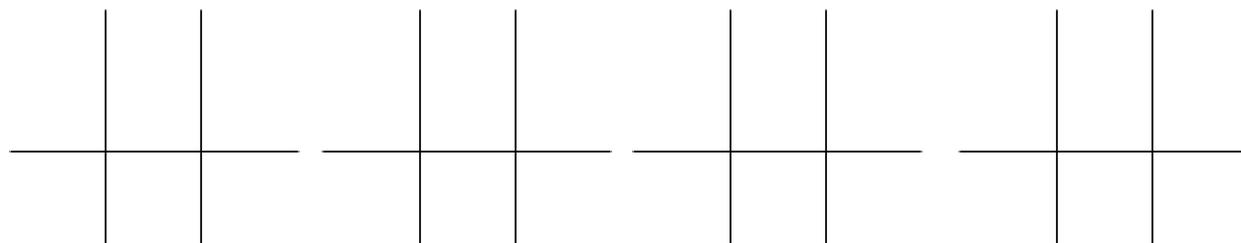
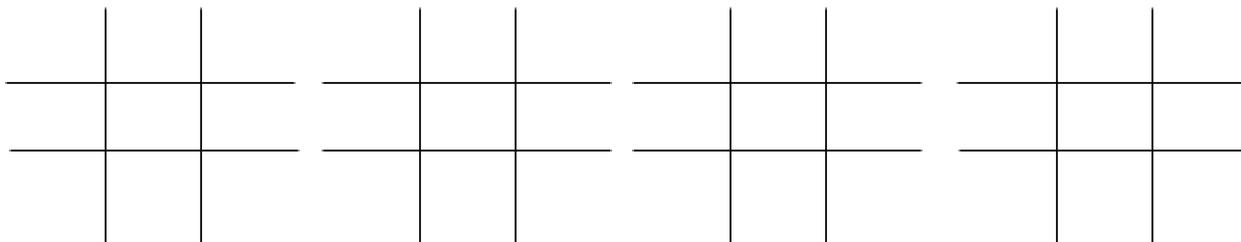






Tic-Tac-Toe

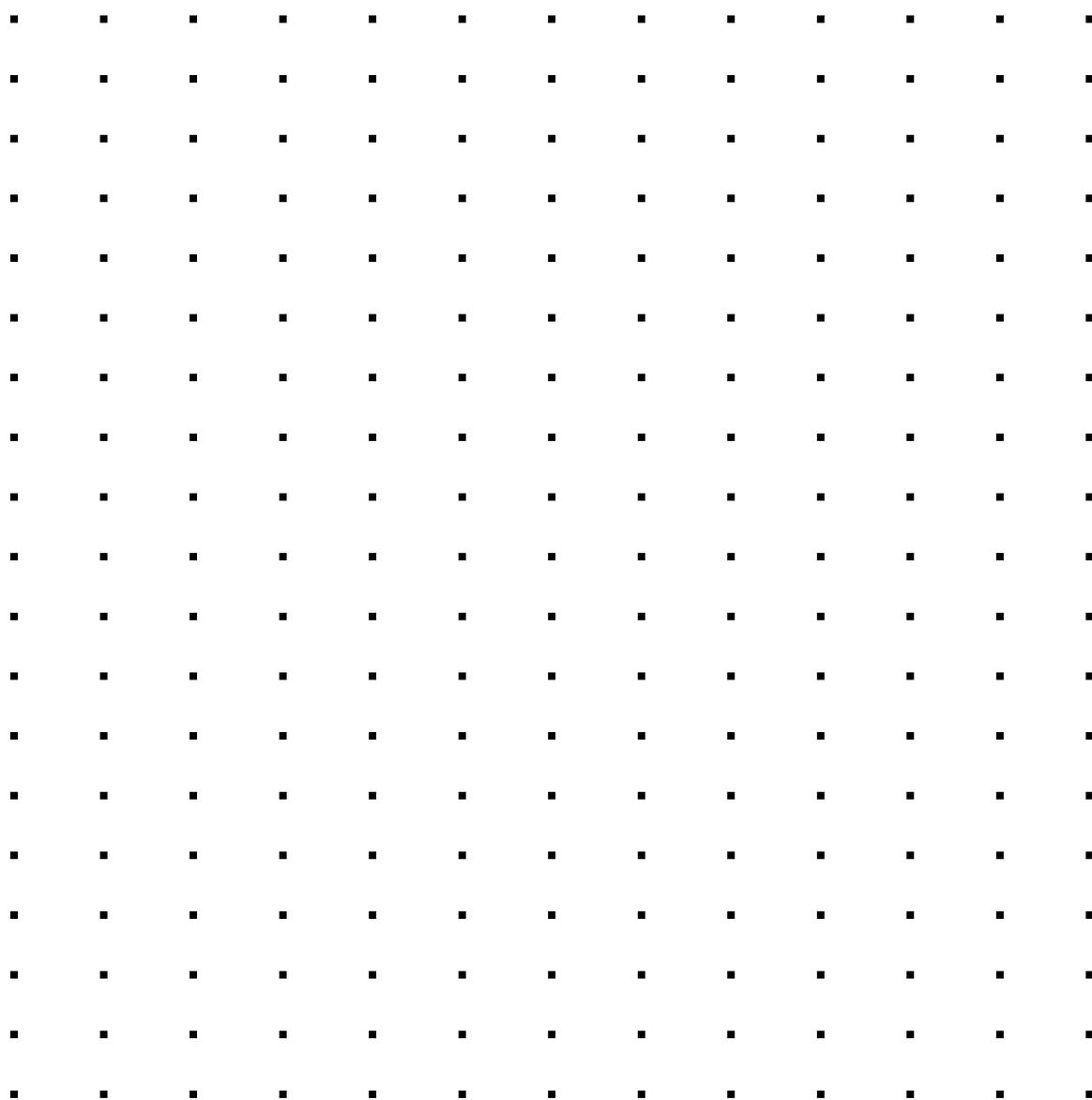
When you run out of paper, use a stick as a pencil and sand as your paper.



Dots and Boxes

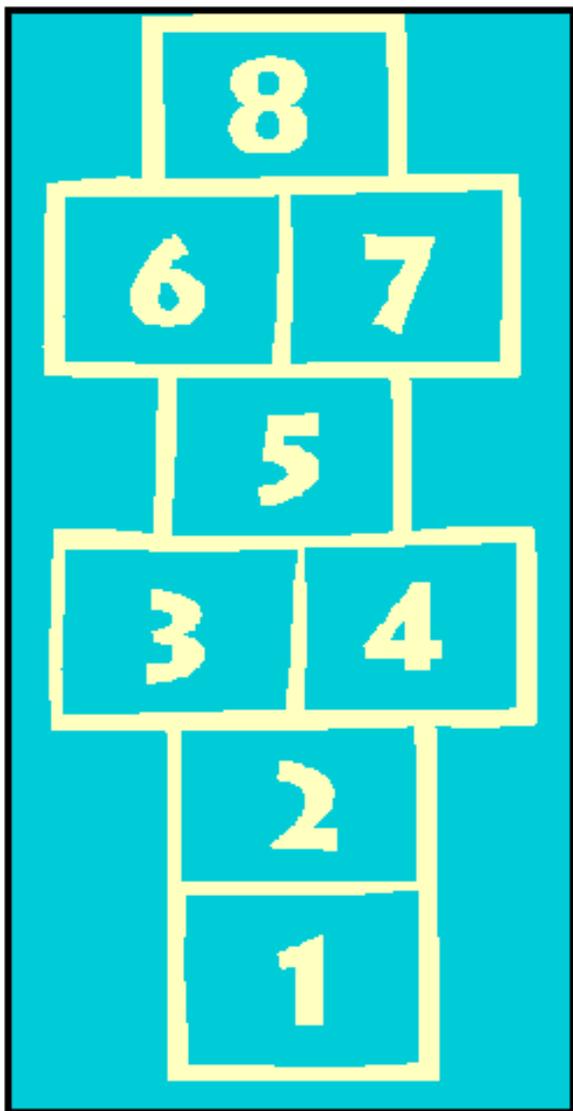
The two players take turns to join two adjacent dots with a horizontal or vertical line. If a player completes the fourth side of a box they initial that box and must draw another line.

When all the boxes have been completed the winner is the player who has initialed the most boxes.



Hopscotch

Hopscotch is a very old game played by children in numerous countries. It can be played by young children and helps with learning to count. This is a very easy game with very few rules. Before you start, get your host family together and practice counting in the local language from one to eight!



You will need a smooth stone or other small object that can be thrown onto the squares.

- First, draw your hopscotch board (use a stick in the sand)

- You start by tossing your token on the space marked #1.

- You hop (on one leg) all the way down the boxes (up to #8). Land on both feet on the two double squares. When you get to #8, hop to turn around and then hop all the way back to where your token is.

- Stop and bend down (still on one leg) and pick up the stone and jump off the board at the starting point.

- Next, you toss your token to box #2.

- You will repeat the steps above, but will pick up the stone at box #2 and then continue off the board.

- You continue until you successfully toss your stone to #8 and make it through the board. If you miss a toss, fall over, or jump on a line, it is someone else's turn.

Have fun and be silly!

Interview a Community Member

Select a student who attends the school, a friend from the work site or a member of your host family! All of the questions may not apply. Be respectful of the community member and your translators when requesting assistance. Use the following page and/or the back of this Guide if you need more space.

Community Member Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Married? _____ Children? _____

Profession/Occupation: _____ Money earned/day? _____

Hours worked per day: _____ Full-time? Seasonal? _____

Level of School Completed: _____

Describe your typical day? _____

Do you think education is important? Why or why not? _____

How will the school affect him/her? The community? _____

What are your life goals? _____

Think of 2 questions of your own to ask!

1. _____

2. _____

Don't forget to thank your interviewee and your translator! Ask if they have any questions for you ☺ Take a photo of the two of you together!

Cultural Workshop Notes

Use this worksheet to take notes on a Cultural Workshop. You may never have an opportunity like this again, so make sure you won't forget it by writing it down! Use the following page and/or the back of this Guide if you need more space.

Description: _____ **Location:** _____

Name(s) of presenter(s): _____

List any details you learn about the presenter (age, children, education, etc.)

What questions were asked and what were the responses?

What surprised you?

What was the most interesting thing you learned during the workshop?

Make sure to give the presenter a chance to ask you questions & ask if you can take a photo together for your memories!

Reflection and Journaling

We encourage each Trek participant to use a journal to record their individual Trek experience in-country. The Trek staff feels very strongly that writing a journal will help each individual understand the learning experience, keep a record of the many things seen and done, and help prepare you to share your experience upon return. There is no prescribed format for the journals, but journal time and reflection time will be a regular part of the daily routine in the host village. You can write stories, reflection pieces, paragraphs, bullets, words, poems, raps, draw pictures, etc.

Here are some journal prompts to consider when in-country:

The World Around Me

- Write down your first impressions of the community, your family, and the team so far. (Revisit this the last day or so and reflect on what has been different, or how you have been surprised.)
- Sketch: Draw exactly what you see in front of you- capture the moment.
- Describe the moment you are in because you will never be here again: on a Trek, on this day of 20__, at age 16 (or whatever age you are), with a belly full of _____, or in this village.
- What do you see, hear, smell, feel, taste, think about, anticipate, and look forward to?
- What do you see from your bed or sleeping mat?



Processing the Experience

- What is one high and one low for today?
- What's the funniest thing that has happened so far?
- What's the most difficult thing that happened so far? How are you dealing with it?
- How is your family at home different than your host family? What is similar? What characteristics of this culture's family life would you like to be a part of yours at home?
- Look at the advice from former Trek participants, what can you learn from them?
- When is childhood over? Is childhood over the same time in the US and in this village?

What if...?

- What if you grew up in this village? How would your life be different right now?
- If you could take one thing/person home with you, what would it be and why?

Did that Really Just Happen?

- A Foot in Two Cultures

List images that combine two cultures (i.e. Tupac shirt on a local grandma, the village chief wearing his traditional robes and modern sunglasses, Michael Jackson blasting out of a packed bus...)

- Make of list of things you have tried on Trek that you never did before: bucket bath, sit under a tamarind tree, pound millet, used a pick axe, poop in a hole, etc.

For the Poet

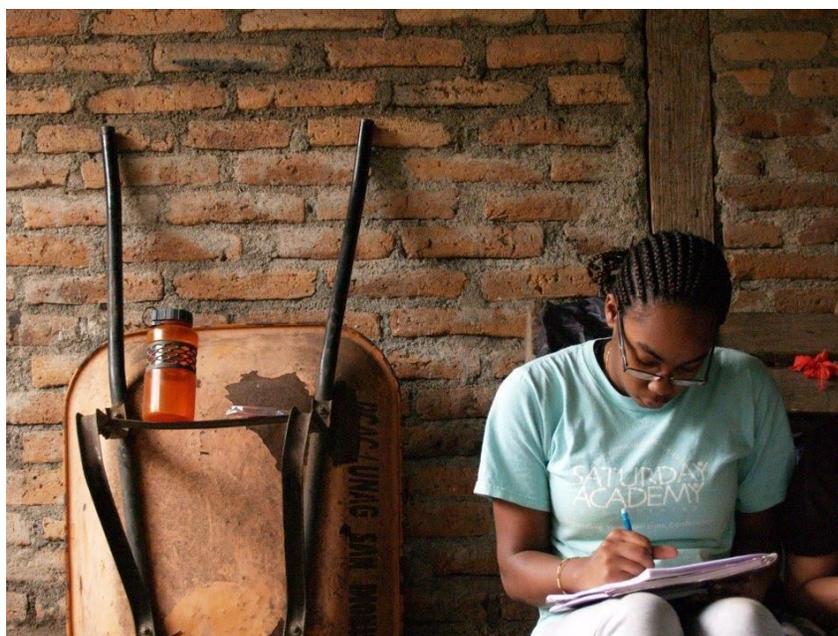
- Write a poem that begins with "<Trek Country> is..." And follow it with a list of images, smells, people, tastes, textures
- In <Trek Country> sunrise/sunset means...
- Write about yourself in relation to the four elements -air, earth, fire, and water.
- Write a poem by listing the colors of the rainbow and what you see of each: RED - bucket, shirt on a small kid, plastic plate, BLUE - sky, water bottle,

What I've learned?

- Write down all of the local language you know so far
- Write down five life-lessons you have already experienced
- How do I want to live my life differently?

Self-Reflection

- What is your life today, a drama, comedy or tragedy?
- Things you learned today
- Write about ritual in your life. How does this compare to the rituals you've observed?
- How is your life impacting others on Trek?
- The one person in the village that I admire more than anyone else is ...
- More than anything else in the world, I hope that ...
- What did you dream about last night?



Chapter 6: Post Trek



Strategies for Re-entry

Re-entering one's daily life after a life-altering experience such as Trek can be challenging. Here are 10 challenges to re-entry as outlined by the University of Colorado study abroad department:

1. **Boredom**
2. ***No one wants to hear about this***
3. ***"It's hard to explain"***
4. **Reverse homesickness**
5. **Relationships have changed**
6. **People see the "wrong" changes**
7. ***People misunderstand if I adopt elements of my host culture; they misinterpret my behavior***
8. **Feelings of alienation; seeing home with critical eyes**
9. **Inability to apply new knowledge and skills**
10. **Fear of losing the experience, like storing it away in a souvenir box that we only occasionally look at.**

There are also steps to help cope with these challenges:

1. **Be reflective.** Give some thought to your return, to the types of intellectual and emotional changes that you have undergone as a result of your time abroad.
2. **Understand the needs of others.** Be patient with your friends and family who are trying to understand your recent experiences. Listen to them, too, about the changes they underwent during the time you were away.
3. **Expect some negative feelings about your "home" culture.** You are viewing it, perhaps for the first time, from the perspective of a foreigner. A common tendency is to be highly critical of shortcomings that you did not see before. Remember that there are positive and negative aspects of **all** cultures.
4. **Accentuate the positive.** Try to identify what you like about both cultures and try to incorporate the best aspects of these into your life.
5. **Plug in to international activities.** Find ways to keep the "international" part of you alive, to make it part of the new you. This may mean becoming involved in clubs or activities on campus or in the community to maintain your language skills, doing volunteer work with ethnic or multicultural groups to use your cross-cultural skills, or hosting a foreign student.
6. **Utilize your skills.** Use the cross-cultural adaptation skills you developed abroad (e.g. keep active, maintain a sense of humor, expect differences, stay flexible) during your readjustment home.
7. **Set goals for your development.** Realize once again that change can be stimulating and this could be your chance to develop in new directions. Set some long-term goals, which may involve finding ways to return abroad. Consider fundraising for the next Trek!

Once you've returned home after your Trek, take some time to reflect on your experience. Read your journal, think back to your reflections, look at the photos you took, remember the conversations you had. Feel free to use the questions below to generate ideas for post-Trek reflection.

- Describe the village. What were the sights and smells? What were the people like?
- How was your host family different from families in your city in the US?
- What was a typical day like?
- Describe your favorite memory or a highlight of your trip, and tell us why.
- Are women in the village educated?
- What was the most meaningful lesson learned during a cultural workshop, and why?
- What was one thing you learned from another Trek participant?
- Think back on a person who lived in the village that was about the same age & gender as you. How is his/her daily life different in comparison?
- What did you learn about the world during your Trek experience?
- What did you learn about yourself during this time?
- Has your experience caused you to think about what you want to do in the future?
- How do you plan to create change after the experience you've gained from your Trek?
- How did the local population prioritize education? How does this compare to how you and your family prioritize education?
- What difference does buildOn constructing schools make?
- Think about what you determine as a *want* versus a *need*. How have those ideas changed since your Trek? Have your wants and needs changed?
- What can you do now as an American consumer to have a positive impact on the global community?

Group Processing

The great thing about Trek is that you did not experience it alone! There is a wonderful team of volunteers who went through the experience with you. If you all live nearby, set up a time to get together. If not, organize a Skype call. Consider using the below reflection questions or try out one of the activities on the preceding pages.

Some possible group discussion topics and questions:

- Are you experiencing any frustrations with anything in the US that you didn't have before? (i.e. with excessive waste, consumption in American culture, the choices we have, others not understanding your perspective.)
- Have people been open and receptive to hearing about your experiences?
- Since you may not be able to continually travel for international service, what are some ways that you might be able to continue to do this work?
- Is there an issue (global health, education, politics, religion) you are more interested in now than before?
- Is there anything about your experience on Trek that makes more sense now than before?
- Are you doing, or thinking any differently about life since your return? (Discuss money, food, family, school, work, etc.)
- What are some ways you can share your Trek experience?
- How has this experience affected any future plans of yours? Is there anything you wish to do now that you didn't think about before?
- Are you having difficulty deciding how to move forward after this experience?
- Do you hope to stay connected to the community? The country? How? What else can you do to stay connected?



Activity #1

If you are able to get together with your Trek team after your Trek, it can be helpful to have organized reflection activities on hand. The Swirling Closing Reflection Activity, detailed below, is a great way to end a day of reflection.

To begin, ask everyone stand in a circle facing each other. You (the facilitator) are part of the group and you will be guiding the group through the process with your words.

Time for Activity: 20 minutes

Materials Needed: None

Space: You will need enough space to move around: a classroom without chairs, a hallway, etc.

Suggested Script:

“I would like each of you to close your eyes, and try to be fully present here in this circle. This may be the last activity we do as an entire team. Please join hands. With your eyes closed, think about all of the memories we have shared. Think about our trip, all the travel, the crazy moments, how much we laughed, when we cried and everything in between.”

Allow 1-2 minutes to come up with three memories.

“Now I want you open your eyes. I am going to take us on a journey to reflect on our memories. Please continue to hold hands and follow the person in front of you.”

I want you to pick three memories, three moments; they can be just 1 word answers that you think of when you think of our trip. What do you remember most? What do you miss the most? As we walk, we will go down the line and everyone will say a moment, one person then the next then the next. We will go around three times, until everyone has a chance to say their three moments. Then I will close us out.”

As the facilitator, let go of one person’s hand (everyone else continues to hold hands) and begin to walk in zig zags, circles, whatever design you want, timing it so that you end up with a circle facing out by the time the last round of memories is spoken. This should take 2-3 minutes. Then, rejoin hands with the others, completing the circle so that it is facing outward.

“Those were beautiful. Think about how many memories we have shared. We came together not too long ago as almost strangers. Now here we are a family. I want to thank you for sharing this experience with me and with each other. It has been a pleasure. Now, let go of your hands. Here we are facing outwards, when for the whole Trek process we have been together through it all. We will all leave today and go our separate ways. Maybe we will see each other at service projects, maybe we will have a reunion. I hope so. But as we leave, remember that we are each better for having shared this experience. Thank you.”

Activity #2

Instructions for a second group reflection activity, Cross the Line, are detailed below.

Time for Activity: 20 minutes

Materials Needed: None

Space: You will need enough space to move around, a classroom without chairs, a hallway, etc.

Ask the group to stand in a straight line. As you ask the following questions, if the participant would answer yes, ask them to step forward. After each question, have the participants return to the line with the rest of the group.

Cross the line if...

- a. You've had a dream about the community.
- b. You've used language skills by accident when talking to someone who you wouldn't usually.
- c. You have communicated with someone from the community/country.
- d. You have shared pictures with someone in person about your experience.
- e. You've shared something about your experience with someone and they didn't seem interested.
- f. You have experienced some form of culture shock.
- g. Somebody has asked you a silly question about your experience.
- h. You've called a Trek team member since we've returned.
- i. You've eaten any foods that remind you of Trek.
- j. You've thought about how you can go back.



Share Your Trek Experience

Ways to share your experience!

There are many ways to share your Trek experience and inspire others.

Create a Trek presentation. Create a PowerPoint presentation to share at a school, church or other groups you are a part of.

Use social or print media. Post photos or a video, write a blog post, do an interview, or write an article for your school or community newspaper.

Host an awareness or fundraising event. There are a number of events you can host to share your Trek experience with your friends, family and supporters. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Photo Exhibits:** Create your own art gallery at your school or local library. Or, ask a local coffee shop/restaurant if your photos could be the featured art for the month!
- **Dinner:** Try your hand at cooking your favorite meal from your community and invite people to partake in the food and learn about your Trek experience.
- **Dance:** Did your Trek involve more dancing than you've ever done before? See if there are any dance studios or groups that offer international dance classes near you. Ask them if they could host a special session featuring dances from your Trek country, and invite friends/family/supporters to participate.
- **Film Festival:** Find a film (or a series of films) related to your Trek country or related to international education. Host a screening with a follow-up discussion relating the film to your Trek experience.
- **Coffee Night:** Did you go to a coffee-growing community in Nicaragua? Host a coffee night, share some delicious Nicaraguan coffee and discuss what you learned about Fair Trade on Trek.



- **Yoga:** Did you go to Nepal and practice yoga every morning? Talk to a yoga studio in your area about hosting an awareness or fundraising event during a yoga session.

Ways to Stay Connected

To your Trek Team...

- ✓ Connect on social media. Create a Facebook group or e-mail chain to keep in touch, share photos, memories, jokes, etc.
- ✓ Arrange a get together. Host a potluck where each guest brings the food they missed the most on Trek, or cook your favorite Trek food together.
- ✓ Commit to doing a service project together as a Trek Team. Show off your shoveling and construction skills by finding somewhere local to volunteer as a group!

To your supporters...

- ✓ Write thank you letters or postcards with photos of you on Trek to all the friends, family and businesses that supported your fundraising efforts.
- ✓ Become a storyteller. Share the lessons you learned on Trek and the impact the experience had on you.
- ✓ Share the impact the school is having on the community. Highlight your host brother or sister and how it will forever change his or her educational opportunities.

To your community/Trek country...

- ✓ Write a letter to your host family, or send printed photos. Talk to your Trek Leader about passing them on.
- ✓ Share photos of the completed school with friends and supporters.
- ✓ Learn more! Follow news updates, check out documentaries, films or books related to your Trek Country.
- ✓ Investigate! Is there a community of people from your Trek country in your city? Perhaps you can connect with them and practice your language skills!

To buildOn and our mission...

- ✓ Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. buildOn posts about new and exciting things happening every day!
- ✓ Do it again! Start planning to fund another school. Think about the joy and opportunity the school brought to the community. What if you were able to help

build one school every year? What impact could you have on the world if you continued to spread education and opportunity to more communities?