



Education
for the Children

VOLUNTEERING WITH THE SCHOOL OF HOPE

A Volunteer Information Packet to teach you the ins and outs of volunteering with our school!



Use your unique skills and experiences to support 600+ students at The School of Hope



INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this packet, then you want to learn more about volunteering in Guatemala at our School of Hope! A key component of our school is the hard work of our volunteers. Volunteers play such an important role in supporting our incredible teachers, students, and staff. They provide the time, the skills, and the experiences we may not always have access to as an NGO.

This information packet tells you everything you need to know about volunteering with EFTC. It includes information about our organization, background on Guatemala, volunteer positions, and traveling advice. Please read the information provided thoroughly and inform the Visitor and Volunteer Coordinator any questions or concerns you have.

We hope you decide to volunteer with us! Help us break the cycle of poverty through education, empowerment, and enterprise at the heart of the community.

Saludos,
The EFTC Team



ABOUT EFTC

Education for the Children Foundation is a registered 501c3, whose mission is to break the cycle of poverty through education and empowerment. We work in partnership with disadvantaged families, children, and young adults in Jocotenango, Guatemala to ensure they develop the tools they need to break free from the cycle of poverty. Our project, La Escuela Esperanza, or the School of Hope, serves students from reception through university. We also support our students and their families through our social services program, which covers access to clean water, nutrition, health care, hygiene, and psychological support.



GUATEMALA AT A GLANCE



Population: 17.11 million (2021 est.)

Major Languages: Spanish, 22 indigenous languages

Major Religions: Christianity, indigenous Mayan beliefs

Life Expectancy: Male 71.62 years, Female 77.3 years

Literacy Rate: Male 84.75%, Female 74.39%

Bordering Countries: México, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador

Geography: Mountains, volcanoes, lakes, forests, jungle and beaches

Main Exports: Coffee, sugar, bananas, fruits, vegetables, meat, petroleum

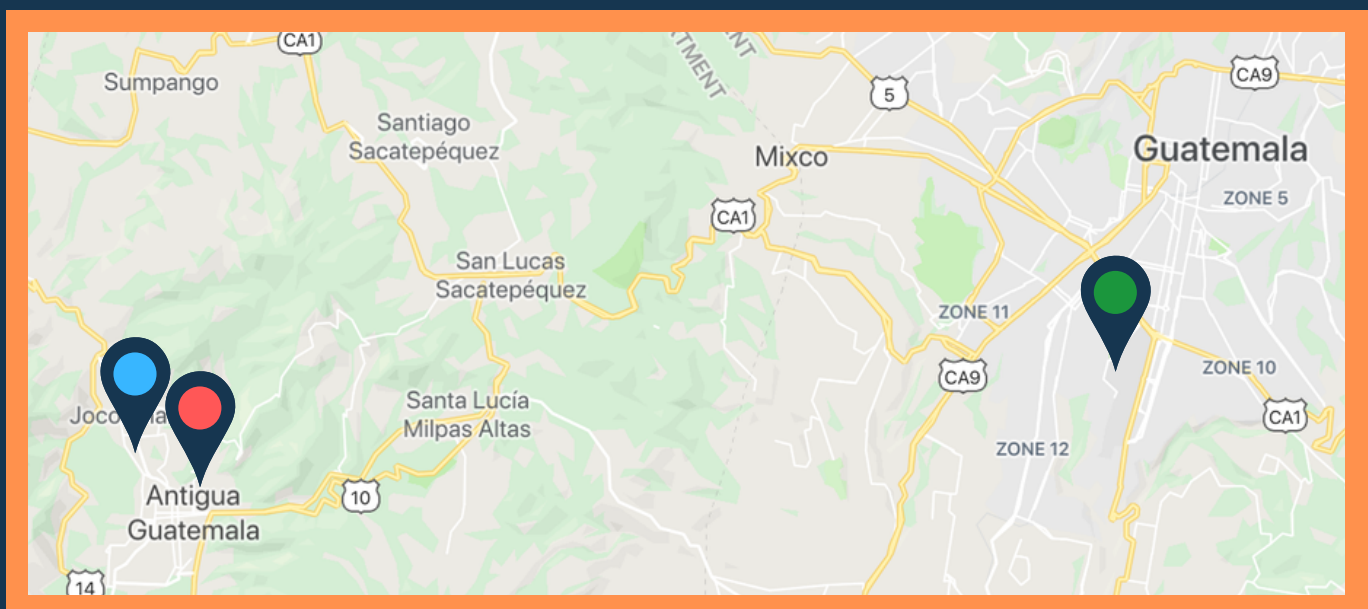
History: Emerged from a 36 year civil war in 1996, where more than 200,000 people, mostly Mayan civilians, were killed or disappeared.

Guatemala has one of the lowest literacy rates in the Western Hemisphere. Almost **50%** of children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition, and approximately **75%** of the population lives below the poverty line. The country's large indigenous population is disproportionately affected. With these socioeconomic barriers, education is out of reach for many. Although officially education is free to all, the cost of school supplies, transportation, uniforms, and food mean that many families cannot afford to send their children to school.

 School of Hope

 Antigua

 Airport



GUATEMALA AT A GLANCE



Antigua

Our school is located about 15 minutes from the beautiful Antigua Guatemala, a vibrant yet peaceful colonial city and the most visited destination in Guatemala. Antigua feels like a portal to another century. The nearly 500-year-old city is cradled by three volcanoes and filled with colonial-era mansions, churches, and convents. The city is a Unesco World Heritage site. In addition to the striking 17th & 18th century ruins right in the center of town, the city offers an array of restaurants, boutiques, and bars with live music. Visitors can browse the markets, sip an espresso at a coffee farm, watch a film at the many cultural centers, and go up the Cerro de la Cruz, only a 20 minute walk away, to get an amazing view of the whole town.



Jocotenango

Our school is located in Jocotenango, which is a small municipality right outside of Antigua. There is a beautiful pink church located in the center of town. If you want to do some shopping, there is a small Bodegona, a shopping mall called Plaza de Jocotenango, and a huge supermarket called el Torre. La Azotea Cultural Center is located here, which has coffee tours and incredible museums.

SCHOOL OF HOPE

When The School of Hope first opened in 2005, we had 80 students. Now, the school is made up of 613 students. Within our building, we have 412 students in "primaria" and "básico," ages 5-17. We also have a scholarship program with 201 students, which offers full scholarships for "diversificado" and university. These students often come to the School of Hope for homework help, career advice, and volunteering.

The School of Hope strives to provide a nurturing environment and a high quality education to ensure that every single child reaches their full potential. The children learn computer competence and life skills. They can express themselves through dance, drama, and creative writing. They can cook, make music, write for the school newspaper, and excel in sports club. They work hard to develop skills and build opportunities to help them break free from the cycle of poverty that has blighted generations before them.



VOLUNTEER ROLES

By now you are probably wondering what volunteers do at the School of Hope. Whether you're looking for a little work experience, a way to help others, or you just have some free time to spend at our project, volunteering can be powerful and rewarding. Your role as a volunteer will vary depending on your interests, experience, length of stay, and language level. Below is a list of available volunteer roles. Volunteers who stay for a longer period of time can work in multiple roles that interest them.

We are always looking for volunteers with unique skill sets. If you do not see a role that fits your qualifications or expectations, contact the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss other possibilities!

WHAT WILL I BE DOING AS A VOLUNTEER?

1 English Classroom Assistant

Volunteers are placed with a particular teacher and grade throughout their stay. As a classroom assistant you will be working with our English teacher. You would prepare classroom materials, help with classroom management, assist with lessons, and work one-on-one with children who need extra help. You will need to work as a classroom assistant for at least 1 week.



2 Academic Tutor

Volunteers with a background in education can serve as academic tutors for all grade levels. For students ages 5-16, you can provide one-on-one or small-group tutoring for students who need extra support. Volunteers who have experience working with older students and academic expertise in a particular subject can tutor scholarship students who need assistance in their subjects or university courses. You must have an advanced level of Spanish and be willing to tutor for a minimum of 4 weeks.

3 English Tutor

English is an important pillar of our organization, and many of our students need support outside of class. If you want to work with students ages 7-15, you can help us give our primary and básico students the additional attention they need to improve their grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and general comfort in English. If you want to work with students ages 15-23, many of our scholarship students are studying careers that require a strong foundation for English. You can give these high school and university students the additional support to succeed. We prefer you to have prior experience working as an ESL tutor. You will need an intermediate level of Spanish and will be required to work as an English tutor for a minimum of 4 weeks.



4 Administrative Assistant

As an Administrative Assistant, you would provide support to supervisors in various departments, including Outreach, Education, and Scholarship. This role involves answering phone calls, filing, photocopying, data entry, and other office duties. This role will teach you all about the inner workings of different departments in a nonprofit organization. Prior administrative experience is preferred. You need an intermediate to advanced level of Spanish and must work for a minimum of 2 weeks.

5 Extracurricular Club Facilitator

We have a variety of after school clubs including Dance, Music, Newspaper, Life Skills, Sports, and Garden Club. You can assist a teacher in an activity you are interested in from 3-4pm. You can also assist our education team in a variety of ways, administrating and organizing with our education department to start and independently run an after school club. You will need experience in classroom management, an intermediate to advanced level of Spanish and a minimum commitment of 4 weeks.



VOLUNTEER PROCESS

There are a few requirements you must complete in order to become a volunteer at the School of Hope. Below you will find the necessary information and tasks you will need to complete before you arrive:

- ✓ You must be aged 18 years or older at the time you volunteer with us. If you are younger you can still come, but must be accompanied by an adult.
- ✓ All interested volunteers must fill out the volunteer application, which lets our Volunteer Coordinator know about dates, your experience working with children, dietary restrictions, and other logistics. The application can be found at <https://forms.gle/VBNMFUX5VnGfCGKE6> or on our website.
- ✓ All volunteers must make a volunteer donation of £50 / \$75 / 70€, which covers the expense of running our volunteer program. This donation can be made through our website.
- ✓ For our Child Protection Policy, we require all visitors to get a background check. There are three main types of checks: background checks for the US, DBS checks for the UK, and police checks for almost all other countries. All checks must be valid within one year of their first day at the school.
- ✓ Please provide your CV or resume so we can see your experiences and find the best fit for you in our organization!



GETTING TO GUATEMALA

Flights and Taxi Pickup

We recommend our volunteers fly into the Guatemala City Airport. The airport is about an hour from Antigua, depending on the time of day and traffic. We can arrange a taxi pickup for you from the airport with one of our trusted drivers. The cost is \$40/£31/€35. The taxi can take you directly to your homestay or housing. If you do not wish to take a taxi, you can catch an airport shuttle or Uber to Antigua. You should keep the Volunteer Coordinator updated on any changes, delays, or missed flights.



Visa and Entry Requirements

- You must hold a valid passport to enter Guatemala. Your passport must be valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of entry into Guatemala.
- British and US citizens do not require a visa to enter Guatemala. Upon arrival, your passport will be stamped for 90 days. If your stay in Guatemala is longer than 90 days, you should visit the immigration offices in Guatemala City to apply for an extension. You can also visit Mexico or Belize to restart your 90 days. It costs Q15 for each day you are over your 90 day visa. Citizens of countries other than the United Kingdom or the United States should contact the Guatemalan embassy in their country to clarify visa requirements.
- If you are not a US citizen and are traveling through the US, you might need to purchase an ESTA to allow you to pass through the country: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>. ESTA's are inexpensive and you must have it prior to leaving your home country. ESTA's are valid for 2 years once approved.

LIVING IN GUATEMALA

Accommodation

All volunteers are welcome and encouraged to stay with our host families with whom we have worked for years. You will have a private bedroom and share the bathroom, kitchen and living area. Breakfast and dinner are provided on weekdays. Our host mothers are able to accommodate vegetarians, gluten-free diets and food allergies. There may be other volunteers living with the family. You will be given your own key so you can come and go as you please. Most host families are close to downtown Antigua and there are many nice bars, restaurants and tourist attractions in the area. You can work with the Volunteer Coordinator to plan the type of homestay you would like. The cost is approximately Q800 per week (£83/\$102/€95). Living with a host family is a great way to experience the local culture and practice your Spanish!

Food

Guatemalan food and drink is primarily influenced by the country's Mayan and Spanish cultures. It has also received influences from African and Caribbean cultures. Today, the food is a mixture of many different international influences such as Chinese, American, and vegetarian. The staple foods are rice, beans, tortillas, eggs and of course coffee. You will have the opportunity to try traditional dishes such as pepian. As mentioned above, you will be provided with food in your homestay. The School of Hope also provides volunteers with a daily snack and lunch.



LIVING IN GUATEMALA

Money

The local currency is the Guatemalan Quetzal (ketsahl), abbreviated to 'Q'. The exchange rate fluctuates but generally £1 equals Q10, \$1 equals Q7.70, and €1 equals Q8.70. There is a cash exchange and an ATM before you exit the airport. There are ATMs throughout Antigua where you can withdraw quetzales as well. As for how much you will spend here, budgets range person to person. The cost of living is very low compared to Europe and the US. Bus fares to the school cost less than £1/\$1 per day. Coffee is about £1/\$2 and drinks cost about £2/\$3. Prices for meals vary depending how touristy the restaurant is. You will need more money for traveling outside of Antigua, such as volcano hikes or a trip to Lake Atitlán.

Climate

The dry season (summer) is from about November to April. It is hot and sunny during the day and cool in the evening. The rainy season (winter) is from mid May to mid October. It rains mostly in the afternoon. It can get chilly at night, so make sure you pack a few layers. Tourism peaks at Christmas, Easter, and June-August.

Language

Although Spanish is the official language of Guatemala, 22 indigenous Mayan languages are spoken in the country. The vast majority of the population speak Spanish, so this is the language you will hear both in the streets and at the school. While many people do speak English in Antigua and at our school, it is the perfect opportunity to practice your Spanish or take classes at a specialized school!



SAFETY AND SECURITY

Before traveling, please check your government's website for any travel advisories or restrictions in place for Guatemala.

Despite high levels of crime throughout Central America most visits to Guatemala are trouble free. In recent years, the Guatemalan Government has taken steps to address the issue of crime against tourists, in particular by expanding the Tourist Police.

Just like any city you travel to, Antigua does have crime. It is important you take your personal security seriously and be aware of your surroundings at all times. We strongly recommend our visitors keep in mind the following advice:

- Avoid displaying items of value such as laptops, cameras and mobile phones.
- Do not carry excessive amounts of cash.
- It's recommended to withdraw money from ATMs inside supermarkets or pharmacies and to withdraw money during the day.
- Do not wander alone in empty streets or isolated areas, particularly at night.
- Keep your valuables locked away in a safe or keep them on you when traveling.
- Be particularly careful of your belongings at bus stations, airports & crowded places.
- In the rare event there is a robbery, do not resist or flee as it can escalate the situation

Seek medical advice before traveling to Guatemala and ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up to date. For more information on vaccination requirements, health outbreaks, and general disease protection and prevention, check your government's website. Be aware that vaccinations may vary depending on other areas or neighboring countries to which you plan to travel.

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator if you want more information on EFTC's Emergency and Safety Plan.

WE HOPE YOU COME VOLUNTEER WITH US!



By now, you should have a better understanding of what it is like to be a volunteer at EFTC. If you decide to volunteer with us or have any remaining questions, our Visitor and Volunteer Coordinator, based in Guatemala, will be happy to help. Please email visitors@eftcfoundation.org. Hope to hear from you soon!



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