

# Teaching Management Plan

## Costa Rica



### OVERVIEW

#### Company Mission

Our mission is to encourage young people to volunteer for worthwhile work in developing countries. We expect that doing this kind of voluntary work will in time become the norm. As more and more people join us, we aim to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve, to learn, to understand, to teach, to inspire, and to be inspired.

#### Teaching Programme Mission

Our Teaching programme mission is to provide sustainable educational support within disadvantaged schools and communities to reduce inequality in education. Through our volunteers, we aim to empower underprivileged students by improving their future prospects and equipping them with the skills needed to actively engage in a multi-national community.

#### Background Information

In many respects, Costa Rica is a development success story. It has seen steady economic expansion over the last 25 years, with the poverty rate declining between 2004 and 2008, from 23% to 17.7%<sup>i</sup>. Costa Rica has also achieved significant progress in its education system which is today considered one of the best in Latin America. Years of schooling increased from 5.4 years in 1980 to 8.4 years in 2013<sup>ii</sup>. Universal primary education enrolment has been achieved and Costa Rica is making progress in secondary education coverage and completion rates<sup>iii</sup>.

However, challenges remain. Despite a decline in poverty rates, inequality increased in the second half of the 2000s<sup>iv</sup>. The wealthiest ten percent of Costa Ricans earn 24.8 times as much as the poorest ten percent<sup>v</sup>. The quality of education also remains a concern. Many teachers lack sufficient teacher training and education standards remain lower in indigenous communities and rural areas<sup>vi</sup>. These deficiencies can also be found in the standards of English teaching in public schools which is often low, and many pupils do not have the opportunity to practice with native speakers.

#### Partners

Projects Abroad Costa Rica is in partnership with the Ministry of Education, working in primary schools in and around Heredia.

### GOALS

In order to work towards our Teaching programme mission, we have set the following goals to achieve in the placements where we send our volunteers:

#### 1. Improve English

English has undeniably become the global language for business. It is vital for countries, businesses and individuals to improve their level of English to become true participants in international trade. Tourism and international business are an important part of the economy in Costa Rica: in 2012, tourism contributed 12.5% of the country's GDP and the USA, Costa Rica's main trading partner,

accounts for almost one third of tourists. With that in mind, good knowledge of English can greatly help people wishing to develop on an international basis and become economically successful, whilst increasing local employment prospects and giving them the opportunity to enter into new markets. Volunteers, in particular native speakers, can offer invaluable help in improving the students' and also the teachers' phonetics, pronunciation and grammar. We also set up conversation classes to improve the student's oral skills and capacity to participate in "real life" conversations.

## 2. Improve teaching techniques

Insufficient teacher training has created obstacles to positive education outcomes in Costa Rica. Many teachers continue to teach using the same methods in which they themselves were taught as students, focusing on simple memorisation. By working with the teachers to introduce new teaching techniques to the classroom and offering one-to-one support to children, our volunteers can help improve the standards of teaching in schools in Costa Rica.

## 3. Encourage learning through creativity

Problem-solving and creative thinking have become essential skills for entrepreneurs to master to be able to run successful, innovative businesses. Building up these skills during a child's education will increase their likelihood of becoming academically successful and economically productive. The education system in Costa Rica often focuses on learning by rote, with little to no attention given to developing skills in creative problem-solving or critical thinking, competencies valuable for higher education and employment. Our volunteers can promote learning through creativity by introducing creative activities and assignments, thus motivating students as well as encouraging them to think for themselves and become more innovative.

## RESOURCES

<b>Human Resources</b>	Average 35 volunteers per year Projects Abroad global staff teams Placement staff support
<b>Physical Resources</b>	Projects Abroad offices Placement materials
<b>Online Resources</b>	Volunteer Resources Database Myprojectsabroad webpages
<b>Financial Resources</b>	Monthly budgets for overall operations Donations to specific projects or placements
<b>Intangible Resources</b>	Reputation in destination communities Goodwill; genuine desire to help Expertise

Projects Abroad provides a range of resources for each of our programmes. These fall into four interdependent categories:

**Human:** Volunteers themselves are our most crucial asset in achieving our goals. Through their creativity and energy, all of our ambitions can be realised. Another central support team is our extensive network of Projects Abroad staff worldwide, dedicated to supporting volunteers and achieving our company mission. We also depend greatly on the staff in all of our placements; whose support guides volunteers through their daily activities.

**Physical:** Projects Abroad has offices in all of our destinations, where volunteers can come to speak to staff or attend workshops. There are also office materials and placement supplies available to volunteers.

**Online:** The Volunteers Resources Database and myprojectsabroad webpages all provide vital support before, during and after their placements.

**Financial:** Funds for all of Projects Abroad's work come solely from volunteer placement fees. These are distributed via monthly budgets, to ensure fair allocation of funds for each destination. Occasionally volunteers may also send donations directly for a specific placement or project.

**Intangible:** The good reputation of volunteers in local communities is what makes our work possible. This reputation has been earned over years of dedicated volunteer contribution. This is supported by the combined knowledge of our extensive staff network. With over 700 staff across every continent, we are proud to be a diverse and accomplished team.

## MONITORING & EVALUATION

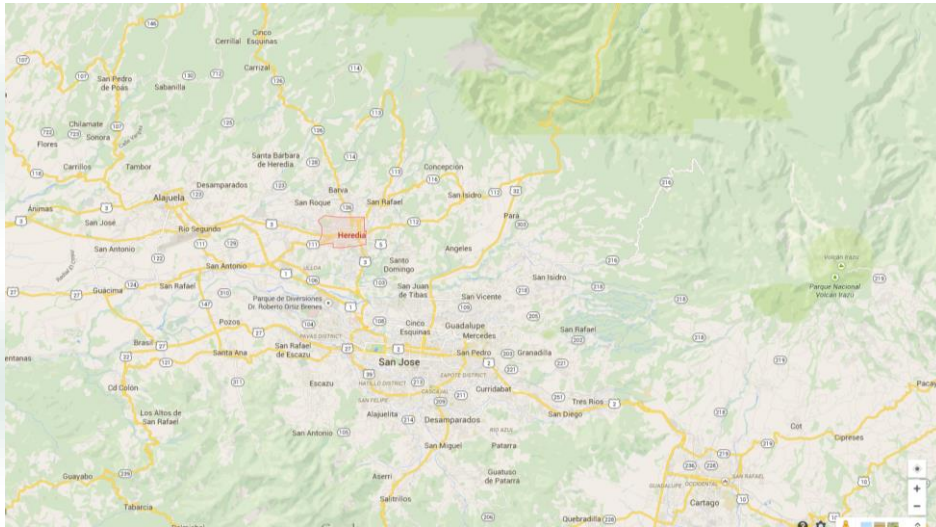
Placement visits Volunteer workshop sessions Staff meetings Volunteer Resources Database Feedback evaluation
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**Physical monitoring:** Through placement visits and volunteer workshops, volunteers are in frequent contact with staff members, who will observe and advise volunteers in action. Staff participate in regular meetings to discuss best practices within and between destinations.

**Online monitoring:** The Volunteer Resource Database is platform for staff and volunteers to share and develop ideas.

**Feedback evaluation:** Feedback from placement staff, Projects Abroad staff and volunteers is continuously gathered and used to inform future plans.

# LOCATION OF PLACEMENTS



## Projects Abroad Teaching programme

		INDICATORS	MONITORING (MEANS OF VERIFICATION)	ASSUMPTIONS
<b>Company Mission: (the change we want to see in greater society)</b>				
Our company mission is to make it the norm for men and women from developed countries to live and work as volunteers in a developing country; they should work on projects which have a clearly favourable impact on host-communities. In this way, we will continue to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve and to inspire.				
<b>Teaching Programme Mission: (the change we want to see for the target group)</b>				
Our Teaching programme mission is to provide sustainable educational support within disadvantaged schools and communities to reduce inequality in education. Through our volunteers, we aim to empower underprivileged students by improving their future prospects and equipping them with the skills needed to actively engage in a multi-national community.			1. Onsite visits 2. Placement staff feedback 3. Projects Abroad staff feedback 4. Volunteer feedback	1. Number of volunteers does not drop considerably 2. Number of volunteers with a good grasp of English does not drop considerably 3. Political and civil stability in the countries we work 4. No natural disasters that could affect our work
<b>Goal 1: (what we want to achieve)</b>				
<b>Improve English</b>				
	Actions: (the tasks that need to take place to achieve the goal)			
1.1	Create and manage a Projects Abroad Library of English language story books. Volunteers can sign books in and out for when they use them on placement.			
1.2	Create a resource centre of flash-cards and other English learning materials			
1.3	Establish a weekly lunch time English conversation club. ½ hour small group sessions on a chosen topic each week.			
1.4	Use creative techniques to help improve the listening and speaking skills of student's e.g. role plays, acting and drama, games.			
1.5	Introduce realistic daily role plays to focus on 'real life' conversational English.			
<b>Goal 2:</b>				
<b>Improve teaching techniques</b>				
	Actions:			

5.1	Arrange fortnightly meetings for teaching volunteers. Meetings can be used to create teaching aides and present them in workshops with other volunteers to be used in the classroom, to discuss tips, highs and lows and for training workshops led by Projects Abroad staff			
5.2	Arrange fortnightly “teachers meeting” for volunteers to get together and discuss tips, highs and lows.			
5.3	Increase group-oriented study in order to improve individual autonomy and team work.			
5.4	Hold meetings both when volunteers arrive and on a weekly basis, between volunteers and teachers to discuss volunteer's roles and activities for the coming week			
5.5	Establish a weekly lunch time club for Teachers to improve their English			
5.6	Create motivational exercises and activities to reduce school desertion and lack of interest			
5.7	Help guide teachers with correct pronunciation and grammar (English)			
5.8	PRO teachers to lead teacher training sessions focused on how to plan lessons, different learning style, positive discipline			
5.9	Volunteers to support the teachers in delivering lessons on phonetics in line with the current subject the English teacher is focusing on.			
5.10	Volunteers to assist with regular testing of student's spoken and written English with exercises, mini-tests and presentations, to be marked and given feedback.			
<b>Goal 3:</b>				
<b>Encourage learning through creativity</b>				
	<b>Actions:</b>			
6.1	Have mini - projects which would result in working with smaller groups within the classroom to assist in the development of the struggling students			
6.2	Volunteers to work with the placements to make learning environments visually appealing and educational to the students e.g. “word of the day wall” –whereby the volunteer displays a new word each day along with a definition and the students are tested on it the following morning			
6.3	Initiate story writing competitions/ poem writing which can then be presented to the class			
6.4	Volunteers to do a presentation to their class on their home country, and divide class into groups to prepare a presentation on a topic of their choice.			

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/costarica/overview>

<sup>ii</sup> Human Development Report Costa Rica 2014. Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience, UNDP, 2014

<sup>iii</sup> Costa Rica - Country partnership strategy for the period 2012 – 2015, World Bank, 2011

<sup>iv</sup> World Bank, 2011

<sup>v</sup> Estado de La Nacion, 2014

<sup>vi</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/costarica/overview\\_12394.htm](http://www.unicef.org/costarica/overview_12394.htm)