

New
WESTERN

SOCIAL PROJECT

ACACIAS META

*“We are building the first
Bilingual Community in Meta”*



EL SUEÑO THE DREAM

Stig and I met 3 years ago, and we meshed two totally different worlds in this little dream of ours. Our idea is to provide English classes to people who cannot access it normally. This benefit improves the lives of many Colombians who do not have the same opportunities as people coming from first world countries. To make it possible, we needed people who want to teach their language, in exchange for a place to stay, and the opportunity to improve their Spanish.

Over 3 years we have had over 100 volunteers, and more than 150 students, with amazing stories to share. With interaction and cultural exchange, we want to put people who want to teach, together with people who want to learn. We believe that with your help to teach English, this will increase the tourism, a tourism that will provide a unique chance to see the lifestyle of Colombians outside of the bigger cities, a social tourism that will benefit the wider community within Acacias as well as within our school.



ACACÍAS

THE TOWN

The warm-weather town (/small city) is located 30 minutes away from Villavicencio, the capital of Meta. Acacías is located between the Andes Mountains and the plains (El llano). Most of its 70.000 inhabitants are living and working in the town, but there are also many farms in the area with livestock and harvest. They produce a lot of rice here, and there is petroleum here too.

THE MOUNTAINS & THE RIVERS

We recommend everyone to go hiking in the mountains at least once a week! There is a lot of unexplored nature with beautiful flowers, fascinating insects and wild animals. There are a lot of rivers in the region, and the mountain area is no exception. Río Acacías is located 200 meters from our property. There are different places in the mountains that will provide an excellent view of the region. We can recommend some places where you can see the sunrise in the morning

THE PLAINS

From Acacías and towards the Amazon, it's flat. Very flat. Many people like to rent bikes and just cycle towards the unknown.



THE SITUATION LA SITUACIÓN

Meta is a virgin land, rich in natural resources and biodiversity. Unfortunately, years ago it was strongly affected by the armed conflict, which caused stagnation in both economic and social growth, leaving a very poor society with very little opportunities. Years later, the violent conflict in this area was eradicated, but the big companies and multinational firms decided to take over this land to exploit their natural resources, so a new problem raised in the society. Lots of money came from petroleum companies and natural resources exploitation industry, a fast economic grown that did help some people getting money, but it was never a sustainable grown, and it was a terrible situation if you look at it in social and environmental terms. The last years with the world oil crisis lots of people lost their jobs and as they are not educated to do something else, there is a big social problem raising.

Now is time to recover the roots, to admire and take advantage of the natural treasure of this land, and make this a touristic place, but doing it with social responsibility and teaching people about looking after the natural resources.



EL EQUIPO THE TEAM

We are a team of Colombians and foreigners that are teaching the locals about languages combining the help given by our volunteers travelling from all across the world. During the previous 2 years, we were building our hotel and guesthouse and we have been working on developing this language exchange since 2016. As this is a guesthouse you will always be surrounded by family, volunteers, students and friends who create a friendly, sociable environment, giving you the opportunity to practice your Spanish at whatever pace you feel necessary, and spending time with locals to experience the authenticity of living within a small 'pueblo' community. We have created a non-profit organization, and the goal is to receive government support or financial aid. Right now we finance this place with a minimum donation from students and language classes for volunteers.



THE WORK LONG-TIME VOLUNTEERING

1. TEACHING ENGLISH

Volunteers will be conducting English classes for the local community. We have created lesson plans to provide English classes according to the European common frame of reference.

You will usually be in charge of three different Group Classes, with as many as 5 students in each Group.

We provide classes in different levels for kids, teens, and adults. Next year schedule will be this:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4.30PM KIDS & PRE-SCHOOL	5PM TUTORÍA	4.30PM KIDS & PRE-SCHOOL	5PM TUTORÍA	4.30PM KIDS ACTIVITIES
6PM TEENS	6PM ADULTS	6PM TEENS	6PM ADULTS	6PM TEENS ACTIVITIES
				7.30PM ADULTS ACTIVITIES

In June 2018, we sent a project to the Ministry of Education to get certified as an English school, and we are still working on meeting all the requirements to have this certification.

TEACHING TRAINING

If you are not a teacher, but you have the passion to learn how to do it, we provide you with training. Our Volunteer Coordinator is a professional teacher that will be happy to share all the knowledge, techniques and skills needed to teach. You will have a smooth incorporation to teach, and all professional teachers participating in our program are invited to join a weekly teaching workshop we will have where all will learn from each other.

You work in the afternoon and will have each morning to practise your Spanish and to explore the area.



THE OTHER WORK SHORT-TIME VOLUNTEERING

1. TUTORING AND CLASSES

Depending on your skills and our situation, you might be involved in the English Program. You might be in charge of a Group Class or Private Classes, or maybe you'll be in charge of the weekly Tutoring Classes we have. As well as conducting Friday fun activities focus in improving the 4 language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening.



2. CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

Some volunteers will be in charge of helping us keep the place clean and nice. We have 2 full-time staff working here, but sometimes it can be a lot of work so we give them a hand while we exchange some vocabulary and learn Spanish. In our weekly meetings, we will discuss

and assign volunteers for this job, as well as make a comfortable and easy cleaning routine to follow.



2. PROJECTS

Sometimes we receive requests from artisans and skilled who wants to help us within their profession. We are always looking for ways to become better, and it's often hard to find qualified skilled workers in a town like this.

We are trying to create a very unique space where people feel comfortable, so we would love volunteers who have special talents, or who want to learn how to do things and help us, with small projects regarding painting, decoration, construction, maintenance, landscaping and gardening.

3. BARTENDING AND RECEPTION



Depending on the season, we might need help in the Guesthouse reception and bar.



LANGUAGE EXCHANGE

During your time here you will participate in different social activities and cultural exchanges with the local community. The idea is that you get to see how Colombia is from the locals perspective, and they come here to learn more about the world outside of Acacías. The best way to learn Spanish is by making friends and practise with them in social settings.

Every friday we have Gringo Friday, an event where people from the town comes to talk and interact in both Spanish and English. People in this area doesn't have many chances to practise their English or to talk with people with different backgrounds.

It's important for us that you enjoy our events, and every Friday will be a bit different, according to what people wants to do. Sometimes we have activities, and sometimes it can be a theme or idea from another country or culture. Please bring your ideas!



THE GUESTHOUSE NUEVO OESTE

During the festivals, holidays and vacations, we may have Colombians visiting us to enjoy lazy days by the pool. Most of our sleeping guest during the rest of the year are people interested in learning languages. We have 10 rooms, 6 for rent and 4 dedicated for the Volunteers. Long-time Volunteers share room with one other Volunteer, while short-time Volunteers share room with up to 4 other Volunteers. Volunteer Rooms are equipped with comfortable beds, shelves, fan and one bathroom per unit.

Guesthouse Services:

- Swimming pool
 - Book Exchange
 - Social Areas
 - Outdoor Kitchen
 - Hammocks
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During your time with us, we provide an open-air kitchen with cooking utensils, a stove, a communal fridge and you are all given a plastic box to store dry food. **It is the responsibility of all volunteers to keep the kitchen clean and tidy** for others so please, clean after you!

We have recently opened a bar where you can purchase beer and (sometimes) food if you don't fancy cooking. There are a wide selection of restaurants in town that are cheap and easily accessible, a 10 to 15-minute walk from us.

It is recommended that you bring a **laptop** or **tablet** with you, although we do have a few laptops spare. We provide whiteboards, books and online slideshows which you can access for the guidance of what sort of topics we want you to cover when teaching.



SPANISH FOR BACKPACKERS

Since we started this project, we have been teaching Spanish in a dynamic and fun way. In this course, you will learn how to get around, what to say and not to say and more. You will learn about the Colombian culture, and connect with other travellers with experience and stories.

Our Spanish Course is called “Spanish for Backpackers”. This Course is optional but we will advice people with basic Spanish level to take it, cause it will make your experience in Acacias much better. And



also this is a way to finance this social project. With your monthly program you are sponsoring a kid or teenager under poverty conditions to learn English with us for free, and hopefully contribute to a considerable change and a improve in their life quality.

Each class costs 15.000COP and the course is 5 days per week monday to friday, you will also have many opportunities and homework to practise in town with locals. If you choose not to participate, we still recommend you to participate in our Language Exchange events (no cost!)



TO-DO

When you meet friends while learning another language, you will see how easy opportunities and adventures appear. We do weekly excursions, and we together choose what activities to do. The best way to have a unique experience is by spending time with students and locals outside

of our property, exploring their favourite spots and traditions. Rafting, mountain biking, rappelling are popular paid activities (provided by local companies), while hiking, camping and river bathing are popular free activities.

We offer two different positions

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING

- Availability for 2 months or more.
(The longer, the better!)
- 30 hours per week from Monday to Friday.
(Weekends work will be offered as paid extra hours)
(check this possibility if you are interested).
- **Breakfast** and **lunch** provided from Monday to Friday.
- Comfortable Guesthouse room to share with another long-term Volunteer
- 50% discount in the Spanish program.
- Laundry and housekeeping service once a week.
- Only English teaching task (projects too if you want but not required)
- Letter of Reference for Volunteering and for talking Spanish Classes (if needed)

SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEERING

- Availability 1 month.
 - 15 hours job per week from Monday to Friday.
(Weekends work will be offered as paid extra hours)
(check this possibility if you are interested).
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- Comfortable Guest Room dorm to share with 3 other short-term volunteers
 - Laundry and housekeeping service once a week.
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During your time at New Western, we provide an open-air kitchen with cooking utensils, a stove, a communal fridge and you are all given a plastic box to store dry food. **It is the responsibility of all volunteers to keep the kitchen clean and tidy** for others so please, clean after you! We have recently opened a bar where you can purchase beer and (sometimes) food if you don't fancy cooking, and there are a wide selection of restaurants in town that are cheap and easily accessible, a 10 to 15-minute walk from us. It is recommended that you bring a **laptop** or **tablet** with you, although we do have a few laptops spare. We provide whiteboards, books and online slideshows which you can access for the guidance of what sort of topics we want you to cover when teaching.

EXPENSES

What expenses you will have while here?

- Drinking water, since is not possible to drink tap water; We have budget an average of 24.000 pesos (8 USD) monthly.
- Transportation costs
 - Taxi from airport to Bus terminal 10.000 pesos
 - The bus ride from Bogota bus terminal to Acacias 27.000 pesos
 - Taxi from Acacias bus terminal to New Western 4.500 pesos
 - Taxi to move around Acacias 4.500 pesos (1.5 USD)

We have a bicycle that you can use for no cost!

• Excursions and free time activities

Acacias has a lot of beautiful nature and nice spots to explore, but there are not many touristic companies in the area. There are a lot of places you can explore for free, but under we mention some paid options:

- Rafting: 60.000 pesos (20 USD)
 - Horseback riding: 30.000 pesos (10 USD)
 - Visit to San Jose, the opening of Seven Colours river 300.000 (100 USD)
 - (Mountain)Bike rental 4.000 per hour (1.5USD)
 - Paragliding: 150.000 pesos (50 USD)
 - Cannoping 60.000 (20 USD)
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These excursions are not arranged with us but directly with the provider, and we will help you get the best price. Also, there are much more activities of ecotourism to do in the area almost for free.

- **Food**

If your volunteering does not include food, your expenses will be a monthly average of (100 USD) if you eat meat. If you are vegetarian it will drop considerably to around 150.000 per month (50 USD). This depends a lot on your habits, some people prefer to order food from the town, while others make their own dinner in the outdoor kitchen.

- **Spanish classes**

We do not require you to take Spanish classes with us, but for Volunteers with a low Spanish level, it is almost mandatory since they will need to improve their Spanish skills in order to teach. Also this is the way how we finance our program and provide free classes to the community. So it will be a win-win if you care about learning Spanish.

Monthly classes are available for 340.000 pesos (110 USD) 1 class of 1.5 hours from Monday to Friday, with small groups from 1 to 3 people, according to your level. The classes are conducted by a native Spanish teacher.

OTHER EXPECTATIONS

- Volunteers are expected to stay for the time they initially committed so it does not affect the program logistics
- Volunteers are expected to keep a clean, family-friendly image of New Western during their time here, making sure people understand this community as a place for exchange and constantly growing.
- Volunteers are expected to keep this place drug free.
- Volunteers are expected to pay for any damage to the resources given during their stay, as well as the new western facilities.
- Volunteers are expected to prepare lessons and take extra time to learn how to teach if they have not done it before.

And what are your expectations...? We would love to hear from you and hear your comments!

LOOKING FORWARD SPENDING TIME WITH YOU!

Contact us for further logistics
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