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### I. WHAT IS MANNA PROJECT?

Manna Project International (MPI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that connects college students and recent graduates with international service opportunities. Our mission is to connect and encourage communities of young adults to collectively apply their passions and education through service to communities in need. The overall vision for our work is to establish a global network of Manna Project communities where young adults live and work alongside one another in underserved communities. By working hand-in-hand with locals and other international organizations towards holistic community development, MPI provides first-hand exposure to international issues, raising awareness of community needs and the means through which students and graduates can pursue their call to service. In order to tie career interests to service work for participants, MPI has many different types of development projects in the areas of juvenile and adult education, health education, creative arts, and recreational sports activities, as well as information gathering and strategic planning. Taking a grassroots approach allows for an effective assessment of the community's needs and a widespread involvement in targeting specific actions in order to effectively meet those needs. In essence, MPI builds community to serve communities.

The luxuries of growing up in a country of high standards of peace, justice, liberty, and prosperity inhibits some Americans from realizing the uniqueness of their lifestyle. Although many college students across the country are informed of the social realities of foreign countries, most have not had the opportunity to leave the confines of national borders to experience living in another culture. International community service opportunities bring students in contact with global issues, allowing them to identify with foreign cultures and gain perspective into their own lives. MPI participants broaden their horizons through first-hand contact with a foreign culture and gain valuable work experience by leading community development programs in areas of their education and work interest.



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### II. A BRIEF HISTORY

Manna Project International was started by a group of four Vanderbilt University students who were looking to harness the creative energy of college students and recent graduates to serve populations in need. Hoping to get their peers involved, they established an on-campus service organization. This new group's goals were to bring the university campus into greater contact with the local immigrant community, and to provide international service opportunities for students.

During the summer of 2003, one of MPI's founders, Luke Putnam, encountered the August family in Managua, Nicaragua. Along with an independent missionary named Amanda Gutierrez, the Augusts had recently purchased an 11-acre plot of land in Chiquilistagua, a rural community that lies approximately five miles outside of the capital. Luke and the others were excited by the Augusts' plan to develop a community and sports center to offer recreational, educational, and social opportunities to the local community. This vision coincided with MPI's goals.

After visiting the site again six months later, the four college seniors established MPI as an IRS-recognized nonprofit organization, and began recruiting other college graduates to commit to working in Managua for one year. In September 2004, eleven college graduates arrived in Managua to begin their year of service that has forever changed, and will continue to change, their perspectives and outlooks on life. While the faces have changed, current MPI-Managua members are helping to further develop the facilities of the community center and implement programs to reach out to those in the local community. Please see "Current MPI Nicaragua Programs" on Manna's website for more details regarding the status of the work in Managua. The program continues to take on new participants every year and has hosted over 100 volunteers who have helped greatly with these programs.



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In September 2007, Mark Hand, a veteran Manna Project volunteer, led the initiation of Manna Project's second international site in Ecuador. In conjunction with a local non-profit called UBECI, the MPI Ecuador group began running an after-school program for over 30 children in a small, impoverished town, San Francisco, about one hour outside of Quito. Through UBECI, the Ecuador group became acquainted with the community, working closely with a local financial cooperative to better understand the area's circumstances and needs. For the status of the work in San Francisco and the other communities where MPI is focused in Ecuador, please see "Current MPI Ecuador Programs."



**Left: Nicaragua PD Christina Colopy works with a student during MPI's after-school tutoring program.**

**Right: Three members of MPI Ecuador's founding team of PDs (Abbie Foust, Hilary Fenet, and Zak Schwarzman) explore the natural beauty of the Andean region.**



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### III. VISION

MPI seeks college students and recent college graduates to execute community development programs abroad. We offer two types of international volunteer service opportunities. "Program Directors" serve for thirteen months and are responsible for the long-term growth and sustainability of the organization and its programs. "Volunteers" can participate in short-term volunteer sessions including one-week spring break group trips and four week summer sessions.

MPI directs its efforts towards communities in need: communities with inadequate access to basic educational, medical, and recreational resources. MPI aims for a holistic approach to community development, working with people of all ages in various aspects of their lives. This broad approach enables those with diverse passions and skills to work together towards providing a targeted community with the resources to serve its specific needs. For example, to better serve the healthcare needs of a targeted community, a holistic approach involves teaching health classes, providing access to clinics, and offering recreational activities that increase physical and mental health. College campus chapters and other domestic participants, who work towards similar goals by raising awareness and support for our international initiatives, complement the MPI international service team.

#### International Participants

- Work with fellow volunteers to develop community programs
- Create opportunities for growth and education in communities
- Broaden understanding of current international issues
- Define personal career goals
- Focus on career interest through service work

#### Domestic Participants

- Establish MPI chapters in U.S. universities and colleges
- Build bridges between university and community
- Provide local service options for current students & faculty
- Offer short-term international service-work opportunities
- Encourage community programming events

#### Partner Organizations

- Develop relationships with other international organizations
- Provide sustainable effort from college students and recent graduates
- Assist in supporting and sustaining the efforts of partner organizations serving communities in which MPI also works



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### IV. MPI PROGRAM DIRECTOR ROLES

#### ***Developing Programs & Sustainability:***

MPI believes in the initiatives of its program directors, thereby allotting them with a large amount of responsibility and independence. While working as a team, program directors implement their projects and hold each other accountable. Future MPI program directors are responsible for the continuation of all existing programs. Therefore, education, experience and interest in specific program topics are especially useful. It is also imperative that they have a keen awareness of the background and purpose of each program. Each new program director has the ability to develop and expand programs throughout the year so that he/she can continue to meet the greatest needs of the community. Additionally, with a focus on sustainable impact, many of our programs are run hand-in-hand with local community leaders, giving program directors the opportunity to develop cross-cultural professional, as well as personal, relationships.

#### ***Raising Awareness:***

Being able to spend a year abroad is a privilege that few get to experience. MPI program directors act as a liaison between MPI's international sites and the USA by sharing their experiences with others. As program directors raise financial support they are also responsible for raising awareness of Manna Project International's mission and the international issues it seeks to address. This can be accomplished through presentations and slideshows. Additionally, program directors are encouraged to write monthly newsletters to their supporters and to publish monthly journal entries on the Manna webpage or blog.



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### ***Hosting Short-Term Volunteers:***

To further raise awareness of international issues, MPI program directors act as hosts for short-term volunteers and groups visiting Manna's International sites. Program directors are responsible for corresponding with interested individuals or groups regarding the realization of such trips. Short-term trips provide an opportunity for participants to see and experience both the beauty and the injustices of developing countries. Furthermore, this time gives potential MPI applicants a glimpse of what a long-term commitment with MPI would involve.

### ***Training Incoming Members:***

During the thirteenth month of a program director's commitment they are entrusted with the transition of programs from current to incoming members. Current members must introduce incoming members to the community, train them appropriately, and turn over the responsibilities of the existing MPI programs.



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### V. PROGRAM DIRECTOR TIMELINE FOR 2010-2011

Applications Due	First round: November 30, 2009 Second round: February 1, 2010 Rolling Acceptance: April, 2010*
Notification of Phone Interview	One to two weeks after deadline
Notification of Acceptance	Two weeks after phone interview (Approx. four weeks after deadline)
Contracts & \$250 Deposit	Due 3 weeks following acceptance
Minimum \$2500 raised	July 7
Miami Program Director Orientation	July 7-10
International Site Arrival-- followed by two to three weeks of language school and on-site orientation**	July 10
Winter break for personal travel (Three weeks)	December 15–January 5, 2011
\$7500 min. Raised/Pledged	February 1, 2011
Group Contract End **	August 8, 2011

\*Acceptance in April is contingent upon space available after the February acceptance notifications. Given the volume of applications in previous years and the increase in interest we have experienced this year, we strongly encourage applications to apply during the first or second round of applications.

\*\*Exceptions to dates must be presented to the MPI office for approval



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### VI. STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### ***MPI Board of Directors:***

The Board of Directors has the legal responsibility and authority to oversee the affairs of Manna Project International, Inc. The Board is responsible for maintaining the mission and vision of the organization, including setting the direction and policies for the organization, overseeing finances and fundraising, and linking the organization to others in the nonprofit and business community. The board can be contacted at [board@mannaproject.org](mailto:board@mannaproject.org).

#### ***MPI Staff:***

MPI's staff includes Executive Director Lori Scharffenberg, US Director Andrew Preston, Nicaragua Director Amira Tahir and Ecuador Director Bibi Al-Ebrahim. MPI Staff report to the Executive Director, and the Executive Director reports to the Board.

The Site Directors are responsible for local program oversight and the realization of MPI's organization-wide mission, vision, and near-term goals. This person serves as executive director of the organization in Ecuador or Nicaragua, and is responsible for the daily and long-term management and administration of the organization there. Daily responsibilities of the Site Directors include any and all tasks necessary to maintain and improve the operations of the organization. This includes but is not limited to: legal operations, financial record keeping, community relations, community program oversight, partner organization relations, and regular communication and accountability with PDs and short-term volunteers.



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### ***On-site Operational Jobs:***

At the beginning of the year, the new program directors determine which non-programmatic or “operational” roles they are interested in pursuing, including House and Office Manager, Donor Relations, Publicity and others. These roles help split up the responsibility of running MPI, and give our program directors the chance to see how nonprofits function internally.

### ***Decisions:***

MPI program directors are responsible for the daily operations of the organization on-site and most decisions are made collaboratively at weekly meetings. Within programs and projects, program directors have significant decision-making latitude.

### ***Vacation:***

MPI allots for three weeks of vacation over Winter Break. During the year, program directors are allowed two weeks (10 days) of vacation time. These are days off from programs that must be planned in coordination with the rest of the team. Both sites also observe some local holidays which can provide additional days off throughout the year as long as they don't conflict with Spring Break groups or Summer Volunteers.

### ***Work Expectations:***

MPI is successful because of the self-motivation and self-discipline of its program directors. Although projects do not run an entire day, MPI program directors are expected to maintain a normal workday by working on grants, fundraising, recruiting, lesson planning, project updates, personal updates, and various other jobs. MPI feels that there is always something to be done to further our organization and trusts its growth to the program directors' ability to self-inspire.



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### VII. CURRENT MPI PROGRAMS

Our programs are at various stages of development, some more permanent than others. Varying levels of development require different degrees of proactiveness, creativity, and flexibility; providing you the unique opportunity to expand on and make more thorough your set of leaderships skills. You will have the well-rounded experience of researching, designing, and implementing projects; complete with both great accomplishment and frustration. Working with MPI requires that you be flexible, patient, creative and proactive in problem solving, as well as a self-starter. If those traits describe you, you are perfect for this job. Below is the full program list for both the Nicaragua and Ecuador sites. For more details about the programs in Nicaragua, [click here](#). For more information about Ecuador's programs, [click here](#).

<b>Nicaragua</b>	<b>Ecuador</b>
Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-After-school Literacy</li><li>-After-school Math</li><li>-Creative Arts</li><li>-Children's English</li><li>-Adult English</li><li>-Preschool</li><li>-Educational Scholarships</li><li>-Library/Computer Lab</li></ul>	Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Children's Art</li><li>-Children's English</li><li>-Adult English</li><li>-Ecuadorian University Campus Chapter Development</li><li>-Community Public Library</li></ul>
Health and Wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Women's Health</li><li>-Women's Exercise</li><li>-Child Sponsorship</li><li>-Feeding Program</li></ul>	Health and Wellness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Exercise/Nutrition Classes</li><li>-Preventative Health Center/Community Health</li></ul>
Sports & Recreation	Mingas (community work projects)
Community Center/Construction	Agriculture/Environment
Business Development/Microfinance	Teen Center/Youth Development
	Local cooperative capacity development
	Small business development



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### VIII. GROUP LIVING COMMITMENT

MPI requires that first year participants live together in a designated MPI house. In Nicaragua, the current MPI Program Directors live together in a house located five minutes (by car) from the targeted communities, Chiquilistagua and Cedro Galan. In Ecuador, the Program Directors live fifteen minutes (by bus) from the targeted communities, Rumiloma, Tena, and San Francisco. In both Nicaragua and Ecuador the house serves as a home and office. This unique living/working environment demands a lot of patience, but in return provides social and cultural opportunities for the participants.

#### ***Purpose:***

Manna Project believes it is important to remain connected to a developed world support network while working in the developing world. By living and working with people who share the same passion for service, program directors will be challenged to evaluate and appreciate the different motivations and approaches taken to serving others. Furthermore, the experience of living and working with other recent college graduates will strengthen the participants' leadership, cooperative, and relational skills; all of which are beneficial to all career choices.

#### ***Personal Time:***

Living and working together can make it difficult to have enough personal time and space. A lot of time is spent at the house - eating meals, researching on the internet, planning programs and conducting meetings. Flexibility and patience will enable you to manage your schedule in such a way as to provide for plenty of personal time. This living situation requires sensitivity to others' use of their time.

#### ***Cultural Immersion:***

The amount of cultural immersion that MPI participants experience depends upon a participant's own efforts. MPI program directors do not live with Nicaraguan or Ecuadorian families, but will find themselves very welcome in the communities in which MPI works and will find many opportunities to participate in local day-to-day life.



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### IX. EXPECTATIONS & GENERAL RULES

#### ***Attitude and Personal Presentation:***

Every MPI program director's actions and words reflect on our country and on our organization as a whole. Participants are expected to be positive and open minded to local cultural norms. This will require flexibility when things are not easy or efficient and enthusiasm for trying different activities and experiences. Participants must also be respectful of others' beliefs and values, including those of the local culture and of other MPI members.

#### ***Living:***

First year MPI program directors must live with the rest of the MPI staff for the full thirteen-month commitment. A spacious and comfortable house with many conveniences will be provided.

#### ***Work Load:***

First year MPI program directors are required to focus the majority of their efforts towards developing MPI's programs in the designated communities. Additional personal projects are highly encouraged for each member, but are to be pursued on the side. Program directors will hold themselves and others accountable to this requirement.

\* Second Year Option: First year MPI program directors who are interested in serving for another year may present a project proposal to MPI's Board of Directors. Second year participants will be free to arrange their own housing and pursue their own program ideas.

#### ***Financial Responsibility:***

MPI program directors are required to fulfill all financial obligations by the designated deadlines. Please see the 'Financial Obligations' section for more details.



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### ***Lifestyle Habits:***

MPI participants must abide by all Nicaraguan laws if residing in Nicaragua, and by all Ecuadorian laws if residing in Ecuador. Additionally, volatile habits such as drug use or excessive drinking are prohibited while working for MPI. Such habits may create unnecessary problems within the group, and may prevent participants from giving 100% to their service. Drug use and excessive drinking will not be tolerated; MPI is authorized to terminate a contract with a program director if this policy is violated.

### ***Marital Status:***

Couples are discouraged from applying as MPI program directors live in a group setting, with sleeping quarters divided by gender. MPI upholds this policy to prevent unneeded, hard-to-address discomforts within the household and the community being served. However, couples are encouraged to apply as short-term MPI Volunteers.



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### X. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

*Personal Expense Account Total: \$7500*

#### *Finance*

Program directors raise \$575/month in donations to cover their living expenses, on-site administrative costs, and basic program expenses. The breakdown:

Expense	Amount (per month)
Living Expenses (room & board, transportation, and visas)	~\$410
MEDEX International Travel Insurance	\$30
Staff Development	\$20
Operating Expenses	\$25
Personal living stipend *	~\$90*
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$575</b>

\*To give our Program Directors freedom to pay for small living amenities, travel expenses, and occasionally eating out, part of living cost goes to providing a weekly living stipend. That means that of the money you raise, \$1040 goes to your personal living stipend.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Financial information will be kept strictly confidential between MPI's administration and each individual participant. Financial updates will be sent twice a month to each participant to keep him/her informed of exactly how much he/she has raised. These updates will also allow participants to follow up with thank you letters to their supporters.



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### ***Travel & Language School Account (optional): max of \$3000***

A separate account designated specifically for a program director's travel and additional language school is available for each participant. Funds must be specifically donated towards this separate account or must be in excess to the required annual financial commitment, and may only be accessed by the participant on the basis of a reimbursement. To receive a reimbursement from this account receipts must be presented to the designated administrative figure with a description of the expense. Travel expenses will only be granted if the travel is MPI-related, with a maximum of two roundtrip flights not exceeding \$2500 total. MPI related travel includes traveling to and from your respective site at the beginning and end of the 13 months as well as one additional "wellness" trip during winter break or another approved vacation time. For all other travel program directors need to plan ahead and set aside the necessary personal funds in order to buy airfare (i.e. job interviews, weddings, etc.). If a participant fails to raise enough money for their living expenses, money from this separate account will be automatically transferred to cover them. Unused money in this account will go toward the Manna general fund unless specified by the participant.

### ***Designations:***

All donations made to MPI need to have a specific designation. These designations can be a program director's name (specify personal or travel account), a specific program, or MPI's general account. Personal contributions amounting to more than the required \$7500 will be deposited into the participant's travel account. Program directors may designate these additional funds to programs if they choose to do so.



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### ***Fundraising:***

MPI realizes that fundraising can be an arduous process. Thus, MPI offers resources and support to program directors as they raise the necessary funds. The following are possible fundraising options:

#### *Personal Support Letters:*

Although many people are hesitant to ask friends and family for financial support, many times friends and family find it to be a privilege to support those close to them and take part in their life-changing experience. Manna fundraising brochures and examples of personal support letters will be available to accepted applicants upon request.

#### *Corporate Support:*

Approaching small and large businesses can't hurt. In the past, many MPI participants have been supported by local area businesses. Designing a detailed proposal with specific information and compelling pictures is a great skill worth developing.

#### *Fundraising Events:*

Many MPI participants have hosted successful fundraising events such as golf tournaments, auctions, and variety talent shows. With good organization and foresight, these events can raise significant support for individuals and for specific programs.

#### *Grant Writing:*

Plenty of grants for individuals and for nonprofit organizations are out there waiting for qualified applicants. Doing the research and writing a comprehensive proposal can be well worth the effort; grant amounts can be incredibly generous. MPI has contacts with people experienced in grant writing who are available to help MPI program directors design effective proposals.



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### ***Financial Deadlines:***

Program directors are responsible for meeting all financial obligations by the stated deadlines. (Please review the Applicant Timeline on pg 5). Participants who encounter problems fulfilling these deadlines may write their concerns to the Board of Directors. Any failure by a participant to meet the specified deadlines can result in the termination of their contract.

Note: All donations to Manna Project International are tax-deductible. Upon receiving a donation, MPI's administration will send out the necessary receipt for claiming tax exemption. (However, MPI participants can NOT personally receive tax-exemption for personal checks written to cover their own program expenses.)



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### XI. MPI PROGRAM DIRECTOR CONTRACT

Upon acceptance, MPI program directors will receive an MPI Program Director Welcome Packet including an MPI Program Director Contract that must be signed and sent back with the participant's initial deposit. This will secure the program director's place and create a binding relationship for the year of service.

### XII. FINAL WORDS

MPI is confident that its program directors will be forever changed through their MPI experiences. It is a very exciting time to be involved with MPI because it is so young and because every member of the group makes a huge impact on the organization's development. Meaningful relationships are inevitably going to develop as program directors pursue their passions both in the field and with other members with whom they live and work. MPI looks forward to working closely with recent graduates to help them develop their passions and world perspectives while working to improve the lives of those they serve.

For additional information, questions, comments or concerns, please contact us at:  
(615) 866-5179 or [apply@mannaproject.org](mailto:apply@mannaproject.org).

