

Nicolás Fund for Education Trip Preparation Handbook



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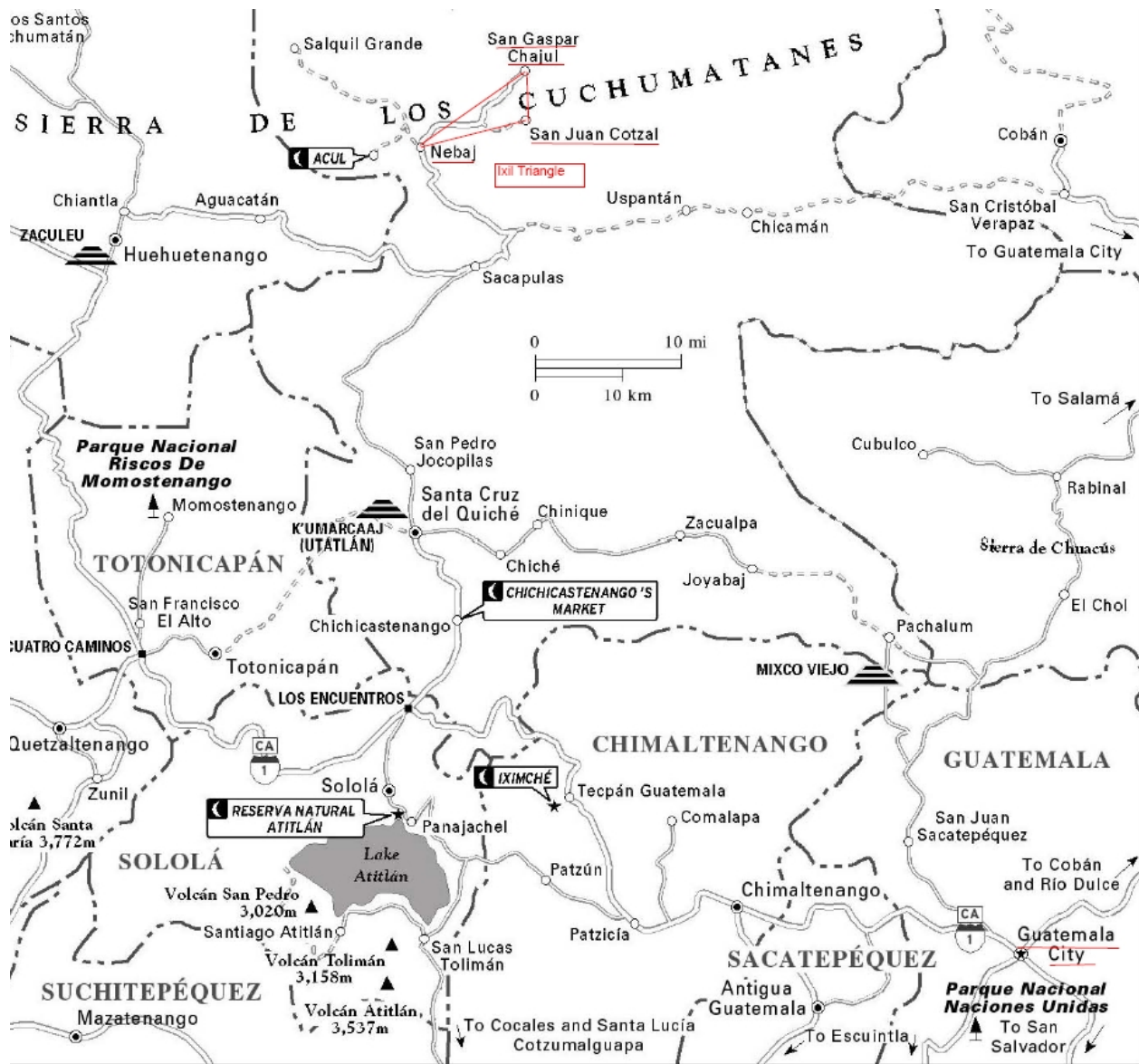
Dear Friend,

It must be amazing and maybe just a little bit terrifying to think that, within a few short weeks, you will find yourself in Guatemala! We are thrilled that you have chosen to join us for this adventure! The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the area and people that we will be travelling to, as well as information about the work of the Nicolás Fund for Education. This handbook will also provide travel tips, immunization information and information about what to pack. We hope to be continually improving this handbook, so if you have suggestions on additional information that might be useful to a newcomer, let us know! Send an e-mail to bmerritt@nicolasfund.org.



During this trip, we will be travelling to the western highland mountains of Guatemala. This area is very mountainous with steep hillsides. The region is green and lush with wonderful volcanic soil. For centuries, an indigenous Mayan tribe called the Ixil (*ish-eel*) have inhabited these mountains and have spoken their own unique Mayan dialect. The area was so remote in the past that one village might have a slightly different Ixil dialect than another. As this area has had more exposure to other Guatemalans and people from other countries, many of the Ixil have learned to speak Spanish. It is not unusual in the smaller villages, however, to find women who speak only Ixil. It is not necessary to speak Spanish to be a team member, but it definitely enriches your experience to learn a few words of Spanish or even Ixil. The Ixil are so forgiving of almost any verbal gaffe or stumble.

Interpreters are provided on our trips. The region that we will be visiting is commonly known as the “Ixil triangle” that is formed by the towns San Juan Cotzal, Nebaj and Chajul.



The purpose of this trip is **RELATIONSHIP**. It is hoped that you will meet with, listen to, pray for and encourage the people you meet on this trip. We want you to share about yourself to the people you meet, too. As you witness the way that our friends in these villages live their lives, you might even contemplate your own life and perhaps be changed by that experience. As we experience all of this, we seek God's guidance for each of us on a daily basis, and as we do that, our relationship with God deepens.

We have had an enduring relationship with the families in two particular villages:

- La Esperanza (the hope)
- La Bendición (the blessing):



Mass grave in the Ixil

To understand more about the lives of the families you will meet, it is helpful to know a bit about the violent history of this area and the extreme suffering and poverty that the Ixil people have endured. This particular region of Guatemala was hit especially hard by a thirty-six year civil war, with the Mayan Ixil people from this region caught between the Guatemalan Army and the left-wing Guerillas. More than 200,000 people were killed over the course of the 36-year-long civil war that began in 1960 and ended with peace accords in 1996. About 83 percent of those killed were Mayan,

according to a 1999 report written by the U.N.-backed Commission for Historical Clarification titled "Guatemala: Memory of Silence."

The civil war brought the Ixil people extreme poverty as they left everything behind to flee into the forests to escape being murdered. They lived on-the-run to avoid detection. There were 1000 victims in Cotzal alone, most of them men who were tortured, massacred and "disappeared", and this is not counting those who lost their lives in the mountains outside of town. Problems with owning land worsened during the armed conflict which was particularly cruel in the Ixil Triangle. Many people were dispossessed of their lands and forced to work in the coffee and sugar plantations.



Crosses in church in Cotzal with names of those murdered, kidnapped and "disappeared" during the 36 year war.

The Ixil people still struggle economically and emotionally to recover from that war, with PTSD and



depression a frequent problem and alcoholism a common way to escape the pain. For twelve years, service teams participated in the creation of the Agros villages of La Esperanza and La Bendición. This JWAV program allowed villagers to purchase farmland and build communities that are self-governing, self-sustaining and thriving. During these years, approximately 30 teams from both churches traveled to serve these two villages through funding, friendship and hands-on support.

PHASE 1 COMPLETED: Journey with a Village (JWAV) partnerships between Agros International, First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue (now Bellevue Presbyterian), Mercer Island Covenant Church (now Evergreen Covenant Church and Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church (JWAV1 partner only) proved to be highly effective in breaking the cycle of poverty through land ownership and training for the 50 families in these two villages. To learn more about Agros and how they help rural poor families in Latin America escape the cycle of generational poverty, visit www.agros.org. The villages are now sustainable and independent enough to survive without additional support through our Agros JWAV partnerships. The JWAV graduation of La Esperanza was in 2007 and La Bendición was in 2011. In addition to farm land, each family has a house with fresh (cold) water and many of the families have paid back the modest loans for their land. An important aspect of the JWAV model is support for the education of the children up to the 6th grade. The adults of these villages have worked hard to rebuild their lives after the long and brutal civil war that directly impacted each of the families from these villages. As a result, very few of the parents have any formal education because of the extreme poverty and displacement that they experienced during the war. Most of the women are illiterate and many only speak the local Ixil dialect. Many of the men understand and speak Spanish, the commercial language.

PHASE II – THE NEXT GENERATION. In most cases, families do not have sufficient financial resources to pay for secondary and college education for their children. Less than 20% of the children from this area attend school past the sixth grade. Only 5% of girls finish the sixth grade. While the Agros model is highly effective to improve the welfare of the first generation; we recognize that education is the critical element for the success of the next generation. On our JWAV service team trips to these villages, we saw very few adolescents attending school. When asked why they were not attending school, we discovered that the lack of the necessary financial resources was the primary reason. Of the few that were attending school, their education often stopped after sixth grade and their dreams of becoming teachers, skilled agriculturalists, nurses or other key professions were cut short. As a result of this compelling need linked with our emotional and spiritual ties to these families, The Nicolas Fund for Education was conceived. The Nicolás Fund for Education, a Nonprofit Corporation, was formed in 2011 by members of Mercer Island Covenant Church (now Evergreen Covenant Church or ECC) and First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue (now Bellevue Presbyterian or BelPres). We have chosen academic scholarships and tutoring for secondary school and university as a way to implement our vision. These scholarships cover tuition, uniforms, transportation and books. In addition, we provide after school tutoring for students to promote our student’s chances of succeeding in secondary school and university.

MISSION: The mission of the Nicolás Fund for Education is to provide an education for every child in an Agros village beyond 6th grade.

VISION: The Vision of the Nicolás Fund for Education is that the vocational dreams of every child from an Agros village would be fulfilled by having the opportunity to be educated to the level of their God-given ability.

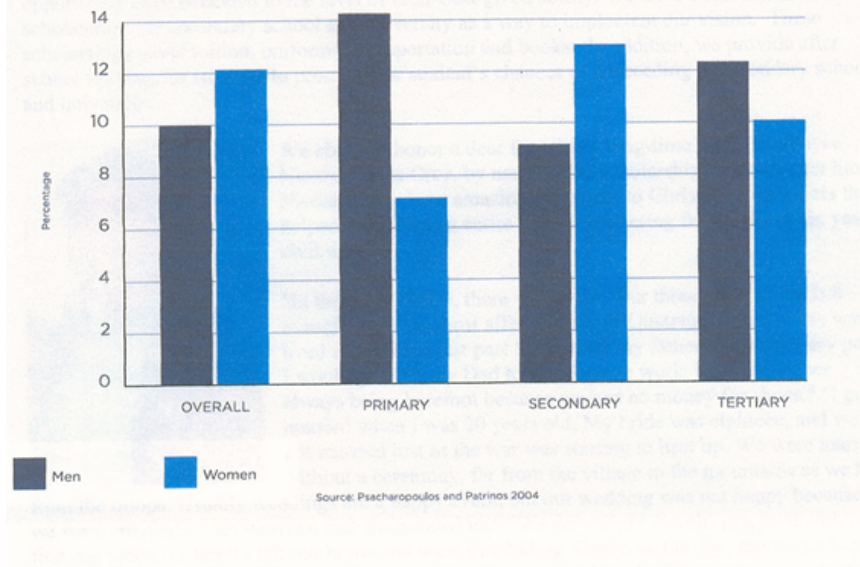
VALUES: The values of the Nicolás Fund for Education include:

- Follow in the ways of Jesus
- Hope
- Dignity
- Stewardship of talent
- Christian community through relationships

Education produces young men and women equipped to contribute to economic and social development. In addition, education leads to better jobs and the educated are more likely to get jobs. Boys with secondary education have a 14% return in future wages. We feel the education of young women, in particular, will have a dramatic impact on the lives of the students, but also on their future families and the communities they live in. Education for girls is key to improved health and nutrition for their future families. Girls that receive even one year of secondary education get married later, have fewer children, and are more likely to have those children be immunized, well-nourished and educated. Each subsequent year of education would increase her future wages by 15 to 25%. When she does work, she would reinvest 90% of her income back into her family. Education for girls has been linked to overall improvement in the standard of living for the community they live in. Education equips girls with the self-esteem and empowerment that helps protect them from domestic violence. We feel that education is a powerful tool to break the cycle of poverty for these young men and women.

FIGURE 2.2

Returns to investment in schooling in developing countries, by gender and level



Gibbs, Nancy. "To Fight Poverty, Invest in Girls" Time Magazine US

<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2046045,00.html>> (2-14-11)

Levine, R. et al. "Girls Count: A Global Investment and Action Agenda". Center for Global Development.

<http://www.cgdev.org/files/15154_file_GC_2009_Final_web.pdf>(2009)

"Women Deliver: Girls Education". Women Deliver

<<http://www.womendeliver.org/knowledge-center/facts-figures/girls-education/>>





THE NICOLÁS STORY.

We chose to honor a dear friend and long-time Agros employee, Nicolás Toma Cruz, by naming this scholarship program after him. Nicolas died in 2010. Nicolás' story is an amazing testimony to Christian forgiveness that helped transform an entire region recovering from a thirty-six year civil war:

"In the early 1980's, there was a war. Our three cities of the Ixil triangle were the most affected area of Guatemala. Before the war, I lived in a village just past Belen with my father. We were very poor. I would go with my Dad to the farms to work, but I remember always being barefoot because we had no money for shoes."

"I got married when I was 20 years old. My bride was eighteen, and we got married just as the war was starting to heat up. We were married without a ceremony, far from the village in the mountains as we hid from the troops. Usually weddings are a happy event, but our wedding was not happy because we were terrified of the violence that surrounded us." "We were eight months pregnant with our first son when we finally left our home and went into hiding. Earlier in the day, the forces began to burn the houses in our village with the people still in them." "My Dad was tortured to death because he was an evangelistic pastor. The Guerillas liked the Catholics and they hated Protestants. The Guerillas hated my Dad because he preached and didn't seem to fear them. They would force both of us to the ground at gun point and laugh at us. Once they took Dad's Bible and burned it in front of him." "They made my Dad go to his house and get his pick and hoe. They marched him out of the village and into the mountains, and they made him dig a hole. When he was done, they shot my Daddy and pushed him in the hole as he fell. In those days the Guerillas refused to bury the dead, and so they threw only several shovels of dirt over his body. It was a month before I was brave enough to return to my Dad's grave. Wild animals and dogs had eaten the body, as they did to all the bodies the Guerillas left lying around the mountains. I collected the bones and took them back to my village. Ana, Nicolás' wife, said, "When we were pregnant with our first baby, I prayed for God to protect us. The night my baby was born, there was much gun fire. So Nicolás and I ran away to the woods and hid in the darkness. The Guerillas were burning houses and killing people so we had to leave even though I could hardly walk. I remember it was raining. We were walking in the darkness when my baby fell out below me. I had no pain.

Nicolás picked up the baby and wrapped him in a piece of plastic to keep him warm. It was the only thing we had. "So we fled the mountains and were heading to Cotzal when the baby died. He died of coldness. He was never well. But we couldn't keep him warm because we had only the plastic." Ana wept as she related this story. Nicolás added, "After my Dad was murdered, the Guerillas started asking my friends where I was. I could no longer trust anyone, so I hid. But I didn't fear the Guerillas, like my Dad hadn't feared them, because I knew God was alive and would save me even if I did die. In the woods, late at night, my wife and I would pray, and I started to preach in the villages as my father had done. Once we were at the village of Oleguana and the Guerillas were closing in on us. I was warned by others to not go to Cotzal because they were telling everyone they were looking for me and wanted me dead. It was raining hard. I wore a plastic bag that covered my face. The road curved so I could not see who was coming towards me, and I met the Guerillas on the curve in the road. But they didn't recognize me. To this day I'm sure it was the prayers my wife and I did daily, for God to save us. To protect us.

In the woods we had nothing. We ate green corn where we could find it. Sometimes we went several weeks without eating. I don't know how we survived. Only God knows." Nicolás was chased both by the leftist Guerillas and the opposing Guatemalan Army soldiers. "The soldiers, they would kill anyone. If they accused you of being a Guerilla, they would kill you even if you were not a Guerilla. If they didn't like you for any reason, they would kill you. Sometimes they just killed for no reason." "The soldiers were worse than the Guerillas, so one night I decided to go back to our village above Belen. But the Guerillas, when they saw me, shot me in the shoulder as I fled for my life." "I could not work for a year after that." "After the war finally ended, I got a job with the government to teach people how to farm. But I was illiterate. And yet, they still hired me. It was God. God saved me. He is stronger than any war, or any soldier, or any Guerilla. After the war I went to school, and studied at the primary school and graduated to the Básico (middle school) level. Then I went on to the next level. When I was studying, my contract with the government ran out. There was no high school I could go to. And then Agros hired me. On the last day of my government job, Agros hired me." David Carlson of Agros recalled, "One day, not long after being promoted to the role of a village development specialist, working directly alongside the members of a new Agros village, Nicolás was shocked to come face to face with two of the men who had killed his father. He'd burned their faces into his mind from that horrible day.

Confronted with a choice of revenge or forgiveness, Nicolás said, "I knew I had only one choice because of all I'd been forgiven by Jesus, even though everything within me cried out for justice, for revenge...because of the horror that had traumatized us all. So, I looked at these men, asking God for strength as I did, extending them the same grace given to me, telling them who I was and that I forgave them for murdering my father, inviting them to help me lead their village." David added, "Neither Nicolás nor the men were the same after that, making significant strides, emerging as leaders in their community, with the story of Nicolás' self-denying, grace-filled act spreading encouragement for others to do likewise throughout the entire region, just as his ever ready smile did to all those fortunate to meet him."

Being a Bridge Builder

Cultural differences might be pictured in the following way. There are two cliffs: On one side is the American way of life and on the other is the way of life found in Guatemala. In between looms a large gap. In order for the two cultures to meet and understand one another a bridge must be built connecting the two sides. Imagine your upcoming journey as an apprenticeship in bridge building. You lay the beams, raise scaffolding and forge cables that make communication between your worlds possible. Bridge building is an exciting challenge!

There are three "roles" you can play that will contribute to your ability to be a bridge builder.

- Being a Guest
- Being a Student
- Being a Servant

How can you play each of the roles above?

Bridge Building Involves the Following Practices

- **Accept:** Accept the fact that you will not completely understand the people in just one trip.
- **Be Aware:** Be aware that you may become frustrated at times with the way things are or the way people behave. Is ok to feel this way and reflect upon “why?” Why am I frustrated? We often learn something about our own culture in this process too.
- **Listen:** Listen more than you talk. You are there to learn, not instruct
- **Give:** Give of yourself. Take the initiative to reach out to those you are visiting. People can tend to shy away from interaction, especially if they aren’t fluent in the language. Go ahead! Take a risk and try to speak the language. People will really appreciate your effort.
- **Enjoy:** Enjoy the people, their culture, their food and their language. Also, don’t take yourself too seriously and learn to laugh at your mistakes. Help create an environment where those you are visiting can enjoy you and your culture just as you aim to enjoy theirs.

Village Visit Etiquette

Be a Humble Guest: When we visit another culture, we are the strange ones. We are the ones with the unusual perspectives, different language and attire. It is important to remember that we are guests, and be humble and courteous to our hosts.

- Try new things without complaining. We honor people when we accept and appreciate what they may offer or share, be it food, an idea or a new way of doing something.
- Learn at least a phrase or two in Spanish and the Ixil language; people are honored by your effort and openness.
- Be aware of what you communicate, remember that people may understand more than you may think;
- Most facial expressions, tone of voice, along with many gestures, can be universally understood
- Be careful with slang and never use profanity, often these are the few familiar English phrases
- Consider refraining from discussing politics, do not be offended if US politics are criticized.
- Share your faith/worldviews/perspectives respectfully and without proselytizing. Listen to other’s perspectives and philosophies as well, as they will often be eager to share their beliefs with you.
- Always dialogue as a polite guest, challenging views is rarely appropriate.
- Be patient, Latin American time orientation may be different than you are accustomed to, schedules are often dynamic guidelines; as guests, we must adjust, be flexible and “go with the flow.”
- Be respectful when taking photos/video, particularly of people and that which is theirs
- If a parent is nearby, it is polite to ask a parent before photographing a child – gestures are usually sufficient to do so
- Gawking at, and or photographing a home or other sight that is distinctly different may be rude
- With an invitation or permission, recording someone/thing may also be honoring, dignity is the key.

- Demonstrate respect for age, status, local perspectives and knowledge.
- Emphasize Courtesy; Latin Americans are typically very polite and appreciate reciprocation
- Smile, acknowledge people, shake hands, be considerate.
- Latin Americans often appreciate individually greeting/recognizing everyone in a group, identifying and or shaking hands with everyone present; they may feel slighted if you do not acknowledge everyone
- Dress modestly, whatever that means locally; do not be afraid to ask. Dress to avoid unhelpful attention, especially in Indigenous communities, avoid revealing clothing, when in doubt default to conservative attire.
- Be discreet when using hand sanitizer. Consider how this may be perceived, implying dirtiness.
- Refrain from Public Displays of Affection, it can isolate couples and or make others uncomfortable.

Be Safe:

NFE staff and your host community attempt to mitigate risks by taking precautions to keep you safe while traveling. You can also help prevent crime and accidents by being aware of your surroundings at all times.

- Follow instructions from the in-country hosts; they know the regional culture and risks well, and have your best interest in mind.
- Do not wander off alone at any time. Always walk in groups of three or four, ideally with at least one male in each group. Do not travel after dark. Counting off or using the buddy system can be helpful.
- You are responsible for your luggage and personal belongings. Know where they are at all times.
- Do not expose your money; keep it hidden until you buy something, then, only show the amount you need
- Latin American men can be quite forward toward women; do not respond to “piropos” (cat-calls, pick-up lines).
- Avoid wearing jewelry, so as not to attract unhelpful attention.
- Avoid crowds of people, political rallies, and protests. These can be volatile environments.

Stay Healthy:

An NFE trip can be a physically, emotionally, and mentally demanding experience. Take care of yourself in all three areas by staying flexible and taking time to relax. The unexpected will happen.

- Take advantage of your debriefing time to journal to process and share what you are learning, how you may have been impacted, and consider how you are responding.
- Get plenty of rest and water, do not overextend yourself. The constant change of pace, varying diet, and unfamiliar germs related to travel (anywhere) can be hard on the body. Dehydration & heatstroke are dangerous.
- Protect yourself from insects and the sun, use pants, long-sleeved shirts, hats, sun block, repellent, etc.
- Sturdy footwear is required – NFE trips frequently involve significant walking over uneven or slippery terrain.

- Pepto-Bismol tablets before a meal may help prevent upset stomach and/or diarrhea; again, be discreet.
- Bathrooms may be scarce, always carry toilet paper with you. Be prepared to discreetly find a tree (in rural areas). Locals do the same thing.
- Avoid dogs, commonly seen although less-frequently considered pets. When ignored they rarely pose any threat, however touching and or feeding them should be avoided for cultural, health, and sustainability reasons.

Cross Cultural Interactions on an NFE Trip

Cross-Cultural Interaction is the process of exchanging, negotiating, and mediating cultural differences through language, non-verbal gestures, and space relationships. Differences occur across a variety of dynamic orientation spectrums:

Relationship	Task
Group Oriented	Individualistic
Inclusive	Private
Spontaneous	Calculated
High context (formal)	Low context (informal)
Indirect communication	Direct communication
People Responsive	Efficiency proactive

Examples of cultural differences you may encounter when traveling in Latin America. Keep in mind that these are generalizations, every person and situation is different.

Food: Sharing food is one of the most significant ways that people may invite you into their lives. Often, this may mean being offered more than you need and or more than you see others eating. Strive to simply accept food graciously and understand that it can be a significant gift. Vegetarianism/veganism is uncommon in Latin America, particularly rural areas; try not to draw attention to your diet.

Poverty: Often the most alarming aspect of travel to a developing region can be the stark and or seemingly overwhelming poverty. Beggars and abhorrent conditions may be common and difficult to reconcile. Be prepared to and allow your heart to be broken, and take advantage of the opportunity to reflect on how you are involved in holistic systemic development to combat this crisis.

Time: Latin Americans may be perceived as more spontaneous and/or flexible regarding time. Be flexible with your schedule and time commitments. Often the “start” time is when preparations begin.

Commitment: Whereas in the US, “yes” can mean, “maybe”, or “I will let you know later”, in many parts of Latin America, “yes” means “YES”. Consider this when making plans or commitments.

Pena: First meetings can often bring out a sense of “pena” (shyness) in many Latin Americans. Consider this when people may seem shy about speaking, sharing their homes, or meeting new people.

Gestures: What may be common in one context may be rude or confusing in another, ask a local about appropriate gestures. Avoid pointing at or beckoning people with your hand.

Touch & Proximity: Latin Americans may be more open to touch and or have a smaller sphere of “personal space” than others. Hugging, kissing on the cheek and handholding are common; sitting or standing close may be the norm, although not necessarily with new people. Public displays of affection may still create barriers for interaction and or be misunderstood and are therefore discouraged for visitors unless the host knows them well.

Dress: Appearing clean and well-dressed, although relative, can be a tremendous source of pride; visitors who strive to do the same honor their hosts. Modesty varies by region, ask your host, a good rule of thumb is to opt minimally for pants or capris and short sleeved shirts instead of shorts and tank-tops.

Toilets: In general, do NOT flush toilet paper in Latin America. Most sewage systems cannot process toilet paper and flushing it (or anything else) can create big problems. Look for a small wastebasket near the toilet. Also, carry toilet paper and be prepared to squat when a toilet and or toilet seat is not available.

Dogs: Strays that may be mangy, malnourished, and or without owners are commonly seen although less-frequently considered pets. When ignored they rarely pose any threat, however they should not be touched, let alone fed, for safety, hygiene and cultural reasons.

Cross Cultural Interaction is a Learning Process

- Humbly ask questions and show curiosity about the new or unfamiliar
- Openness to sharing about your own culture may facilitate a better exchange
- Consider differences while reserving judgment or evaluation
- Note that people from the US are often perceived as very outgoing, having natural curiosity and freedom which is not always understood by others
- Ask about what may be considered appropriate or non-offensive behavior, it may be the best and last question to ask about a particular topic

Expect:

- Differences – remember different is just different, not bad, backward or wrong
- That the schedule will not always happen as planned
- To FLEX, FLEX, FLEX
- Frustration but refuse to complain
- To forgive others and yourself
- To be stretched, challenged and changed
- That your expectations will not always all be met
- To make mistakes, to apologize and to move forward with grace

Ixil Culture and Dress:



Ixil women often wear a beautiful headdress that is woven into their long hair. Colors and patterns establish what village they came from. The tops are called huipils (whip-peels) and their skirts are called cortes (cort-tays). A red skirt signifies that the woman is from Nebaj. Skirts that are grey and blue indicate that the woman is from the Cotzal region. The women often utilize a back-strap loom to weave these garments. Ixil women are some of the best weavers in the world.



Men have tended to adopt western dress for the most part, but traditional dress for men from Nebaj involves a red jacket with black embroidered designs.

Boys will traditionally wear a straw hat, white shirt and pants with a red sash for special occasions or performances.

The Ixil are primarily maize (corn) farmers historically practicing slash-and-burn farming methods. There is only one maize harvest per year. Other crops are beans, coffee, snow peas and

other vegetables. Through the work of Agros, families in the villages of La Bendición and La Esperanza have learned sustainable farming and crop diversification techniques. Many families use crops for both subsistence and as cash crops. Some of their crops are sold at Costco in England!

Immunizations: 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 (Tdap), varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot. The CDC recommends hepatitis A vaccine because you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in Guatemala, regardless of where you are eating or staying. A typhoid immunization is also recommended because you can also get typhoid through contaminated food or water. CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater. On our trips, it is common for families in the village to offer us a meal they have made. While the families have received information on how to prepare food safely for North American stomachs, sometimes illness can still occur. Travelers' diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout the region and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all children ages 11–12 years who did not receive the series as infants. The area that we are visiting is not considered a risk for malaria, but if you plan to tour other portions of Guatemala such as Tikal, you will want to speak with your health care provider about prophylactic medication to prevent malaria. This area is not at risk for Yellow Fever. Zika virus is present in Guatemala.

For detailed information about specific locations, see the CDC website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Each traveler should consult his or her own family doctor or a travel clinic for personalized advice; recommendations may differ for pregnant women, children, and persons who have chronic medical conditions. This document is not a complete medical guide for travelers to this region.

Places to go for immunizations include your own doctor's office or several travel clinics in the area:

- Downtown Public Health Center
2124 4th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98121
This is the least expensive option. The Downtown (Seattle) Public Health travel clinic offers a Travel Assessment, travel immunizations, and prescription medications and treatment of travelers' diarrhea and other travel-related conditions.
 - o Travel Immunizations by appointment: Monday through Friday.
 - o Initial travel visits with a nurse are available by appointment by calling 206-296-4960.
 - o Travel prescriptions are only available by appointment Monday through Wednesday.

- Safeway Pharmacy in Kirkland (not all Safeway stores offer this)
12519 N E 85th St
Kirkland, WA 98033
425-822-9235
There is a form you need to complete and fax in to 425- 822-0538 or drop it off. You will need your immunization record from your doctor to fill out the form. Safeway will call you back and arrange an appointment after reviewing your form information. The form to complete is found at <https://www.travelmedmd.com/safeway/>
 - The travel medicine doctor can prescribe the recommended antibiotic for diarrhea.
 - When you fill out the form, your destination is Antigua, Guatemala and then Nebaj, Guatemala. Antigua is in the central highlands of Guatemala and Nebaj is in the western highlands. The elevation is 6200 feet in Nebaj.

- Bartell Drug Stores has several International Health Clinics. A list is available at <http://www.bartelldrugs.com/bartells-international-travel-clinic-locations>
- Virginia Mason has several travel medicine clinic locations, found at <https://www.virginiamason.org/service.cfm?id=6533>
- Swedish has several providers who provide Travel Medicine services. The link for one provider in Snoqualmie is <http://www.swedish.org/media-files/documents/primary-care/smg-travel-visit-form-2013.aspx>

You will want to ask the doctor to write an antibiotic prescription for you to take if you get severe nausea/diarrhea. Typical antibiotics are Levaquin or Cipro. On the trip, you will also want to have with you any "as needed" prescription medications such as migraine meds, muscle relaxers, sleep aids, and pain relief meds.

Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively. Use seat belts and avoid nighttime travel if possible.

To Stay Healthy

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only SEALED bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
- Use bottled water to brush your teeth and keep your mouth closed in the shower.
- Purified water is available throughout NFE trips. Bring a water bottle that you can refill and bring to the villages with you each day. Be sure to drink enough so that you do not become dehydrated.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- o Food prepared for NFE travelers by NFE organized meal preparers adhere to these guidelines.
- Protect yourself from insects (chiggers, primarily) by using repellents, wearing long pants, and consider using permethrin sprays on pant leg bottoms or wear pre-treated clothing.
- To prevent fungal & parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.

To Avoid Getting Sick:

- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly. Use Purell in between.
- Avoid food purchased from street vendors.
- Avoid beverages with ice.
- Avoid dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Avoid handling animals (especially dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague).

Bring with You:

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent sunburn and chigger bites. Also consider pre-treating clothing with permethrin, available online and at REI, camping or military supply stores
- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethyltoluamide), in 30%–35% strength for adults and 6%–10% for children.
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine (loperamide, brand name Imodium) to take if you have diarrhea. If you develop diarrhea and are an adult or child over the age of 12, take 2 caplets after the first loose stool; 1 caplet after each subsequent loose stool; but no more than 4 caplets in 24 hours
- Consider bringing Emetrol (a liquid over the counter non-sedating nausea medication), compazine (prescription pills or suppositories) or Dramamine (over the counter sedating nausea medication) to use in the event that you have nausea or vomiting.
- Consider bringing a prescription antibiotic for use if you become ill with diarrhea or vomiting. You have spent a lot of money and gone through a great deal of preparation to go on this trip, and to be out sick for 3-4 days would mean that you might miss out on most of the adventure. Additionally, it can be quite miserable to travel if you are very ill, and can complicate team travel.
- Bring over the counter medications that you might typically use if you had a cold as well as a few small packs of tissues.
- “As needed” prescription medications such as migraine meds, muscle relaxers, sleep aids, and pain relief meds.

- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip and carry them in your carry-on bags. If possible, bring a copy of the prescription(s).
- Bring a few Band-Aids. Some people have been grateful for moleskin to treat blisters.

After You Return Home:

If you started an antibiotic before or after the trip, please be sure to finish the entire prescription except in the event of an adverse reaction or are instructed by your health care provider to stop that medication early.

If you become ill after your trip—even as long as a year after your return—tell your doctor where you have traveled.

If you would like to, please feel free to post some of your trip pictures to our Twitter page **@NicolasFundEd**. Please use discretion as you are representing us in those photos. We also would not want to post any photos that would be offensive or harmful to our Guatemalan friends.

Nicolás Fund for Education Policies and Expectations

Gift Policy

NFE recognizes that giving gifts can promote relationship building – an NFE objective. However, gift giving in NFE villages could cause dependency. Gifts may also further the perception of the recipients being “poor” and “needy” and or can cause jealousy among recipients who receive fewer/smaller/less valuable gifts. Giving gifts may also make the recipient feel the need to give something else back – putting the recipient in a difficult position given their limited resources. For these reasons, NFE asks that visitors:

“Leave nothing (new or second-hand) with individuals in NFE villages, nearby towns or the country at large that could create dependency. Refrain from leaving money or personal gifts with any individual, including NFE staff, no matter how needy the individuals might seem.” Appropriate children’s books in Spanish, art supplies, etc. may be left by the team with the NFE in-country host to distribute to village schools at a later date.

Tipping policy

NFE understand and respects the value of tipping those in the service industry who provide exceptional service. While tipping at hotels, restaurants, etc. is entirely appropriate, we would ask that you refrain from tipping persons employed or contracted by NFE in-country staff. NFE contracts with specifically selected candidates for their services in hosting outside visitors, and builds into their compensation a full, fair, and adequate wage for their services. There are many ways to express gratitude for exceptional service, and we hope that you do express your gratitude to both staff and contractors as appropriate.

Communication Guidelines

NFE requires that all communication regarding NFE programs be directed through established channels. This allows accurate information to be shared in a clear, timely manner. Questions or concerns pertaining to the NFE Program may be directed to NFE staff during an NFE trip, or NFE Board members.

Outside of these trips, all inquiries should be directed to NFE Board members. Please keep in mind that NFE does not have any paid staff in the US. We are all volunteers, so a response may be delayed.

One of NFE core values is fostering relationships, and the partnerships between people in the U.S. and the students we serve are significant. However, correspondence between specific individuals or families often causes unintended harm. Instead, we encourage communication from the team to every NFE student, or to all students as a letter addressed to the group if at all possible. Use NFE trips as the primary mode of distribution for communal correspondence. **NFE does not recommend the exchange of personal information such as telephone numbers or home addresses as we cannot control the discretion and usage of this information.** The sending of gifts and money is prohibited. If you receive communication that raises any special concern, including any type of request for assistance or information, please contact an NFE Board member.

Risk Management

- As with anything in life, there are risks associated with an NFE trip. These risks may include: health risks, man- made risks, and natural disasters.
- NFE provides all trip participants country specific emergency and international medical and evacuation insurance information to be carried on their person throughout the duration of their trip; each person should carry a copy.
- The US State Department and the CDC may be helpful websites in determining and evaluating potential risks.
- There will be a small first aid kit available at all times for the team.

What to Pack for an NFE Trip

Clothes

- 3 pairs pants (lightweight fabric is important, jeans don't dry quickly)
- 2-4 lightweight shirts (long or short sleeve)
- 2-3 shirts for evenings (cotton, mostly long sleeve)
- One nicer outfit -- business casual (skirt or slacks)
- Socks & underwear
- Shoes: comfortable hiking boots or closed-toe walking shoes, also consider flip flops for showers, tennis shoes (optional)
- Broad-brimmed hat/baseball hat or scarf for sun protection
- Sunblock, sunglasses
- Rain gear: poncho or raincoat or travel umbrella
- La Bendición trails are steep and often slippery. Some people like to bring collapsible hiking pole(s) to steady themselves.

Personal Medication

- Band aids
- Prescription medications –in labeled bottles
- Anti-diarrhea (Pepto-Bismol (8/day) or Imodium)
- Antacids
- Decongestant (tablets)
- Topical antibacterial cream
- Topical hydrocortisone cream (for itchy bug bites)
- Antihistamines

Travel Items

- Airline tickets
- Passport & copy (keep separate)
- Itinerary
- Money (cash)/one Visa credit card
- Money belt/secure hiding place
- Travel pillow, if desired
- Phone list (in case of emergency)
- NFE provided emergency cards
- Avoid bringing expensive electronics/phones

Toiletries & Personal Hygiene

- Ear plugs. The chicken and dog serenade starts quite early. Roommates can snore.
- Handy wipes
- Comb/hair brush
- Tooth paste & brush
- Soap (liquid or bar)
- Finger nail clippers
- Toilet paper (to carry, many restrooms do not provide)
- Pocket tissue (Kleenex)
- Insect repellent
- Lotion & chap stick
- Razor (if electric, charged)
- Contact lens solution
- Feminine hygiene items
- Sun screen (SPF 15 or higher)

Other Items

- Day pack/ belly pack
- Spanish dictionary (optional)
- Waterless hand Sanitizer
- Bible and devotional book
- Pocket Notebook/journal
- Photos of your family in plastic sleeves or a little photo album (4-6 pages)
- Camera and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Travel alarm
- Reading material

Notes:

1. Not everything is applicable depending on what time of year you are traveling.
2. Pack all essentials in your carry-on, plus change of clothes. Luggage might get lost.
3. Pack light: Soft-sided bags are best—NO BOXES
4. Keep valuables in a secure place (money belt, hidden pocket, etc.)
5. Do not take anything you cannot live without
6. Keep rain gear handy

7. Consider packing items in one or two gallon Zip lock bags to keep them dry. Bring 2-3 giant hefty bags to slip over your suitcase in the event of heavy rainfall on travel days.
8. Label all of your luggage INSIDE and out. Best to use your business address rather than your home address
9. Baggage limits: check with your airline for weight and size limitations
10. Notify your credit card company about your travel dates and country you are visiting or they may decline charges due to anti-fraud measures.

Spanish Lessons

Spanish Lesson #1:

In Latin cultures, people take the first of their father's two names and the first of their mother's. If you want to use one surname, which you normally do for informal use, it usually is the first (middle) name.

1. Numbers

0 cero

1 uno	6 seis	11 once	16 diez y seis
2 dos	7 siete	12 doce	17 diez y siete
3 tres	8 ocho	13 trece	18 diez y ocho
4 cuatro	9 nueve	14 catorce	19 diez y nueve
5 cinco	10 diez	15 quince	20 veinte

10 diez	60 sesenta	1000 mil
20 veinte	70 setenta	1,000,000 millón
30 treinta	80 ochenta	
40 cuarenta	90 noventa	
50 cincuenta	100 cien	

2. Greetings

- Buenos días, señor (señora, señorita).	Good morning, sir (ma'am, miss)
- Buenas tardes.	Good afternoon.
- Buenas noches.	Good evening.
- ¿Cómo se llama?	What is your name?
- Me llamo _____.	My name is _____.
¿Y usted?	And you?
- Me llamo _____.	My name is _____.
- Mucho gusto, _____.	It's a pleasure to meet you, _____.
- El gusto es mío.	The pleasure is mine.
- ¿Cómo está usted?	How are you?
- Muy bien, gracias. ¿Y usted?	Very well, thank you. And you?
- Bien, gracias.(bien, así así, mal)	Fine, thanks. (good, so-so, bad)
- Adios.	Goodbye.
- Hasta luego. (hasta mañana)	See you later. (Until tomorrow)

Spanish Lesson #2: Profiles

1. Review

¿Cómo se llama?

¿Cómo está usted?

Mucho gusto.

2. Personal descriptions

- a) Your name and home
- b) Your family
- c) Your work
- d) Your love for the country

a) Me llamo _____. My name is _____.
Soy de Seattle. I'm from Seattle.
Está lejos de aquí. It is far from here.

b) Mi familia es pequeña. (mediana, grande) My family is small (medium, large)
Tengo dos hermanos (un/a esposo/a, hijos/as). I have two brothers (a husband/wife,
sons/daughters)

c) Soy estudiante de la Universidad de Washington. I am a student at _____.
maestro/a – teacher secretaria - secretary
ingeniero/a - engineer ama de casa – housewife

Estudio ingeniería I study engineering.

d) Me gusta Guatemala. I like Guatemala.
La gente es muy simpática. The people are very nice.
Estoy muy contento/a aquí. I am very happy here.

Prepare a five-line profile about yourself using the above models for ideas. Be prepared to share this profile with your group.

Spanish Lesson #3: Asking Questions

Question Words:

¿Qué?	What?
¿Dónde?	Where?
¿Cómo?	How?
¿Quién?	Who?
¿Cuánto?	How much?
¿Cuál, cuáles?	Which?
¿Cuándo?	When?
¿Por qué?	Why?

Helpful questions:

¿Dónde está la tienda? ¿el baño? Where is the store? the bathroom?
Está a la derecha. (isquierda) It's to the right. (left)

¿De dónde es usted? Where are you from?
Soy de los Estados Unidos. I am from the United States.

¿Qué es esto? What is this?
Es un sombrero. It's a hat.

¿Qué hora es? What time is it?
Son las tres de la tarde. It's three in the afternoon.

¿Cuánto es? How much is it?
Diez quetzales (colones, pesos). Ten quetzales.

¿Cuántos hermanos tiene? How many brothers and sisters do you have?
Tengo dos hermanos. I have two brothers.

¿Cómo se dice _____? How do you say _____?

3. Daily expressions:

Muchas gracias.	Thank you very much.
Por favor.	Please.
Con permiso.	Excuse me. (to leave the table, to get by someone)
Perdóneme.	Excuse me. (apologetic)
Repita, por favor.	Repeat, please.
Más despacio.	Slower.
No comprendo.	I don't understand.

Spanish Lesson #4: Tourist Talk

En el restaurante:	In the restaurant:
Un menú, por favor.	A menu, please.
Quisiera la especialidad del día.	I would like the special of the day
La cuenta, por favor.	The bill, please.
Me hace daño.	"It harms me." (I can't eat that)
agua sin hielo	water without ice
agua con/sin gas.	water with/without fizz
pollo	chicken
carne	beef
pescado	fish
postre	dessert

De compras:

Quisiera comprar un sombrero.
¿Cuánto es? ¿Cuánto cuesta?
Cuesta demasiado/Es muy caro.
No gracias.

Shopping:

I would like to buy a hat.
How much is it?
It costs too much/It is very expensive.
No thank you.

Shopping tips:

- Be prepared to bargain in the markets – start low (about half the first asking price) and work your way up.
- Don't start bargaining unless you actually intend to buy something.
- Have small bills, as it is harder to get change for large ones.

3. Nuestra fé:

Que Dios (el Señor) le bendiga.
Vamos a orar.
Abra(n) la Biblia a _____.
Somos hermanos en Cristo.

Our faith:

May God (the Lord) bless you.
Let's pray.
Open the Bible to _____.
We are brothers & sisters in Christ.

Ixil Lesson:

<p>Ixil Sounds ch = chubby x = sh xh = sh ' = stop the sound B' = "p" (no sound) (example: jub' al = hoo(p) - ahl)</p>	<p>What's your name? (¿Cómo se llama?)</p> <p>kam a b'ii (kahm a (b)ee)</p>
<p>Hello! (Buenos días, Buenas tardes)</p> <p>Chentzik' axh (Chen tsee kahsh) Reply is <u>Cha</u> – a – lo</p>	<p>My name is (me llamo)</p> <p>A un b'ii (ah oon (b)ee)</p>
<p>Goodbye! (adios)</p> <p>matin va (mah teen vah bah)</p>	<p>How old are you? (¿Cuántos años tiene?)</p> <p>Jat va'l a ya'ab' (Haht ba'll a yah – a (b))</p>
<p>"take care" – reply to matin va (que le vaya bien)</p> <p>Oraxh (oh – rahsh)</p>	<p>How are you? (¿Cómo está usted?)</p> <p>Mantzi caxh ((<u>mahnt</u> – see – caxh) (<u>bahnt</u> – see – caxh))</p>
<p>Thank you! (gracias)</p> <p>Ta'n tioxh (tahn tee <u>osh</u>)</p>	<p>I'm fine (muy bien)</p> <p>Man co sxin ((mahn coe <u>sheen</u>) (bah coe sheen))</p>

(bahn coe sheen)

Recommended Reading:

The personal meaningfulness of this trip would definitely be enhanced by doing a little reading ahead to learn more about the (indigenous Mayan) Ixil culture in Guatemala, the 36 year civil war that resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000 people, and what has been done to help the Ixil people through a holistic, integrated, long-term approach to ending poverty. Two very interesting books that specifically deal with the war that plunged this region into violence and extreme poverty are:

- “I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala” by Rigoberta Menchu
- “Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala” by David Stoll
- “Buy This Land” by Chi-Doo Li

All are available at Amazon and other locations. “Buy This Land” was written by the founder of Agros International and will give you quite a bit of background on the integrated, sustainable approach being used to overcoming poverty and how the particular villages that we work with came into existence.

Other reading specifically recommended by Agros International:

Hidden in Plain Sight (Documentary)

John H. Smihula

-A short history, a spirited debate, a personal story, and a call for accountability, 'Hidden in Plain Sight' is a bold, unflinching look at the nature and consequences of U.S. policy in Latin America

Driving Agreement: Driving Guidelines for Trip Participants

To drive a vehicle during an NFE trip you must read this agreement and sign below. Driving in Central America can be dangerous. The lives of many are at stake. Please drive carefully!

To drive you must:

- Be over the age of 25.
- Have a fully valid U.S. driver’s license.
- Be listed as a driver on the rental agreement, inspect the vehicle carefully before you sign the rental agreement and be present for the damage inspection when you return the vehicle.
- Be certain that the vehicle you’re driving is fully insured under local laws.
- NFE requires that a person agreeing to drive for an Agros trip take out the maximum insurance coverage offered to you through the car rental company.
- Never be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while driving.

Driving Description:

Driving in Latin America requires full attention, and safe drivers must make extraordinary efforts to drive defensively in order to avoid dangerous situations. Due to an almost complete lack of law enforcement, traffic rules are generally ignored. Many drivers do not use their turn signals to alert other drivers. Instead, a common custom is for a driver or passenger to stick a hand out the window and wave it to indicate that they will be taking an unspecified action. Turning right on red is not permitted unless otherwise posted, and drivers must yield when entering a traffic circle.

Seat belts must be worn, but there are no laws regarding the use of child safety seats. It is against the law for drivers to operate cellular phones while driving.

Winding and/or steep mountain roads, poorly designed surfaces, and unmarked hazards present additional risks to motorists. While city streets are lit, secondary and rural roads have little to no illumination. There are no roadside assistance clubs and no emergency transit service. Police patrol the major roadways and may assist travelers. Drivers use the right-hand side of the road, and speed limits are posted depending on the condition of the road. Speed limits are different in rural and urban areas, but are rarely enforced. Drivers usually drive at the absolute maximum speed possible for the particular vehicle at the time. Branches may be laid out in the road to alert motorists of a disabled vehicle ahead, similar to the use of a flare. The word “tumelo” means speed bump, many of which are quite steep.

People found driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are arrested and may serve jail time. In some countries, when an accident results in injury or death, every driver involved is taken into custody until a judge determines responsibility in a re-enactment of the accident.

Driving Advice:

- Avoid driving at night.
- Driver and passengers must wear seatbelts whenever possible.
- Downshift on all steep roads.
- Use extreme caution when entering highly populated areas, driving on isolated stretches of road, approaching mountainous curves, and when passing large trucks.
- Honk when driving around sharp corners and turns.
- If pulled over at a checkpoint, provide the rental vehicle papers and your driver’s license.
- Lock all vehicle doors while on the road and each time you park.
- Do not offer rides to anyone other than Agros staff or other trip participants.
- Carry a cellular phone that functions in-country in case of an emergency.

Should an accident occur while driving, NFE staff and trip participants should:

- Call the car rental company and call for emergency assistance if needed.
- Document the names, contact information, etc. of all parties involved, witnesses and local authorities. If possible, take pictures of the scene of the accident including specific damage to vehicles.
- Report the incident to the car rental company, insurance company (unless the car rental company does this for you), local authorities, and a representative of NFE (staff or Board member).
- Obey local laws and processes regarding the handling of traffic accidents.

I have read and understood the above and I agree to the terms.

Signed _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____