

DUKEENGAGE IN COLOMBIA

Addressing food security for indigenous families and those subject to forced migration

Dates: June 15 – August 10, 2020

(Dates subject to change up until the point of departure.)

Service Themes

- Health & Human Services
- Immigration & Refugees
- Community Development & Outreach
- Arts
- Technology & Media

Program Focus

Assisting with programs aimed at promoting food security, sustainable livelihoods, cultural self-reliance, and adaptation for immigrants from Venezuela and rural Colombia living in Bogota, and for indigenous people in Sierra Nevada.

Program Leaders

- Dalia Patino-Echeverri, Gendell Associate Professor of Energy Systems and Public Policy at the Nicholas School of the Environment. Dalia explores, assesses, and proposes technological, policy, and market approaches to contribute to the goal of striking a balance between environmental sustainability, affordability, and reliability of electricity systems. Dalia teaches a course on Environmental Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) and her recent research has focused on the carbon footprint of different food systems.
- Miguel Rojas-Sotelo, Duke Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Miguel works at the intersection of critical human geography, ethnic studies, environmental and health humanities and cultural theory. As a scholar, filmmaker, visual artist, and media activist, he studies how communities of color (indigenous and migrants) and natural spaces are shaped by modernity and how they mobilize to adapt and resist.

Program Overview

During their two months in Colombia, students will work on program evaluation, documentation (filmmaking), creating educational materials, and hands on activities (urban and rural gardening) with migrant children and families from Venezuela, different Colombian regions, and urban indigenous people living in Bogotá and Sierra Nevada. This program engages students with the mission and vision of two local NGOs, Soydoy and Repurpose-IT. Soydoy is a social non-profit developing sustainable projects to improve the nutritional well-being of children and families object of forced displacement in urban conditions, or in processes of return to their territories in Colombia. Repurpose-IT is an organization dedicated to leading future indigenous generations to overcome the digital divide, to transform education and preserve cultural heritage.

The programs and projects that SoyDoy develops aim to support vulnerable but organized communities suffering from high undernutrition rates, which are strengthened by empowering the beneficiaries and promoting environmental awareness and economic and social development. The NGO microenterprise chapter delivers food production equipment, training, and seed money, which facilitate the preparation of nutritional complements for boys, girls, pregnant and breastfeeding women, people with disabilities, and elderly adults within the communities. This program promotes the creation of microenterprises, which support the development of each community and ensure the projects'

sustainability. At the same time, they allow each geographical region to create an alternative adapted to their geography and culture, and availability of typical foods used to prepare the nutritional complements.

Repurpose-IT rebuilds donated laptops, installs carefully curated educational content, and takes them to communities where school teachers can use them for preserving all dimensions of indigenous culture - language, ancestral knowledge, spiritual traditions, medicine, music and the arts. Repurpose-IT works with the same indigenous communities where SoyDoy has active programs (in Sesquile, near Bogota and in Sierra Nevada (near the city of Santa Marta). Here is [a short video](#) where indigenous teachers speak about the teacher training provided by Repurpose-IT in the Nasa reservation of Yaquiva (Spanish & Nasa Yuwe language with English subtitles). And here is [a short video](#) of a project in the Kankuamo reservation in the Sierra Nevada. (Spanish with English subtitles). More about Repurpose-IT is in [this document](#).

Both Miguel and Dalia are Colombian and worked for several years in Bogota in the private and public sectors. As director of the of the Visual Arts program of the Colombian Ministry of Culture, Miguel traveled around the country and studied in detail the needs and demands of indigenous peoples.

Goals for Students

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMUNICATIONAL SKILLS: Students will ...

- Improve interpersonal skills crucial for success in professional and personal spheres
- Cultivate intercultural sensibility and unique perspectives in a globalized world
- Direct energy, knowledge, creativity and enthusiasm to support a community partner's vision and mission
- Develop understanding of issues related to the effects of forced displacement, migration, discrimination, and adaptation while actively serving a community in need.

GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING AND CITIZENSHIP: Students will ...

- Be attentive to local, international, and global issues related to political instability, forced displacement, indigeneity and the interconnections with human right and ethics.
- Be aware of how global history, culture, society, and politics play in a real setting.
- Recognize and understand the realities and stories of diverse ethnic, social, and national communities, in a country in the same continent.
- Be mindful of how an individual (and a group of individuals) can produce change by direct action.
- Be able to relate to personal and social issues taking place in the United States.

Partnership Opportunities

Students will spend four weeks in Bogota, and four weeks in a rural location in the Sierra Nevada, serving Soydoy and Repurpose-IT:

SoyDoy:

- In Bogotá: (Barrio El Codito, North East), Soydoy has an Attention Center where a population of 480 children between the ages of 2 and 14 years old are served under the Alimentary Encounters modality. Additionally, 43 elderly adults are served. The sessions take place in the mornings and afternoons, during hours opposed to school schedules. During this time, the elderly and 30% of the children visit Soydoy's facilities, the remaining 70% of the children are served at their schools or nursery schools. The attention given consists of the delivery of a light meal with a nutritional value equivalent to 20 to 25% of the total daily required caloric value, and recreational activities where games, books, arts, theatre, magic, etc., are used to teach concepts related to healthy eating, cultural adaptation, social values, school reinforcement and citizen competencies. During the year, health care is provided through professional volunteers in the areas such as eye care, general medicine or oral health.
- In Nabusimake and Gunchukwa: Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Department of Cesar, northeast of Colombia). Nutripreneurship (entrepreneurship that promotes both nutrition and livelihoods) , cultural affirmation, and

sustainable development for the Arhuaco community. The population is predominantly an agricultural community, where in 75% of the cases the heads of the household are men and 50% of them with an elementary educational level. The family units are comprised of an average of 7 people, among which are two grandparents, a father, a mother and 3 children. There is a general lack of financial resources with little income coming from agriculture and crafts. Soydo's Nabusimake and Gunchukwa program has been developed in partnership with the community and its indigenous leaders (Mamos). Soydo delivers knowledge tools and materials for their sustainable development in two working areas: sustained agricultural development and food processing. They have received a soy processing plant, cookware to prepare several recipes, and also seeds, seedlings, organic fertilizers and other materials required to plant food such as tomatoes, lettuces, onions, celery, bell peppers, soy, broccoli, parsley and coriander. The purpose of this program is to reach economic sustainability through the exchange of the food planted by each family using the implements delivered with the nutritional community program, which delivers food to be transformed and prepared. A portion of the agricultural production goes into the family's domestic consumption and another part goes to the community programs. A main goal is to identify local products and ancestral practices with new permaculture to help the cultural affirmation and defeat the chronic malnutrition among Arhuaco children. Students will work along the IKU Indigenous Cultural Center and Soydo's partners Salva Terra Foundation, Meals Solidario and the Populorum Progressio Foundation.

In both locations, students will prepare curriculum activities and support the organization in five main areas:

1. Administration: human resources management, quality of service to beneficiaries, management indicators, finances, and project development and evaluation
2. Food production: improvement of gardening and food processing activities, training of personnel on new production techniques, waste management, regulations compliance, packing design, and packing materials
3. Children's education: development of recreational workshops that entertain, encourage reflection and facilitate learning
4. Community education: training women, community leaders and staff on nutrition as well as on topics such as planning, finances, business plan creation, marketing, good food handling practices, among others
5. Telling Soydo's story: producing short documentary films that tell the personal story of people who have benefited from the organization's programs

Repurpose-IT:

- Duke students will help with a number of tasks related to program evaluation, and the improvement and enhancement of the digital educational materials. This includes helping develop lesson plans / discussion guidelines to the videos and texts, helping catalog all the material and improving the user interface for searching through the resources. The organization also wants to update the code of the educational video game FOOD FORCE (similar to SimCity) so that it can be installed in the laptops.

Program Requirements

Language: While fluency or proficiency in Spanish is NOT required for all students, we highly encourage students in upper levels of Spanish to apply. Students from diverse backgrounds and different competence will be considered.

Coursework: All students selected as finalists are required to attend at least three mandatory group meetings during the spring semester prior the trip, in order to receive some guidelines on how to prepare themselves and acquire knowledge of the country, region, and related geopolitical and humanitarian context. The training will discuss the historical and socio-political contexts of Colombia, Venezuela, and indigenous issues, as well as ideas for making meaningful and effective contributions to the partner organization. Students will be asked to develop and formulate an individual self-assessment tool, and to prepare to produce a report after the trip.

Personal Qualities:

We welcome students that are happy, creative, enthusiastic, open-minded, optimistic and resilient; and that have a burning desire to understand cultural difference, new communities, social inequality, and diverse realities.

Program Details

Description of community: This program will serve two communities, one in Bogota and one in Sierra Nevada. In Bogota, some are migrants from Venezuela who are fleeing political unrest and a very dire economic and security situation there; others are Colombians from the countryside who have been displaced from their homeland by violence and lack of opportunities. The community in Sierra Nevada is composed of the Arhuaco people, a tribe that stands out for its adherence to the traditions and worldviews of the pre-Hispanic cultures. Arhuaco's lives are defined by their belief that it is their sacred duty to protect the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, a place they consider to be the heart of the world. Their protection of the Sierra Nevada ensures the wellbeing of their little brothers (the white people). Their history in the 500+ years since the discovery of America is one of abuse and neglect from conquerors, colonizers, religious missionaries, and local and national governments. After Colombia changed its national constitution in 1991 conditions improved, but the prospects of hydroelectric dams and touristic projects that threaten the Sierra have caused new challenges.

Housing and meals: In Bogota students will stay in a guest house in a middle-class neighborhood in rooms for 2 and 3 people. The guest house has all the amenities of a modern home (running water & sewage, electricity, hot water, etc). Each day students will travel by bus 30-40 minutes each way to SoyDoy's installations. Breakfast and dinner can be prepared by the students in the guesthouse or purchased in the buffet of the grocery store about 300meters away. Lunch will be provided by SoyDoy.

In Sierra Nevada students will stay both in Nabusimake and Gunchuwa, camping right next to the indigenous families' homes, and/or in hammocks and rustic beds inside the health post (depending on the number of students). Food will be purchased ahead of time from the families.

Local Safety, Security, and Cultural Norms: If you have special needs related to health, cultural, or religious practices, please contact the DukeEngage office, dukeengage@duke.edu, to discuss whether or not your needs can be reasonably accommodated in this program.

For information related to how your religion, race, sexual/gender identity, ability or other aspects of your identity might impact your travels, we recommend starting with the Diversity, Identity and Global Travel section of the DukeEngage website.

We encourage students who have questions or concerns about health or safety in international programs to check Duke's [International SOS](#) (ISOS) portal for relevant information.

Reflection and Enrichment: The conversations and cohabitation with the communities served will spark the curiosity of students about how to solve the most challenging problems of this planet in a sustainable and culturally sensitive way. How to solve hunger? How to help communities create viable and sustainable enterprises/businesses? How to manage an organization like SoyDoy? How to measure the impact of the programs that seek to alleviate food insecurity? How to help Venezuelans and Venezuela? What are the policy challenges and ethical dilemmas that arise when trying to solve the needs of a culturally vulnerable community like the Arhuacos? What is that we know and do not know about sustainable agriculture? Nutrition and human health?

Curricular Connections

While all students are welcome to apply, this program may be of particular interest to students with interest in human rights, ethics, global health, documentary studies, social sciences (economy, public policy), and environmental studies. Students interested in careers in international public policy, government, global health, international comparative studies, environmental studies, filmmaking (or storytelling), and healthcare may benefit from this program.

Students might find the following courses and projects of interest either before or after participating in this program:

- Duke Immerse: The Future of Food

- Building Creative Communities (ICS ST315)
- Narrative Nature: Documentaries for environmental studies (DOCTS/ENVI/LATAMER315S)

More Information

Books

- Gaviotas a Village to Reinvent the World by Alan Weisman
- Hunger: A modern history by J Vernon
- Re-think Food by Shushana Castle and Amy-Lee Goodman
- Prevent and reverse heart disease by Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr.

Journal articles

- Conceptualizing Chronic Poverty, Hulme, D., Shepherd, A. World Development (2003)- 3- 403-423
- Climate benefits of changing diet, Stehfest, E., Bouwman, L., van Vuuren, D.P. et al. Climatic Change (2009) 95: 83. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-008-9534-6>
- Nutritional state associated with social determinants in Arhuaco children aged less than 5 years-old. Arias, M., Tarazona, MC., Lamus, F. Granados, C. Rev. salud pública vol.15 no.4 Bogotá July/Aug. 2013.

Films and Multi-media

- Thinking like a mountain
- El pueblo soy yo: Venezuela en populismo | I Am the People: Venezuela Under Populism
- UPROOTED: The Faces of the Venezuelan Crisis
- Los hermanos mayores (Elder Brothers)
- The Arhuacos
- Forks over knives
- Eating Animals