

## **ACE IN PERU**

**This program is organized by Global Vision International (GVI)**

**Program Dates:** July 18 – August 8, 2020

(Students will arrive on-site July 18 and depart August 8. Dates subject to change up until point of departure.)

### **Service Focus**

Supporting community development and environmental conservation programs through education-related initiatives and infrastructure projects in indigenous communities in the Cusco region.

### **Program Leaders**

- **Karol Hermoza, Program Manager for Peru**  
Karol holds a BA in Tourism from San Ignacio de Loyola University of Lima, Peru and a Master's degree in International Cultural Heritage Management from Durham University, UK. She has been working with international volunteers since 2017 in Arequipa and Lima before joining GVI in Cusco in April 2019. She led her first ACE program in Cusco in 2019 and is very excited to welcome students back again for 2020!
- **Nicole Watson, Director of Institutional Relations**  
Nicole holds a Master's degree in Strategic Management and Planning from Smurfit Graduate School of Business, University College Dublin. She manages GVI's university partnerships in North America and works closely with institutions of higher education to develop impactful programs that achieve specific learning objectives through experiential education.

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### **Program Overview**

GVI has joined forces with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Centro Bartolomé de las Casas (CBC) to work on environmental sustainability and education projects in the region. The overarching focus of GVI's mission is to work alongside community members trying to protect and conserve the natural resources around the Piuray Lake and support sustainability through community development.

During their three weeks in Cusco, students will work closely with a number of local partners and will be involved in a variety of conservation, education, and community development activities. The first few days will involve orientation to the city and surrounding communities, as well as education on the local culture, including the socio-cultural, historical, economic and environmental factors affecting the region.

A comprehensive orientation program, including health and safety training, occurs immediately upon arrival. To enable students to acclimate to the high altitude, less strenuous physical activities will be planned for the first week. Students will begin Spanish language lessons during orientation, for example, and will continue to improve their Spanish skills via weekly lessons. They will participate in a city tour, visit archeological sites near Cusco, and learn more about Incan history and local communities. This cultural immersion will help students quickly adapt to their new surroundings and feel more confident about seeking opportunities to interact with local people. A highlight of the program will be a guided tour to Machu Picchu, Peru's most famous UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### **Service Opportunities**

GVI is partnering with The Nature Conservancy and the Center for Andean Regional Studies Bartolomé de Las Casas (CBC). GVI programs in Peru immerse students in the local culture and educate them about the socio-cultural, historical, economic and environmental factors affecting the region. As a non-profit, civil association, CBC has been working on protecting and advocating for indigenous rights since 1974. Under the guidance of CBC and GVI staff, students will participate in improving current green infrastructure projects that will support community development through promoting tourism and the conservation of natural resources.

Students will work together throughout their time in Peru and will travel to project sites together with at least one GVI staff member present at all time. Project work and locations are based on the needs and requests of long term local partners as described above and specific service projects will be available closer to the date of departure. In general, students will typically spend 6 hours at a project site during the week, with additional time spent preparing to deliver workshops, participating in guest lectures and reflection sessions, and practicing their Spanish (or Quechua) language skills.

Examples of service projects may include:

- Delivering environmental education workshops at local schools.
- Improving trails around the Piuray lagoon. These trails are very important to the community as they fulfill two key functions: providing safe paths for community members to reach the terraces and infiltration ditches and attracting visitors to these sites, so the communities can increase income generated from tourists.
- Improving green infrastructure projects along the Piuray lagoon such as digging terraces and infiltration ditches to retain water during the rainy season.
- Renovating local community centers in order to provide quality facilities to hold environmental workshops, important meetings and conferences, amongst many other uses.

Participants will generally work together as a group but for some projects they may be divided into two smaller groups. The majority of the program involves working outdoors on a number of different initiatives. Students should be prepared to walk on a daily basis, and to experience some adjustment during their acclimation to the high altitude. Hours of

service work vary depending on the activity, but students can expect to work up to 6 hours per day between the hours of 6am and 6pm with additional time spent planning for future work days.

For example, last year's ACE group visited the Pongobamba School during their first week and were able to provide environmental education workshops to primary school students. The group divided themselves into three teams and each team led a game focusing on environmental conservation and awareness. All the workshops were conducted in Spanish. In the second and third week, the ACE group worked with the Valle Chosica community on two projects: the trail project and the tree nursery project. Around 3 to 4 students worked on the trail and the rest helped with the tree nursery, with groups switching between the two so that they helped on both. For the trail project, students cleaned and maintained the handrails, built a small roof for the viewpoint, and painted arrows to improve the signage on the trail and make the directions clearer. For the tree nursery, students tilled and prepared the soil for planting seeds, dug holes and placed poles for the fence, and finally put up a fence so animals would not be able trespass in the nursery. The tree nursery will help with growing and providing native plants for the community that can then be used to reforest the mountains. Native plants play an important role in preserving the natural environment, regulating climate and improving water retention in the soil. This was an ideal example of how a group of individuals can come together for a common cause, challenge themselves with a task, learn to work together as a team, and ultimately make a difference.

### **Program Requirements**

**Language & Other Prerequisites:** No previous experience or qualifications in the field of conservation, community development or education is required to join this program. An interest and understanding of issues threatening natural resources and familiarity with responsible tourism is desirable. All students must have proficiency in the English language. All students must be able to understand health and safety protocols as well as project specific training from our field staff.

A basic understanding of Spanish is helpful. Students with a high level of proficiency in Spanish are encouraged to apply. Students who are interested in joining the program but have a low level of proficiency are strongly encouraged to study or practice beforehand. All students will participate in an intensive Spanish workshop during orientation. Further Spanish training will be available and is highly encouraged. If there are sufficient numbers, students fluent in Spanish will be provided with Quechua lessons instead. Students should be aware of the high altitude in Peru.

**Other skills:** These projects do not require any technical skills but students who are flexible, adaptable, friendly, accustomed to working outdoors and having an interest in the Spanish language are preferred. To ensure the safety of the children and communities with whom we work, all accepted participants will be required to submit a criminal background check no later than 2 weeks before their program start date. Should this document not be submitted before

arrival in the field, the student/students will not be allowed to participate in community projects.

### **Personal Qualities:**

Ideal participants will be flexible, enthusiastic team players with the following competencies:

- **Empathy and cultural sensitivity:** Effectively and respectfully communicates and interacts with people of different ages, races, religions, and cultures; demonstrates curiosity about the lives of others without judgment.
- **Embracing and using culturally appropriate social skills:** Social skills are important in Peru and students should expect to exchange greetings by shaking hands, receiving a kiss on the cheek, and using basic Spanish words to say “hello”, “good morning”, “please” and “thank you.”
- **Ability to work productively on a supervised team:** Ability to respond to feedback and critique from co-workers and supervisors with maturity and openness to improvement; ability to listen actively and communicate courteously; ability to respond with patience and perseverance to new or unanticipated situations and obstacles; accepts responsibility for their actions; balances personal expectations of the volunteer experience with the realities of working on short-term projects in cultural settings that are new to them.
- **Self-reliance and self-confidence:** Understands and meets their own physical and emotional needs in new environments with an age-appropriate mixture of optimism and realism.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** Must be flexible in response to the needs of the community. Time in Peru is approached in a very relaxed and flexible manner so should be able to adapt to meetings being delayed or last minute changes to the schedule.

### **Program Details**

**Description of Community:** Students will be based in Cusco and will work with a variety of communities in the more rural area, outside the city. This close-knit community welcomes GVI volunteers, and although many families live simple lives, there is no shortage of kindness or happiness. There are a variety of local restaurants, shops selling local handicrafts and produce, internet cafes and attractions.

**Housing:** Accommodation will be in a homestay-style hotel with three to four students per room. Each room is equipped with an en-suite bathroom with western style toilets. The hotel has electricity and hot water showers and is located in downtown Cusco, close to many amenities. Students can choose to have their laundry cleaned by a local service for a minimal price or wash it by hand.

**Meals:** All meals will be provided, since cooking facilities are limited. Breakfast will be served at the accommodation, while lunch will be provided on project and will include local foods. Dinners will sometimes be provided at the accommodation and sometimes take place at local cafes and restaurants, which helps to support the local community and provides variety for

participants. A range of food choices is available, including both local and western cuisine. Traditional meals in Cusco are very carbohydrate heavy and normally have less protein than the typical western diet.

In general, most dietary restrictions and preferences can be accommodated. If you have any specific concerns, please contact the ACE office, [aceathletes@duke.edu](mailto:aceathletes@duke.edu), to discuss whether or not your dietary needs can be reasonably accommodated at this program site.

- Breakfast will be a buffet served by the hotel with a variety of fruits, different kinds of bread, coffee/butter/jam, a good variety of tea, scrambled eggs (or other types of eggs upon request), banana pancakes, sweet fried bananas, fried sweet potatoes, bacon and sausages. There is fresh cheese and jam, yogurt and milk. Two kinds of fresh, natural juices are available every morning
- Lunch may be a packed lunch of sandwiches and fruit or a meal cooked and shared with community members. When provided by the community lunches typically include a starter of soup and a main course that consists of potatoes, tubers, rice, corn, cheese, lentils, quinoa, vegetables and a protein dish such as chicken or trout.
- Dinner will usually consist of a buffet served by the hotel. It includes a variety of vegetables and potatoes, breads and meats. Pork, chicken and beef are all common sources of protein in the Peruvian diet. Trout may be available occasionally. For some dinners, the group will visit local restaurants to provide variety and more insight into the city's culture.

Due to varying quality levels of food handling practices in restaurants in Cusco students should only eat at restaurants recommended by GVI and only drink bottled water, which will be supplied by GVI. Students should note that tap water is not drinkable and avoid drinks with ice.

Students may buy additional food, snacks or sundries at a convenience store located 2.5 blocks away from the hotel. A full service grocery store is a 10-minute walk from the accommodations. Protein bars and peanut butter are much more expensive in Cusco than it is in the U.S. Students may want to bring a supply of these with them.

**Communication:** Access to free Wi-Fi is available in rooms and common areas at the accommodation and most cafes and restaurants also have Wi-Fi. Students should not expect Wi-Fi to be as robust as it is at home. Streaming of music and videos may not be possible. In some communities where project work takes place, Wi-Fi and telephone signals will be limited or non-existent.

All students will be provided with a cell phone and local sim card to use during their stay to make local calls and additional airtime can easily be bought at local grocery stores. All GVI onsite field staff carry cell/mobile phones at all times and are reachable via the 24 hour GVI Emergency Contact number.

While students are permitted to bring their own cell phone, camera, laptop to the program, GVI is not liable for any damage, lost, or stolen items during the stay. Due to GVI's Health & Safety and Child Protection Policy, technological equipment will not be permitted on the project site (including cell phones, cameras, etc.).

**Transportation:** GVI provides transportation to and from service placements and all scheduled program activities. GVI staff will meet students at Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport, Cusco (CUZ), Peru and transport them to their accommodations. At the completion of the program, GVI staff will also accompany students back to the airport. Students will travel in a fully-insured and seat-belted minibus with a licensed and experienced driver to and from their community partner sites, the gym, and on weekend enrichment activities. Transportation to enrichment activities will also be by private bus or van when not within walking distance of student accommodations. Students are also within walking distance of the gym.

**Athletic Training Facilities:** Time will be set aside daily for students to train after a compulsory acclimatization period of one week. After this period, students may train in the early morning or late afternoon, depending on the service projects schedule. Due to the high altitude, students are strongly encouraged to talk with coaching staff about modifying training and workouts and to take into consideration the amount of physical labor required for some of the service projects. In the first week, students will not have access to the gym or track as no training will be possible.

Due to the conservative culture of Cusco, when training or running students will need to dress conservatively and are encouraged to avoid wearing short shorts, transparent leggings, tank tops or any tight clothing and rather opt for track pants and short-sleeve t-shirts, etc.

- **Running:** Depending on availability, students will have access to either the Peruvian Institute of Sports (IPD) professional athletics track or a running track at a local school. Access and times will be confirmed with students prior to arrival.
- **Gym:** Students will have access to a gym that is a 10-minute walk from the accommodations. The facility includes free weights, nautilus machines, treadmills and elliptical trainers. Students may also participate in group fitness classes at the gym. Students will be able to use the gym from 6 am to 10 pm, Monday to Saturday, outside of project hours.

**Opportunities for Reflection:** GVI staff will facilitate a regular schedule of reflection sessions. This can take the form of discussion topics, informal debates, or sharing thoughts on the day. The reflection sessions may also include written reflections, choosing a photo to represent their experiences of the day, or students posing a list of questions for further exploration. Reflection prompts may include various current events or challenges in Peru and Latin America, the UN Sustainable Development Goals related to GVI's work, local cultural topics and/or other themes related to students' experiences in Cusco.

**Other Opportunities:** Service projects usually run from Monday to Friday each week, and excursions and project planning activities occur on the weekends. Most evenings will be devoted to reflection sessions, guest speakers, and discussion of students' experiences and observations. Enrichment activities organized by the program may include a visit to nearby archeological sites and a Cusco city tour.

Spanish or Quechua conversation lessons are included twice a week. A highlight of the program is a guided tour of Machu Picchu.

**Suggested Resources:** All students will receive a detailed field manual and reading list at least two weeks prior to the departure date. While staff in the field will also provide training on the skills required to complete their service project, students may benefit from learning more about local history, culture and customs before they travel.

To learn more about the program:

- <https://www.facebook.com/GVIPeruCusco/GVI>
- <https://www.gviusa.com/international-service-learning/>
- <https://www.gviusa.com/volunteer-in-peru/>

Additional resources:

- The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics – Orin Starn, Ivan Degregori, and Robin Kirk
- Turn Right at Machu Picchu – Mark Adams
- The Conquest of the Incas - John Hemming
- The Lost City of the Incas – Hiram Bingham
- Death in the Andes -Mario Vargas Llosa
- The Shining Path: Love, Madness, and Revolution in the Andes – Orin Starn and Miguel La Serna
- De dónde venimos los cholos – Marco Áviles (only in Spanish) – Program Manager's favorite

Overall, these are just suggestions, but there are other great ways to start orienting yourself to the country before you set foot in Cusco. You could try searching BBC News – Peru or reading Peruvian Times (<https://www.peruviantimes.com/>). If you're looking to brush up on your Spanish, listening to and reading BBC Mundo is a great resource! If you are a beginning or intermediate Spanish speaker, a good trick is to switch between the "translate this page" button on google chrome to see both the English and Spanish versions back to back. Watching the videos can be fun too.

Finally, here's a link to "13 Films You Must See Before Visiting Peru" along with trailers and descriptions of each movie: <https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/peru/articles/13-films-you-must-see-before-visiting-peru/>.

**Miscellaneous:** Days can be long and tiring especially given the high altitude in which Cusco is located.

**Attire:** The weather can be very cold in Cusco and does not allow much for shorts or top tanks. When exercising outside, students should wear shorts that reach the knee. Students should plan to bring hiking boots and thermal layers for outdoor activities. When on the project sites, students should plan to wear jeans or long pants and GVI t-shirts or long sleeved shirts. GVI t-shirts will be provided to students on arrival. When it is really sunny, sunburn is likely so sunscreen and long sleeves are recommended.

**Health & Safety:** The impact of high altitude (+/- 11,000 feet above sea level) on this program should not be underestimated, and students are encouraged to learn more about how this can impact them and their training. High altitude can cause symptoms such as: headaches, nausea, vomiting, tiredness and shortness of breath amongst others. During their time in Cusco, students may experience one or more of these symptoms as their bodies try to adapt to the lack of oxygen. For this reason, students are strongly recommended to follow GVI's guidelines on health and safety while in Cusco. Students can walk around the city when they first arrive, but it is strongly advised that any training or running is paused during the first week. Consulting with coaching staff and developing a custom high-altitude training schedule for their time in Cusco is advised. Dehydrating drinks like coffee should also be avoided throughout the program. Students are not permitted to drink coca tea or use products made with coca leaves.