SUMMER 2016

Entrepreneurship & Development

An INTERNSHIP hosted by HUMAN CONNECTIONS
in MEXICO’S BEAUTIFUL RIVIERA NAYARIT
Our internships are led by our Executive Director, Elly Rohrer, as well as other HC staff members, in collaboration with local staff and guest speakers. Our staff has conducted more than a dozen student programs in Bucerias, a small beach town just north of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. These programs have involved students from Tufts, Harvard, Yale, Berkeley, MIT, NYU, and many more. Our programs are capped at 14 interns and, given the intimate nature of our work and housing, interns tend to become close friends who stay in touch for years to come.

This Summer Internship program is an immersive cultural and professional development experience ideal for those seriously interested in the social sector. We treat you as a part of our small but inventive team, and entrust you with a great deal of responsibility and choice. We want you to think critically about community and economic development. We believe that, when working to help those in need, you must first understand who they are, what their goals are, and why. Through projects, personal interaction, and meetings with social entrepreneurs in western Mexico, this internship gives you the analytical tools necessary to tackle these questions. It also provides you with experience that will help you make decisions about your own future in the social sector.

Why is this experience valuable? These are the four specific objectives of our Summer Internship program:

1. Hone your skills as a social entrepreneur through hands-on projects, in-person trainings, and a critical analysis of local and international impact models.

2. Develop a personal perspective about poverty and development to inform your professional trajectory in the social space.

3. Strengthen local micro-businesses by training them to leverage the tourism industry and international markets (your perspective as a visitor is relevant and very valuable to our clients).

4. Leave your mark on Human Connections. Given our small team, you have the opportunity to innovate programs and strategies that have a lasting impact on HC and our community.
Throughout the week, our office doubles as a professional development center, where we teach English classes to local entrepreneurs so that they can successfully access the tourism sector. We also facilitate monthly collaboration meetings for our artisans, run a leadership course for teens, and hold volunteer-run specialty workshops. This team will take the lead on teaching, developing curricula, and designing new programs based on expressed community needs. This position has a strong community outreach piece, as interns will administer surveys, promote classes, and address past challenges like attrition among community members. Strong candidates for this position have leadership or teaching experience, and intermediate to advanced Spanish language skills.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, Human Connections provides the perfect ground for a team of socially driven interns to contribute to our growth and operations. Projects will foster important skills needed for non-profit management, including building an alumni engagement plan, grant-writing, maximizing the effective use of in-kind services like Salesforce, and contributing to our growth strategy. This team will play a key role in decisions that influence the progress of our organization. For anyone planning to work in the social sector, these hard skills and experiences will be invaluable. Top applicants possess strong writing skills, have proven interest in the social sector, and ideally have experience with management, finances, or consulting. Spanish proficiency is not necessary.

Most of our clients rely solely on product sales for income. While over 90% of sales generated for our artisans via HC programs take place in Bucerias itself, we know that there is a global market for traditional, hand-crafted art. As such, we want our Business Innovation team to develop a strategy to enable our artisans to sell their products to an international market by exploring the possibility of setting up an online store. This team will also focus on artisan innovation projects, as a strategy to help our artisans diversify their products to meet demand without forsaking tradition. Ideal candidates have good photography and design skills, proven research skills, an understanding of international business, and/or accounting Spanish proficiency is preferable for this position.

As a social enterprise, our Global Engagement Trips (GETs) are a key piece of our financial sustainability. Our Marketing Team will work with our staff to develop new itineraries both locally and internationally. The aim here is to expand HC’s impact to new countries, as well as to expand our offerings here in Mexico by establishing connections in other areas of the country (may include travel opportunities). In addition to developing these new itineraries, our Marketing Team will revamp our marketing strategy to more effectively sell these programs. For these positions, we seek candidates with a background in marketing, sales, design, research, and community relationship building. Spanish proficiency is not necessary but is preferred.

In addition to their team projects, our interns will work directly with a local client to fine-tune and strengthen his/her business. These Community Consulting projects are tremendously helpful for our clients, and are also important learning opportunities for our interns. By working with a specific client throughout the course of the internship, each intern will gain a personal perspective about entrepreneurship, Mexican culture, and local values.
The Logistics

DATES:
We are offering two different lengths of time for the internship: 6 weeks or 8 weeks. Both programs begin on May 29th, 2016 and end on July 9th (6 weeks) or July 23rd (8 weeks). Please see the FAQs for more information.

LOCATION: Bucerias, Mexico
Bucerias is a vibrant seaside village 30 minutes north of the Pacific Coast destination, Puerto Vallarta. Bucerias is known for its safety, making this the ideal setting for interns to freely explore and fall in love with Mexico. While most of your time will be spent working in Bucerias, we will also visit and enjoy excursions to nearby towns.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Option 1: Hotel
Interns who wish to stay in a hotel will be staying in charming, comfortable and safe accommodations in Bucerias located within walking distance of the beach and of Human Connections staff. Accommodations include kitchen access, double occupancy rooms, and free Internet. Also within walking distance are convenience stores, restaurants, cafes, and the town plaza.

Option 2: Local Homestay
Want to experience Mexican culture first hand? Hoping to seriously improve your Spanish skills while in Mexico? HC is now offering the chance to live with a local Mexican family! If you prefer this accommodation option, we will work with you to find the family that will be a good fit for your needs and preferences.

COST:
US$2700 for 6 weeks, US$3250 for 8 weeks.

Given the academic nature of this experience, many participants receive partial or full funding from their universities. Also, interns have had great success fundraising to cover the costs of this trip. HC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, meaning that donations made to HC on your behalf are tax-deductible. Any questions? Contact us!

WHAT’S INCLUDED:
• Beautiful, safe hotel accommodations
• 24/7 support prior to and during the program
• All local transportation, including to and from airport
• International Health Insurance
• Intensive professional trainings
• 18 group meals (24 in the 8-week program)
• Excursions to unique destinations throughout the world-renowned Riviera Nayarit
• Regular internet and telephone access
• Guided tours of local communities
• Talks by esteemed experts
• Valuable, hands-on professional experience
• The opportunity to make a direct contribution to the lives of local artisans, tradespeople, and vendors.
How to Apply

QUALIFICATIONS:
We are looking for interns who are sharp, sociable, and interested in the social sector. Applicants must be at least 18-years-old and currently enrolled in undergraduate studies. Ideal candidates have a demonstrated interest in social enterprise, international development, microfinance, and/or Latin America. Proficiency in Spanish is desired, but it is not a requirement.

DEADLINES:
Priority Due Date:
• Friday February 12th, 2016

General Due Dates:
• Friday, March 11th, 2016
• Friday, April 15th, 2016

We are conscientious of university funding deadlines and will interview and accept strong applicants within two weeks of each due date. As a result, we cannot guarantee that positions will still be available in April. It is recommended to apply early.

HOW TO APPLY:
Please fill out the application form on our website: humanconnections.org/apply-online/. We will then contact qualified candidates to set up a Skype interview.

Additional Ways to Get Involved

• GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT TRIPS: GETs are ethical and affordable short-term experiential learning trips to Latin America, that enable students to gain hands-on experience in a certain academic topic. They usually last one or two weeks, but the memories made and lessons learned last much longer! For 2016, we have spaces available for GETs in Ecuador (August 2016) and Peru (in May 2016). Please contact Victoria (victoria@humanconnections.org) for more details.

• WINTER INTERNSHIPS: Over winter break of each year, we host small groups of students in Mexico. Check our website (humanconnections.org/experience) in September for more details and application instructions for our winter programming.
Before this trip I had no idea what economic development looked like in real life. I had seen TED talks and heard podcasts, but nothing can replace the experience. This internship has given me the privilege of visualization...I can see myself learning every day. I can see myself taking on a role in the social space that doesn’t involve an inherent tradeoff between impact and income.”

Sarah Brooks, UNC - Chapel Hill
FAQs

What is the work schedule and atmosphere like?

HC creates an itinerary for the program that functions like a syllabus. Each project has a final objective and weekly milestones to help keep you on track. The itinerary is enriched with activities that complement your workload, too. These opportunities include visiting social businesses and innovative organizations in the area, spending time in the homes of our clients, and engaging with local community leaders about their projects. Social events and weekend excursions make for a well-balanced, truly enjoyable learning experience in Mexico. Human Connections staff enjoy a “relaxed professional” atmosphere, as we spend much of our time working with rural clients.

What is the advantage of staying eight weeks?

The extra two weeks allow students more time in the community, increasing both their impact and the depth of their knowledge. On top of this, the benefit of the extension is working on a smaller team, which gives you more responsibility and a better sense of the day-to-day life of a Human Connections employee. Finally, if your university requires that internships be eight weeks long in order to apply for funding, this is the route to take! (Note: We can also accommodate up to 10 week time commitment requirements - please contact us directly for more details)

How safe is Bucerias?

Bucerias and the Riviera Nayarit are incredibly safe given their touristic nature. There is “no recommendation against travel to these regions” by the US Department of State (travel.state.gov), and incidences of violence are much lower here than in many US cities. In fact, we are located in this part of Mexico specifically because it is such a calm, safe, and beautiful part of the country.

What are living costs like in Mexico?

Our past interns have spent $50-$125 USD per week on food, laundry, local transportation, and entertainment. If you plan on buying many souvenirs or eating out often, we suggest bringing additional spending money.

Why is there a cost associated with the program?

While we recognize and value the contributions interns make during their time in Mexico, we charge a fee to offset the costs related with their stay. Accommodation, transportation for interns and staff, a budget and materials for intern projects, and fair compensation to clients, guides, and staff for their work during the program, as well as during the months of careful preparation leading up to it are all covered by the program fee. We believe in full transparency, and are happy to provide a detailed breakdown of fees upon request. We are also available to help with university funding applications and in providing fundraising resources.

Can I hear from past participants of your programs?

Yes! Many interns have offered to answer questions, so please let us know if you are interested and we will put you in touch.
I felt that my Human Connections internship this summer was designed specially for me. This experience has transformed me as a person. I was not only able to meet fascinating artisans and help them improve their businesses, but I was also able to have fun working with a team.”

Marco Ortega, Yale University