

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Where does the NSF training take place?

The research/training takes place in two villages – Maraka and Puerto Yucumo -- along the Maniqui River in the department of Beni. The villages are about 6-8 hours by motorized canoe,. The most important town in the area is San Borja (pop ~19,000), about 18 hours in bus from La Paz and one hour by airplane (if it is a direct flight). San Borja has electricity, running water, telephones, a hospital, pharmacies, and email connections. Amaszonas, a Bolivian airline company, has flights into and out of San Borja from La Paz via Rurrenabaque (a tourist center in the lowlands) and Trinidad (the capital of the Department of Beni) several times a week, weather permitting. The project has a house in San Borja where you can leave valuables (e.g., passports) when going to the field. During 2008, we might be joined by 1-2 medical students from Northwestern U.

2. When does the training take place?

June 8 (arrival date in La Paz) - July 13 (departure date from San Borja), 2008. 5 weeks. In planning the date of your return from La Paz back to the USA (or elsewhere), make sure it is 2-3 days after the San Bor-La Paz flight. For example, in this case, make sure you leave from La Paz on or about July 29-30. The delay is because sometimes the flights from San Borja get delayed or are cancelled due to poor visibility/weather.

3. How do we get to the training site?

To Bolivia. Because of federal regulations governing NSF funding, students must fly in a USA carrier, unless there are no other options. At the time of this writing (**January 23, 2007**), the only USA airline flying to Bolivia (La Paz or Santa Cruz) is American Airlines. Try to fly to La Paz. Once you know your departure and return date and place, contact **Stephanie Yuan Ma (mayuan@brandeis.edu)** and she will get an electronic ticket for your. When you contact Stephanie about your itinerary, send her the following: *(i)* your full name as it appears in your passport, *(ii)* your passport number and place and date of issue, *(iii)* the dates and place of departure and return, and *(iv)* an indication of whether you want a ticket with a flexible return option (see point 4).

To San Borja. Once in La Paz, we will travel as a group to San Borja in Amaszonas airlines. If we travel to Rurrenabaque and there are no flight to San Borja, we will go by bus to San Borja (about 6 hours).

Visa. When you enter Bolivia, ask for a 90-day tourist visa. If they give you a visa for fewer days, you can change it for a longer stay in La Paz. Starting in late 2007, the Bolivian government charges all USA citizens entering Bolivia \$US100 for a visa, so make sure to have cash with you when you enter Bolivia so you can pay the fee; we will reimburse you for the \$US100 fee.

4. Can I stay in Bolivia longer than the lengths of the program?

If you think you might want to stay longer, either to travel in the region or to continue working at the research sites, you should get an airline ticket that allows you the flexibility to return after the program ends. NSF does not reimburse additional fees related to the ticket exchange.

5. Are there any additional documents that I have to fill out before going to Bolivia?

Legal waiver. Every participant funded by NSF needs to sign and send to Ricardo Godoy a legal waiver that is given to participants (see point 16 below). You can download the form; note you need a witness when signing the form.

Medical form. Before departing to Bolivia students must submit to Brandeis a letter from their physician indicating that the applicant is in good health and without medical impediments that might hamper them from carrying out training in Bolivia.

6. How do I get reimbursed for my expenses before and during the training?

Keep all your receipts (medical exams, vaccinations, insurance, visa, etc.). You will not be reimbursed if the original receipts are not presented. You will need to provide actual transaction receipts and your social security number. Most likely it will be your credit card statement, or if you paid with cash - cash receipt, or if you paid with check – cancelled check or bank statement. Copies of receipts are not enough to process reimbursement. If you need to get back your documents please put a sticky note that you would like receipts to be returned (they will be returned to you along with reimbursement checks). You will NOT be reimbursed WITHOUT the originals. When submitting receipts go to the following web address:

<http://www.brandeis.edu/financialaffairs/forms/ap-forms.html>

and click on the icon called “Expense report”. If you get stuck and do not know how to fill out the expense form, contact Ms Yehfang Mok (mok@brandeis.edu). After you have filled out the form, send the form to Stephanie Yuan Ma along with your receipts or evidence of having incurred the expense (see point #16 below for address).

7. What vaccinations should I get?

Besides the medical form under # 5 above, every participant has to visit her/his own local travel clinic or medical center to get appropriate vaccinations. The NSF program will reimburse you up to \$300 total on costs for vaccinations and malaria prophylactics and any other expense related to health while in training and while traveling to and from Bolivia. If you foresee expenses surpassing the \$300 limit, contact Ricardo Godoy. Your medical clinic will have the current recommendations for vaccinations and medical needs in Bolivia (tetanus, yellow fever and meningitis are probably the most important, but you may elect to have the other vaccinations as well). For additional information visit the CDC website @ www.cdc.gov/travel/tropsam.htm. Here you can find a list of all the vaccinations that are necessary to go to tropical South America, particularly to Bolivia. See your doctor at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for some immunizations to take effect (e.g., rabies).

- You can buy antibiotics in Bolivia over the counter; they are cheaper
- We will give you an initial briefing on health and medicinal issues once you are in Bolivia
- The project will provide you with mosquito nets.
- Malaria has not been a problem in the area

8. What type of medical insurance do I use while on the trip?

Visit your university international travel/study abroad office, where you should be able to get an “International Student ID Card.” One of the most valuable parts of this card is the medical/evacuation insurance that comes with it. The card should cost about 25\$. Make sure you have some type of medical insurance that covers evacuation in case of emergency.

The program encourages participants to buy **TravMed Global** insurance from MedEx insurance company. To buy your medical insurance, visit the website: http://www.medexassist.com/travmed_globe.cfm (if the link does not work, go to <http://www.medexassist.com/index3.cfm>, on the left panel find “Individuals” and the insurance would be **TravMed Global**). Buy the insurance for about six weeks starting from **June 8 until July 15, 2008**. You need to choose the \$100 deductible; the cost of the insurance will be \$21 per week. Read the description of the policy, as so you would know what the insurance covers. You will pay for your insurance by yourself and send me receipts to the address mentioned at the end of this memo.

9. What currency is used in Bolivia and where should I change money for the trip?

You can use CIRRUS, MAC, or PLUS in La Paz. In San Borja, you will not find ATM machines. It may be safest to bring travelers checks, and change some into bolivianos while in La Paz. If you need more bolivianos while in San Borja or in the field, we can arrange with the other members of the staff to get your travelers checks changed. Over 2007, the boliviano has been appreciating relative to the US dollar, so US dollars buy less than they once did.

10. How can I make telephone calls from Bolivia?

In San Borja there are many places from which you can make international calls. You can make international calls with a card or by paying with money. As of January, 2008, you could not make international calls through the internet nor can you use the project house to make or receive international calls. We will have at all times a satellite telephone to make international calls, but this telephone can only be used for emergencies and might have a voice mail system where third parties can leave messages.

11. Is there Internet access on the site?

In the last few years, there have been a couple of cyber cafes in San Borja. Connections are typically slow and you won't be able to send/receive large volumes of material, but you won't be out of touch. You cannot use the project facilities to send emails.

12. Are there any additional rules for the participants while on the site?

There is a Code of Conduct for every member of the program that includes the following.

1. No sex with people from the area, either Tsimane' or non-Tsimane'
2. No drinking of alcoholic beverages in the towns with indigenous peoples. Only drinking allowed is: **(a)** in the privacy of your home, **(b)** by yourselves in town, or **(c)** in public in the community when it is part of a communal event. Under no circumstance should researchers buy subjects an alcoholic drink.
3. No use of any drug that is illegal in Bolivia.
4. Researchers should refrain from providing credit to subjects and never for more than 6 US \$ at a time to the same household (~b\$50 Bolivianos).

5. Should someone in the community require emergency medical evacuation (even if unrelated to the project) the project should pay for it. We will request that the patient repay the costs incurred in the medical evacuation, but should the patient or her/his family refuse to repay or be unable to repay, we will cover the costs incurred.
6. Policies on stealing by subjects: ignore it unless the item stolen is very valuable; do not hold a grudge.
7. Policy on distribution of cigarettes and coca to locals: do not distribute them to subjects.
8. Unless there is an emergency or medical condition, you must remain with the group at all times.
9. If for some reason you find that you want to leave the training program, you must return to the USA; that is, you cannot hang around the town of San Borja or the region.
10. No jokes or teasing about another student's sexual, religious, or political orientation
11. If you break any of the above rules, the project reserves the right to dismiss you from the training at no extra cost to the project.

13. What portion of expenses is covered by NSF?

The program will cover roundtrip *economy* airfare in an American carrier (or a foreign carrier if there are no American carriers), travel to/ from airports, group lodging (no deluxe hotels etc.) and meals, vaccines, and regular medical insurance. We will give students \$100 USA to cover ground transport to and from their USA airport. We will give students \$130 for one-night room and board in La Paz + exit tax (US\$25) from Bolivia before their return to the USA at the end of the training program. At this time (or earlier if the student wants it) we will reimburse you for the US\$100 visa to enter Bolivia.

14. What expenses are not covered by the program?

The program does not cover the following expenses:

- Tourist activities
- Food and beverages outside of group meals.
- Communication costs (e.g., emailing or telephoning USA).

15. What to bring

- Light sleeping bag and sleeping pad or mat to sleep (in the field, you will place your sleeping bag/pad on a raised wooden structure so a thick sleeping mat helps). Cold front during May-August can bring night temperatures down to 10-12 Celsius.
- Tarp for sleeping (i.e., tarp to put under the sleeping pad or mat)
- Sweater and rain/windbreak (it can be cold in the Beni, especially at night)
- Flashlight/headlamp (bring two just in case one breaks)
- Bug repellent, sun screen, antibiotic cream, antihistamine or anti-itch cream and pills versus allergic reaction (e.g., pollen)
- Rain jacket
- Long-sleeve cotton shirts and pants (they dry faster than blue jeans)
- Iodine tables to put in water when traveling and we do not have time to boil water
- Sandals and sneakers and/or comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots

- Duck tape
- Swiss army knife or pocket knife
- Shorts for bathing in the river
- Baseball cap
- Cotton clothing
- Sense of humor and patience

16. **Who should I send forms and expenses?**

Send legal waiver and medical form (#5 above) to:

Ricardo Godoy
MS 078
Heller School for Social Policy & Management
Brandeis University
South Street
Waltham, MA 02454

Send receipts and expense forms to get reimbursed to:

Stephanie Yuan Ma
c/o Ricardo Godoy
MS 078
Heller School for Social Policy & Management
Brandeis University
South Street
Waltham, MA 02454

17. **What is food like in the site?**

San Borja has a market, many restaurants, and many food stores where you can buy food. Most meals in restaurants include meat or fish, but you can order meals without meat in some places. Foods in the villages include cassava, plantains, rice, hard bread, noodles, canned fish, and fresh or sun-dried fish and meat. The diet can get monotonous. We cook separately for vegetarians. Some students in the past have brought their own spices or treats to add variety to the diet.

18. **How do we meet in Bolivia?**

In La Paz we will stay at Hostal Republica; Godoy stays in Hostal Illimani. R Godoy will arrive in La Paz a few days before you. Someone from the team (maybe R Godoy) will wait for you at the airport, and take you to Hostal República

Calle Comercio 1445 (corner with calle Bueno)
Barrio Miraflores
Tel. 5912-2202742, 2203448
Fax. 5912-2202782
Email: marynela@ceibo.entelnet.bo

The address of Hostal Illimani (administrators are Mrs Filomena and Mr Miguel):

Hostal Illimani
 Calle Illimani #1817
 Barrio Miraflores (1/2 a block from the national soccer stadium)
 Tel. 591-2-220-2346; emergency 220-0413 (591=Bolivia country code; 2=La Paz city code)

Hostal Illimani and Republica are on the same general street, and about 10 min walk from each other.

We will make reservations for you at Hostal Republica. Although there will be someone there waiting for you, if for some reason you arrive and find nobody, then take a taxi to Hostal República. The taxi from the airport should cost about \$40 bolivianos (exchange rate is about \$8.00 bolivianos/1 US dollar). We might have to spend a few days in La Paz doing paper work (e.g., registering in the USA embassy, changing money) before going to the Beni.

19. Contact information and emergency information

Send R. Godoy the name, address, telephone numbers, relationship, and email address of a person we could contact in case of an emergency. Here is R Godoy's home address; don't hesitate to contact him at home:

4 Irving Street
 Winchester, MA 01890
 Tel. 781-729-9561 (home); 781-736-2784 (office)
 E-mail: rgodoy@brandeis.edu

In case of emergency, you might also want to give your relatives the emails of Tomas Huanca and Viki Reyes-García:

Tomás:

thlaura@hotmail.com
thvicky@mixmail.com
tomashi@brandeis.edu

Viki:

vreyes@brandeis.edu

The project telephone # in San Borja is 591-3-895-4283. Ask for Tomas Huanca, our point man in the field and one of the instructors. The address of Amazonas airlines in La Paz is:

Avenida Saavedra 1649
 Barrio Miraflores (about 1 block from the National stadium and close to Hostal Illimani)
 Telephone in La Paz: 22244705
 Telephone in San Borja: 8953185

20. **What do I need to send to Brandeis once admitted and before going to the field?**

- Legal waiver (to R. Godoy)
- Medical form (to R. Godoy)
- Desired flight itinerary, plus your name as it appears in your passport, passport #, and citizenship (to S. Yuan Ma)
- Expenses related to the trip incurred before leaving for Bolivia, including your social security # (to S. Yuan Ma)
- Emergency contact information: Name, address, email, and tel # of contact person in case of emergency (to S. Yuan Ma)

See #16 above for postal address.