

Psychiatric Hospital

Highlights

- Dedicating your time and support to a group of people who are often forgotten about by Bolivian society.
- Enjoying varied and busy days at the hospital as you work alongside various groups of patients to provide mentally stimulating activities as well as general conversation and company.
- Living and volunteering in Bolivia's beautiful 'white city' of Sucre.

About The Project

The hospital in which you will be located is the only psychiatric hospital in Bolivia. It was built by a past president when a member of his family became ill and required a lot of medical attention and he realized there was not currently a comfortable place with good facilities in existence in Bolivia. The hospital cares for up to 350 patients of all ages, but on this project you will mainly be working with adults.

Volunteer Role

The first Monday at the Academia is an orientation day. All new students and volunteers go on a city tour of Sucre to get to know the city and learn how to get around and use the public transport system. In the afternoon there's an information session in which you will learn about the Academia, as well as about important issues such as security, do's and don'ts in Sucre, accommodation, volunteer work etc. Your volunteer placement commences on Tuesday of the first week.

As a volunteer, you will work alongside permanent staff, as well as Bolivian volunteers, many of whom are based at the hospital for part of their medical training. This is a fantastic way to gain experience in a supported environment.

The patients at the hospital need a lot of stimulation, support and attention. Since it is the only psychiatric hospital in Bolivia, many of the patient's families live a long way away, and as such they rarely receive visitors. You will assist the medical staff with occupational therapy and physiotherapy. You will also spend a lot of time taking part in activities with the patients to ensure they are constantly stimulated and motivated throughout the day. Games, didactic materials and general interaction through conversation are all really important. There is also a garden and vegetable patch that you will work on with the patients.

One area of the hospital cares for very elderly people. These patients need a great deal of support and are often unable to walk or feed themselves. You will spend time assisting with care such as feeding, but also organizing stimulating activities and simply spending time talking to the patients and accompanying them on walks. These activities help to ensure the patients are mentally and physically stimulated as much as possible.

Location

The hospital is a 10-15 minute walk from the Academia in Sucre.

Sucre is a beautiful city set in a valley and surrounded by low mountains. It has a rich colonial heritage and is also known as 'the white city' due to its numerous colonial buildings, all of which are painted white and topped with shiny red roofs. In 1991, it was granted 'UNESCO Cultural Heritage' status.

Sucre is home to many museums, a lively central plaza, shops, bars and restaurants. Locals and visitors alike are also attracted to markets where food, textiles and an assortment of other products are sold in barter fashion! The charming colonial town and its nearby villages feature a sizeable indigenous population and they have managed to maintain their customs and colorful dress.

Accommodation

You will stay either at the student residence or with a host family. Host family accommodation includes a private room, breakfast, dinner and laundry service. Singles, married couples and parents with children can all be accommodated. It is also possible to stay in a student residence – one is located within the school grounds, and there are two very nearby. Here you will self cater - there are shops and markets very nearby and a fully equipped kitchen.

Requirements

Volunteers must be able to commit to at least 4 weeks at the project in order to build up a trusting relationship with the children and staff.

All volunteers must hold a medium to high level of intermediate spoken Spanish. If your Spanish is at a lower level, you must join our Spanish language school prior to commencing your volunteer work.

When choosing to volunteer in a developing country such as Bolivia, it is important to remain flexible as the needs of the project are constantly evolving. This is what makes volunteering so rewarding – the fact that you are on hand to lend your support when and where it is needed. By choosing Academia Latinoamericana de Español you will have a comprehensive safety network behind you as we are here to help throughout the duration of your entire stay!

Feedback

"In France, I am studying assistant psychology, so taking part in this project was an incredible learning opportunity for me. It gave me the chance to see the reality of working with people with mental health problems, and was especially interesting to do so in a different country where medical practices are different. It was beneficial to be able to put into practice my knowledge and I look forward to working in this role in the future."

Elodie Corcuff, France

Programme Fee Includes

- Accommodation
- 2 meals per day if staying with a host family
- Project Support
- A donation that goes directly to your project
- Orientation and city tour
- Pre-departure information
- Laundry service if staying with a host family
- 24 hour emergency support

Programme Fee Does Not Include

- International flights
- Meals if staying at the student residence
- Laundry service if staying at the student residence
- Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Inoculations
- Excursions over and above the itinerary

Travel Ideas

We are fully equipped to help you with making weekend travel arrangements, and onwards travel arrangements following your time at the Academia. We work with the best tour companies to offer safe, reliable and competitively priced trips. Some of the most popular trips include:

- La Paz – The World's highest capital city at 3660m above sea level! Wander the markets, visit the museums and sip coffee in the plazas. Good day trips from La Paz include: the Valle de la Luna - a maze of canyons and pinnacles, and Tiwanaku – Bolivia's most significant archeological site.
- Salar de Uyuni – Go on a 4WD adventure of the incredible lunar landscape of the world's largest salt flat. See giant cacti, red lakes, pink flamingo and steaming geysers!
- Pampas – visit the wetland savannas to spot a vast array of wildlife including caimans, monkeys, sloths, pink river dolphins and maybe even anacondas! Stay in riverside lodges, watch incredible sun sets and sun rises and sway the day away in hammocks!
- Lake Titicaca – South America's largest Lake which borders Peru and Bolivia. Stay on one of the floating islands for a true insight into the lifestyle and culture of the local communities.
- Potosi – scabble and crawl through the shafts of Potosi's mines and even let off a stick of dynamite!

Apply Now

If you have some further questions about this project, please feel free to contact us at info@latinoschools.com.

If you would like to book this programme, please [click here](#) to complete the booking form. We will be in touch within one week of application to confirm your booking!