



2022 COOPERANT PROGRAM SELF ASSESSMENT

Self-Assessment

Cooperants may find the experience life-changing, filled with tremendous learning, growth, meaning, and fun! However, this experience will also be challenging and demanding, with ups and downs and struggles along the way. This program is not appropriate for individuals whose primary goals are personal achievement and results; rather, this program is focused on learning and contributing through developing relationships and supporting community processes, which may or may not achieve results during your relatively short stay in Guatemala. If you know that you need a clearly defined, detailed job description and a highly structured work experience and/or you have high achievement needs and want to see immediate results, this may not be the program for you.

Important Considerations *(presented in part thanks to Project Ploughshares)*

Deciding to live and work as a cooperant means more than simply filling a position in Guatemala. Different cultural expectations, living conditions and levels of support must be considered. If you do not have a basic understanding of the history and social reality of Guatemala, we urge you to do some research before deciding whether to apply. Please also review the [Travel Advisory for Guatemala](#) on the Canadian Embassy webpage.

In addition, we encourage you to take time to ask yourself (and your family, if appropriate) the questions below and consider them seriously and honestly before submitting your application.

Why do you want to do this?

Living and working in Guatemala will require adjustments in food, living quarters, daily pace, forms of entertainment, language, and companionship.

- Are you able to adapt quickly to changes in your life?
- How stressful do you find change?

Professional Considerations

Conditions accompanying your placement can change, requiring great flexibility.

- How flexible are you? Do you enjoy the freedom and responsibility of using your initiative in your work or do you prefer having a prescribed plan and direction?
- Do you tend to focus on results and personal achievement, or are you more interested in contributing and learning through entering into community processes?

Emotional Considerations

- Are you prepared to be separated from your friends and loved ones?
- Are you creative about your leisure time?

Cultural Factors

- Are you prepared for misunderstandings?
- Have you worked/lived with people from other cultures before? How did you react?
- How successful were you in sharing your concerns and understanding theirs?
- How would you deal with differences in work experience, work styles and values?



Breaking the Silence (BTS)
Rompiendo el Silencio (RES)

- How would you ensure that you don't impose your agenda on that of your partner organization, its employees and members?
- Do you have experience working with people in non-traditional roles or settings?
- Have you thought about how you would respond to these situations?
- Do you feel that you hold open and flexible attitudes, opinions, and behaviours about people from other cultures?

Physical Conditions

- Are you prepared to live in a different climate?
- Can you do without easy access to cell phones, TV, Internet, movies and books?
- How do you react to physical discomfort? Insects? Unvaried diet? Lack of sleep/privacy? Digestive problems?
- Are you prepared to do without most of your personal belongings?
- Are you prepared to live with insecurity and restrictions on your freedom due to high levels of crime and violence in Guatemala (e.g. no travel at night)?