

# Frequently Asked Questions

## International Service-Learning Trips 2023

*When and where are the trips?*

The Dominican Republic (March 4-11, 2023 (SPRING BREAK); Poland (May 12 - 24, 2023)  
Ecuador (May 15 - 24, 2023)

*What will we be doing on the trips?*

- In the **Dominican Republic**, students work alongside our longtime partnering organization, Food for the Hungry (FH) to assist in poverty reduction and relief efforts. Specifically, participants have the opportunity to improve community access to water through piping, trenching, and water filtration infrastructure. In addition to water access and housing revitalization, students lead Vacation Bible School; participate in home visits within the community and support relational ministry opportunities through Food for the Hungry.
- In **Poland**, students will be working with our partners, Polish Christian Ministries (PCM). PCM focuses on planting churches, providing resources, and promoting friendships. PCM serves as a bridge between churches in Poland and churches in the States. Student participants have an opportunity to share personal testimonies of faith, spend time with host families, teach English to youth (ages 13-18) in local schools, and support initiatives of the local church.
- In **Ecuador**, students will be working with Living, Learning International and an organization called LoveOn. Participants will have the opportunity to volunteer in several ministries working with individuals who have experienced human trafficking, indigenous communities, and language learning classes.

*How much do the trips cost?*

For both of these fundraising activities, students will work alongside the Agape Center for materials and support. In addition, the Agape Center will reach out to donors on your team's behalf. On average, the trips cost \$30,000-\$35,000, but this amount includes every expense for the entire team, including transportation (flights and on the ground), food, housing, and project costs.

*What is the time commitment to be on an International Service-Learning Team?*

Students are asked to set aside 1-4 hours per week, on average. Some weeks there will be more to do, for example, the weeks leading up to a fundraising event. During the fall, there are various meetings for orientation, health information, and a letter stuffing for fundraising letters. During the spring, students are required to attend the first and second wave of chapel series specifically for the teams to prepare and learn more about the trip and service-learning.

*What does "service-learning trip" entail?*

A service-learning trip is similar to a mission trip in the sense that students will work to serve the community they are traveling to. The Agape Center also follows best practice by partnering with local organizations to work alongside of them and continue the work that they are already doing. This is considered "best practice" because the organizations provide a continuing foundation for the community and people. In addition to service, these trips also incorporate a learning component through preparation and reflection. During preparation, students will learn about fundraising, pros/cons of missions, an element of self-awareness, and about the country and organization they will serve with. Throughout trip preparation, as well as during and after the trip, students will gather as a team to spend time reflecting on what they are doing and learning.

*Is this trip a cross cultural trip? Will it count for credit?*

These trips are service-learning trips (see question above), not cross-cultural trips, and the service-learning trips do not count for credit. If you are interested in a cross-cultural trip, they take place over May Term and are led by a Messiah University faculty member. They are 3 credits and include a variety of locations. For more information, contact [offcampusga@messiah.edu](mailto:offcampusga@messiah.edu).