



These Are Not Mission Trips – They're Adventure Impact Trips

# Nicaragua Impact Experience Trip

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Cova invites you to embark on an enriching journey to Nicaragua where you will witness the profound impact of our efforts in providing safe drinking water to rural communities. We believe in the balance of work and play, embracing every moment to forge connections with the incredible people within the Cova community. During your Experience Trip, delve into the rich tapestry of Central American history, culture, and food while cultivating a deeper appreciation for the significant impact safe drinking water can have on a community.





# Your Journey Begins!

**Welcome to Nicaragua, the enchanting “Land of Lakes and Volcanoes,” where nature’s marvels unfold before your eyes.** This Central American gem boasts awe-inspiring scenery, from the tranquil lakes to majestic volcanoes, as well as pristine coastlines along both the Pacific and Caribbean shores.

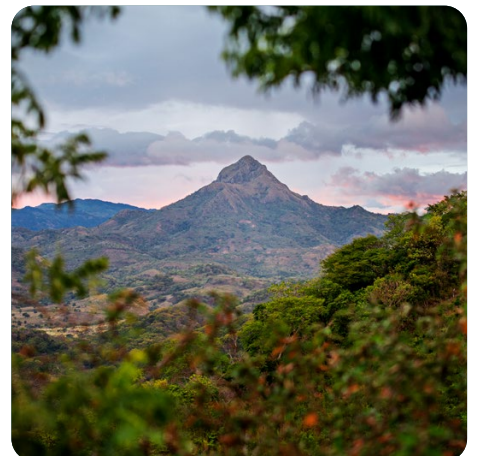
As you journey through this remarkable country, you’ll be captivated by more than just its natural beauty. Nicaragua is renowned for its splendid coffee, a delight for both enthusiasts and coffee drinkers alike, and its verdant forests that teem with vibrant wildlife and breathtaking waterfalls.

Venture into the heart of rural communities, and you’ll discover charming villages, where locals embrace a way of life closely tied to the land. Most families here work as farmers and laborers, skillfully cultivating crops like cotton and coffee, adding to the nation’s rich cultural heritage.

Despite facing challenges—its people are a testament to resilience and passion. Nicaraguans embody the spirit of warmth and hospitality, welcoming visitors with open arms, sharing their nation’s remarkable history, natural wonders, and untapped potential.

Immerse yourself in the beauty of Nicaragua, a land that holds the promise of unforgettable experiences, where the allure of its lakes and volcanoes is matched only by the kindness and determined spirit of its people.

**On this trip, you’ll have the opportunity to learn about Nicaraguan history and culture and gain a deeper understanding of the importance of safe drinking water.** You’ll journey through the lush countryside to meet rural community members who are committed to overcoming the water crisis for the betterment of their community and country. You’ll see firsthand how access to safe drinking water changes everything.



# Preparing for Your Adventure

## Pre-trip Requirement for Participants

- To guarantee your spot in the Impact Experience trip pay your initial deposit of \$500
- Final Payments are due 60 days before the start of the trip.
- All participants must provide a copy of a valid health insurance card for our records in case the participant is incapacitated in a case of extreme emergency. A copy of this can be provided to staff upon arrival.
- All participants must have travel or medical insurance, which includes repatriation or emergency medical evacuation. It is highly recommended that program participants purchase travel insurance to protect against property loss, flight delays, trip cancellation, or travel disruption as Cova is not responsible for cancellations or disruptions and items lost or stolen during the trip.
- Two we recommend are:
  - Travel Insurance.com
  - Faye
- All participants must register travel dates with the US Department of State/US Embassy Managua before arrival.
- All participants must provide Cova with a copy of their passport to keep on record in case of any emergency. They must also carry a copy of their passport with them at all times.
- Participants must have access to credit card and bank contact information in case credit or debit cards are lost or stolen.
- All participants must provide at least two emergency contacts. This information will be requested on the Participant Information Sheet, provided by Cova in the pre-departure correspondence.
- All participants must provide any medical conditions, relevant medical history, and current medications in the Participant Information Sheet.
- All participants must attend the pre-departure Cova Orientation Session, as scheduled in the itinerary.
- All participants will be required to provide a copy of their travel flight itinerary before arrival.



# Preparing for Your Adventure - Continued

## Important Items to Bring

- **Passport (must be valid for six months beyond the date of arrival)**
- **Malaria Medicine and Other Necessary Medications**
- **Flight Information**
- **Cash to exchange or ATM card to withdraw local currency (suggested \$250/person)**
- **Call/visit your bank ahead of time to let them know you'll be traveling to Nicaragua**

## Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the price of the trip. Purchasing your airline ticket at least two months before departure typically ensures a better rate. The only international airport in Nicaragua to fly into is in Managua, Augusto Cesar Sandino International Airport (MGA). Once you have booked your airline tickets, you will need to send your itinerary to [lisa@CovaAgua.org](mailto:lisa@CovaAgua.org). A packet containing information for your family members, including itinerary and contact information, will be emailed to you before your departure.

## Arriving in Nicaragua

You will have to pay \$10 when you arrive in Nicaragua and go through Passport Control. Each person must pay \$10 for their Nicaraguan Tourist Visa – so when you get in line, have this ready with your Passport. Make sure to have a \$10 bill – they may not have change.

## Cell Service

Check your cell service provider to see if they have any international modes you may want to make available during your trip. There is wifi at the Cova office and at the hotel. You can shut off roaming and use FaceTime/WhatsApp to call back home. We will also have cell phones available for emergencies. Alternatively, you may wish to investigate eSIM options that allows you to activate mobile data from your network provider.

## Dietary Needs

Please let us know in advance if you have any food or dietary restrictions. We will be dining at locally owned restaurants, so we will need to prepare in advance for any dietary restrictions.

## Weather

Nicaragua's weather is comfortable and the best time to visit is between November and May – the country's dry season. You'll see plenty of sunny days, with temperatures sitting between 70 to 82°F in much of the country. Traveling during the dry season may be a bit dusty and dry as you might expect. Traveling during the rainy season will be wet, but typically the rains fall within an hour each day, and we can plan our activities around this. We always recommend bringing a rain jacket in your day bag in case we get caught in an unexpected rainfall while in the field.



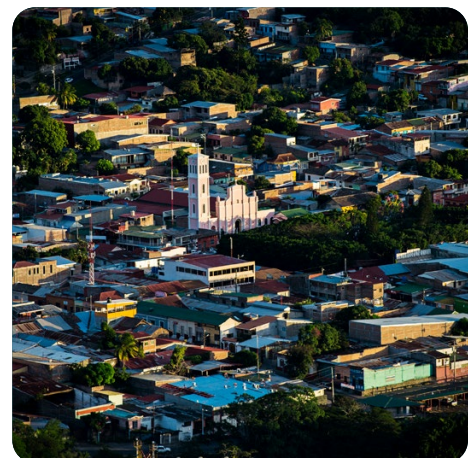
# Preparing for Your Adventure - Continued

## Policies and Guidelines

Cova is committed to providing our Impact Experience participants (as well as our staff, interns, and volunteers) a safe, productive, educational, and pleasant experience during their time in Central America. The Information Guide, Standard Operating Procedures, Policies, and Emergency Protocols have been composed to express to all involved parties what are the procedures regarding general trip management and emergencies for Cova's Impact Experience Trip. Contained within the document are also policies and guidelines that have been implemented to mitigate the inherent risk of travel and provide participants with the best experience.

To minimize risk for our program participants, Cova has adopted the following general principles regarding managing our trips:

- All efforts will be taken to prevent emergencies through risk management training for Cova Staff. For participants, pre-departure correspondence and arrival orientation about health, safety, and cross-cultural issues will be provided.
- All responses to a crisis will be managed with the highest regard for the safety of all participating in Cova's Impact Experience Trip.
- The Cova staff will manage the distribution of emergency information to ensure accuracy, effectiveness, and respect for privacy.
- The participants will be informed immediately of all communications regarding any major Impact Experience Trip emergencies. More information about when and how this communication will occur is detailed below.



# Packing List

## Clothing to Pack

We have prepared a brief list of essentials that can assist you with your packing. Please note that the water sources we will be visiting are often located in dense forests. These can often be muddy and require a short hike to reach. We suggest a good pair of hiking shoes. Pack lightly – you will use less than you think! Be prepared for variances in temperature and humidity. We recommend lightweight, comfortable clothes, that you won't mind getting dirty. In general, bring one or two nice outfits for going out in the evening.

### Bottoms

- Long pants are recommended as shorts are not culturally common except at home
- Jeans (the darker the jeans, the more professional)
- Khakis (i.e. old khaki work pants or Dickies are good)
- Swimsuit (some hotels will have a pool)
- Ladies – dresses, skirts, yoga pants, and capris are great

### Tops

- T-shirts, polos, button-ups (short sleeves are best)
- Cotton gets hot, so a few dry fit/polyester shirts are nice to have
- A light jacket or long-sleeve dry-fit. Best if it is a light rain jacket or windbreaker and not a material like fleece that will attract dust
- A lightweight rain jacket is nice to have in case of rain or cool temperatures

### Footwear

Comfortable and sturdy shoes are a must as you will be doing a lot of walking and sometimes will be at remote rural sites with steep inclines, mud, water, and vegetation. Closed-toed shoes with quality soles will ensure that your feet are protected from injury and any biting ants. Flip flops/sandals are OK only at the hotel. Consider running shoes if you're interested in working out.

### Medications/Prescriptions

- Prescriptions – pack in a carry-on bag in original containers
- Malaria Medication – pack in a carry-on bag
- Cipro or Xifaxin for travelers' diarrhea – pack in a carry-on bag
- OTC medications/vitamins – pack in a carry-on bag

# Packing List - Continued

## Personal Care

- Toiletries
- Bug repellant – at least 29% Deet or Sawyer Brand time-released formula (available Amazon)
- Permethrin-based clothing spray (Walmart or Amazon) – spray your clothes and let them dry BEFORE you pack them.
- Hand sanitizer – 1-2 travel-size bottles depending on how much you use
- Sunscreen – SPF 30 or higher and water-resistant
- Hat (of some sort, great for blocking out the sun)
- Lip Balm
- Deodorant
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Soap
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Razor and shaving cream
- A small pack of tissues
- Wet wipes or baby wipes
- Feminine products (may be hard to find and expensive in-country)
- Handkerchief or bandana – more useful than you'd think!
- Eyeglasses or contacts/solution
- Sleeping aids – ear plugs, blindfold, drugs (for air travel and snoring roommates)

## Travel Gear

- Camera (optional) – with extra batteries, memory cards, charger
- Cell phone and charger
- Small umbrella – for sun/rain protection and privacy shield
- Travel pillow
- A small day pack for trips to rural villages
- Water bottle (we will provide you with bottled water)

## Other Items

- Passport
- Copy of your passport (carry a copy and have a scanned copy or photo on your phone)
- Electricity in Nicaragua is the same as in the US (110v 50-60 hz)
- Snacks (we will have snacks available, but if there is something specific you need/want, bring it with you)
- Small Spanish dictionary/download offline app if you want to learn/practice (we will have translators throughout the tour)
- Journal and pens
- Laundry bag or garbage bag for dirty clothes as some may be muddy
- Powdered Gatorade or electrolytes
- Gum or candy

# Packing List - Continued

## What to Leave at Home

Anything you don't want to lose or have damaged, i.e. nice jewelry, watches, clothes, electronics, etc. It will be safe to bring a laptops and cameras/cell phones.

## Spending Money

Your trip fee includes all meals, water, hotel accommodations, in-country transportation, and transportation to and from the airport. Please be aware that it does not cover additional costs such as purchasing cell phone minutes, souvenir shopping, etc.

### Overall, things are generally inexpensive in Nicaragua

- \$250/person should be MORE than enough for snacks, souvenirs, and extra money for whatever you would like. Bring down the cash you think you'll spend on the trip.
- Have the cash in \$20 bills (make sure they are crisp with no tears, rips, or ink on them – seriously! The folks who exchange bills do not take bills with any damage).
- You can exchange USD for Nicaraguan Córdobas in Nicaragua (you'll get a much better exchange rate in country).
- ATMs are available in bigger towns; however, you can exchange dollars for Córdobas at the local grocery store.
- It is helpful to check online the current exchange rate of Córdobas to USD before traveling.

## Souvenirs To Think About

There is no shortage of things to buy in Nicaragua, as a cultural country offering a wide range of souvenirs to fill your suitcase.

- **Coffee** (world renowned)
- **Pottery** – Nicaraguan pottery is beautiful and very popular. Pottery making has been a part of the culture since pre-Columbian times. All the Nicaraguan handmade pottery is crafted using a manual “kick” wheel to throw the desired shape and use mineral oxides to color the vases before being fired in brick kilns. Most of the potteries of Nicaragua come from San Juan de Oriente, a small village near Nicaragua's capital, Managua.
- **Leather Goods** – Sandals, bags, purses, wallets, and all types of accessories are beautifully worked by the leather artisans.
- **Flor de Caña Rum**: Nicaragua's most famous alcohol
- **Chocolate**
- **Cigars** – Nicaragua has quickly become well known for producing some of the best tobacco in the world. The nutrient-rich volcanic soil, paired with the ideal weather conditions.
- **Hammocks** – Nicaragua has a long history of producing the finest quality artisanal hammocks that are made with great attention and care, entirely by hand. Hammocks are designed to be not only comfortable but uniquely beautiful; an addition to your porch or yard that is both aesthetically pleasing and purposeful.



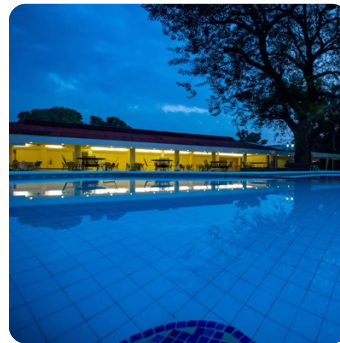
# Sample Impact Trip Itinerary

## Trip Agenda

- Day 1 – Managua International Airport
- Day 2 – Esteli- Cova Orientation, Office Tour, and Site Visit
- Day 3 – Esteli
- Day 4 – Leon- Beach
- Day 5 – Managua

## Arrival in Nicaragua

Everyone will land at the Managua airport. We will have both US and Nicaraguan staff there to meet you at the airport and welcome you to Nicaragua. Light snacks and drinks will be available while we wait for everyone to land. We will travel to our accommodations for the night near the airport.



## Orientation and Travel to Cova Offices

The group will meet for breakfast and discuss the plans for the week. Private transportation will take us through the beautiful mountains to visit our office where we will learn more about Cova's work and meet our in-country staff. This is a scenic 2.5-hour drive from Managua to Estelí. Our route will wind us through Nicaragua's western highlands, giving a window into the culture as we are surrounded by forested mountains of pines, oaks, walnuts, and plateaus.

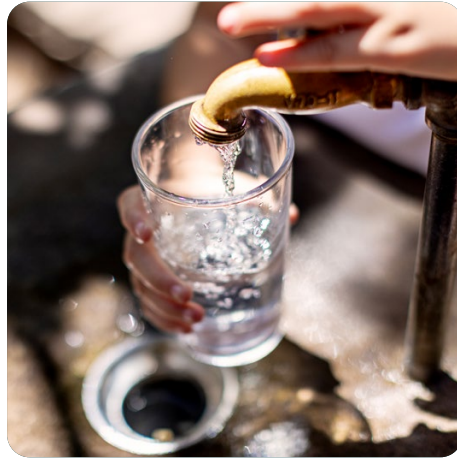
## Community Visits and Water Treatment Installation Tours

We will tour community water systems as well as meet with the community members and water boards. Plan to wear comfortable hiking clothes as we will be walking up to the water tank. The hike to the water source may be challenging due to the terrain, muddy conditions, and steepness. If the hike is too much for a guest, other accommodations will be made. Once we reach the top, we will catch our breath and enjoy the spectacular views. Then you will roll up your sleeves and help our team install a water treatment system for the community! Every night we will meet up as a group for dinner, relaxation, and debriefing.

# Sample Impact Trip Itinerary - Continued

## School Visit

We will wake up to the sounds of holler monkeys and enjoy a nice breakfast together. Next, we will visit a school where Cova has provided students with access to safe drinking water. We will explore classrooms and curriculum before having the unique opportunity to talk with students and community members about how safe water has helped these children stay in school.



## Community Partners and Relaxation in León

We will swing by several more communities as well as connect with one of Cova's partners to hear how we collaborate to make a larger impact. Finally, we will make our way to the colonial city of León, where there are some great markets to buy souvenirs to take back home. Our final night together will be spent at the beach, where we will reflect on our experiences and the impact the trip has had on everyone.



## Departure

Private transport will take you back to the airport to fly home. We'll say our final goodbyes and continue our adventures or travel back home.

# Emergency Response Protocols

To better be able to respond to a wide range of emergencies, foreseeable situations have been classified into four different categories:

1. **Minor Incidents** – These are the most common and least threatening situations, requiring the least amount of communication.
2. **Urgent Emergency Situations** – These are more serious incidents, but are generally not life-threatening. They occur less frequently than “Minor Incidents,” and require more frequent communication between Cova and participants.
3. **Major Emergency Situations** – These are situations that involve life-threatening medical conditions, and potentially require local law enforcement and/or US Embassy involvement.
4. **Emergency Situation Affecting Entire Group** – The last section deals with major emergencies involving the entire group, in response to a natural disaster or political or civil unrest.



## Minor Incidents

Description of Issue	Action Steps	Contact/Information Management	Incident Report
Minor illness – light stomach illness, minor cold and flu, allergies related sickness, pulled muscle, etc.	Contact Cova’ travel program doctor and take participant to their office in Managua. A Cova staff member will accompany participant, and will assist in interpreting, if necessary.	None	No
	Take participant to the local pharmacy to purchase any prescribed medications. Staff will translate prescriptions and medications instruction to English.		
	Staff will make daily follow-up visits to ensure the participant is improving and following doctor’s instructions.		
	Services and prescribed medications will be covered by the participant. A receipt will be provided, and participants can file for reimbursement with their insurance company. Total cost is generally not more \$20.		
Misplaced, damaged, or stolen property (\$50 or less)	Meet with participant to determine how property was damaged or stolen, and to take inventory to ensure nothing else is missing or damaged. If deemed necessary, staff will contact local police station to file a report.	None	No, unless police report is filed.
Stolen wallet, photo IDs, credit cards, computer, camera, large sum of money, etc.	Contact local police station to file report and make attempt to recover stolen property.		Yes – attach copy of police report.
	Assist participant in contacting their bank to cancel credit and debit cards.		
	Determine whether participant needs assistance in replacing funds or missing items. If funds are necessary, Cova will loan participant funds, under the assumption that upon return to the US, participant will reimburse Cova.		
Lost or misplaced luggage with the airline	Contact airlines upon exiting Customs and Immigration to file missing luggage report and attempt to locate luggage.	None	No
	If luggage is located, give contact and delivery information to airline. Follow-up with call. Luggage should be delivered within 48 hours.		
	If not found, assist participant in filing lost luggage claim. Then inventory necessary items with participant and assist in locating necessary items.		
Temporarily lost participant	Participants will be provided information cards, maps, and instructions on how to get back to hotel during arrival orientation and upon arrival to any new city, site, or hotel. Participants will be instructed to inform staff if planning to go anywhere. They will be given contact information and instructions on how to best contact staff if lost.	None, unless deemed major emergency. Then follow communication protocols for major emergency below.	None, unless deemed major emergency
	If participant cannot be found, staff will interview other participants to try to determine where missing participant could be. One staff member will stay at meeting place/hotel, while other staff members, attempt to search surrounding areas and frequently visited areas. If participant cannot be found, or does not return, within 12 hours then staff will contact police, and follow procedure for ‘Missing Participant’ found in “Major Emergency Issues” section		

## Urgent Emergencies

Description of Issue	Action Steps	Contact/Information Management	Incident Report
Hospitalization for non-life-threatening illness or injury – Dehydration, serious infections, dengue fever, Zika chikungunya, etc.	Admit participant to the regional public hospital. Cova staff will remain with participant in hospital until participant is discharged.	Text or call participants emergency contact when the situation has stabilized, or upon participant's request. Limit social media activity of other participants, until all parties have been reached. Group will not be updated on the specific condition of participant.	Yes
	If participant does not show signs of improvement or needs to be transferred to a hospital for more advanced treatment, Cova will arrange for transfer of participant. Staff will accompany participant while he/she is hospitalized.		
	Staff will request copies of medical records, and give to participant to bring back to US, at each institution.		
	If necessary, staff will assist participant in arranging emergency travel back to US. Cova staff will escort participant back to US, if need be. The cost of the escort will be covered by travel insurance or participant.		
	If participant chooses to return, staff will check up with participant until he/she is healthy.		
Hospitalization or medical procedure for a non-life-threatening broken bone or sprain	Stabilize participant at the regional public hospital.	Text or call participants emergency contact when the situation has stabilized, or upon participant's request. Limit social media activity of other participants, until all parties have been reached. Group will not be updated on the specific condition of participant.	Yes
	Transfer participant to hospital for treatment.		
	Staff will request copies of medical records and provide them to the participant to bring back to US.		
	Analyze situation with participant. If necessary, staff will assist participant in arranging emergency travel back to US. If necessary, Cova staff will escort participant back to US. The cost of the escort will be covered by travel insurance or participant.		
Missed Flight	Assist participant in rebooking flight and travel/hotel arrangement until participant can travel. Cova staff will stay with participant until participant has left the country.	Text or call participants emergency contact.	Yes
	If flight is missed on account of negligence of Cova, all associated costs will be covered by Cova. If flight is missed by fault of the participant, all associated costs will be covered by the participant.		
Stolen/ Lost Passport	Contact local police station to file report and make attempt to recover stolen property.	Text or call participants emergency contact.	Yes
	Contact US Embassy immediately reporting stolen passport, and set up appointment within 48 hours of incident to get an emergency passport. Cova staff will travel with participant to obtain a new passport.		
	If scheduled travel date is before emergency passport is ready, assist participant in rebooking flight and travel/hotel arrangement until participant can travel.		
	If passport is stolen or lost by participant, all associated costs will be covered by the participant.		

## Major Emergencies

Description of Issue	Action Steps	Contact/Information Management	Incident Report
Hospitalization or medical procedure for a life-threatening medical emergency including COVID-19	Stabilize participant at the regional public hospital.	Call participants emergency contact Limit social media activity of other participants, until all parties have been reached. Group will not be updated on the specific condition of participant.	Yes
	Transfer participant to hospital for treatment.		
	Staff will request copies of medical records and give to participant to bring back to US.		
	Analyze situation with participant or his/her parents/legal guardians. If necessary, and when appropriate, staff will arrange medevac for participant to US. Cova staff will escort participant back to US. If it is not recommended for participant to travel, Cova will assist parents/legal guardians in arranging travel to the country.		
Missing participant	If a participant has been missing for more than 12 hours, or has disappeared under suspicious circumstances, staff will contact the local police immediately. Staff will also contact the US Embassy.	Call participants emergency contact Limit social media activity of other participants, until all parties have been reached. Group will not be updated on the specific condition of participant.	Yes
	Staff will provide to authorities, both local and from the US Embassy, a copy of participants' passport, a physical description, last known whereabouts, potential contacts, recent photos of the participant, and any information relevant to the participants' disappearance.		
Death of a program participant	Contact local police department to open an investigation into the cause of death, etc. Staff will assist making positive identification, if required. Staff will also contact US Embassy.	Call participants emergency contact Limit social media activity of other participants, until all parties have been reached.	Yes, attached with all police investigation reports, cause of death reports, etc.
	Staff will arrange with U.S. Embassy and health insurance provider repatriation of participant.		
	Staff will assist in arranging travel back to U.S for any participant wishing to return before scheduled departure date.		
	If possible and deemed necessary, staff will arrange trauma counseling for remaining participants. Cost of counseling will be assumed by Cova or participant's travel/health insurance.		
Physical or Sexual Assault	Staff will seek immediate medical attention for the participant at the nearest hospital.	Call participants emergency contact Limit social media activity of other participants, until all parties have been reached. Group will not be updated on the specific condition of participant due to confidentiality.	Yes – attached with all police investigation reports.
	Staff will contact the local Police Department, and staff will assist in interpreting for all participants being interviewed. Staff will also contact the U.S. Embassy.		
	Separate group from participant and remind the group about confidentiality and privacy for the victim. If possible and deemed necessary, staff will arrange trauma counseling for remaining participants. Cost of counseling will be assumed by the partner institution or participants' travel/health insurance.		
	Analyze situation with participant. If necessary, staff will assist participant in arranging emergency travel back to U.S. If necessary, Cova staff will escort participant back to U.S. The cost of the escort will be covered by travel insurance or participant.		
Arrest of a Program Participant	Staff will contact U.S. Embassy and Cova' Law Consultant. Staff will arrange a visit to participant on behalf of U.S. Embassy, as well as Cova' lawyer. Staff will facilitate, if possible, communication between participant and parents/guardians.	Call participants emergency contact U.S. Embassy. Limit social media activity of other program participants.	Yes – attached with all police investigation reports.



## Major Emergencies Affecting Entire Group

Description of Issue	Action Steps	Contact/ Information Management	Incident Report
Hurricane or Tropical Storms	Prior to visit, staff will monitor any potentially dangerous weather situation and communicate risks to partner institution.	Contact with participants via email, prior to an event. Phone communication and update will be provided after an event occurs.	Yes
	If risks are minimal and regionalized, then staff will alter itinerary to avoid dangerous areas. If risks are imminent and present throughout the country, or regionalized, Cova may postpone trip until the risks subside.		
	If the country is deemed dangerous after a hurricane or tropical storm has landed but before the group arrives, the trip will be canceled.		
	If a tropical storm develops while group is in-country, all participants will be moved to accommodations in the high area of the city. All activities and transportation will be suspended. Staff will remain in constant contact with participants until after the storm. Staff will alter itinerary, if group is scheduled be near the coastline.		
	If a hurricane develops while participants are in-country, staff will evaluate the risk of the storm impact. If the risk appears high, staff may move group to the city in the interior of the country, or may begin a process of emergency evacuation. All activities and unnecessary transportation will be suspended.		
Natural disasters – earthquakes, fires, floods, etc.	If a natural disaster occurs prior to participants' arrival, staff will evaluate the risk of proceeding with the trip. Staff will investigate available information from the US Embassy, in-country National Emergency Warnings, and any information from other available sources.	Contact with participants via email, prior to an event. Phone communication and update will be provided after an event occurs.	Yes
	If a natural disaster occurs while participants are in-country, staff will evaluate the immediate risks. Staff will convene all participants to a safe area to inform them on the current situation and any plans for evacuation, etc. Staff will also attend to any health and safety concerns.		
	If the risk appears high, staff may move group to a safe zone, or may begin a process of emergency evacuation. All activities and unnecessary transportation will be suspended.		
Political or Civil Unrest	Prior to visit, staff will monitor any potentially dangerous situation and communicate risks to partner institution. If risks are minimal and regionalized, then staff will alter itinerary to avoid potential areas. If risks are imminent and present throughout the country, or regionalized, Cova will cancel any planned trip.	Contact with participants via email, prior to an event. Phone communication and update will be provided after an event occurs.	Yes
	If the group is found in a potentially dangerous situation, staff will immediately contact the US embassy. Staff will gather the group in one location and arrange transportation to a safe zone. If necessary, the group will seek shelter at US Embassy.		
	Once assembled in a safe zone, Cova staff will begin process for emergency evacuation/departure.		

# Procedures and Policies

This section discusses the pre-trip procedures, as well as trip policies that help us provide a safe experience to our participants. The section will be divided into 3 parts: general policies and procedures, transportation, and hotel and accommodations.

## General Policies and Procedures

- When traveling with groups with more than ten participants, Cova will always assign and travel with at least two staff members.
- The site coordinator will be available for any emergency 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, while participants are in the country. A secondary emergency contact (country director or other specified personnel) will also be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in case the participant cannot contact the site coordinator.
- When the group is visiting the rural communities for an overnight visit at least one Cova staff member, guide, or interpreter will be in attendance.
- Cova staff will provide all program participants with an informational packet, which will include the following information:
  - List of emergency contacts in-country – including U.S. Embassy
  - Detailed itinerary of the trip
- Cova staff will always carry with them the participants' medical information and emergency contact information.
- Reliable and safe transportation will always be available in case of an emergency.
- Cova staff will carry a first aid kit with them on all excursions.
- Once a year, all Cova staff will receive a basic first aid (or refresher course).
- Cova U.S. contacts will be available for emergency consultation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the event of an emergency.

# Procedures and Policies - Continued

## Transportation

While Nicaragua has some of the best road infrastructure in Central America, there is not always paved access to communities where Cova works. We plan accordingly to ensure that each group has the safest, most reliable ground transportation available to our groups. Detailed below are our policies in reference to group transport.

- Each driver that is hired will have a valid driver's license certified by the Policía Nacional. Drivers will be trained on Cova protocols and receive written protocols.
- Cova staff will travel and inspect any planned route prior to group visitation to ensure safe road conditions.
- When it can be avoided, groups will not be scheduled to travel between cities at night.
- Cova staff will ensure groups do not travel in unsafe conditions, which include, but are not limited to flooding or heavy rain; hurricane or tropical storm conditions; wildfires; protests, strikes, or areas of potential violence.
- When an enclosed vehicle, like a bus or van, cannot be utilized to access a destination, a 4x4 pickup truck will be substituted as a method of transportation. In situations where a group must travel in a pickup truck:
  - Participants will be given the option to ride in the cab, with a seat belt.
  - Safety orientation about how to safely ride in a truck will be provided to participants by staff.
  - Only drivers will be selected who have advanced knowledge of the terrain and roads that will be traveled.
  - Upon instruction of Cova staff, when necessary, program participants will be removed from truck and will walk portions of the road deemed even moderately risky.

## Hotel and other Accommodations

While most of our participants' time is spent in rural villages, there are often scheduled excursions to better understand the history, culture, and life of Central Americans. We choose our sites, hotels, and tour operators carefully before including them in a group's itinerary.

- All hotels, and properties, will be visited and inspected for security concerns, as well as reviewing the proximity to emergency services before making reservations.
- All hotels must have 24-hour reception and/or a security guard on the premises.
- At least one Cova Staff member will always be present in the hotel when groups are present.
- All restaurants and hotels will be vetted and approved based on food quality and safety



# Emergency Contact Information

## US Contacts

### **Wesley Meier**, *Co-Founder & CEO*

(English- Spanish)

Phone from US: 319-830-2731

Phone from Nicaragua: +1-319-830-2731

Email: [Wes@CovaAgua.org](mailto:Wes@CovaAgua.org)

Location: Saint Paul, Minnesota

### **Lisa Cook**, *Director of Development*

(English only)

Phone from the USA: 612-707-3094

Phone from Nicaragua: +1- 612-707-3094

Email: [Lisa@CovaAgua.org](mailto:Lisa@CovaAgua.org)

## Nicaragua Contacts

### **Cova Office**

Phone from the US: +505 8.719.9050

Phone from Nicaragua: 8.719.9050

Address: Barrio Jaime Úbeda. Costado norte del Estadio Independencia (de futbol). Estelí, Nicaragua

### **Ivette Morazan**, *Country Director*

(Spanish only)

Phone from Nicaragua: +1 (772) 333-5793

### **Other Nicaraguan Contacts**

Phone for Managua Police Station (Spanish): 101

Phone for Emergencies: 118

### **US Embassy in Managua (English)**

Address: Carretera Sur Via Panamericana Km. 5.5 Managua, Nicaragua

Phone from US: + (505) 2252-7100

Phone from Nicaragua: 2.252.7100

# Arriving in Country

*(Print and keep this lower section with your passport for reference when arriving in Nicaragua)*

- You must pay \$10 when you arrive in Nicaragua and go through Passport Control, each person must pay \$10 for your Nicaraguan Tourist Visa – so when you get in line, have this ready with your Passport. Make sure to have a \$10 bill – they may not have change.
- On your immigration form:
  - Reason visiting mark “**Tourism**”
  - Address (Dirección) in Nicaragua:  
Las Mercedes Hotel Km 11 Carretera Norte, Managua 11053, Nicaragua
  - Contact numbers:
    - **Ivette Morazan**, Country Director (Spanish speaking only): +1 (772) 333-5793
    - **Cova Office**: 2779-0269
    - **Wes Meier** (US Phone): +1 319-830-2731
    - **Lisa Cook** (US Phone): +1 612-707-30940

# Participant Information Sheet

Can you please provide Cova with the following for our records in case of emergency:

1.

Copy of traveler’s passports
2.

Copy of travel insurance
3.

Copy of valid health insurance card
4.

Copy of travel itinerary
5.

Sign and date Cova Liability Form
1.

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number: Country\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_
2.

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number: Country\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any medical conditions, relevant medical history, and current medications:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any dietary concerns:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any other concerns Cova should be aware of:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Cova Waiver and Release of Liability

I understand that participation in domestic and volunteer activities associated with Cova, such as the opportunity to travel to Nicaragua on \_\_\_\_\_(dates) for Cova Impact Experience Trip (Activity), is potentially hazardous and involves inherent risks that could result in injury and/or death. In consideration of the benefits to be derived from the Activity and after carefully reviewing those risks involved, and understanding that Cova is an organization whose membership is voluntary and that my participation in the Activity is voluntary, I do hereby, for myself, my spouse, heirs, executors, and administrators, release and hold harmless and waive all claims I may have against Cova, its directors, officers, members and employees, and any volunteers, Activity coordinators or organizations associated with this Activity. I understand that I should not participate in the Activity unless I am medically able. I attest that there is no physical limitation that would place me at undue risk. I assume all risks associated with my participation in this activity.

Having read this Waiver and Release of Liability and by signing this agreement I waive, for myself, my spouse, heirs, executors, and administrators, my right to bring court action to recover compensation or obtain any other remedy for any injury, death or loss of property, however caused, arising from my participation in this Activity now or in the future even though caused by the negligence of parties, including Cova, in planning, sponsoring and operating the Activity.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_