

International Programs Director
Position Description and Application
Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic

About Our Organization

Health Horizons International (HHI) is a US-based non-profit organization working to sustainably improve community health and expand access to quality health care in the Dominican Republic. Our focus is on addressing health issues in their social, economic, and cultural context, thus requiring a comprehensive approach to program development. HHI organizes three medical service trips per year, during which physicians, allied health professionals, and students of community health, healthcare professions, and other interests offer their expertise and skills to communities in the Puerto Plata province. Medical service trips are integrated with a community-based model made possible by HHI's year-round presence in the Dominican Republic, led by its two International Programs Directors (IPDs). Crucial to this model are HHI's community health workers, or *cooperadores de salud*, who we equip with the skills, knowledge, and support necessary to improve health within their own communities.

By partnering medical service trips with these local capacity-building and community health initiatives, HHI's vision is to empower underserved communities and to engage international support for community development and health promotion. HHI is a young organization continuing to research ways in which it can achieve its mission, and is constantly being shaped by community feedback and on-the-ground experience.

About the Position

The International Programs Directors are responsible for leading, managing, and developing HHI's local presence in the Dominican Republic. The IPDs oversee HHI's Community Health Workers Program, the on-the-ground functioning of medical service trips, the building of new programs and initiatives, and relationships with community leaders, partner organizations, and local residents. The IPD plays an exciting and instrumental role in guiding the programmatic and long-term strategic goals of HHI. Living and working immersed in the communities HHI serves, the position also offers a valuable opportunity for cultural, personal, and professional growth. The IPD is entrusted with acting as a service provider, advocate, and visionary for realizing HHI's mission, and therefore has the chance to effect positive change through both direct service and organizational-level action. The position demands a passion for global health and community development, and a commitment to working towards a holistic vision of health in partnership with communities.

The ideal candidate should be a motivated, independent, and dedicated leader. S/he must be open-minded, innovative, and willing to take on challenging situations. Excellent interpersonal skills are essential. S/he must have strong organizational skills, writing and public speaking ability, show attention to detail, and be able to develop and execute long-term organizational goals. As HHI develops its programs and carves out its niche in response to community ideas and needs, IPDs must be flexible and open to changes in direction.

The IPD term is a minimum of one year in length, with possibility for extension. Terms begin in July 2010, but start date can be flexible depending on candidate's schedule and commitments. IPDs must commit to fundraising to support a portion of their stipend and program expenses. For more information about the position, please see the current IPDs' blog: <http://hhiblog.org>.

Responsibilities

The IPDs' role encompasses the following responsibilities:

- Develop, manage, and teach HHI's Community Health Workers Program (*Curso de Formación de Cooperadores de Salud*), including both the training course and the on-going community-based program.
- Coordinate and facilitate the on-the-ground systems that enable HHI's week-long medical service trips to effectively meet existing health care needs.
- Communicate with the HHI medical service team leaders to support pre-trip preparations, and accompany the team during clinic days.
- Manage the referral system and patient tracking systems, including overseeing the *cooperadores'* provision of follow-up care to patients.
- Build the infrastructure and organizational partnerships that HHI requires to have a continuous and effective presence in the Dominican Republic.
- Manage the international programs budget, and develop long-term goals for infrastructural needs.
- Engage with community members and leaders to understand community-identified goals and needs, to facilitate the development of solutions, and to grow HHI's programs in response.
- Serve as the primary liaison between the communities HHI serves and the HHI Board of Directors and Medical Service Team Leaders.
- Report to HHI's Executive Director and assist with tasks and assignments as required.

Qualifications

- Fluency in Spanish. Proficiency and/or fluency in Haitian Creole is desirable.
- Bachelor's degree. Degrees in Public Health, International Relations, Business/Management, or related fields are recommended.
- Experience in program management, volunteer/staff management, and education or training.
- Significant work or volunteer experience with marginalized communities, international or domestic.
- Experience living and/or working in a Spanish-speaking country.
- Demonstrated commitment to and understanding of global health issues.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with co-workers and team members.

Benefits

- Three-week on-site training with previous IPD, with flexible start date.
- Living stipend of \$400 per month to cover food, transportation, cell phone, rent & utilities, and personal costs. (As mentioned in "About the Position," IPDs are responsible for fundraising a portion of this amount annually.)
- Patriot International medical insurance, covering emergency medical treatment and evacuation if necessary, hospitalizations, medications required for treatment of an illness or injury, and outpatient surgeries and diagnostic testing while in the Dominican Republic.
- Flights to and from the Dominican Republic at the beginning and end of IPD term.
- Housing in Montellano with co-IPD, or assistance finding alternate housing. Apartment in Montellano includes kitchen, living room, two bedrooms, and bathroom. Also features wireless internet, phone, electricity, and running water.

Application Instructions and Timeline

Please email a cover letter, resume, and personal statement to info@healthhorizonsinternational.org. Candidates will be contacted within two weeks of submitting their application. Selected candidates will be invited to interview (in person or by phone) with a member of the HHI Board of Directors, and with one of the current IPDs. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

For more information, please see www.healthhorizonsinternational.org
(to be launched by March 2010).

About the Puerto Plata Region

The area where HHI currently works includes ten communities within a 20-km radius around the city of Puerto Plata. Stretching from Montellano to Amistad, these communities range from rural villages in the mountainous inland, to more accessible towns on the outskirts of sugarcane refineries. Many were originally Haitian *bateyes*, constructed in the 1930s by government-backed sugarcane companies to house Haitian migrant workers and their families. Now, the *bateyes* have expanded beyond the original barracks into full communities, and are home to poor Dominicans and Haitians alike. Each community has a distinct demographic make-up, local government and leadership structure, and sets of needs and assets, but certain themes are common throughout.

In these communities, unemployment is purported to be nearly 90%, due in large part to the closure of the two regional sugarcane companies around 2005, combined with the global economic downturn and its resultant effects on tourism. Access to health care is limited by economic, geographic, and socio-cultural barriers. Access to education is similarly limited, although efforts by NGOs and the Dominican government have made important steps in improving primary school level education. Hunger, lack of adequate housing, and lack of access to clean water are also widespread issues. As in the country as a whole, it is important to note that disparities in living conditions, economic opportunities, and social determinants of health exist between Dominicans and Haitians (as well as individuals of Haitian descent born in the Dominican Republic), due to structural, historical, and political factors.

Overall, the region is home to a complex society, where one can find homes with dirt floors and no running water, middle-class families with nice cars and kids in private school, and a large ex-patriot community of retired Americans and young volunteers. There are many non-profit organizations, both Dominican and international, working in areas like health, education, microfinance, and evangelism. While the government is often criticized for corruption and inefficiency, structures and systems to regulate health care, education, social security, and more, do indeed function. However, populations marginalized by poverty, racism, and social inequality are often excluded, in theory and/or in practice, from fully enjoying the benefits of such systems.