

From Costa Rica to the World: Pura Vida, Study Abroad, and Global Happiness

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UPEACE UNIVERSITY

- **University for Peace (UPEACE):** UN-mandated institution in Costa Rica, founded in 1980.
- **Focus Areas:** Peace, conflict resolution, and sustainable development through education.
- **Global Learning:** Encourages dialogue, research, and practical solutions to global challenges.

Key Initiatives:

- Gross Global Happiness Summit – Focuses on well-being and sustainability.
- Study Abroad Program – Engages international students in peace and environmental issues.

Location: Surrounded by a natural reserve, providing a peaceful setting for learning and collaboration.



“Pura Vida” is a popular phrase in Costa Rica that translates to “pure life,” but its meaning goes far beyond that. It represents a way of life centered around happiness, gratitude, and positive attitude. Costa Ricans (Ticos) use it as a greeting, farewell, or expression of well-being, like saying “all good” or “life is great.” It reflects the country’s culture of enjoying life, appreciating nature, and embracing simplicity.

GROSS GLOBAL HAPPINESS

The Gross Global Happiness (GGH) Summit is an annual event hosted by the University for Peace (UPeace) in Costa Rica, bringing together changemakers, social impact leaders, and professionals to explore strategies for increasing well-being at personal, organizational, and societal levels. Through interactive workshops, global networking, and research-driven discussions, the summit focuses on leadership, resilience, mindfulness, and social innovation, all while aligning with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Designed for individuals committed to creating positive change, the GGH Summit offers a unique opportunity to learn, connect, and implement well-being-focused solutions in communities worldwide.



Our Experiences Overall

Laisha’s - I truly enjoyed my experience at UPEACE and in Costa Rica. I had the opportunity to work with an amazing team, meet new people, and grow personally and professionally. I immersed myself in Costa Rican culture and customs while gaining insight into the internal operations of initiatives like the Gross Global Happiness Summit.

Xena’s - My experience in Costa Rica was truly unforgettable. I loved being immersed in nature, where I had the incredible opportunity to see the diverse fauna in their natural habitats. It was such a rewarding experience to connect with the environment in such a meaningful way. Additionally, I enjoyed being part of a dedicated team, where I was able to develop and enhance my skills in program coordination. It was a perfect balance of personal growth, learning, and adventure!

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

UPeace Centre for Executive Education has worked with multiple colleges and universities from the United States and around the world to develop life-changing and catalytic learning experiences

- **Multifaceted Approach to Education:** Focuses on cultural immersion, critical thinking, and hands-on field experience.
- **Critical Thinking:** Promote analysis of sustainable development issues and evaluate strategies and policies.
- **Field Experience:** Provide hands-on opportunities to apply knowledge in areas like sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.
- **Global Awareness:** Develop a global perspective by comparing strategies across different cultures and regions.
- **Cross-Cultural Communication:** Enhance communication skills to work effectively with diverse stakeholders.
- **Community Engagement:** Encourage collaboration with local communities on sustainable solutions.
- **Personal Growth:** Foster a deeper understanding of sustainability, peace, and justice, empowering students to take responsibility.

Our Experiences

With Nature

- Costa Rica makes up 5% of the biodiversity in the world
- Home to over 500,000 species, including exotic animals like sloths, toucans, and howler monkeys
- The animals are pictures we took of a sloth, Capuchin monkeys, and a Pizote



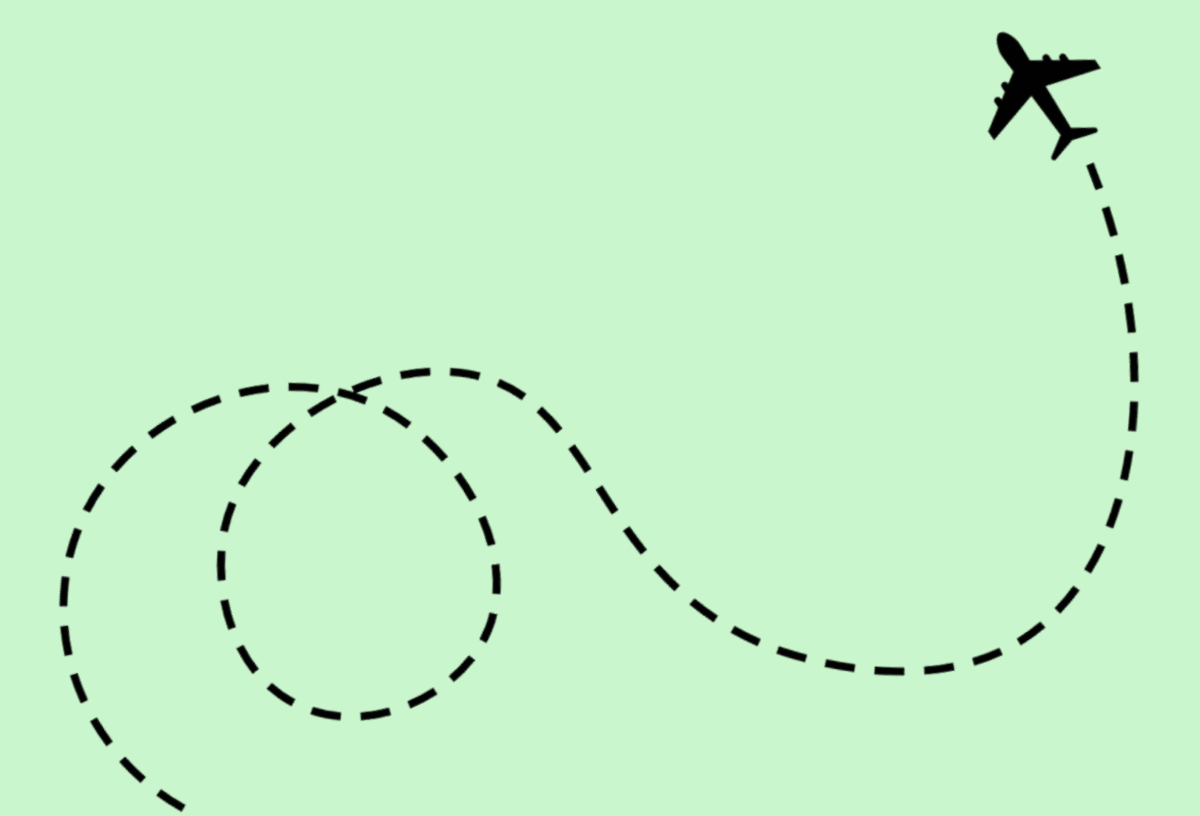
ROLE

Gross Global Happiness:

- Event Coordination
- Working with a team
- Clear communication
- Digital marketing
- Community outreach
- Event planning

Study Abroad Program:

- Event coordination
- Worked with a team
- Contacted nonprofit organization partners
- Scheduling and timelines
- Clear communication
- Event planning



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