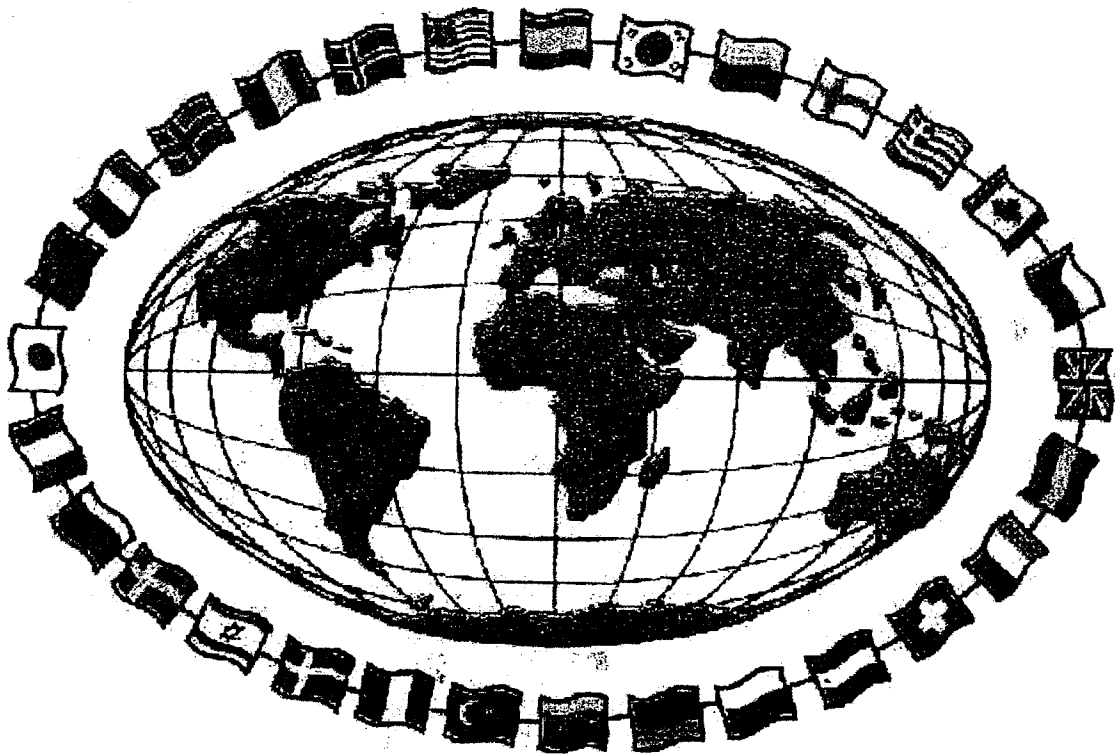


Global Competency Program Portfolio

2





GCP Travel Experience Form

Travel Dates: July 7-Aug. 7, 2008 Destination(s): Peru

Program name or host organization: World Challenge Expeditions

GCP Travel Partner (refer to the GCP Approved Travel Program List at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>)

Yes (If YES, complete only student and parent signatures) No (If NO, please complete the entire form and put it in the GCP Review Committee mailbox in the Guidance Office. Applications received by the 15th of the month will be reviewed and returned via the student's homeroom by the last day of the month.)

Student name [REDACTED] Current grade 12

Student signature [REDACTED] Date 9/28/09

Homeroom 213 Email [REDACTED]

Parent/guardian name [REDACTED]

Parent/guardian signature [REDACTED] Date 10.1.09

Program website: _____

Program description (mission and objectives): _____

How will you be challenging yourself to connect and interact directly with the culture and the people?

Check all that apply to your selected travel program:

- Homestay
- 30+ hours of community service
- Cultural study
- Political study
- Economic study
- Historical study
- Language immersion
- Pre-departure fundraising
- Pre-departure program requirements (please list): _____

If this trip/program is non-international, please explain how you feel it will increase your global awareness: _____

Program approved for GCP: Yes No Date reviewed _____

GCP Review Committee Member signature _____



GCP Global Service Form

Student name [REDACTED] Date _____
Student email [REDACTED]
Homeroom teacher Mrs. Rohan

Name of organization/travel service program World Challenge
Supervisor's name Katie Burke Phone NA
Supervisor's email Katie_Burke@needham.k12.ma.us
Beginning and ending dates July 17-21, 2008 Total hours 30

Project description:
We worked in a rural village called Tuti, outside of Chivay, Peru. We painted a small primary schoolhouse & also waterproofed the roof. During this time we spent time w/ the schoolkids & taught some classes.

Cultural and foreign language exposure:
It was a very small town culture full of farmers, livestock & who led a life very different to my own. When communicating I only used Spanish.

Supervisor's signature (upon completion of project) Katie Burke

If this project is not in conjunction with a pre-approved GCP Global Service Partner or a GCP approved travel/service program (refer to the GCP Global Service Partners List and the GCP Approved Travel Programs List at <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>), then this proposal must be submitted to the GCP Review Committee for approval, prior to the start of the community service project. Please put this form in the GCP Review Committee mailbox in the Guidance Office. Applications received by the 15th of the month will be reviewed and returned via the student's homeroom by the last day of the month.

Program approved for GCP: YES NO Date reviewed _____
GCP Review Committee Member signature _____

PLEASE NOTE: a Community Classroom Student Proposal Form must be completed and approved as well, in order to earn Community Classroom credit for this project. These forms are available on the Community Classroom website: http://fcw.needham.k12.ma.us/%7Egretchen_ayoub/index

<http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/info/global-c/global-comp.htm>



GCP Global Focus Project Form

Student Name: [REDACTED]

Student Email: [REDACTED]

Country/Region of Focus: Afghanistan

Activity #1

Activity: Reading "The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini
Date completed: Summer 2008

Activity #2

Activity: Watching "Daughters of Afghanistan" Documentary
Date completed: Tuesday, September 29

Activity #3

Activity: Cooking 4 Afghan meals + discussion w/ my family over US involvement in Afghanistan
Date completed: Month of September

Essay Topic: The effect of these 3 activities on my global outlook

In a double-spaced, 3-4 page essay, discuss what motivated you to pursue your area of focus, describe the ways in which the project's activities have widened your cultural understanding, and predict how you may apply what you have learned to your future endeavors. Attach the essay to this form.

Global Focus Essay

The majority of my Global Competency work has come from Latin America. I traveled to Peru, I now take AP Spanish, and I did service at a school in Peru. On top of all this, I can relate to the culture and even have close friends who are from South America. Although there are obviously endless possibilities to learn more, I feel more adept in the ways and traditions of Latin America than any other culture besides my own. And this was precisely the reason that for my Global Focus Project I decided to stray away from this culture and broaden my horizons in global learning. I chose to focus on a country that, not only do I know little about, but I have aspirations to learn much more. The country I chose was Afghanistan. It is a country of 32 million people and it is directly in the heart of the Middle East. In order to learn more about the country I participated in three different activities: Reading the *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, watching a documentary called *The Daughters of Afghanistan*, and preparing four Afghani dishes for my family. From these activities I have learned a startling amount about the way of life in this war-torn Middle Eastern country, and it has opened my eyes to the Islamic religion, the horrors of the Taliban, and the massive differences in culture between the Middle East and United States.

The first activity that I did was reading the *Kite Runner*. This is a powerful story about the universal themes of loyalty and guilt. But within its universality, the book has a focus on the political turmoil of Afghanistan as it is set in the backdrop of harsh Taliban rule. One aspect of the book that I found very interesting was the traditionalism of marriage in Afghan society. There is a section of the book where Amir, the main character, is trying to court a wife, but in his society it is looked down upon if he is seen talking to her. Growing up in a community and family where I can feel free to choose any single person I want to

date or marry, the lack of marital freedom in this culture was a great surprise to me. It made me stop and appreciate my freedom to eventually be able to marry someone of any different social class and ethnicity. Having said that, there were aspects of the book that, as an American, I could relate to. The author really depicted the emotions of the narrator, and the deep guilt, loyalty, empathy and love. This reminded me that although this book's culture is worlds away from my own, everybody in Afghanistan is as human as I am and therefore each one of us can experience these same raw feelings. Because it was such a culturally insightful book, it inspired me to look more deeply into the culture by doing the next two activities.

Daughters of Afghanistan is a documentary that exposes the injustices done to women in Afghanistan. As a spectacle, the movie was really awful to watch because of the brutality and malice of the Afghan men towards the women. Before this movie I knew about the burka, a cloak worn by a woman to cover her face, but I had no clue that the inequality went farther than that. In fact, according to the movie, women are often raped, murdered, and beaten. What startled me is that when one of the woman in the movie was asked if she "knew what rape was," she answered "no" because in her society, it is such a normal practice that it is not even considered wrong. Even after being treated so poorly, the women are still given all the domestic responsibility of the household. One of the women in the movie (if you can even call her that as she is thirteen) is the oldest sibling of five others. Her parents died in a Taliban rocket attack, and so the burden is put completely on her to feed, bathe and care for all the younger ones. At age thirteen, nobody should have this kind of responsibility. Sitting on my couch after the movie I tried to compare her to my thirteen year old sister, and the amount of responsibility that she has in comparison to my sister's relatively carefree life is staggering. This is not a stab at my sister because I cannot even imagine myself, at seventeen, even attempting to raise one child, let alone five. The incredible sexual discrimination has led me to begin to draft a letter to Congressman Kerry, because being a

world power with a military force, the United States has the ability to change these woman's lives. Yet despite all the brutality and injustice, what shone through for me was the strength of character that each woman in the documentary possessed which was truly remarkable. As an American who only hears the news about the Taliban bombings and American soldiers dying, it is hard to imagine the character of the individual people who live in this war-torn country. But learning about the lives of these women in the documentary has taught me that one cannot judge the individual people by what one hears on the news about the country or government. Within this country, there are amazing Afghan women who have suffered such hardship, but still find it in themselves to continue fighting admirably for equality.

Having focused on the political injustices and cultural traditions in my first two activities, I decided to do something a little more light-hearted for the third activity. My decision led me to cook three meals and a dessert for my family that all are Afghan original recipes: Lamb Kabab, Bonjan Salat, Samoosi Yirakot, and Baklava. During this activity, I appreciated the fact that I could enjoy this foreign food and learn about a culture while at the same time sitting down with my family and enjoying our time together. It was also a welcome relief to have something foreign for dinner instead of the usual just pasta or hamburgers. In order to spice up the activity I asked my family if, during these four meals, we could discuss our views about the American war in Afghanistan. Because my parents are both news addicts, there was hot debate over the amount of troops we have in Afghanistan, the country's potential nuclear weapons, and whether or not to start a full-fledged war on the Taliban extremists. I think with just food, and without these Afghan-based discussions, the meal would not have taught me enough about Afghanistan. I also was able to share what I learned about the political system through the first two activities and actually tell my parents something they do not know. The food, coupled with the conversation, was a perfect way to end my last Afghani activity.

Afghanistan is a country that is so much in the thick of foreign wars, totalitarian regimes, and a heavily religious culture that it was a very interesting choice for my Global Focus Project. I wanted to find out the real story on Afghanistan because I had heard about the country so much in the news over the past couple of years. The stories that I read about and watched really showed me some things about the culture that I did not know or understand before completing the project. The treatment of women, the Taliban, and religious traditionalism were all things that, before I did these activities, I had no idea about. But these activities have made me aware of the real story beyond just the newspaper headlines about bombings and violence. Because I found this country to be so fascinating, it has motivated me to do a number of things in the future. First, I want to keep up-to-date on the country. Also, as I mentioned earlier, I plan on writing a letter to our state Senator to give aid to the country, specifically giving aid to Suma Samar who was the main character in the documentary, and a woman's rights activist. I also am now of the strong belief that the US military needs to do anything (except using nuclear weapons) and everything to keep the Taliban at bay. It is such a destructive group to the wellbeing of Afghanistan that something needs to be done to stop them. But apart from all this war and violence, one thing that did strike me as I finished this project, that in spite of all the differences, the Afghan people are people just like everybody I know. All the virtues and malice of human nature are exhibited in Afghanistan in the same way they are exhibited in Peru, and in the United States. I have found that despite the immense differences, we are in life together and that instead of fighting we need to coexist to make life as good as possible for everyone who lives on this earth.

Global Competence Program Resume



I. International Travel Experience

World Challenge, www.world-challenge.co.uk , Peru July 7 – August 7, 2008

- “Education through experience...physical challenges, eye-opening cultural exchanges...journeys of self-discovery.”
- A 19 month development program, culminating in a month-long overseas expedition to develop leadership skills, teamwork skills, organization, and responsibility. The trip includes a challenging trek and a one week community service project.
- - Reaching a 15,000 ft. altitude
- - Speaking Spanish every single day with native speakers
- - Making lasting Peruvian friends
- - Learning about my personal strengths and weaknesses
- - Bonding with my peers

II. Community Service

Painting and waterproofing a school, July 17-21, 2008, 30 hrs.

- Painting a school and raising a waterproofing tarp over the roof of the school; also playing with the children of the school during breaks.
- Leadership, teamwork, Spanish
- Leadership, teamwork, Spanish, Painting, teaching

III. Academic

A. Foreign Language Study

- Spanish, in my 9th year of taking Spanish

B. Other Global Academic Studies

- 9th grade World History Acc.: Early History of Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas until the end of the Middle Ages
- 10th grade Recent World History Acc.: From the beginning of the Renaissance to the Cold War world history
- 10th Grade English Acc. (involved predominantly foreign literature): Read many novels, poems and short stories from all over the world such as *Don Quixote*, and Shakespeare
- 12th grade World Since 1945 History Class unlevelled: History of the world from when world war 2 ended including the cold war, communism, end of imperialism, and international relations.

IV. Extra-Curricular

- A. Reading the *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini: A fictional but life-based tale of an Afghani man's struggle with guilt amongst the backdrop of cruel Taliban rule and Religious Extremism.**
- B. Watching *Daughters of Afghanistan*: A documentary about the injustices against woman in modern day Afghanistan based on religious beliefs and traditional views. It documents five woman struggling for gender independence.**
- C. Cooking three meals and one Afghan dessert: I cooked four traditional Afghan dishes for my family in which I learned about the Afghan cuisine. During the meals I proctored discussion with my family about the US involvement in Afghanistan.**

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Travel/Service Essay

When I was first debating with myself whether or not to go to Peru on a World Challenge trip my thoughts boiled down to one question: Do I want to take this risk? At that point I did not know if I was ready to leave my parents and go outside my comfort zone of Needham, MA. A couple years later I relish in the fact that I decided to test my personal boundaries and go on this trip. The World Challenge Expedition to Peru represented a substantial change in my life. It helped me become much more aware of the world around me, and also exemplified many of my personal weaknesses and strengths. I went through some very difficult times and equally incredible times on my trip. But despite the roller coaster ride, going to Peru was an experience that I will never forget or regret because it completely transformed my life and made me into a more globally conscious and mature individual.

Coming into the trip I was a relatively provincial person who did not really care much about the wellbeing of others. I was forced onto a team of sixteen people that for the next month I relied on, and they relied on me. At some points in the trip there was only a certain amount of money for food, and considering that all of us had to eat, not everybody could have as much as they pleased. Being a hungry, growing boy this was difficult for me and I had to work through the fact that I might not be able to be full every single meal as I *always* am in the United States. This opened my eyes to the issue of hunger that is so prevalent in our world but as a middle class American I have never experienced. Now back in the United States I can eat as much as I want, but that does not mean I have not changed as far as my outlook on hunger. I can now empathize at least a

little bit with the people all across the world who feel those hunger pangs each and every day. It is personal changes like this that marked my trip to Peru. In the same way that I became more aware of such problems, I learned about the culture, learned leadership and teamwork, and connected at a deep level with the local people.

In much the same ways as this example above, I have changed significantly as a person from my trip. I have experienced raw feelings of success at having reached a 15,000 foot altitude, and joy at playing with little Peruvian children. These are emotions that I can still vividly feel every single day I am back in the United States. Above each of these, the most incredible part of my trip was the Service that our group did in rural Peruvian village. Everything that I had already learned from Peru in the first two weeks I was able to put into play. I worked with my team to paint and waterproof a school building. At some points I led the group, and at others I sat back and listened to others' commands. On top of this, I was able to translate from Spanish to English between our group and the school Principal who directed the project. But when we finished, the feeling that I had bettered these young kids' lives was fantastic, and I can still remember to this day my sentiment at pride and self-fulfillment that I had changed the children's lives. The trip to Peru was one that transformed my life, and later in my life, hopefully in college, I want to go away again for a semester. I hope to find the friends I met there and experience everything again from the perspective of someone, who, because of this World Challenge trip, is more globally adept and mature.