INTERNERS IN NON-TRADITIONAL DESTINATIONS:
What are the Opportunities Outside the Mainstream?

More than half of US students studying abroad travel to Europe (this includes for-credit internships).

Non-Traditional Placement Opportunities:

Medical Internship in Belize
Working with local staff in hospitals and clinics in areas such as nursing, specific hospital departments and health education, learning about local practices, structures and approaches.

Fair Trade Internship in the Ecuadorian Amazon
Community development through workshops, eco tourism projects, social media, forest conservation, support social entrepreneurship initiatives.

Pre-Vet Internship in South Africa
Working with local veterinarians involved with game movement, wildlife reserve management and domestic animal care, comparing approaches and attending to diverse species.

Sports Development Internship in Swaziland
Develop sports curriculum for children, work with online marketing content, coach sports, community events and research impact of sports on children.

NGO Development Internship in Thailand
Write reports, run English training sessions, review website content, developing grant proposals and outreach to communities within the structure of an operating NGO.

Rainforest Habitat and Wildlife Conservation in Costa Rica
Working with environmental scientists on sea turtle monitoring, species studies and tracking, and biological assessments surveys.

Benefits of Internships in Non-Traditional Locations:

How do these locations benefit the student, your institution and the society we live within?

**FOR STUDENTS**

**PERSONALLY**
- Provides an understanding of different global work contexts and issues influencing operations in these areas of the world which are increasingly important in today’s growing global economies.
- Offers great personal growth through the challenge associated with adapting to less familiar, non-westernized cultures.
- Opportunity for greater responsibility, involvement and achievement exists in resource-poor organizations, because there is an intern need in comparison.
- Good immersion can be gained through encountering fewer people that share language or nationality.
- Improved language and communication skills are developed working in environments less reliant on technology.

**FINANCIALLY**
- Scholarships are available for non-traditional locations and there is often a higher chance of getting them because there are less students applying.
- Cost of living is often much cheaper in alternative locations which can increase the opportunities for students worried about financial burden of going abroad.

**FOR FUTURE CAREERS**
- Sets intern apart as a risk taker who is adaptable and willing to address challenges head on.
- Shows flexibility and important non-traditional communication skills.
- Demonstrates that the student is interested in different ways of learning and new perspectives.
- Marks a candidate as a good prospect for roles requiring global travel.
- Provides an interesting context for discussion that can make a candidate more appealing to interviewers.

**FOR YOUR INSTITUTION**

- Expands diversity and locations.
- Offers opportunities in niche academic areas and markets.
- Potential to offer more low-cost program options.
- Increases institutional competitiveness.

**SOCIALLY**
- Increases international and intercultural understanding.
- Offers unique, first-hand experience with global issues and problems.
- Develops global citizens who are more culturally aware and competent.

Challenges & Considerations:

- Managing onsite support and risk management standards – ensuring you have a trusted on-site coordinator.
- Health and safety concerns that arise in rural / less developed locations – working with established incidents and emergency procedures.
- Challenges arising from communication between cultures or language barriers – having cultural sensitivities in place and coordinators experienced in dealing with Western students.
- Managing the expectations of host communities and organizations – having a coordinator who recognizes the potential for local over-expectation of the student’s skills and abilities.
- Faculty/International office inexperience with advising on unknown destinations – request the information you need and ask partners to assist in advising, even of the entry stage.
- Greater potential for student to experience culture shock, feelings of isolation, cultural misunderstandings or being an ‘outsider’ – experienced coordinators should have an awareness of this and provide support.
- Questions surrounding the stability of political climates or ongoing turmoil with neighboring countries – require an awareness on Department of State warnings. Many destinations are either stable or have only very localized problems.
- Funding established and trusted placements/providers to ensure ethical program delivery – challenge providers/partners on specific experience in each location and their ethical stance. Good providers have staff who can answer these questions automatically.
- Generating demand and interest for non-traditional locations in competition to large, European cities – communicating the benefits.

There is a growing need for a generation of citizens that have exposure to emerging markets, understanding of the different business approaches and recognize the important realities of living and operating with these cultures.