

GREENTREK Cia. Ltda.

Address: El Espectador E8-13 y Shyris. Edificio El Espectador. Oficina 203. Quito – Ecuador

Phone: +593-2-600-4954 - Mobile: +593-9-9258-8303 - US Phone: (312)-450-3176

www.greentrek.org/ volunteers@greentrek.org/ Skype: greentrektravel



Community Run Small Business in the Highlands



1. Program overview

Our partners for this program are an organized community of “Mestizo” people in the highlands, legally recognized by the Ministry of Work as a small-business. They maintain a dynamic & integral participation of the different groups of the community (women, men, children & youth) in activities, such as: eco-tourism; production of organic fruits and vegetables, marmalades, dairy products, and recycled paper; as well as an ongoing research & reforestation projects. The children of this community form part of an active environmental education program.

All of these projects have helped our partner community to improve the relationship with their land and maintain their great wealth: their culture, the forest & its water, its natural beauty and the production capacity of their land. We invite you to be part of their dreams and help them keep their projects running for the long term.

- Minimum time commitment: 2 weeks
- Spanish level recommended: Basic-Intermediate

2. Life in the program

Volunteers live with families involved in the community organization, one volunteer per family. Volunteers have their own room. Food is provided by the family with whom they are staying, and consists mainly of local products (various roots, greens and vegetables, grains, dairy products and little meat). In order to achieve an equal distribution of the benefits of this method, the community has established a rotating system for participating families receiving guests in their house.

When volunteers stay for more than two weeks, they work from Monday to Friday on different tasks they are assigned, being able to spend the weekend however they wish, and having the

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option of staying in the community if they want, or leaving to see other places in our country, in which case they should notify the community coordinator.

3. Project details & activities

According to your interests, the needs of the community, and previous conversations, each volunteer is provided with a calendar of activities. It can include work such as:

- Environmental Education: Volunteers are needed who can support the development of an environmental education program for the children .
- Forest Research: You can also contribute significantly to the research into the non-wood resources of the zone (orchids, bromelias, medicinal plants) there is always plenty of work at the greenhouses.
- Organic garden: You can participate in activities such seed processing, weeding & preparation of beds, and everything related to the maintenance and production of the family’s organic garden, this will help you acquire practical experience with organic agriculture.
- Your support is key in the construction and maintenance of paths, the camping area, the recreational area, compost systems, and all the infrastructure work proposed in our maintenance plan. These activities are coordinated and take place with the accompaniment of the community’s Ecotourism director. Also you can participate directly in our Ecotourism operation.
- Reforestation: You can participate in reforestation activities on the properties of the members of the community organization, which form part of the Forest preserve called Cuenca Alta del Río Guayllabamba (CARG). These activities take place with the participation of members of the families.
- Participation in community farms: The community has the custom of making “mingas” (voluntary communal labour) for the completion of tasks for the common good. This activity is a great opportunity to share formal and informal spaces of socialization with the community.
- Processing dairy products and jams: You can choose to support the making of cheeses that are processed daily in the small dairy factory, or in the making of jams.
- Volunteers have the option of participating in social or sports events, and/or in parties that the community puts on.

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4. Things to see and do!

The setting of this community & its marvelous views make for a great living experience. Located just an hour away from Quito, this community is rich in biodiversity and nature! Also this area is characterized by its rich archeological findings, especially a network of mysterious pre-Incan trails (called culuncos). The trails are a sort of natural tunnel formed by past inhabitants of the area traveling on the paths and by erosion from rain. The paths are covered by the vegetation of the cloud forest, allowing little light to penetrate the forest floor. We invite you to discover the cloud forest by means of a network of paths that will allow you to get to know its history, and admire the views of the mountains, clouds and forest from each time you return to the surface. This community is also very close to Quito, therefore you could travel during your weekend to various destinations such as: Mindo, Otavalo, Cotopaxi, Cayambe, among other places.

5. Cost

One week: USD 150
Two weeks: USD 270
Three weeks: USD 380
Four weeks: USD 540
Five weeks: USD 625
Six weeks: USD 740
Seven weeks: USD 860
Eight weeks: USD 1015

If you wish to stay longer ask us for a quotation!

There is a USD \$50 application fee that is valid for 18 months and you can apply to as many programs as you like without having to pay this again.

What is included

- Pre-departure support
- Arrival orientation(Monday thru Friday at 3 PM at our offices in Quito)
- Long term experienced staff
- Welcome meeting
- Location orientation
- 24-hour in-country support
- A private room with lock
- Access to a bathroom and shower

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- 3 meals per day (upon arrival to the community)
- Tools for work

What is not included

- Flights
- Medical and travel insurance
- Visa costs
- Personal kit
- Additional drinks and gratuities
- Extra local excursions
- International and domestic airport taxes.
- In country transportation
- Lodging outside the Project

Suggested packing list

- Rubber boots
- Rain poncho
- Insect repellent
- Comfortable and warm clothes

Preparing for your Trip

Passport / Visa Requiriments

Please note that you need a full valid passport. Some countries do not require a visa for Ecuador, please confirm this with the embassy. Upon entry you will be issued with a 3 month permit (at no cost). Make sure the correct date and length of stay in the country is entered onto your visa when at immigration. Longer-term visitors need to obtain a volunteer visa in their home country. We can help you sending you all the documents you required for paperwork.

Arrival / Departure Information

You need to fly to Quito international airport, and make your way to a hotel. Taxis from the airport to the center of Quito cost approximately US\$8. If you would like to have the transfer service and/or hotel reservations please contact us in order to arrange this for you. After arrival you have to attend an introduction meeting at our main offices in Quito. Introductory meetings are at 3pm Mondays through Fridays. During these meetings you will receive all the information you need to volunteer in the project. If you need to change this appointment time let us know in advance.

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(IMPORTANT NOTE: We kindly ask you to arrive in Ecuador at least a two days ahead of the start of your volunteer placement. Most projects WON'T receive volunteers on the weekends so please plan accordingly. Also remember you have one meeting with us at our offices, this happens at 3 PM Mondays thru Fridays.)

Direction to our Offices**Directions to our offices in Quito:**

Take the Ecovia (Red bus running along 6 de Diciembre Avenue) & get off at the Estadio Olimpico stop. Walk west in Naciones Unidas Avenue (towards the big mountain, Pichincha) and get to the corner of the Naciones Unidas and Shyris Avenue (on the corner of Quicentro Shopping Mall). Cross Shyris avenue; then walk two blocks north (to your right) in Shyris avenue until you reach El Espectador street. Look for a building with blue windows called El Espectador. We are on the second floor. Office 203

Our Address

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Finance

The Ecuadorian currency is the US Dollar. In general we recommend that you take travellers cheques or worldwide recognized credit cards instead of cash as your main source of money. Please be aware that you may have a maximum limit on cash withdrawal for your bank card in a single day, so it is advisable to come with most of the cash you'll need right away to avoid complications or delays in getting the cash you need.

Ecuador is a cheap country in which to live. A normal person's daily expenses (excluding room, laundry and board) range between US \$20 to US\$25. Urban public transport is US\$0.25 one-way regardless of distance.

Medical Information

High altitude, e.g. in Quito (2800 metres) can affect some people's health. You should check with your doctor if you have any doubts before you travel. If visiting Quito you are advised to take it easy for the first couple of days.

Health and Safety**Field Base safety**

All volunteers will be informed of the risks, health and safety procedures for the field on the arrival orientation. It is imperative that everyone both understands and respects them.

Volunteer safety

Look after your passport and take a separate photocopy with you. Do not wear jewelry or walk around areas outside with valuable items on display e.g. cameras. Do not carry large amounts of cash. In the unlikely event that you are targeted for your belongings, hand them over

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without resistance. If you are traveling in public transportation in Quito, always be aware of your belongings; put your backpack on your front instead of in the back. Be careful with your wallet and keep it in your front pocket. If you are taking taxis, be sure to get on an official taxi (yellow with orange plates).