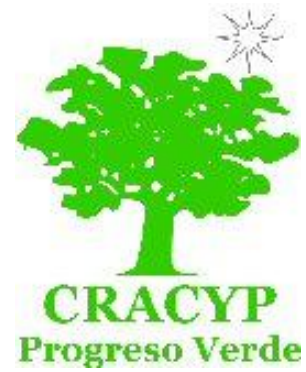


Interning with CRACYP
for Progreso Verde ("Green Progress")

Sustainable Development Internships in rural Ecuador
2010



Business planning in rural Ecuador
Photo thanks to volunteer Roz Gordon



Installing appropriate technology on an organic farm
Photo from the CADO archives



Training sugar cane farmers
Photo thanks to Sarah Clifford



Ecotourism consultant volunteer interviewing local farmers
Photo thanks to Sarah Clifford



Living conditions are basic in this rural area
Photo thanks to Sarah Clifford



Photographing flora and fauna for an ecotourism project
Photo thanks to Sarah Clifford



Introduction

CRACYP (which stands for Rural Forestation and Progress Network Corporation, in Spanish) is a non profit organisation facilitating reforestation and sustainable rural development in an agricultural area of extreme poverty including over 200 communities in the foothills of the Western Andes in Ecuador.

Our mission is "Progreso Verde" or "Green Progress" - that is, social and economic development, but in a way which protects the environment. We build environmental awareness and motivate and assist local communities to take practical conservation action. Our sustainable development projects help to increase incomes to the point where people are able to think further ahead than the next meal and can afford to care about the environment.

The 'price' of our help is that they must use a small percentage of the extra income to plant trees - which stabilize and enrich their land and provide them with fruits or other useful products.

CRACYP's "Green Progress" projects are long-term. We train people in techniques for sustainable agriculture and appropriate technology to add value to their crops by processing them locally rather than selling them as raw materials, and provide ongoing support. We advise on and assist with the reforestation process. In this way the communities improve their quality of life and preserve the environment on which they depend.

CRACYP is recognised as a leader in sustainable development and Executive Secretary Carlos Cabrera has recently been asked to act as an advisor to the Ecuadorian government.

Read through the website www.progresoverde.org for more information about us and what we do. You will be volunteering mostly in the communities where CADO, the sugarcane alcohol project, operates. Our approach is holistic so the projects you will work on involve not only the sugarcane farmers but also other stakeholders and different aspects of development.

Objectives

This Internship Program helps CRACYP implement small development projects, or phases of larger projects, in a rural area of extreme poverty. Without interns and volunteers, these projects might not happen at all, or would take much longer. We also hope to increase understanding by facilitating interaction between rural farming communities in a developing country and interested volunteers from other countries.

We understand the frustrating chicken-and-egg situation of trying to gain experience in order to get a job in sustainable development in order to gain experience. We have designed this intern program so that students and graduates can gain relevant, useful, practical experience as a stepping stone to starting or extending a career in sustainable development. An internship or volunteer placement with us can also serve as a "try-out" prior to university studies to see if sustainable development really is right for you.

Location

You will be based in the picturesque little village of Jilimbí in Bolívar Province, close to the border with Cotopaxi Province. The nearest town you might find on a map is Moraspungo, about an hour's journey up into the mountains from the main road between Quevedo and Ventanas. You may work in Jilimbí itself or in any of several nearby villages or member communities of the CADO sugar cane project. The climate in Jilimbí is usually comfortably warm to hot in the dry season, slightly cooler in the wet season. At times you may be working or camping in communities at higher altitudes where it is cooler and can be quite chilly at night, so you should be prepared for all eventualities. There are a few remaining fragments of native forest in the area and the sugarcane farmers, who need running water to distill their alcohol, are conscious of the need to conserve and extend the forested areas and water sources.

The programme location is fairly remote and you will not be easily contactable, other than in cases of emergency. There are mobile phones in the local communities but few fixed phone lines, other than in Moraspungo. There is (slow) internet access available in Moraspungo, which is reached by a 45 minute walk followed by a short bus ride. There is a bus from Jilimbí to Moraspungo on Saturdays (market day).

Intern Activities

Intern activities vary according to what is needed, the weather and other local conditions. This is real rural development, warts and all, and it is not always predictable. There may be times when progress is slow or limited by conditions beyond our control, or when the work is repetitive and not particularly interesting. On the other hand, you might be here for an inauguration or celebration of success due to the hard work of previous interns, volunteers and local people. That's the reality of sustainable development in the field.

As well as helping with a range of current activities, each intern will also undertake a mini development project. This might be a stand-alone project, or a small phase of a larger ongoing project. Either way you will have the support of program staff, and perhaps some volunteers as well. You will be responsible for the results and will write a report of your project, its objectives, challenges and results, what you learned and your recommendations for the future. If you have particular skills or experience, for example in photography, writing business plans, or teaching, we may be able to make use of these. If there are skills you wish to develop further whilst you are here, let us know.

At the time of writing, intern activities are likely to include:

- Health and safety improvements to organic sugarcane farms, working with the farming families to improve hygiene in the distilleries and safety features on the mills. This could include painting, laying concrete flooring or constructing basic wooden shuttering in addition to training people about health and safety (depending on the level of your Spanish skills)
- Education – teaching or helping as a teacher's assistant in local primary schools. You might be teaching English, sports, art, environmental education or computing. Depending on your skills, experience and interests, you could perhaps run after-school workshops on themes such as drama, football, music or other topics.
- Environmental outreach work with schools and other groups - helping with activities such as making compost, planting an organic vegetable plot, planting and watering tree seedlings
- Helping to develop an ecotourism project in the area – this could include researching excursions, clearing trails, surveying the local area to inventory wildlife, developing educational and promotional materials, working with local families to develop menus and standards.
- Excavating a "cava" for maturing organic rum
- Developing productive projects with local families to create additional income sources by adding value to local raw materials
- Helping in the volunteer vegetable plot to produce some of your own food
- Training our office staff, if your computing, business or accounting knowledge is more than theirs and your Spanish skills are up to it.



Collecting eco-construction materials
Photo thanks to Global Routes volunteers



Attending a community meeting
Photo thanks to volunteer Roz Gordon

Having said all that, it could change completely and we need flexible, adaptable interns who will make the most of whatever challenges and opportunities arise.

We usually expect interns to work 5 or 6 days a week, depending on the current situation. A working day might involve perhaps 6 or 7 hours of work, but this varies – sometimes you might have to make an early start to avoid the heat or to reach a more distant community. Some working days might be longer, at other times you might unexpectedly have free time due to local conditions at the time.

On your days off you can choose to stay and rest at the intern house where meals will be provided, or you can travel to see more of Ecuador. These personal excursions will be at your own expense. Depending on the current situation, you may be able to arrange with the coordinator a few free days in a row in the middle of a few weeks internship, subject to the needs of the project.

Duration and Costs

Internships are available for 4 to 12 weeks. Start dates are THURSDAYS and we strongly suggest that you start on the first Thursday of the month in order to benefit from the Orientation Day, which is the first Friday of each month. Interns starting on the first or third Thursday of the month will be assisted with travel to the project site, on other Thursdays you may need to make your own way to the site.

Duration in weeks	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Intern Contribution in US\$	\$720	\$870	\$1020	\$1170	\$1320	\$1460	\$1600	\$1740	\$1880

Once your application has been accepted and we have established that we have a vacancy for your chosen dates, you will be invited to pay a deposit of \$220 in order to reserve your place. The deposit is non-refundable – it takes time and money to organize your internship and we may have turned away other potential interns. If your situation changes and you are no longer able to intern with us, please get in touch as soon as possible to see if we can transfer your booking to another date without losing your deposit (subject to availability) or at least offer the place to another intern.

The balance of the Intern Contribution must be paid in advance by bank transfer or in cash on arrival. (Once you've tried to carry out transactions in an Ecuadorian bank, you will understand why, like many organisations in Ecuador, we only accept cash). Note: We do not offer a refund if you change your mind about the length of time you wish to spend with us.

What's Included

- Accommodation and meals (see below)
- Orientation day (first Friday of each month)
- Supervision as appropriate
- Training on an ongoing basis as required for each task, Spanish lessons when available
- Participation in sustainable development activities and a mini project as available at the time
- One day Development Workshop each month (usually in the third week of the month)
- Completion of forms or reports about you as required by your university or college
- Travel from Quito to the project site if starting on the 1st or 3rd Thursday of the month
- A tree seedling to plant as a living reminder to local people of the work you do here

Not Included

- Passport / Visa (if required from your country)
- Return transportation to Quito
- Local transport costs (usually no more than US\$10 per month, for bus fares, hire of horses, etc., rather than walking when there is the chance – this is optional & therefore at your own expense)
- Travel and cancellation insurance (all interns **must** have both)
- Medical expenses
- Personal expenses such as snacks, souvenirs, internet use, phone calls and personal excursions
- Meals on your days off if you are not at the intern house at meal times.

Accommodation

Accommodation is usually in a shared house in the village of Jilimbí. The house is basic but has everything we need, with two dormitories, a living room, kitchen facilities and an indoor toilet and (cold) shower. (The weather is warm, so a cold shower is no hardship). At times you may camp out if you are working in a different community for a few days. At times interns may stay with a local family if required by CRACYP.



The Intern & Volunteer House



The swimming hole is a short walk away

Photos thanks to Sarah Clifford

Meals

We provide three meals a day of mostly local-style food, though we do try to include more vegetables than is normal in Ecuador. The food is mostly vegetarian with occasional meat, so vegetarians should be fine as long as they eat eggs and dairy products. For logistical reasons, we cannot cater for a completely vegan diet. Imported luxuries, snacks, sweets, fizzy drinks, etc. are not included.

Requirements

Interns must be reasonably fit and healthy. There is little public transport in the area so you will often need to walk from one location to another. The work will also involve manual labour at times. We need enthusiastic, patient, resourceful and adaptable interns who will cheerfully cope with the unpredictability of working in sustainable development in a developing country and have a go at whatever tasks are required. Whilst we hope to include occasional visits to other projects or local attractions, the focus is on the work and this is not a holiday camp. The minimum age is 18.

If you have any kind of medical condition, physical impairment or other special needs, you must let us know when you apply so that we can establish whether or not we have the facilities to accommodate you in this remote area with very little infrastructure.

Ideally you need to speak at least basic Spanish – this is a great opportunity to practise and improve your Spanish. Total fluency is not necessary. If you are serious about working in development in Central or South America, you will need to learn Spanish anyway. The program includes some Spanish classes focusing on relevant vocabulary for development. If you do not yet speak any Spanish we will require you to take classes in Quito for at least a week before starting your internship.



Unloading sugar cane reading for milling



The route to Jilimbi

Photos thanks to Sarah Clifford

Insurance

You **MUST** have travel insurance covering cancellation and medical costs. We cannot accept you as an intern without this. We cannot accept any liability for you, it is your responsibility to purchase suitable insurance covering any eventualities.

Visa

You can intern with us on a normal tourist visa (you don't need a special volunteer visa or working visa, because you are not paid). As far as we know, all tourists now automatically receive a free 90 day tourist visa upon entry once in each 12 month period, though you should check with your local Ecuadorian consulate before booking your flight. This visa does not seem to be extendable in Ecuador or neighbouring countries the way it used to be, so if you want to spend more time in Ecuador you will need to talk with the consulate in your home country well before you leave.

Ecuador

Ecuador is a fascinating country. Find out more including practical details about currency, travel and visas at www.ecuadortravelsite.org

FAQs

Why should I have to pay to intern?

We very much appreciate the hard work and enthusiasm of our interns. However, we don't have the funds to subsidise interns, so we need your Intern Contributions to cover the costs involved.

Intern Contributions allow us to provide paid work for local people, in a poor rural area where there are virtually no salaried jobs available. The Contributions are needed for the cost of some of the materials used on the projects, as well as administration, the development workshops, time spent filling in reports for your educational establishment, and of course your food and accommodation. All the money stays in Ecuador; you are not paying for fancy advertising or international agencies.

Even if we had funds available to subsidise interns (which we don't), it would be far more sustainable to use them to provide a salary for a local person, who would stay in the area and use their developing skills and experience as part of the project. Interns gain valuable experience and learn useful skills on the programme, but then leave to take those skills & experience elsewhere and profit from them in their future careers.

Depending how long you stay, the costs involved are between \$22 and \$26 a day. This would be good value just for accommodation and food, but also includes the valuable practical experience that you need for your degree and your future career. Plus the satisfaction of knowing you've made a difference in an area of extreme poverty. You get the chance to see a little-visited part of Ecuador, experience a very different way of life and gain a real understanding of what it's like to work in sustainable rural development in a developing country. It's probably cheaper than staying at home, and much more rewarding.



Repairing an alcohol distillation tank with banana pulp



Appropriate technology - extracting essential oils

Photos thanks to Sarah Clifford

Do I have to have studied sustainable development to intern?

Not necessarily. Although this project is a great way to gain experience with a respected organisation for a career in sustainable rural development, you do not need to be a graduate in development. This is an ideal opportunity to see whether sustainable development is the career for you before you start your degree, or to gain some practical experience, if you are studying or planning to study sustainable development, organic agriculture, rural development, ecotourism, community development or similar subjects.

If you have no career aims in this field but just want to practise your Spanish language skills whilst doing something worthwhile with your holidays, our volunteer program has less of an academic focus and may be more suitable. It is in the same location, but you don't run your own project, write reports or participate in the development workshops. Also you can volunteer for fewer than 4 weeks. Email volunteer@progresoverde.org to request an information pack.

Do I need to bring a tent?

We have some tents available for volunteers to share. If you want a tent to yourself you will need to bring your own. You definitely need a sleeping bag and camping mat.

For how long should I intern?

The minimum is four weeks, maximum 12 weeks. If you want to be here for fewer than four weeks, ask us for the Volunteer Information Pack – volunteer opportunities are available for 1 to 8 weeks.

What is the difference between the Internship Program and the Volunteer Program?

Internship	Volunteer
4 to 12 weeks	1 to 8 weeks
Relevant studies needed (past, present or accepted on future course)	No qualifications or studies needed
We will complete any forms or reports about you required for your course	Standard letter of reference available if you volunteer for 2 weeks or more. Individual reports or forms for educational establishments NOT available.
Monthly One-Day Development Workshop	-
Intern responsible for mini development project. Project report required detailing outcome, learning points & recommendations.	Volunteers may assist interns, but no report is required.
At least basic Spanish required, or an intensive course in Quito prior to internship	Spanish language skills not compulsory (though recommended)
-	1 week = \$190
-	2 weeks = \$360
-	3 weeks = \$540
4 weeks = \$720	4 weeks = \$600
5 weeks = \$870	5 weeks = \$750
6 weeks = \$1020	6 weeks = \$900
7 weeks = \$1170	7 weeks = \$1050
8 weeks = \$1320	8 weeks = \$1200
9 weeks = \$1460	-
10 weeks = \$1600	-
11 weeks = \$1740	-
12 weeks = \$1880	-



Community event in Jilimbí
Photo thanks to Sarah Clifford

What if I don't speak any Spanish at all?

You will be required to take an intensive course of at least one week before starting your internship. If you intend to work in development in Latin America, you will need to learn Spanish anyway. Quito is one of the best places to learn Spanish, the locals speak relatively slowly and clearly, and Spanish classes are widely available and not expensive. We can help you arrange Spanish lessons in Quito before you start your internship with us. Some Spanish instruction is included in the intern program and we may be able to help you arrange extra classes (at your own expense) if you wish.

When is the best time to intern?

Our work continues all year round and there is always something to do. The dry season in this area is usually from around June to December, although this varies from year to year. The wet season, from around January to late May, can cause travel delays at times, but there is always some indoor or sheltered work to do such as project planning, training, teaching or implementing indoor projects. University holidays (June to September for Europe, December to February for Australia) can book up quite early, so do apply as soon as possible.

How do I apply?

To apply for an internship with us, send your c.v. and a brief explanation of why you want to intern, why you think you would be a good intern and what you expect to gain from the experience. Note any special requirements from your university or college about what your internship must cover. Make sure you tell us the level of your Spanish language skills. Email this to the address from which you received this document or to intern@progresoverde.org. Let us know when you want to intern and for how long. Note that start dates are Thursdays.

People here are waiting to welcome you.



A warm welcome awaits you in the rural communities of Ecuador
Photo thanks to volunteer Paul Bamford