

Community Development Internships – Nutrition with CRACYP for Progreso Verde (“Green Progress”)



2013

Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the Internship Information Pack available at <http://www.progresoverde.org/internship.html>

CRACYP works in numerous communities in the Cotopaxi, Bolivar, and Los Rios provinces of Ecuador, and combating malnutrition in the area is high priority for our organization. Due to cultural practices, lack of education, and extreme poverty, malnutrition is a very common problem. Local farmers have become dependent on the cash crop of sugarcane and choose to buy most of their food in the market rather than cultivating plots and orchards for home consumption. When their incomes from sugarcane are not sufficient to afford food in the market, they subsist on yucca, plantains, rice, the occasional chicken, and very little else. Many people exhibit numerous symptoms of severe malnutrition, such as the temporary loss of the use of their limbs. Obesity is also a widespread problem; although they generally include high calorie foods such as deep fried plantains and sugary drinks, diets are sorely lacking in protein, vitamins, and minerals.

Objectives

We need nutritionist interns to implement relevant programs in CRACYP communities. This may include, but is not limited to, the development and piloting of training programs through community workshops, farm visits, school lessons, or afterschool programs. All programs should be interactive and participatory and should be designed so that even non-readers can gain from participation, given the high illiteracy rates particularly among women. Themes may include how to eat the correct ratio of macronutrients, eating colorful food for vitamins and minerals, preparing fruits and vegetables, cooking techniques other than deep frying, etc.

In particular, lessons and workshops should focus on training and educating mothers, since they generally control the nutrition of their families. Mothers of young children and pregnant women are particularly important to target, since studies show that good nutrition is most vital for children from the neo-natal stage – 5 years of age.

If your time permits, you may also work with some of the poorest community members to identify which nutrients are most lacking in their diets. Then you can work to plant kitchen gardens and fruit trees so that they can grow some of their own produce that best reflects their nutritional needs. This is vital for the assurance of both food security and proper nutrition for local families.

Location

You will be based in the picturesque little village of Jilimbí in Bolivar 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 will work in various communities near the border between the Bolivar and Cotopaxi provinces.

Requirements

Nutritionist interns will need to either be fairly independent or else have access to advice by email from their university or other sources (e.g. health organization), if needed. CRACYP's Volunteer Coordinator has limited experience with health and nutrition education, though he will be available for support via translation if needed. Spanish language skills are extremely relevant. Interns should also have experience working outdoors in a somewhat physically demanding environment and should be aware that this program will require great cultural sensitivity.

How to Apply

Read the Internship Information Pack for details of how to apply.

