



www.redsemillas.org

The Seed Guardian Network (Red de Guardianes de Semillas, RGS) is a not for profit, grassroots organization that works for the conservation and use of traditional organic seeds and related knowledge in the Tropical Andes, aiming to build a sustainable future.

We believe that without the culture that supports it, the seed is nothing but an empty receptacle. Thus we research, preserve and promote old & new skills that can help us build a sustainable future, such as nutrition, alternative economics, natural building and appropriate technologies .

RGS is formed by people who work directly with nature, organic production, and local culture. Seed Guardians, as we call them, are heirs to a very ancient culture, living in one of the more important hotspots of agricultural diversity. The incredible genetic and cultural wealth of the Tropical Andes is being lost today at an alarming rate, and thus the Seed Guardians' work is a most needed one.

VOLUNTEERING IN CAIMITO ECOVILLAGE AND COMUNITY

Volunteers on this program will work in Caimito for a period of one year, being able to work in the Ecovillage plots, gardens, and with the community.

CAIMITO

Caimito is located in the northern coast of Ecuador, in Esmeraldas Province. In Caimito near Quingue, a few houses along the road face the ocean up on a cliff, surrounded by tropical forests. George Fletcher, an ecuadorian-peruvian biologist and permaculturalist

has made his home there, in a small campesino home, along his wife and little son. George manages several friend's properties in Caimito, using agroforestry as a technique for protecting forests and producing fruits, grains and roots. One of these properties is a project called Caimito Ecovillage, owned by people from Quito who are planning to come and live in Caimito in a few years.

Volunteers will work on the farm during a year, being able as well to have a deeper contact with the surrounding community.

George created, with local campesinos, an association of producers called Ecocacao. This organization is rebuilding old cacao orchards in a permaculture way, and producing high quality fine aroma cacao for national use and fair international trade. In 2009, George started an Agroecology School with members of Ecocacao, to share and experiment with theoretical concepts and practical techniques of agroecology, adapting them to local conditions.

ACTIVITIES:

- Agroforestry plots management.
- Seed production and storage.
- Cacao harvesting
- trabajar en mantenimiento y establecimiento de parcelas agroforestales, huertos familiares y sembríos de plantas anuales.
- Poda de cacao (sept-nov) y cosecha (jun-sept);
- Siembra y cosecha de cultivos anuales.
- Huertas familiares se siembra y cosecha todo el año;
- Help with new volunteers and national & foreign students.
- General support for Caimito Ecovillage house and gardens: cleaning, repairing, etc...

VOLUNTEER PROFILE:

The first requirement for this volunteering program is the will to learn about sustainability, and the curiosity and respect for local cultures.

At RGS we are very clear that we want a sharing of experiences among equals. So we look for people prepared to listen and learn with humility, understanding deeply the local reality, before giving advice and providing solutions. The solutions must rise from the local culture. Volunteers are important because they can serve as cultural bridges, helping local people to understand the western world.

Volunteers will have the opportunity of experimenting traditional ways of life in different regions of Ecuador. They will be part of daily activities of families and communities.

We value volunteers that establish an exchange of knowledge, which means that meanwhile they learn, they also share things they know or are good for.

Some important characteristics for volunteers are:

- Willing to do hard work in agriculture, carpentry, building. No previous training is needed.
- Willing to awake before dawn, when needed.
- In all places sanitation is complete, but requires a certain adaptation from the volunteer, having wood / cane structures, dry compost toilets, cold water, etc.
- Volunteers must be clean and organized, taking care of their own places.
- Volunteers are expected to help in cleaning and house chores, cooking, etc.
- We prefer non smokers and people who consume only small quantities of alcohol. Drugs are not allowed.
- We respect political and religious choices, and expect the same from volunteers. Local societies are very traditional, thus we kindly ask an understanding of local realities, before voicing carefully personal opinions.

Volunteers need to be interested in at least one of the following topics:

- Permaculture,
- Agroecology,
- Seed processing and conservation,
- Fair trade systems,
- Renewable energies,
- Appropriated technologies,
- Animal caring,
- Natural alimentation.

The appropriated age to apply on this program is between 18 and 30 years old.