

In partnership with people of diverse cultures, GCN promotes cross-cultural understanding and interconnectedness through authentic immersion experiences.

Afro-Ecuadorian Community

Ecuador – the middle of the world - is divided into four regions: the Costa, the Sierra, the Oriente, and the Galápagos Islands. One of the world's most famous mountain ranges- the Andes, bisects Ecuador from north to south. Ecuador is a land of geographical extremes, with the Andes mountain range with peaks rising almost 20,000 feet. Ecuador enjoys tremendous tourism and notoriety gained from the world famous Galápagos Islands which are approximately 660 miles (1000km) off the coast. A leading country in community participatory tourism, Ecuador is well known for its wide array of flora and fauna, cultural diversity, and strong, independent indigenous groups. Bordering the Esmeraldas and Imbabura provinces, this area is home to many Afro-Ecuadorian communities who live a traditional way of life very different than that of the rest of Ecuador. Africans were brought to the country during the Atlantic slave trade; today Afro-Ecuadorians comprise between 5 -10% of the country's population and remain marginalized from society, with limited political involvement and economic development.

Community Development, Tumbatu Style

The villagers of Tumbatu have invited GCN to partner with them on a variety of community projects, possibly including creating a community plaza, building irrigation ditches and making repairs to other community buildings. The residents of Tumbatu, who often feel disenfranchised from mainstream Ecuadorian society and politics, are highly welcoming and eager to further develop the relationship with future GCN teams.



Travel Itinerary

The first day of the trip is a travel day; team members should schedule to arrive in the capital city of Quito on the first day, where they will meet the other team members and spend the evening. The team will have the next day and half in Quito, to acclimatize, rest or explore. Quito is a fascinating colonial capital with extensive markets, historical buildings and museums. Sunday the team will travel via public bus about three hours to Tumbatu, and get settled into their lodgings, meet community members and plan the work project. Generally work on the project will be conducted Monday through Friday, with plenty of time available to interact in numerous other ways with community members. At the end of the trip, team members will return via the same route to Quito, where they will spend the last evening of the GCN experience. Participants are free to extend their stay past the end date of the GCN trip to explore some of Ecuador's captivating areas.



Accommodation and Meals

The team may home stay with community families or lodge as a group in one of the community buildings such as a school room. Some of the community homes have bathroom facilities such as toilets and showers, others do not. Team meals will be eaten as a group and prepared by a local woman; team members can assist with cooking and cleaning. Purified water will be made available at all times for drinking and cooking.

TUMBATU, ECUADOR



Time to Explore

The GCN experience is time in the host community, which allows for plenty of time to get to know the local community in your own way.

Often team members like to explore the surrounding area for an occasional day trip. There is much to explore in and around Ibarra, the nearby colonial capital of Imbabura. In the immediate area you will find several waterfalls, rafting, hiking, horse-back riding opportunities or relaxing natural hot springs, not to mention the paramos of El Angel

Ecological Reserve and the Gruta de la Paz (Grotto of Peace). This area is most famous for artisan markets - the biggest is in Otavalo, where indigenous people from dozens of local villages meet in the Plaza de los Ponchos to display their handcrafted textiles.

Many participants build in time before or after the GCN experience to explore the country even more. There are many options, such as Tena, the gateway to the Amazon jungle, several hours from Ibarra and Cayambe. Moreover, Mindo-Nambillo Forest Reserve is just one hour west of Quito, offering cloud forest tours and access to a delightful butterfly reserve. Quito is easily connected by air or land to other major attractions such as Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, and Cuenca. *It is important to note that July/August is peak tourist season in Ecuador and all accommodations for free time should be made in advance.

Health and Safety Issues

Participants are required to be in sound health. Potential participants with significant physical limitations are encouraged to check with their physician and discuss the situation with GCN staff beforehand. Some inoculations as well as provisions for high altitude may be required. Check with your local travel clinic or the Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/> for accurate information.

Ecuador is a developing democracy, and its political situation is stable. The United States State Department web site <http://www.state.gov/travel/> is a good place to get updated on travel advisories in Ecuador and other countries.

Dates:

June 16-July 6, 2012 & July 30-August 8, 2012

** Trip dates subject to change – check with GCN office to confirm details*

** Special trips can be arranged for an intact group of 6 or more*

Program fee: \$2,150 USD

Program costs cover on-site accommodations (lodging and meals), in-country travel, training materials, donation to the project, emergency medical and evacuation insurance, t-shirt, and a portion of the team leader's expenses. Airfare to Quito, and costs relating to activities outside of the village, are additional and the responsibility of the individual participant.

All trip related costs are **tax-deductible** in the U.S.

Discounts available. One per person/group:

\$50 returning participants

\$50 early registration (application in at least four months prior to the first date of the trip)

Youth rates for ages 8-15

Groups: Four participants, one person goes half-price. Eight participants, one person goes free.

Contact us for further information:

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