Country Information
Located east of the famous and historical Galapagos Islands, Ecuador contains within its borders a variety of landscapes and cultures! Considered a microcosm of South America, Ecuador offers mountains (Quito is at 9,000 feet), jungle, beaches, Inca ruins, indigenous communities, and the Galapagos Islands. Depending on your length of stay and interests, your group program will include a visit to the famous Equator line, an indigenous clinic and local markets. Your group may work in one of the most beautiful capital cities of South America, Quito, or in another location that is also a perfect place to begin exploring Ecuador.

Projects

VOLUNTEERING IN YUNGUILLAS COMMUNITY
Yunguillas is a rural community located only an hour away from the north of Quito, off the major roadway from Calacali. Yunguillas is in the cloud forest at an altitude of 2,650 meters above sea level. Over the past 20 years, community members have been working to improve their quality of life while protecting their natural resources, developing sustainable activities, and creating a hospitable and welcoming community. Residents of Yunguillas have seen positive environmental impacts and share their successes with volunteers.

This volunteer project is ideal for individuals interested in environmental sustainability and social entrepreneurship.

According to your interests, the needs of the community and previous conversations, each volunteer is given a timetable. It can include tasks such as:
ACTIVITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

- Living with host families (sharing the family’s food and accommodation).
- **Dairy Processing and jams**: Work is in the Tahuallullo smallholding, where you can participate in the production of cheese, yogurt, milk products, jams and handicrafts.
- **Environmental Education**: We need volunteers to support the development of an environmental education program for the children of Yunguillas.
- **Forest Research**: You can also contribute greatly to the research of non-timber resources of the area (orchids, bromeliads, medicinal plants), or to other aspects, such as environmental services.
- **Organic gardening**: You can participate in activities such as planting, weeding, harvest and postharvest, bed preparation, and everything related to the maintenance and production of the organic gardens of the families of the community. For this you will always work with someone who’s in charge. This will help you gain practical knowledge of organic agriculture.
- **Tahuallullo Community House**: Your support in building and maintaining trails, the camping area, the recreation area, all the infrastructure proposed in the management plan, and in the maintenance of facilities, is key. These activities are coordinated and have the backing of the Ecotourism project coordinator for the community. You can also be directly involved in the ecotourism operation.
- **Family Farms**: You can participate in agricultural tasks and forestry (reforestation) on the farms of the members of the community organization, which also form part of the Bosque Protector Guayllabamba River Upper Basin (CARG). These activities are carried out with the participation of family members.
- **Participation in community Mingas**: The community has a tradition of doing “mingas” to perform works of common benefit. This activity is a great opportunity to share with the community and for formal and informal socialization.
- If relevant, volunteers have the option of participating in social events, sports and/or festivals that take place in the community.
- If you have other knowledge, experience and skills that can be utilized, special work can be arranged.

**The volunteer must bring**: Rubber boots (can be purchased in Quito for $8), rain poncho, torch, insect repellent, sunscreen, sun hat or cap, work gloves, and comfortable/warm clothes in layers. We recommend long sleeves for any outdoor work and things that dry quickly.

**Accommodations and Meals**
In Quito, your group will live in a group hostel (B&B) that includes breakfast and Wi-Fi access. You will also be provided with a welcome and farewell dinner. You will stay with host families in Yunguillas. They have single, double or triple rooms for volunteers. The host families will offer 3 meals per day; they have experience hosting vegetarians, vegans and any other food diet.
Transportation
Volunteers will be provided with a private van for the duration of their stay. This will include transport to/from the airport, to the project sites and all excursions included in the itinerary. Transportation for other sightseeing and individually arranged excursions will be at the expense of the volunteers.

Insurance, Health and Safety
United Planet provides emergency medical insurance for all its participants. Detailed policy and benefit information will be provided as well as the emergency number to call if you are treated for any medical issues. Insurance also covers baggage loss up to $500 and trip interruption due to extraordinary circumstances. We highly recommend booking an appointment with your doctor or at a travel clinic a few months before your departure to update your vaccinations and to discuss any medical-related concerns. Your doctor can recommend the appropriate vaccinations and travel medicine and you are invited to read the [CDC’s recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) for your destination. Please see our [Health and Safety page](#) for more information.

Program Fee per Person
The fee for the 1-week group Quest described in the itinerary below is $1,695.

Included in the Program Fee:
- Pre-departure training and support
- Orientation upon arrival & activities
- Medical insurance
- Accommodations & most meals
- Local cell phone for group leader
- 24/7 in-country support
- Round trip airport transfers
- Transport while in-country
- Customized itinerary

Not included in the Program Fee: Airfare to Quito, Ecuador, visa fees (none required for U.S. passport holders), vaccinations, 2 lunches during travel/excursion days, personal spending money
**Excursions/Activities**

Group activities and excursions can be customized to the interests of your group. The itineraries below include the following:

- Quito City Tour
- Visit to the equator-Mitad del Mundo
- Lecture on local topic of interest (Quito programs)
- Day trip to Otavalo
- 1 formal Spanish lesson (Quito programs)
- Salsa dance lesson (Quito programs)

Additional excursions (for extra cost):

- Cooking lesson
- Visit to Mindalae Cultural Museum
- Visit to Mindo - includes tubing or a trip to a butterfly garden, and artisanal chocolate tour
- Hike in the Papallacta Hot Springs

All group Quests include Welcome and Farewell dinners.
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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Arrive at Quito airport (pm) transfer to your hostel&lt;br&gt;Accommodation: Hostel in Quito</td>
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<td>Day 2</td>
<td>After breakfast orientation of the Quest at the hostel&lt;br&gt;City tour of Quito&lt;br&gt;Visit the Equator line&lt;br&gt;Welcome dinner&lt;br&gt;Accommodation: Hostel in Quito</td>
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<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Breakfast at the hostel&lt;br&gt;Drive to Yunguillas community&lt;br&gt;Introduction of the project by the coordinator of the community.&lt;br&gt;Group activity with members of the community&lt;br&gt;Accommodation: Host families</td>
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<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Volunteer work at the community&lt;br&gt;Accommodation: Host families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Volunteer work at the community&lt;br&gt;Accommodation: Host families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 6</td>
<td>Volunteer work at the community&lt;br&gt;Accommodation: Host families</td>
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<td>Day 7</td>
<td>Breakfast at the project&lt;br&gt;Start driving back your hostel in Quito&lt;br&gt;Time to visit the indigenous market of la Mariscal&lt;br&gt;Farewell dinner in a local restaurant in Quito&lt;br&gt;Accommodation: Hostel in Quito</td>
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<td>Day 8</td>
<td>Transfer to the airport</td>
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