

Experienced Volunteers Needed!

January 17 – 24, 2025 or

January 25 – February 1, 2025

Join the Tandana Foundation's Service-Learning Experience

Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteers & Friends



Who: *Pam Bennett and Jen Andon* are organizing two weeks in highland Ecuador especially designed for knowledgeable gardeners. This will be MGVs 12th trip, and participants are still excited about the wonderful adventures experienced in previous years. The Tandana Foundation was started in 2006 by Anna Taft to work with indigenous communities in Ecuador and Mali to help them reach their goals.

What: *An MGV Service-Learning Experience*, where we will be working with various community groups with horticultural type projects (from reforestation, helping a community plant trees, assisting a school or helping to plant crops) and sightseeing the other half. The group size is limited to 14 people, but at least 10 per week are needed to make the trip possible. There will be orientations the morning after we arrive to get us acquainted with the group and learn of our finalized agenda.

When

Week 1: Leave from an airport convenient to your location on January 17, 2025, and arrive in Ecuador in the evening (Currently there is a flight into Quito at 8:25 pm). Depart Ecuador late on Friday, January 24, 2025 (after 10 p.m. Friday or after midnight) and arrive in Ohio on Saturday morning, January 25.

Week 2: Leave from an airport convenient to your location on January 25, 2025, and arrive in Ecuador in the evening (Currently there is a flight into Quito at 8:25 pm). Depart Ecuador late on Saturday, Feb 1, 2025 (after 10 p.m. Friday or after midnight) and arrive in Ohio on Sunday morning, February 2.

We need to all arrive and depart Quito together to catch the shuttle to and from our hotel which is just under two hours away from the airport. Travel before or after your Tandana experience is an individual option.

Where: In the Andean highlands outside Otavalo, Ecuador. Lodging will be at La Posada del Quinde in Otavalo, a lovely inn with great food, free Wi-Fi service and friendly staff. Ecuador is a beautiful country on the equator in South America that is on the Eastern time zone and uses US dollars. Spanish is the major language. Tandana will provide group leaders who are fluent in Spanish. The weather should be above the 70's during the day and cooler at night.

Why: To help 23 communities who have banded together to create an operating nursery to raise native trees to plant in their watersheds to protect their water supplies. We will be collecting seeds or seedlings,

potting-up seedlings, planting trees, etc. We will also learn about another culture and biome. For more information on the nursery, see www.tandanafoundation.org/muyu.html.

Cost (Tentative): \$1550 double occupancy, \$150 additional for single occupancy. Plus: airfare and personal expenses. The trip fee covers all the basic expenses (food, lodging, transportation, activities) from when you land at the Quito airport until you return to the airport at the end of the week. You will be responsible for making your own plane reservation. We will share the parameters for your arrival and departure flights. This worked very well for our previous trips, allowing some to use frequent flyer miles, etc. Airfare will be anywhere from \$500 to \$1100 roundtrip depending on when you make your reservation and from which city from which you are departing. We do not recommend making reservations until we confirm we have the minimum of 10 participants for the trip. We have never had to cancel, but we like to be cautious.

How to sign up: Please complete initial registration [HERE](#) to reserve your spot and include a non-refundable deposit for \$500 (make the check out to Tandana Foundation). Only when your deposit has been received can your spot be finalized. Places on the trip are on a first come basis. Final payment is due by October 1, 2024. Jen's address: 675 Park Road, Worthington, OH 43085. Her email address is: andon.1@osu.edu. If you need to discuss anything her the number is: 614-216-4288.

The Tandana Foundation

Weaving friendships ~ Empowering communities
www.tandanafoundation.org ~ info@tandanafoundation.org

Expectations for MGV Participants

Our mission on this trip is to provide service to the communities. Through the Tandana Foundation relationships, we are able to help in a variety of settings not available to tourists visiting the area. This is a special and unique opportunity to meet and work with the indigenous people.

As a volunteer you are expected to:

- ✓ Join in the work and leisure activities each day. The only excuse for not participating is illness.
- ✓ Be able to walk up steep hills and work on steep inclines for 1 to 4 hours at a stretch. Physically you need to be able to walk on your own up hills without danger to your wellbeing. Keep in mind the elevation may affect your breathing and level of activity.
- ✓ Be able to ride in a bus travelling along steep, winding and sometimes very narrow roads.
- ✓ Have a positive work attitude and be flexible to changes and delays

What to expect

- A life changing experience that you will value the rest of your life.
- Meeting indigenous people who are beautiful and live a simple life.
- Working with children who will steal your heart and make you admire their way of life.
- We are headquartered in Otavalo, Ecuador. This city is at an altitude of 8,000 feet above sea level.

Some may experience altitude sickness; staying well hydrated will help alleviate symptoms but headaches can occur. Bottled drinking water is provided but it is your responsibility to drink it.

- The terrain is very mountainous, steep and dramatically scenic.
- You will be asked to work at altitudes as high as 11,000 feet above sea level.
- Ride a bus each day to travel to various remote communities. Although the roads have improved greatly since 2013; some may be gravel and dirt with rockslides along the way. Consider travel sickness aids such as patches and bracelets.
- You may be using the outdoors as your bathroom. There are not always facilities available.
- You will make friends and meet MGVs from around the state and have a memorable experience.

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