Green Life Volunteers

Puerto Jimenez, Costa Rica

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Solar Power Project – A Hands On Workshop

Project Handbook

Location: Puerto Jimenez, Costa Rica

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1. Project overview

The goal of this project is to provide renewable power to neglected rural communities in Costa Rica where it would otherwise be absent. There are significant social, economic, and environmental benefits to increasing access to renewable energy we hope to implement through this program. Not only does it create opportunities that vastly improve the quality of life for the community at hand, it also reduces overall carbon emissions and as a clean, viable alternative to common options such as running a generator, burning tires, or using toxic kerosene lamps.

Costa Rica is a global leader in renewable energy. The Costa Rican electrical grid operates largely on two abundant renewable energy sources; hydropower and geothermal. You can read more about how Costa Rica became the first in the world 100% powered by renewable energy for 75 straight days. We see this being all the more reason to hold an educational workshop on solar power in this beautiful location! However, this does not tell the whole story. There is estimated to be well over 20,000 rural farmers, families, and organizations without any reliable power on the outskirts of Southern Costa Rica alone. Unfortunately, these families and groups are too scattered and widespread to make it economically viable to connect all of them to the existing, largely renewably sourced, electrical grid in Costa Rica. This is where we come in, providing power through education.

Neglected regions such as this are prevalent all throughout Central and South America—an estimated **1.2 billion** people around the world also face similar living standards. We believe providing this basic necessity is one of the most important objectives of our time and our goal is to fulfill this need within our region.

If we can provide even a small amount of power to these areas their quality of life can be vastly improved. Through education, training, and sharing of resources we aim to spread the benefits of solar technology to this beautiful local community. This program is designed to serve this community while educating participants from all over the world.

We provide all the materials for the workshop and have established industry professionals instructing and leading the course to ensure the highest quality educational experience possible providing the most streamlined practical training for everyday use. The idea is that throughout the course the participants learn how a solar panel works, the process of proper installation, and even basic principles by making panels from scratch. This all happens free of charge for the community – we are donating the solar systems to local non-profit organizations, farms and rural families who are in dire need of this clean energy source.

2. Project location

The Solar Workshop is held in Puerto Jimenez on the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica. The Osa Peninsula boasts 2.5% of the world's biodiversity, and is the most biodiverse region in Costa Rica. The communities are still quite poor, more so than in other parts of Costa Rica. The area around Puerto Jimenez is unique and beautiful.

Puerto Jimenez has grown to be one of the largest towns on the Osa Peninsula. Located in the southern part of the Puntarenas province, this laidback town is one of the main gateways to the beautiful Corcovado National Park. The last town before one can enter the park premises; a main ranger station is situated here with many tourists using this town to stock up on supplies before they trek their way through the gorgeous and diverse wildlife that the Corcovado National Park has to offer.

Situated in the Golfo Dulce, Puerto Jimenez has a wonderful beach where one can relax while taking in the superb beauty of the Osa Peninsula. This tiny 'frontier' town has a good number of hotel and resorts, both affordable and luxurious, with many rental tour companies and travel agencies in the area from where trips around the region can be arranged. Transportation can also be organized from Puerto Jimenez, that way if you get bored you can head out to the lovely remote village of Cabo Matapalo, which is famous in the region for its awesome surf breaks. Throughout the course, we make sure you will get some "down time" and you will be able to enjoy what the Osa has to offer. We will also arrange for some extra activities, like surfing or stand up paddling or Dolphin/Whale watching that you can participate in while on the course.

3. Mission, Vision, Goals

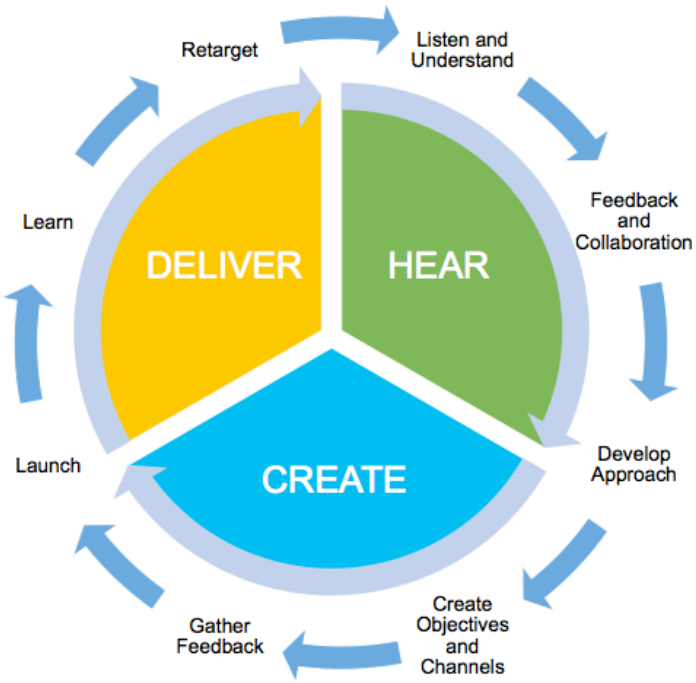
We believe educating the world on clean energy such as solar technology is one of the most important objectives of our time. We are developing a framework and process that will provide sustainable development at a local level. Proper education and training, with access to the necessary resources can be a game changer for local communities lacking basic necessities such as adequate clean power.

This program is designed to educate participants from all over the world on the benefits of solar power alongside local community members. This dynamic will offer a truly culturally immersive experience and learning environment.

The mission of this project has two primary objectives. The first is to provide the highest quality education in solar photovoltaic technology possible providing the most streamlined practical training for everyday use. This means that all participants will leave having a solid understanding of the technology through a culturally immersive and hands on experience. The feedback from participants is vital to continuous improvement. Please refer to our learning objectives for more details on the educational experience we provide.

The secondary objective goes hand in hand with our first stated goal, which is to significantly reduce

that estimated number of 20,000 people living without power throughout the region. We anticipate this short course to be offered more consistently throughout the year as we progress. We also hope to leverage this program to find ways to install more systems outside of the workshop to increase our impact. We will accomplish this as we move forward by engaging the local community through what is called a *human centered design approach*.



Source: https://www.sprinklr.com/social-scale-blog/human-centered-design/

Human Centered Design Process

This means that the project is actively seeking input and engagement from the local community alongside visiting participants to continually improve the design of the course. This is done with the intent to fulfill, respect, and enhance local community needs while respecting their culture and values. For example, the locations we choose for installations are selected very carefully to ensure it fulfills the expectations of all stakeholders involved. After all, we consider ourselves blessed to share and experience this amazing slice of earth with people who have called this region home for generations.

The following are ongoing goals of the program that provide us with motivation and guidance as we grow:

- Implement solutions that fulfill the off grid energy needs of the region
- Engage & employ as many locals as possible in the program
- Every participant, regardless of their experience in the solar field, leaves with a stronger understanding of solar technology than they had coming into the workshop.
- Identify, monitor, and measure identified key metrics to ensure success of program
- Every participant leaves, at a minimum, with an understanding of essential principles including how solar photovoltaic systems work, the process of proper site analysis, system design and installation, alongside other basic principles
- Complete transparency with participants and local community
- Identify ideal locations throughout the region benefiting the most from solar power

- Provide basic, remedial career counseling in the solar industry on an as needed basis
- Ensure the learning environment is hands on, engaged, and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone involved!

4. About Our Workshop Locations

Solar power is a leverage point that can have ripple effects on economic, social, and environmental prosperity. With a prevalent lack of off grid power throughout the region, selecting the right site for our solar workshop is vital to meet the goals of this project. The workshop will have **two** independent locations, each with unique energy demands and requirements. We are currently assessing ideal candidates in off grid locations in the following categories and will notify all participants of the specific locations prior to the workshop commencement:

- ***Local Farms:*** For a farm, access to power can significantly enhance crop quality and production. Better food means better eating and a healthier way of life for the community.

- ***Rural Families:*** For families living without reliable electricity, life can be very difficult in so many ways we take for granted. For example, the evening hours of young students are spent crouched over a candle or kerosene lamp as they try to attend to their studies. The light is poor and unsteady, the smoke black, dirty and toxic. The open flame is a fire hazard and the fuel is costly, using up as much as 30 percent of the family's income. Ideally, these families should have a reliable source of power to operate several lights, charge a cell phone, and run a radio. If we can provide even this small amount of power their quality of life will be vastly improved.

- ***Nonprofits Organizations:*** Local organizations that offer an economic, social, or environmental benefit to the region whose energy needs are not being met are ideal candidates for our workshop.

5. Workshop Learning Objectives & Curriculum

1. **The case for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and conservation**

- Brief overview on state of the worlds energy demands
- Explaining the benefits all renewable energies share
- Overview of Costa Rica and Osa Peninsula Energy Demands
- Innovations in Increasing Access to Solar Power
- Brief introduction into solar cooking, solar hot water, solar-, wind-, and hydro-electricity

2. **Basics of electricity**
   - Addressing the two types of electrical current
   - The relationship between volts, amps, amp-hours, watts, watt-hours
   - Perform power and energy calculations

3. **Photovoltaic modules and the PV system**
   - Understanding the history of PV technology development and the differences among various PV cell technologies
   - How a PV cell produces electricity from sunlight
   - The parts of the system and how they work together
   - Testing modules with a multimeter
   - Predicting the effects of temperature and irradiance on voltage and current values
   - The schematics of different PV system configurations such as PV direct, stand alone, grid direct, grid-tied with battery back up
   - Basics of Service Panel Connections
   - The characteristics of Series and Parallel Connections with Modules

4. **Job site safety**
   - Precautionary Measures, Procedures and Protocol for Installation

5. **Solar site analysis and system installation**
   - System sizing; basic tools and procedures
   - Implementing efficiency and optimal battery
   - Using a sun chart to determine the azimuth and altitude angles of the sun alongside the magnetic declination for a given site
   - Analyze the amount of sunlight available for a particular solar window
   - Identifying the tilt angle and orientation to provide maximum energy production for a given site
   - Evaluate site-specific criteria for mounting options; examine roof, ground, and pole mounts
   - Introduction to Grounding, Wiring, Disconnects, Overcurrent Protection, and Series Fusing

6. Travel and accommodation

We will meet with all workshop participants in San Jose on the arrival day. Two days before the project starts you have to arrive in Costa Rica. We will pick you up from the airport and all of the workshop participants will meet at the hotel/hostel where we will spend the night. The next day we will travel by bus to Puerto Jimenez, where the project will take place. A Green Life Volunteers staff or instructor will be with the group at all times. You will just have to travel to Costa Rica by yourself, and we will be there at the airport to greet you! ☺

All Solar Panel Workshop participants will be accommodated in a host family. The host family will provide two or three meals a day, this depend on our activities. You will be spending time with local Costa Ricans, who not may speak English that well, but the coordinator and the teacher on site speak English. It will give you the opportunity to fully immerse yourself in Costa Rican culture.

7. Volunteer duties

As a participant on the Solar Panel Workshop you will gain an understanding of the basic engineering principles of photovoltaic power. The Solar Panels are made from scratch, and as a volunteer you will construct, and install them for the local community. You will also help to educate the community about renewable energy.

Volunteer's Responsibilities Include:

- Help install Solar Panels
- Participate in the Solar Panel workshop
- Learn how Solar Panels are installed and maintained
- Help assemble all the Solar System parts
- Educate the community about renewable energy

8. Preliminary Itinerary

DATES for our Course 2016: 18th June – 2nd July 2016

Date	Activities
Day 1	Arrival day. Everyone has to book their flights to arrive around this day. First night in San Jose in a hostel as group.
Day 2	Travel to Puerto Jimenez as a group. Arrival in Puerto Jimenez, and settling into accommodations/ host families.
Day 3	First working day Introduction to solar panel installations, presentations, first lessons.
Day 4	Second working day Theory lessons and practical work: how to make a solar panel?
Day 5	Third working day Solar Panel constructions. Begin of planning community solar event.
Day 6	Fourth working day Solar Panel constructions/installations.
Day 7	Day off for participants and staff Optional activities around the Osa Peninsula.
Day 8	Fifth working day Solar Panel installations. Educational day-preparing the solar panel educational and informational material.
Day 9	Sixth working day Solar Panel installations. Educational day-preparing the solar panel educational and informational material.
Day 10	Educational day-preparing the solar panel educational and informational material.
Day 11	Educational day/event/festival teaching kids and community about solar panels.
Day 12	Last day and last night activities!

Day 13	Transport back to San Jose, one last night at hostel/hotel
Day 14	Flight out of Costa Rica. You may choose to stay on in Costa Rica for longer. This is up to the course participant.

***Note that we may have to move some activities/planned events around on short notice, and that this is a preliminary schedule. Things may change according to our instructor's availability, and the family's availability where Solar Panels are installed.

9. Costs of Solar Power Project

The mission and goals of this program cannot be accomplished without the financial contribution of the participants, who are the lifeblood of this non-profit endeavor. The vast majority of money collected from the participants go directly towards the solar systems we install, food and lodging accommodations, and compensation for our hard working staff.

Here is an estimated breakdown of the major costs the program fee will provide (please note some of these costs are approximated and may differ in the final course):

Project Cost and Expenses	**$1200**
From that we'll pay for you:	
Accommodation and Food	$300
Transportation	$200
Instructor / staff costs	$300
Program Materials	$200
Solar System Costs	$200

10. Project supervisor and staff

There will be Green Life Volunteers staff and/or Solar Panel staff present to guide the group. There will be instructors and coordinators with the group at all times. Your project supervisor will be Green Life Volunteers staff and workshop teachers. They will take care of you during the workshop and they will help you with anything you need. If you have further questions or need help you can contact Green Life Volunteers any time.

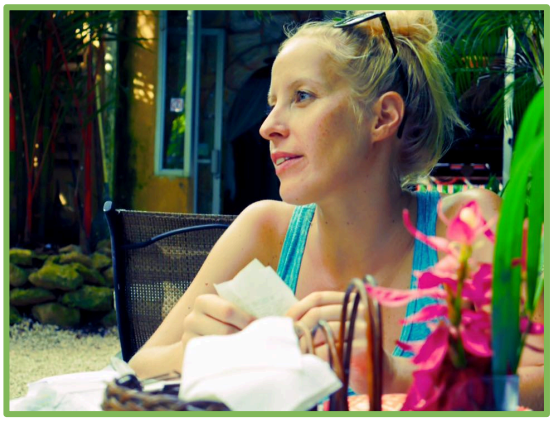
Contact: Janina Schan - Coordinator and Green Life Volunteers Program Manager

Cell: +506 8570 0710

E-mail: info@glvolunteers.com

10.1 Introduction of GLV Staff

Janina Schan – Owner of Green Life Volunteers, Co-founder of "Solar Power Project – A Hands On Workshop"



Janina has a Masters in Environmental Studies and has visited the COP Climate Change Conferences. She has studied renewable energies and has been involved in the renewable energy area for years. Janina is also the founder and manager of Green Life Volunteers, and co-founder and co-manager of the Solar Power Project in Costa Rica. She will be on site the entire workshop and will organize logistics and everything administratively around the Workshop.

Janina is responsible for all organizational and logistical aspects of the course. She's taking care of housing and host families for course participants, will meet everyone in San Jose, and make sure everyone is well taken care of. She's also leading the educational aspects of the course (solar educational event), to help educate people in the area about solar energy.

Richie Aronson* – Co-founder of *"Solar Power Project – A Hands On Workshop"

Richie is a solar energy professional with an MBA in Sustainable Systems from Pinchot University, which is consistently ranked as one of the top programs within the United States for social and environmental impact. Also as a cofounder of the Solar Power Project, he will be on site assisting with the workshop to help ensure all participants receive the highest quality education possible during their two week stay. He is interested in the multitude of economic and community benefits solar technology provides when proper education, training, and implementation is brought to the table. He played collegiate basketball in Southern California, has a lifelong passion for athletics, and looks forward to collaborating with the local community of Osa Peninsula on renewable energy solutions for the region.

Richie will help throughout the workshop with theory and practical workshop aspects, and lead the construction of small solar systems, which the course participants will build themselves.

Brad Mobly – Primary Course Instructor and Primary Installer of Solar Systems

Brad moved to Costa Rica 22 years ago after earning a degree in residential construction from Florida State University.The first half of his time in Costa Rica was spent in Guanacaste working in a dive and sail charter business. Managing the DC electrical systems on boats was his introduction to alternative forms of energy production. In 2006 he sailed a boat he bought in California to the Osa Peninsula where he began working as a solar installer and systems designer on both off grid and grid tied systems. Today he has a business that installs, maintains and services off grid solar systems on the Osa Peninsula. He is also a marine electrician and most recently completed a NABCEP certified solar training program at Outback Power in Washington State.

Brad will be the primary course instructor of theory classes and solar installation classes of the workshop. He'll also supervise and install Solar Systems with course participants.

Keith Bonarrigo - Advisor

Keith is the founder of the GreenGo Solar Project in Baja, California and has accumulated over six years of invaluable experience with off grid solar technology through his nonprofit efforts. Keith is a field instructor, linguist, community liaison, and program coordinator. He is fluent in English, Spanish, and Brazilian Portuguese. He splits his time living between Seattle and Baja where he conducts solar workshops for the local community. He enjoys many hobbies - among them are surfing, snowboarding, skiing, skateboarding, martial arts, travel, and language.

11. Emergency contacts- volunteer coordinator

Please bring with you the phone number below just in case something happens (you miss a connecting flight, lose luggage, etc.) and need to contact the project.

Contact: Janina Schan - Coordinator and Green Life Volunteers Program Manager

Cell: +506 8570 0710

E-mail: info@glvolunteers.com

12. Orientation and Introduction

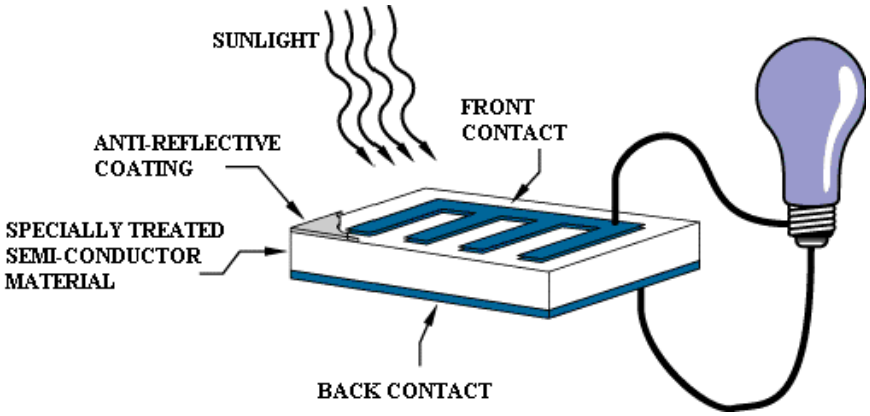
Our first orientation and introduction will happen in San Jose after your arrival at the airport and on our way to Puerto Jimenez.

During the orientation / introduction you will receive information about your workshop, and Green Life Volunteers staff will talk about general Costa Rican information, the Osa Peninsula, transportation, banks, food, and any other questions you may have before you begin at the workshop.

There will be always someone from Green Life Volunteers assisting you before and during your project! We take good customer service very seriously, and we want you to feel comfortable from the beginning till the end of your time in Costa Rica.

13. Solar Power Basic Introduction

Photovoltaic technology converts light (electromagnetic) energy into electric energy. The diagram on the right will illustrate the operation of a basic photovoltaic solar cell. Solar cells are made of semiconductor materials, such as silicon. A thin semiconductor wafer is specially treated to form as an electric field for solar cells. They are positive on one side and negative on the other side. When light reaches the solar cell, the electrons will disconnect from the atoms in the semiconductor material. An electrical circuit will form, if electrical conductors are attached on the positive and negative sides. The electrons bind and hold in the form of an electric current, which is electricity. This electricity can be used for several objectives, by powering a load, such as a tool or a light. Here is a great introductory TedEd video on How Solar Panels Work.



Source: http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2002/solarcells/

14. Volunteer extra-curricular activities and excursions

Together with your Solar Panel Workshop group you can participate in other activities around the area. There is plenty to do around the Osa Peninsula, and we will organize activities around Puerto Jimenez during your workshop time. Unfortunately, any extra-curricular activities are not covered by the workshop fee.

Activities may be surfing, paddle boarding, Corcovado National Park hikes, Bird watching, Mangrove and Sunset kayaking, Dolphin Tours, Zip lining and much more. We may set these activities up in a group or you may decide to do your own thing – but in a group we get great discounts and can offer very affordable activities.

15. Program support

Throughout your placement you will have the support and guidance of our experienced project

coordinators. You will be provided with a 24-hour emergency number that you can call from your project site in case you need to speak to a Green Life Volunteers staff. The host families where you'll be staying are very happy to lend you their phone to make quick local phone calls to Green Life Volunteers staff. Also Green Life Volunteers staff will call and "check in" on you throughout your stay – and we'll make sure there are no miscommunication errors happening between you and your family.

16. General Information

Accommodation

You will be living and eating with a Costa Rican host family or in a shared dormitory style accommodation where food will be provided to you. You will be provided with a clean bed, bed-linens, and a shared bathroom. Sometimes you may be accommodated in shared dormitory type accommodation or in your own private room. If you are very concerned about mosquitoes, you may bring your own mosquito net to set it up at your host family location. Most families do not have mosquito netting. It would be great if you bring your own towel, since towels are usually limited with host families.

Meals

Food in Costa Rica is simple but delicious, and you will have access to a great variety of fruits, veggies, and dairy products in Costa Rica. Meals at your host family often include rice and beans; other common items include tortillas, salads, chicken, fish, pork, beef, pastas, soups, cereals, sandwiches, cheese, fruits, veggies and fresh- squeezed juices. You will help prepare meals with your host family, and you will experience a whole new way of cooking and preparing food. Vegetarians should have no problems with the diet in Costa Rica. Since Costa Rica is a tropical country, the variety of vegetables and fruits is fairly large.

Nonetheless, it's important to let us know about any dietary needs in advance so the family is notified and they can prepare accordingly. Those who follow a vegan diet should note that tofu is not readily available in Costa Rica, especially on the Osa Peninsula. You will be offered three meals a day usually breakfast is early around 7am, lunch between 12 and 1; and dinner between 6 and 7 p.m. You will have coffee and other snacks available at the project throughout the day as well – just talk to your host family about your needs.

Laundry/cleaning

Laundry services ARE NOT part of the arrangements with your host family. You will have access to a place where you can wash your own laundry. Most families don't have washing machines or dryers. Normally laundry is done by hand and hung to dry. Some families might offer to do your laundry for an additional fee. It is culturally unacceptable for women to wash other women's underwear so if you arrange to have your laundry done, please separate your underwear and wash that yourself.

Telephone/internet access

In Puerto Jimenez Internet and Phone Signal is readily available. However, most host families still do not have Wi-Fi or internet installed at the house. You may use Wi-Fi at the local internet café, or you can go to any of the restaurants and coffee shops who offer Wi-F.

You may purchase your own cellphone sim-card for an unlocked phone! That way you can use a

prepaid card and also use internet/WiFi if you have a smartphone. The sim cards are very cheaply available – it costs around 2000 Colones and you can buy it almost at any small Kiosk (Pulperia) in Puerto Jimenez or San Jose.

Weather/clothing

It usually rains at least once each day during the rainy season (May-November) even if it is just for 10-30 minutes. Puerto Jimenez is right at the ocean and the rainforest is not far – rain is pretty common during your project time. Daytime temperatures range from the mid 70's (Fahrenheit) when overcast and low-90's when the sun is out. The weather can change very quickly, storms can develop and rain may fall even though it was just sunny five minutes ago. However, it is mostly sunny all throughout the morning. So installing solar panels and outdoor work will mainly be happening in the morning hours.

Humidity is very high and cotton clothes should be avoided because they never dry completely. During the summer months the humidity is a lot lower, the skies are clear and blue with a nice breeze, however at times it may be a bit dusty since the roads are gravel. We recommend quick-dry clothes and light breathable fabric. You will need some sandals for light day work, and stronger hiking boots or gum boots for working at the farm. Check our Packing List at the end of this document for more details.

Spending money

There are two banks located in the center of Puerto Jimenez – they both have ATMs and access to US$ and Colones. You should not have to spend too much money while you are on the project, since the project fee covers your accommodation and meals, but we recommend you bring some money for your own personal items, snacks, drinks, or anything else you may want to buy.

There is really no need for you to change money into Colones before you come to Costa Rica. Once you are in Costa Rica, and pay with your dollars, you will usually receive change back in Colones. You can take money from the ATMs with your credit card or debit card, so you do not need to carry a lot of cash with you. Please contact your bank and clear your card for international usage. Some banks have restrictions as to the amount of cash you can withdraw in a day. Find out what those limits are prior to departing. You should bring enough cash to carry you for at least the first week until you have a chance to go to an ATM (sometimes you have to try a few ATMs before you get money). If you are bringing US Dollars you have to make sure that the bills are in good conditions, otherwise the bank would not accept them. You will need your passport (not a photocopy) in order to exchange dollars.

Most places in Costa Rica would not take fifty or hundred dollar bills (with the exception of some hotels). If you carry fifties and hundreds, you will have to go to the bank to exchange them.

Volunteer expectations

While you are working on your project, Green Life Volunteers staff or your host family will provide you with accommodation, meals, and support. We will provide you with guidance and support in case you become ill, or need any other medical attention. You can contact our Green Life Volunteers Manager 24/7 on an emergency cell phone number (+506 8570 0710).

The workshop instructors and coordinators expect you to attend the program regularly, be on time, and behave consistently in ways that reflect well upon Green Life Volunteers and the other participants. You are expected to dress according to local norms while in public and to treat people with kindness and respect appropriate to their age and social standing.

The same goes for your host family. In addition, Green Life Volunteers insist that volunteers avoid any contact with drugs and any culturally inappropriate activities relating to alcohol, especially in your host homes. Remember that some of these families have children and their culture is rather conservative. In cases that a volunteer repeatedly behaved in ways that contradict the codes and conducts, we reserve the right to remove volunteers from a program.

We view the experience of the participants as a commitment that includes a willingness to overcome challenges of all kinds. In cases where participant are experiencing difficulties, we strongly encourage creative, collaborative solutions that allow the participant commitments to be completed. At the same time, we respect the ability and freedom of our participants to use their own judgments and we understand that participant's work only functions well when the participants retain the will to work fully and energetically.

Rule and guidelines

Please be aware of all the Green Life Volunteers rules in our Terms and Conditions. Green Life Volunteers expects participants to respect the areas in which you are working as well as your project leaders, members of your host families, members of the community and other participants.

In case you are experiences troubles or conflicts, we rather know sooner than later if there is anything that is not working for you and we want to make you as comfortable as possible. Having said that, we cannot stress enough that flexibility and being positive and open-minded will go a long way in ensuring an enjoyable participant experience.

Remember that you are in a Spanish speaking country. It is up to you to accommodate the new language and not impose your language on the locals. We always recommend to volunteers and participants that the more Spanish they speak, the better their experience will be. If you do not speak any Spanish or if you are a beginner, you have a perfect opportunity to improve your language skills while you are on your project and in your host family. On most of our projects the project coordinators and host families speak very little to no English. Ask us for options to take Spanish Classes before your volunteer stay – we offer very affordable and a great Spanish school program.

Important rules that you should be aware of are

- Drinking is permitted ONLY while NOT on duty. Keep in mind that alcohol can negatively affect a participant's performance at the project and you will be doing tasks that may be dangerous to do when under the influence of alcohol. Drinking after hours is left to your discretion but be sensitive to the drinking habits of your host family. It is unacceptable to show up at your host family home intoxicated and sloppy!
- Participants are permitted to smoke cigarettes but not inside the project's buildings or your host homes. You will have to agree on a place for you to smoke cigarettes where it does not molest anyone.

- Please respect the facilities and the environment.
- Conserve water and electricity as it is expensive and you do not want to burden your host family.
- Respect the culture of the local community and ask for permission if you want to do things in their home that they don't normally do. Use common sense and treat people and their home with respect.
- Be aware of mosquitoes, scorpions, spiders and other insects. Keep your bed clean and your bag zipped. Use your mosquitoes net if you brought one.
- Always clean your feet from sand before you enter the house and specially the shower.
- Since you're right on the beach, drains can easily clog due to sand being tracked to showers and drains.
- Due to the heat and humidity, it is recommended that all volunteers shower and use deodorant every day. Personal hygiene is a must in this type of climate. Please do not put yourself in the situation that you have to be told to practice personal hygiene. The families are usually very polite, and they would feel terrible to have to tell you that you "smell". Please be considerate!
- Normally, toilet paper is deposited in baskets right next to the toilet. Do not flush toilet paper after using the bathroom! Again, drains in these rural areas and especially on the beach can clog easily and do not have the power to deal with toilet paper, female slips or tampons! Always throw those items in the bin next to the toilet.
- If you use, abuse or even come in contact with drugs, drug users, drug pushers or anyone remotely connected with drugs illegal or otherwise (other than for medical reasons), your placement will be terminated immediately, your visa will be withdrawn, and you will be deported from the country with no compensation. Never bring drugs into the project or host families (other than prescription drugs). There are no exceptions to this rule, regardless of the reasons. Please accept that while you're working on your project you don't consume illegal drugs.

Safety and precautions

Tourists are sometimes targets for pickpockets and thieves. The Osa Peninsula is a very safe place but places like San Jose or even smaller towns like Puerto Jimenez are not as safe. Please do not put yourself in a dangerous situation. Be cautious and use common sense. As a general rule, participants should not go off alone at nights, especially in large cities like San Jose.

In general, the best way to store valuables is not to bring them with you if you go out but to leave them with your host family. Make sure whatever valuable you bring are in your bag and that you keep your bag close to you at all times. Money belts are a good investment before you travel to Costa Rica. Make sure if you get one that it is big enough that you can also fit your passport in it.

If you travel on public buses please always stay close to your bag, or bring your valuables with you when you go to the bathroom. Don't even leave your valuables alone for a few minutes – it has happened to many volunteers and participants before that they lost items on the bus.

Tips:

- Travel in pairs if you can (one can stay with the bags, the other goes to the bathroom).

- Use caution in unfamiliar locations.
- Be very careful when traveling in San Jose.
- You're a target for thieves. Keep your valuables in a safe place. Always keep an eye on your bag. Never leave your bag unattended when you go to the beach.
- Photocopy your passport and important documents. Don't carry your original passport on you.
- Carry your money and passport (or copy) inside a money belt on your body. It is the safest place.
- Avoid flashy dresses. Never wear expensive jewelry, etc. while traveling. Do not carry all your credit cards and all cash with you. If there isn't a safety box where you are, use a money belt or make several trips to the bank.
- In a lot of areas in Costa Rica swimming can be dangerous because of rip tides. Please inquire FIRST before swimming at a deserted beach. Don't go swimming alone, have someone watch you at the beach.

Medical facilities

The closest medical facility is a clinic on the Osa Peninsula is in Puerto Jimenez. The doctors in Costa Rica are well educated, often speak English, and are able to take care of most of your medical needs. In case of a more serious medical situation, there is a bigger hospital in Golfito, where patients can be transferred, or if a more serious situation occurs, participants can fly to San Jose.

Recommended packing list

- Passport and passport photocopy
- Your own Towel
- Debit card and credit card for any emergency
- Camera and batteries (you can find batteries here but they're more expensive)
- Small notebook and pen
- Headlamp or Torch!
- Alarm clock and batteries
- Personal medical first aid (Or medication you may need – it is remote in your location and you may not be able to buy what you need, so bring it from your home country).
- Clothing for a warm tropical climate, preferably non-cotton, that you are not worried about ruining
- Sturdy shoes for working and hiking - gum boots work great for farm work, or good /sturdy hiking boots
- Waterproof sunscreen (the sun rays are powerful)
- Sunglasses
- Forms of entertainment: books, games, music, guitar, paints, surfing equipment, etc.
- Sandals and comfortable walking shoes (that dry fast)
- Lightweight disposable rain poncho
- Sweater for colder rainy weather and when in San Jose
- Swimwear
- BUG Repellent
- Water proof & secure bag for documents
- Money belt

- Binoculars for wildlife watching?
- Positive attitude

Thank you and we are looking forward to working with you!
Your Green Life Volunteers Team