

Pursuing Sustainable Development in Latin America: An Experiential, Urban and Rural Program.

Learn about the complexities, practicalities and innovations of sustainability in Costa Rica – a global leader of sustainable development!

Background

Sustainable development today is an urgent global imperative. It is a complex blend of political, cultural, educational, economic and scientific challenges like no other. To create a sustainable world for future generations, we must establish a system that meets our basic needs without over-exploiting our finite natural resources. Innovative solutions require holistic, coordinated interdisciplinary actions across a very wide range of sectors.

Costa Rica is a global leader in green economics and sustainable development. Unique ecological and social conditions make Costa Rica a wonderful open-air laboratory for the study of urban and rural sustainability. With its extraordinary wealth of natural resources, educated population, long commitment to peace and human rights and innovative environmental policies, Costa Rica has pursued an egalitarian and sustainable development. The nation aims to become the world's first carbon-neutral country by 2021.

This ground-breaking new study abroad program provides students with the unique opportunity to link theory and practice in the pursuit of sustainable development in both urban and rural contexts. The program combines intense fieldwork with classroom engagement and closely examines different sustainable development and resource management models that Costa Rica uses to protect its biodiversity while promoting socioeconomic benefits.

Program Structure

Over a four-month period, students will participate in five credit-bearing courses at two institutions: [International Center for Development Studies \(ICDS\)](#) and [EARTH University](#). Spanish language courses will be taught at both schools.

Course Description

For the first two months, students will take the following courses at ICDS, located in San José, the urban capital of Costa Rica:

1. *Community Engagement and Sustainable Human Development: A Service Learning Course*; community work is reinforced with reflection to connect with personal values and course content of local development, social justice, intercultural understanding, sustainability, global citizenship and civic responsibility.

2. *Environmental Dimensions of Sustainable Development: The Costa Rican Experience*; ongoing case studies and successful and failed experiences in Costa Rica are analyzed alongside potential new ways to improve, study and evaluate the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

During the second half of the course, students will attend EARTH University in the rural lowland rainforest region of the Caribbean Limón province:

1. *Sustainable Livelihoods: Integrating Community, Entrepreneurship and Natural Resources*; a hands-on overview of sustainable development within a rural context – combining an in-depth theoretical and experiential focus on local communities, sustainable livelihoods, entrepreneurship and natural resource management.
2. *Environmental and Social Assessment: How to Measure, Manage and Mitigate our Impact*; identify and directly assist in the development of decisions to control, mitigate, and compensate for the environmental and social impacts of businesses and individuals within a real-world Costa Rican rural context.

Spanish language course

This academic and experiential opportunity in Costa Rica is further complemented by the chance to develop and perfect valuable language skills through **Spanish language courses** and by immersing in the local culture through living in homestays and interacting with other students.

Credits and transcripts

The recommended number of credits for each course in ICDS/EARTH University's joint program "Pursuing Sustainable Development in Latin America: An Experiential Urban and Rural Program" is three (3) credits, based on forty-five contact hours for the topical courses, and sixty for the Spanish language course that is part of this program. It is the home university's prerogative, though, to adapt the number of credits per course (or per program) to its own system in accordance with the number of teaching hours. Transcripts for this program will be issued by EARTH University.

Application procedures and deadlines

Applications will be received through the students' respective study abroad offices, or as direct applications through the host institutions' websites (please see details above).

The following are the deadlines to apply in either case:

For Spring semester 2017: October 30th, 2016;

For Fall semester 2017: March 31st, 2017.