



Program at Glance Muchucuxcah, Mexico

Name of Host NGO

Hombre Sobre La Tierra (HST - Humankind on Earth) www.elhombresobrelatierra.org

Information about the NGO

HST was founded in 1994 to promote the sustainable development of marginalized populations who struggle to meet their basic needs because of their socio-economic status. The organization works with Mayan peasants to promote environmental sustainability and food self-sufficiency, advances the integration of women in the economy and strengthens the capacity of grassroots groups.

HST works for the sustainable development of rural indigenous communities while supporting the strengthening of sociocultural identities in the Yucatán Peninsula in southeast Mexico. HST promotes equitable human development through community-based programs in natural resource conservation and preservation, food security, product diversification and gender equity.

AJWS's History of Grantmaking

From 2003 to 2006, AJWS supported HST's project to improve the socioeconomic conditions of over 150 Mayan women and their families through agricultural trainings. The project provided each family with a set of tools, seed and seedling packets, and intensive training in environmentally sustainable agricultural techniques rooted in Mayan traditions. After four years of project funding, AJWS supported HST with a two-year institutional strengthening grant beginning in December 2008.

In 2009, AJWS supported HST with an emergency grant to purchase corn seeds and implement a seed-sharing fair for small farmers in the Yucatán. HST has promoted annual seed fairs, and in 2009 a drought destroyed most of the corn crop, raising the risk of hunger among the population. With AJWS support, HST purchased four tons of corn seeds from another part of the Yucatán Peninsula and held the annual fair, selling seeds at low prices to local farmers.

AJWS and HST have partnered in other important ways over the past four years including participating in the ICAS farmer-to-farmer learning network.

NGO's History of Receiving Volunteers

AJWS service partnered with HST for the first time in 2005. Since then, HST has worked with a variety of volunteer groups, including high school groups, adult delegations, Alternative Breaks and Rabbinical Students' Delegations.

Past groups have worked on a variety of projects, including farming and harvesting in local and home gardens, building pools for aquaculture development, construction work on the community's eco-tourism project and sustainable agriculture work in a community nursery.

Location of Host Community

The NGO is based in the Yucatán state, in the city of Mérida. HST works with Mayan communities around the Yucatán, particularly communities located between the cities of Mérida and Cancún. Groups generally stay in Muchucuxcah (pronounced moo-choo-*koosh*-ka), in the municipality of Chankóm. Approximately 500 people live in the community of mostly Mayans who speak Mayan language and most also speak Spanish.

Work Project

Volunteers will build small reservoirs to store water that will be used to irrigate orchards in Muchucuxcah for HST.

Accommodations and Meals

Volunteers will stay in the community of Muchucuxcah and will sleep in palapas (palm shelters) in the Tourist Center on hammocks. There is electricity and running water. There are flush toilets and showers with cold running water near the palapas.

The group will eat with families in smaller groups of 4-5. Each group will return to the same house for each meal and multiple families will prepare the meals. This allows the greater community to share both the work and reward of hosting volunteers, providing a larger number of people to engage in meaningful interaction during meal times.

Seasonal Weather Norms

From January through March, the high temperature ranges from 84 to 91 degrees and the low is between 64-68 degrees. The region receives an average of 1.4-1 inches of rain in January through March. In May, the average high temperature is 96 degrees and the low is 74 degrees. The region receives an average of 2.8 inch of rain in May.

Health-Related Information

AJWS contracts with International SOS, a provider of medical assistance, international healthcare, security services and outsourced customer care. AJWS-trained group leaders are required to contact International SOS in the event of any serious medical or security situation. In the event that medical care is needed, International SOS will recommend the closest ISOS-approved clinic and/or hospital.

There is a partner NGO-recommended clinic in Chankóm, in addition to a clinic in Piste, which is a town approximately 18 miles from the community. There is also a hospital in Valladolid, a town approximately 30 miles from Muchucuxcah.

Additionally, all AJWS-trained group leaders are certified in Wilderness First Aid.