

# DOS CORRIENTES JOURNAL

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## Welcome to the Dos Corrientes Journal

Unemployment and underemployment lie at the core of poverty. For the poor, labour is often the only asset they can use to improve their well-being. Hence, creating productive employment opportunities is essential for achieving poverty reduction and sustainable economic and social development. It is crucial to provide decent jobs that secure income and empowerment for the poor, especially women and younger people.



Rapid economic growth can potentially bring a high rate of expansion of productive and remunerative employment, which can lead to a reduction in poverty. Nevertheless, the contribution of the growth process to poverty reduction does not depend only on the rate of economic growth, but also on the ability of the poor

to respond to the increasing demand for labour in the more productive categories of employment.

Given the importance of employment for poverty reduction, job creation should occupy a central place in any poverty reduction strategy. It should include developing small and medium-sized enterprises and promoting micro-projects in rural areas. Strategies should also promote skill formation, training, and self-employment.



**Welcome to issue #7.**

## *The Dos Corrientes Ecovillage*

The Dos Corrientes team intends to implement a strategy that also addresses qualitative dimensions such as equity, security, dignity, and freedom.

A social perspective on development emphasizes the view that the best route to socio-economic development, poverty eradication, and personal well-being is through decent work. Productive employment opportunities will contribute substantially to achieving the internationally agreed 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The Dos Corrientes model is unusual in that the project model touches on all 17 SDG's.



Future Site of the Dos Corrientes Ecovillage

The concept of an Ecovillage at Dos Corrientes is an exciting one. An ecovillage is a traditional, or urban community that is consciously designed through locally owned participatory processes in all four dimensions of sustainability, (society, culture, ecology, and economy) to regenerate social and natural environments. In the Dos Corrientes model, villagers of Liguiqui will be trained in several skill-based trades and then employed in the construction of houses under the tutelage of a “maestro”.

Planning is currently underway and includes as many as 15 houses for sale, a small restaurant, and a store. The tourist industry is starting to grow again in this lovely coastal area and a store and restaurant will be a perfect stop-off destination. Villagers can be trained and employed as chefs specializing in farm-to-table cuisine. They will also have an outlet to sell home-grown food as a result of the Dos Corrientes Backyard Garden Course designed for the restaurant and store.

Part of the plan includes Dos Corrientes being the official rental agent for homeowners who would like others to use their homes when they are away. The profits that Dos Corrientes would earn as a rental agent would fund other aspects of the Dos Corrientes not-for-profit project.

An economic engine in the form of an Ecovillage is the last piece of the innovative Dos Corrientes model that addresses food scarcity, skill-based education, and employment.

## ***Teaching English to Children***



The villagers asked if we would teach English to their children. While outside the realm of skill-based education per se, we felt it had a place in the community. It was viewed as an opportunity to help the youth of the community learn what might interest them beyond elementary school. Also, the young students could become tomorrow’s entrepreneurs who will have an opportunity to interact with foreign tourists. We were very fortunate to meet Santiago Mendieta. Santiago was born in Ecuador but lived for several years in Canada where he married a Canadian woman who is a primatologist currently residing in Ecuador to study Howler Monkeys.

Santiago worked for many years for Cirque du Soleil and is as you would imagine, an expert in presentation. The classes have been beyond our expectations as Santiago mixes magic tricks and juggling as part of his teaching process. "What box is the blue ball under, 1 or 2 or 3 or 4"? The children yell out the correct answer but when the box is lifted... to everyone's amazement, nothing is there. It has disappeared. Laughter is the next teaching aid and Santiago's classes are filled with joy. Greetings, parts of the body, colours, and numbers are now very easy for the children to understand, and they can hardly wait until the next call.



Dos Corrientes is Privileged to be Sponsoring English Classes in the Village School

## ***Interview with Raquel Pico***

In October, 2020, Dos Corrientes was introduced to a university student who lived in the city of Manta which is about a 45-minute drive from the Dos Corrientes farm. Raquel Pico was entering her graduating year and interested in part-time work. She was hired as an administrative assistant and her achievements in her work with the organization were far beyond expectations. Recently, Raquel graduated, and she has taken a full-time position with the federal government in the capital city of Quito. With gratitude, Dos Corrientes wishes her well. The following items are excerpts from an interview with Raquel on her last day at the farm.



**DC:** Dos Corrientes

**R:** Raquel Pico

**DC:** When were you introduced to Dos Corrientes?

**Raquel:** October 5th, 2020

**DC:** Wow. How were you able to remember that date so well?

**Raquel:** I was at university in Guayaquil at the time Heather called. I remember the call because it was around 6:00 p.m. on a Saturday and I was at a party with my friends.

**DC:** What happened next?

**Raquel:** Heather asked if I could meet with her in Santa Marianita on the following Monday. That was about a 4-hour drive away.

**DC:** What was your first impression of the job?

**Raquel:** Initially Heather told me that the job was to look after the social media outreach for Dos Corrientes. Then as she started to learn more about me in the interview, she told me that she would like me to look after all the administration. I thought it was a great opportunity to boost my career and I was very excited about it.

**DC:** What was your first impression of the work by DC?

**Raquel:** I was so excited because of the opportunity of working with foreign people. I would be able to practice and improve my English and get involved with an Ecuadorian rural community.

**DC:** How hard was it to fit your Dos Corrientes job in with your studies.

**Raquel:** It was not hard as our courses were still online and I lived about a 40-minute drive away from the project. You were also very flexible with my schedule.

**DC:** Early on, you did a school research project that was of use to Dos Corrientes. What was that all about?

**Raquel:** One of my school subjects was “Social Evaluation of a Project”. I liked what you were doing at Dos Corrientes and I wanted to contribute. The project was to be done in coordination with a team and I spoke with my friends and we agreed that research was very important to the region and Dos Corrientes.

**DC:** What was your topic?

**Raquel:** The title was Food Security in Liguiqui.

**DC:** What was your main finding?

**Raquel:** Our main finding was that people in Liguiqui were very interested in having a good diet and eating organic vegetables but they don't have either the vegetables or the money to buy them. Poverty plays a very big role in poor diets.

**DC:** What grade did your team receive?

**Raquel:** We got a mark of 98% and I shared our research with you and Heather.

**DC:** What university did you attend and what did you study?

**Raquel:** I went to the Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL) and graduated last month in Economics.

**DC:** Were you satisfied with the marks you received?

**Raquel:** Yes, I graduated with an average of 88% and was ranked second in my graduating year.

**DC:** Now that you have graduated, what are your plans?

**Raquel:** I have accepted a position working with the federal government in Quito. My job will be as an assistant in their national investment planning area. My title will be “Assistant in National Development Programs and Projects”.

**DC:** Has your work at Dos Corrientes prepared you in any way for your new job?

**Raquel:** Yes. The main thing I learned at Dos Corrientes was problem-solving. Also, I improved my communication skills and for sure, English.



**DC:** Now that you are on your way, what did you like at Dos Corrientes?

**Raquel:** I met a lot of people and was a part of important meetings. I felt respected and valued.

**DC:** What didn't you like...

**Raquel:** Sometimes there was too much work for the time available to do it.

**DC:** What do you think are the main differences between Canadian and Ecuadorian businesspeople?

**Raquel:** Canadians are very careful and love to plan. They also hire people with very good references and are very kind.

**DC:** What have you learned about being an entrepreneur and business owner?

**Raquel:** Being an entrepreneur and business owner involves a lot of effort and patience. You do not always get the expected results and it is normal to make mistakes and have losses at the beginning. On the other hand, an entrepreneur must have highly developed soft skills, mainly communication and problem-solving.

**DC:** What is the impact of this learning on the way you think about business?

**Raquel:** With this learning, I reaffirm my belief that having an excellent team is essential to having a successful business. This team must be committed to the job, with integrity and unity.

**DC:** What is the impact of your learning about food scarcity, employment, and sustainable communities?

**Raquel:** I am now more committed to social work. I will analyze more carefully the plans that each new government has in favour of these issues. And of course, I will transfer my knowledge to the community.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donations will be directed to Dos Corrientes through the University of the Fraser Valley and a tax receipt will be issued.

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