



A brief overview of

ECHO's Internship Program

v.1

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1 | ECHO's Mission

ECHO is a Christian, non-profit dedicated to the fight against world hunger. Our primary mandate is to strengthen the ministries of those working with smallholder farmers or urban gardeners in developing countries through agricultural resources and skills. Through our Regional Impact Centers (Thailand, Tanzania, & Burkina Faso) and our Headquarters (Florida), we strive to offer assistance to nationals, missionaries, development workers, and Peace Corps Volunteers so they are more effective.

ECHO's primary missional activities are:

1. Providing culturally- and regionally- appropriate training in agricultural techniques through our Regional Impact Centers.
2. Responding to agricultural questions from around the globe.
3. Publishing *ECHO Development Notes* and other training publications that address problems faced by small-scale farmers in developing countries.
4. Sending trial seed packets of underutilized food plants to people in our network.
5. Hosting an annual Agricultural Conference at ECHO Headquarters and regional conferences hosted by each Regional Impact Center.
6. Sharing technical information through ECHOcommunity.org
7. Providing study opportunities, consulting, and project planning at our demonstration farm in Florida for interns, missionaries, and development workers.

ECHO provides information, ideas, and trial seeds to those working with small-scale farmers in developing countries. ECHO serves those who work directly with farmers faced with constraints such as: limited land access, reduced soil fertility, limited education, and restricted access to resources. We are interested in any plant or technique that can help people living in these conditions. These techniques usually focus on using locally-available and naturally-occurring resources. We tend to be more oriented toward sustainable technologies that require limited imported materials such as plants that can be grown and processed locally to improve nutrition, soil fertility or provide botanical pesticides.

We do not insist that agriculture or agricultural development only be done one way. We realize significant diversity in the world means a technology appropriate for one area of the world may be very inappropriate in another context. ECHO provides ideas for individuals to test, refine, and implement as they determine appropriateness for the culture and climate in which they live.



Section 2 | ECHO's Internship Program

ECHO's Internship Program exists to assist college graduates preparing for serving in developing countries. This internship is designed to serve as a hands-on and academic training program in small-scale tropical agriculture. In addition, completion of the ECHO Internship will result in the receipt of a Graduate-level Certificate in Tropical Agricultural Development from Dallas International University.

The International Agricultural Development worker needs to be prepared to creatively problem solve, listen to the local community, identify gaps and opportunities in the agricultural landscape, and intimately understand the factors that contribute to cultivating food. The ECHO Internship provides instruction in tropical agricultural knowledge, guiding participants through Agronomy, Horticultural Production, and Agricultural Systems. In addition, participants will learn how to apply this knowledge within communities through instruction in cross cultural training, multicultural teamwork, community development, and agricultural experimentation through distance learning courses with Dallas International University. The program capstone project is a comprehensive project in which Interns demonstrate their understanding and ability to apply agricultural knowledge to a key area of personal interest in the agricultural development field.

The ECHO internship program is challenging and rewarding. Many have found that their time at ECHO helped them focus their goals and provide ideas for their future direction.

Program Purpose Statements

1. Integrate into agricultural communities around the globe with deep cultural awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation for local initiatives, knowledge, and solutions.
2. Work alongside under-resourced communities to help them identify, utilize, and maximize locally available resources to address quality of life issues within the community.
3. Train smallholder farmers in appropriate agricultural systems, techniques, and plant varieties that have the potential to increase their capacity and enhance their quality and quantity of food production.
4. Creatively problem-solve as they help the undernourished navigate the challenges of sustainable food production.

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Articulate the importance of small-scale farmers' contributions in combating food insecurity within communities.
2. Implement and evaluate small-scale agricultural techniques in an intern-managed demonstration area.
3. Effectively develop cross-cultural agricultural training for adult audiences facing diverse climatic and agricultural scenarios.
4. Address diverse and complex agricultural challenges through heightened and informed critical inquiry.

2.1 | Internship Expectations

Interns have found the following to be accurate expectations:

- Broad exposure to tropical agriculture and appropriate technologies
- Broad exposure to agriculture systems practical for developing countries
- Spray broad spectrum insecticides and herbicides
- Networking with individuals and organizations working in developing countries
- Learn about development, anthropological, and educational theory & philosophy from a Christian perspective
- Learn, study, and experiment while receiving instruction
- Learn management skills of physical resources and human resources
- Experience community dynamics
- Experience animal management and integration into farming systems
- Receive spiritual nurture

Exposure to tropical agriculture and community development come from the experiential learning model at ECHO. All coursework taught by ECHO and Dallas International University Staff has support and further experimentation available through life on ECHO's Global Research and Demonstration Farm.

Each intern is given responsibility for an area of ECHO's Global Farm. In this Area of Responsibility (AoR), they have the opportunity to experiment, implement, and integrate ideas and technologies pertaining to agricultural development. In addition, interns are responsible for caring for the animals on the farm and assisting with ECHO's seed bank and propagation nursery. Responsibilities for these activities are shared equally.

Living in community provides a natural outworking of discussion and implementation of community development principles that will help prepare interns for a life of cross-cultural ministry. Over the next few pages we will detail expectations regarding coursework, Areas of Responsibility (AoR), animals, seed bank, propagation nursery, and community living.



2.2 | Coursework

ECHO Courses

Throughout the internship program, ECHO staff teach five courses:

1. Fundamentals of Tropical Agriculture
2. Tropical Crops in Small-scale Agriculture
3. Tropical Agriculture Systems
4. Community Development
5. Small-scale Agricultural Experimentation

These courses will be taught through seminars during the internship. Time in AoR will be provided to demonstrate understanding of these course, reinforce what is learned, and allow for experimentation based on individual interests.

Dallas International University Courses

In the fall and spring semester, interns will participate remotely in an online course taught by Dallas International University.

In the fall 2021:

- Cultural Anthropology

In the spring 2022:

- Training Across Cultures
- Capstone Project

Approximately 5-7 hours are expected to be spent on DIU courses outside of daily work. Time will be provided in the week to corporately attend classes, and some time will be provided for corporate study and completion of coursework.

2.3 | Intern Support Structure

Internship Manager

Interns are directly managed by the Internship Manager, and provided monthly feedback via meetings with the Internship Manager.

Area Advisor (also referred to as “Advisor”)

An Area Advisor is assigned to each Area of Responsibility.

The role of the Area Advisor is threefold:

1. Orient interns as they develop their Area of Responsibility in what may be a new climate with unique pest/disease challenges.
2. Act as a sounding board for interns to learn and plan within areas of responsibility through weekly meetings (Monday) and intermittent additional meetings as needed.
3. Act as institutional knowledge keepers for the areas of responsibility.

Specialist

A Specialist has subject matter expertise that is integral to the intern’s learning objectives.

The role of the Specialist is twofold:

1. Specialists will be available to provide guidance or answers when questions specifically arise concerning their area of expertise.
2. Topic Specialists can additionally be available, if needed/requested, during an intern’s Capstone Project.



2.4 | Areas of Responsibility (AoR)

As an intern you will have an Area of Responsibility in ECHO's Global Farm. The AoR serves three purposes: Generational Maintenance, Creation and Exploration, and Stewardship.

Generational Activities

Interns will experience and participate in tasks and activities that contribute to the generational health and success of ECHO's Global Farm. As stewards of their Area of Responsibility, interns will:

Cultivate perennials: Manage (e.g., prune, irrigate, and fertilize) perennial crops in AoR.

Label & record: Label crops grown, and record their experience.

Preserve key demonstrations: Maintain pertinent demonstrations of agricultural practices. Examples of which include:

- [SRI](#)
- [keyhole garden](#)
- [terracing](#)
- [100-Fold Garden](#)
- [tire gardens](#)
- [zai holes](#)
- [trellising](#)
- [FMNR](#)

Creation and Exploration

Interns, in their AoR, have the opportunity to explore tropical small-scale agriculture. This often looks like:

Plant crops: Interns will plant and manage annual and biennial crops in conjunction with their personal interest and the Global Farm's needs.

Grow seeds: Interns will plant and manage crops intended for seed production.

Integrate animals: Interns will integrate the animals on the farm in their AoR.

Integrate Appropriate Technology: Interns have the opportunity to utilize AT implements to cultivate their crops.

Stewardship

Interns will be active stewards of their AoR and learn how it impacts the greater ecosystem of ECHO's Global Farm.

Learn time and land management: Interns will develop, with guidance and assistance from their Advisor, weekly, monthly, and seasonal management plans.

Maintain Area of Responsibility: Be trained to lead and/or participate in all necessary activities (e.g., weeding, pest and fertility management, planting, watering, harvesting) for care and stewardship of area of responsibility.

2.5 | Animals

ECHO's Global Farm has purposefully chosen three animals that interns will interact with to provide broad exposure in animal management, and how to integrate animals into a farming system. Divided into pairs, interns will rotate care for goats, pigs, and chickens. All interns will have access to utilize these animals in their AoR.

Foraging for these animals and the maintenance of forage banks will be a key activity as it relates to the feeding of the goats, pigs, and chickens.

2.6 | Propagation Nursery

ECHO operates a Propagation Nursery. The Propagation Nursery is responsible to provide the plants that are sold in the Retail Nursery and many of the plants that are used on the Global Farm. Many international development workers find necessity to incorporate tree nurseries or greenhouses for their plants to thrive. At ECHO, interns have the opportunity to understand the requirements for plants care when starting out in nurseries.

2.7 | Seed Bank

ECHO provides seeds to our overseas network and retail bookstore. ECHO operates a seed bank for study and distribution with seeds appropriate for small scale farmers. Many of the plants grown on the farm are for distribution to missionaries and development workers around the world.

While at ECHO, interns have the opportunity to be exposed to the world of seed saving. Seed saving and storage is frequently requested by farmers and development workers around the world. Saving seeds is a critical skill that ECHO prioritizes in the internship program. Interns will be able to experience the full life cycle of a seed from growing to saving.



2.8 | Community Life

ECHO provides a Christian community experience geared at personal and communal spiritual growth. ECHO interns are a major part of the ECHO campus community and have an opportunity to experience and participate in community living. Interns live, eat, work, and fellowship together, providing opportunities to learn from each other, to support and encourage each other, and to challenge each other. This can look like sharing rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, and community areas.

In addition throughout the year, interns can live alongside missionaries and development workers as they stay on ECHO's campus. Interns help provide opportunities for some of these visitors to work side-by-side with them on projects and to point them to helpful resources. Interactions with students and missionary visitors can be a highlight of the internship at ECHO

There is opportunity for interns to lead music at weekly staff devotions, have intern devotions, and lead a staff devotion at the end of intern's time. This community life provides interns with valuable experience for helping create growth-oriented communities around the world.

If you are not comfortable participating in the community life of ECHO, please discuss that with the Internship Manager before accepting a position.



2.9 | Weekly Schedule

INTERNSHIP WEEKLY SCHEDULE: AUGUST 22 2022- May 15 2023

Time	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY		
7:30	Animal Chores						
8:00		Work in Area of Responsibility	Farm Work	Work in Area of Responsibility	Work in Area of Responsibility -or- Field Trips		
8:30	Monday Morning Meeting						
9:00		DIU Course Work		DIU Course Work			
9:30	Office Work Relating to Area of Responsibility						
10:00		DIU Course Work		DIU Course Work			
10:30	Meet with Advisor						
11:00		Lunch					
11:30							
12:00							
12:30					Work in Area of Responsibility Flex for Field Trips -or- DIU Course Work		
1:00							
1:30							
2:00	ECHO Seminar -or- Work in Area of Responsibility -or- DIU Capstone Project	DIU Course Work	Seed Bank -or- Propagation	DIU Course Work	DIU Course Work		
2:30		DIU Online Class		DIU Online Class			
3:00		DIU Course Work	Animal Chores				
3:30							
4:00							
4:30							
Evening	Expected 5-7 Hours on DIU/ECHO Homework & Assignments						

Section 3 | Benefits

Stipend

Interns are paid a small monthly stipend. ECHO payroll runs every two weeks.

Housing

ECHO provides housing that includes utilities (water, electricity, and internet). There is a 4-bedroom men's house and a 4-bedroom women's house for single interns and a small apartment for married interns.

Single interns live in dorm-like arrangements with 1-2 people per bedroom and a shared common area and kitchen.

Interns are expected to keep their living areas clean, and monthly housing inspections will be conducted by the Facilities Manager and Internship Manager.

Insurance Coverage

ECHO provides a variety of insurance benefits and options. Coverage is paid with pre-tax wages. If you have a pre-existing condition or questions about insurance coverage please discuss these with the Internship Manager.

Health Insurance- ECHO currently provides basic health insurance for ECHO employees. Coverage is effective the 1st of the month following the start date of your internship at ECHO.

Life Insurance- Interns are covered from the first day of work with life insurance.

Supplemental Medical/Accident Insurance- Anyone who would like additional insurance coverage can purchase it through AFLAC. If interested, an AFLAC representative will meet with each intern to explain the various options.

Vacation and Holidays

As an employee of ECHO you receive a total of 26 paid days off each year comprised of:

- 15 days of Paid Time Off (PTO)*
- Your birthday as a paid day off (the Friday before if the birthday falls on a weekend)
- 10 paid US holidays**

All absences (except for illness) must be approved by the Internship Manager two weeks in advance. Interns are required to make sure all their responsibilities are covered before turning in a PTO request. Absences due to illness require coverage to be arranged.

*ECHO approves PTO requests whenever possible; however, adequate staffing must be maintained to tend the farm 365 days a year, this comes into play primarily at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year holidays.

**New Year (2 days), Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2 days), and Christmas (2 days).

Section 4 | ECHO's Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only reliable, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity and humanity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His present rule as Head of the Church.

We believe in the salvation through God's grace of all who repent and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone.

We believe in the indwelling presence and transforming power of the Holy Spirit, by which the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the future personal return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of both the repentant and unrepentant who will be judged by Jesus with justice and mercy; for those who are repentant unto the resurrection of eternal life and those who are unrepentant unto eternal condemnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ with equality across racial, gender and class differences.

