



echo[®]
Hope Against Hunger



A brief overview of
ECHO's Internship Program
2023-2024

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*It is intended for providing an overview of the
Internship Program. It is subject to change from
year to year.*

May 2023



***ECHO's Vision: Honoring God by empowering the undernourished with
sustainable hunger solutions.***

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1 | **ECHO's Mission**

ECHO's Mission: Following Jesus by reducing hunger and improving lives worldwide through partnerships that equip people with agricultural resources and skills.

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, skills, and trainings. Through our Regional Impact Centers (Thailand, Tanzania, & Burkina Faso) and our Global Office & Farm (Florida), we strive to offer assistance to students, national pastors, farmers, missionaries, and development workers, 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 (RIC).***
- 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. Facilitating an 11-month internship program which results in interns receiving a Certificate in Tropical Agriculture Development through ECHO's partnership with Dallas International University (DIU).***
- 6. Hosting an annual International Agricultural Conference at ECHO Florida and regional conferences hosted by each Regional Impact Center.***
- 7. Sharing technical information through *ECHOcommunity.org****
- 8. Providing study opportunities, consulting, and project planning at our demonstration farm in Florida for interns, apprentices, missionaries, and development workers.***

ECHO provides information, ideas, and trial seeds to those working with small-scale farmers in developing countries. ECHO also serves farmers who often face 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 prioritize 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 strive to approach our work using best practices of community development.

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, climate, and community in which they live.

2 | ECHO's Internship Program

ECHO's Internship Program exists to assist college graduates preparing for service in developing countries and/or cross-cultural settings. 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 (13 credits) Certificate in Tropical Agricultural Development from Dallas International University (DIU).

The International Agricultural Development worker needs to be prepared to creatively problem solve, listen to, and learn from 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 and hands on learning in tropical agricultural knowledge by guiding the cohort through Agronomy, Horticultural Production, and Agricultural Systems. It also provides intentional learning related to Appropriate Technology (AT), Propagation/Nursery Management, and Seed Banking. 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 both ECHO staff and distance learning courses with Dallas International University. The program capstone project is a comprehensive project in which Interns reflect on their year and demonstrate their understanding and ability to apply agricultural knowledge to a key area of personal interest in the agricultural development field and/or area of potential service.

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. Build relationships while working 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, technologies, and plant varieties that have the potential to increase their capacity and enhance their quality and quantity of food production.**
- 4. Creatively integrate Biblical principles while problem-solving with the undernourished navigating 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 (Area of Responsibility - AoR).**

- 3. Learn about and consider cross-cultural agricultural training methods for adult audiences facing diverse climatic and agricultural scenarios.**
- 4. Address diverse and complex agricultural challenges through heightened and informed critical inquiry, worldview, and Biblical holistic transformational development.**



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**
- **Proper and safe use spraying a broad spectrum of insecticides and herbicides**
- **Networking with individuals and organizations working in developing countries**
- **Learning about development, anthropological, and educational theory & approaches from a Christian perspective**
- **Learn, study, and experiment while receiving instruction through both hands-on experiences and classroom learning at the graduate school level**
- **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 comes from the experiential learning model at ECHO. Living and working on ECHO's Global Research and Demonstration Farm enhances the coursework taught by ECHO and Dallas International University staff.

Each intern is given responsibility for an area of ECHO's Global Farm. In this Area of Responsibility (AoR), they have the opportunity to integrate their faith while integrating 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 collectively with a fellow intern or "AoR Buddy."

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 credits)**
(ex. Crop Management, Fertilizers, Integrated Pest Management, Agroecology, Seed Harvest and Storage, Irrigation Systems)
- 2. Tropical Crops in Small-scale Agriculture (1 credit)**
(ex. Bananas, Air Layering, Grafting, Tropical Fruits, Root Tubers)
- 3. Tropical Agriculture Systems (1 credit)**
(ex. Conservation Agriculture, System Rice Intensification, Trees in Agriculture)
- 4. Community Development (1 credit)**
(ex. Asset Based Comm Dev, Biblical Holism, Participatory Methodology - PLA/PRA)
- 5. Small-scale Agricultural Experimentation (1 credit)**
(ex. Relevance & Design, Research for Dev Application, Variety Trialing)

These courses will be taught through seminars (classes) during the internship. Courses will have class assignments and assessments. Time will be provided for the intern to work in their AoR allowing them to demonstrate understanding of these courses, reinforce what is learned, and providing for experimentation based on individual interests. Each intern will be assigned an Area Advisor (AA) -- an experienced ECHO staff to come alongside, guide, reflect, and learn with.

Dallas International University Courses

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

In the fall 2023:

- **Cultural Anthropology (3 credits)**

In the spring 2024:

- **Program Design & Management (3 credits)**
- **Capstone Project (1 credit)**

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



2.3 | Intern Support Structure

The ECHO staff have a variety of rich experiences, skills, and knowledge to draw from. You may interact regularly with the Farm, AT, Seed Bank, and Propagation Managers. In addition to the general support any ECHO team member desires to provide, you will also interact often with the following:

Internship Manager

The Internship Manager directly manages the interns and connects with them on a regular basis. They are responsible for the overall Internship Program.

Area Advisor (also referred to as “Advisor”)

An Area Advisor (AA) is assigned to each Area of Responsibility (AoR).

The role of the Area Advisor is threefold:

- 1. Orient and train 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 (i.e., knowledge and experience in a particular country or region of the world, ABCD, SRI, Community Development, a particular plant, crop or technology, agro-economics, agroforestry, trees, bees, animals, integration of faith and agriculture, etc.) that is integral to the intern’s learning objectives.

The role of the Specialist is twofold:

An Overview of ECHO’s Internship Program

- 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.**

Mentor

A mentor is a voluntary option available to the interns. It aims to provide spiritual and emotional encouragement through an informal relationship. It is often organic and is not required. An intern may connect with a mentor, after getting to know them, from their local church or from the ECHO community.



2.4 | Areas of Responsibility (AoR)

Interns will have an Area of Responsibility (AoR) in ECHO's Global Farm. (Urban Garden, Tropical Rainforest, Tropical Lowlands, Tropical Highlands, Monsoon, Semi-Arid, Peri-Urban, Community Garden). The AoR serves three learning purposes:

Generational Maintenance

Creation and Exploration

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 the AoR.

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

Preserve key demonstrations: Maintain pertinent demonstrations of agricultural practices.

Examples 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 and learn about tropical small-scale agriculture. This often looks like:

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

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

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

Integrating Appropriate Technology: Interns have the opportunity to utilize AT options while working in their AoR.

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: Interns will 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 their 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 ("AoR Buddy"), interns will rotate care for goats, pigs, chickens, and the forage bank as it, too, is an important part in feeding the animals. All interns will have access to utilize these animals in their AoR. There is an annual fish harvesting event at one or two of the ponds on the farm that interns participate in as well.

2.6 | Propagation Nursery

ECHO operates a Propagation Nursery. The Propagation Nursery provides 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. ECHO interns have the opportunity to learn about the many aspects surrounding nursery management.

2.7 | Seed Bank

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. ECHO also provides seeds to our overseas network and Florida based retail bookstore.

While at ECHO, interns are 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 | **Appropriate Technology**

While technologies are ever changing around the world, ECHO desires to be a research and demonstration center that values both traditional technologies and low-cost new technologies as we learn from our global network. Interns have the opportunity to be exposed to and use a variety of technologies from around the world - from farming tools to building materials to water purification systems. In addition, there is a one day seminar for interns to learn about the varieties and treatment of bamboo along with hands on techniques related to bamboo uses and construction.

2.9 | **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.

In addition, throughout the year, interns may live alongside missionaries, development workers, and volunteer teams 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 missionary visitors, international guests, volunteers, and other visitors can be a highlight of the internship at ECHO.

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

ECHO also desires interns to be involved in a local church. There is value in fellowshiping with believers outside of ECHO for personal spiritual growth and community outreach. These opportunities can also lead to longtime friendships, prayer and financial support.

If you have questions regarding the community life of ECHO, please discuss them with the Internship Manager before accepting a position.

2.10 | Weekly Schedule (sample - 2023)

Intern Weekly Schedule June 26th - August 28th, 2023

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:30					
8:00	Chores			Chores	Chores
8:30					
9:00	Devotions				
9:30					
10:00					
10:30	AoR Planning				
11:00					
11:30	Advisor Meeting				
12:00					
12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00					
1:30					
2:00					
2:30					
3:00	ECHO Class	ECHO Class	Propagation/Seed bank	AoR /Course work	AoR /Coursework
3:30					
4:00					
4:30					
5:00	Chores	Chores	Chores	Chores	Chores

Average of 10 hours a week required in AoR | Participation in ECHO classes are 60% or your grade
 Check Canvas regularly for due dates | a B average is required to receive the Certificate

Section 3 | Benefits

Stipend

Interns are paid a monthly stipend of approximately \$500. ECHO payroll runs every two weeks.

Graduate Credits

ECHO covers most of the costs for DIU fees and graduate credits.

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 recurring inspections may be conducted by the Facilities Manager and/or Internship Manager.

Insurance Coverage

ECHO provides a variety of insurance benefits and options. Coverage is paid with pre-tax wages.

Health Insurance- ECHO currently provides basic health insurance for ECHO interns. Coverage is effective the first of the month following the first thirty days of your internship at ECHO.

Life Insurance- Interns are covered from the first day of month following thirty days of the internship.

Voluntary Dental and Vision- are also available if elected. Coverage is effective the 1st of the month following the first thirty days of your internship at ECHO.

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 intern 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 (within 1 week of your birthday)*
- 10 paid US holidays***

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

