

#### LA MARIPOSA RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY

We understand responsible tourism to mean acting consistently in ways which are helpful to both the local community and the environment. We would not claim to be 100% but we work continuously to learn more about how we may improve. We hope to act as a model for both the local community and visiting students.

# For our students and guests – we offer

- Excellent Spanish classes with teachers trained and monitored by us in a relaxing environment and access to our library
- A community atmosphere (combined with personal space) where guests eat together and interact with staff and animals as members of the community
- A choice of accommodation all carefully checked and maintained. We balance the need for basic cleanliness and provision of facilities with our policy of keeping our eco standards high
- Freshly prepared and cooked food, sourced from our own vegetable garden, local growers or the nearest market (Jinotepe).
- Opportunities to learn about this community, this environment and Nicaragua in the context of global issues whether as a volunteer, in a homestay or on one of our many enjoyable and information excursions and activities
- A policy of openness...you can see where the trash goes, inspect how we treat our animals (no tied up dogs out the back!!), watch the accountant at work, ask the kitchen staff what they cooking......
- Adequate pre arrival information on the website, via personal email and an introductory tour on arrival

## Within La Mariposa –we aim to

- Maximize employment...teachers, guides, admin, kitchen, cleaning, building
  maintenance and construction, gardens, animal care, project staff. We do not
  pay high wages to a select few but pay above minimum wages to as many
  workers as possible, thus assisting as many local families as possible
- Employ all local staff except interns and Paulette (who are unpaid).
- Ensure good working conditions on the job training, individual help (loans),
   asking guests to tip all staff, advice on healthy lifestyles, promoting workers
- Reduce, reuse, recycle as much as possible and including rice husks, paper, plastic bags, bottles
- Conserve water through collection of rainwater and grey water. We also encourage the use of latrines and alert both staff and guests to the importance of saving water
- Provide solar power and solar heated water
- Reduce power consumption through minimum use of machines ( no A/C, hand wash & line dry clothes, no freezer)
- Produce our own veggies, fruit, herbs, medicinal plants, free range eggs, coffee
- Offer freshly prepared and cooked meals, mostly vegetarian, using a no waste buffet style,
- Encourage consumption of locally produced, low litter snacks & drinks rather than mass produced ones.
- Ensure that furniture & furnishings are locally and ethically made
- Provide organic, locally made shampoo & soap in hotel bathrooms
- Use our land and space respectfully, maximizing uses of rooms (eg library doubling as a classroom)
- Expand our eco building -using rice straw, adobe, thatch, recycled tyres, volcanic rock
- Encourage walking & use of local transport
- Reforest our land as much as possible concentrating on trees which are rare and also help wildlife
- Avoid using damaging pesticides & fertilizers. Produce our own with kitchen waste, horse manure, human urine and our worm project
- Encourage wildlife by providing feeding stations and improving habitats for insects, bees, birds, bats, reptiles, mammals

- Rescue animals in need of care as much as possible whilst returning wild animals to the wild whenever possible
- Ensure high levels of care of rescued animals
- Help to preserve rare chicken breeds through a heritage chicken project
- Celebrate Nicaraguan culture, not as something "exotic", but as part of a way of life. This includes food, music, dance, local festivals. Where the concept of culture supports oppression of women/children or cruelty to animals e.g. cock fighting, not supported
- Ensure written information available on our policies and offer led discussions, films, workshops to staff, guests and members of the local community on all aspects of community and environmental responsibility
- Incorporate issues into Spanish classes where appropriate

### *In the local community and environment – we aim to*

- Direct income into the local economy through (1) job creation and using local service providers such as electricians & mechanics (2) paying local families to offer homestays to guests (3) purchasing from local producers and stores (4) financially and practically helping families in distress
- Avoid large chain supermarkets, using local family owned businesses
- Strengthen local communities through supporting local, already existing
  projects which help the most marginalized within the communities disabled
  children and young people (education and play), women (employment and
  family support), adolescents (education, especially in English and sports) and
  the poorest families (eco-cookers, building latrines, laying water pipes,
  community gardens)
- Examples of projects are children's reading corners, renovating the building of a health post, building a bakery for a women's cooperative, assisting a disabled children's center including physical, occupational and horse riding therapy,
- Develop further projects with the community as and when resources allow
- Pay the local volunteer project workers a reasonable "ayuda" and place
   Mariposa students as extra volunteer assistance
- Support the poorest and most isolated communities with jobs (both within La
   Mariposa and as tourist guides) and income through our rural tourism initiative
- Help mitigate the effects of climate change through reforestation & donating tree seedlings from our tree nursery

- Promote our eco cooker project, donating cookers designed to use 50% less firewood to families in the poorest communities
- Assist families who wish to have their dogs and cats neutered and spayed by offering a free service

### In Nicaragua

- Contribute to national debates and developments on sustainable tourism and related issues through social media, blogs etc
- Research places that share similar values and avoid exploitative tourism, raise awareness generally, off the beaten track
- Support the importance of languages other than English and Nicaraguan culture
- Offer personal advice to guests travelling further afield on transport, national reserves, ecologically sound hotels etc

# Globally speaking.....

- Demonstrate concern for depletion of the oceans, destruction of soils, air and water pollution, loss of forests, wildlife and biodiversity – including cultural diversity
- Understand more about Nicaraguan history from pre Columbian and current situation (poverty) and how it relates to global history and geopolitics
- Contribute to debates through social media, interviews, articles
- Offer opportunities for learning especially with high school and university students in the group study centre and the local community
- Demonstrate the richness ad satisfaction of working in a genuinely nonprofit way.