

Angela (Rich) George, Peace Corps Volunteer, Dominican Republic (2001–2003)

Biography

My name is Angela (Rich) George, and I work as an agroforestry community development Volunteer in the Dominican Republic. Growing up the youngest of my family in Racine, Wisconsin, was not easy. I constantly competed with my two older



Angela Rich

brothers, but I also looked to them as role models. Often, I aspired to do the same things they were doing. When my older brother was leading short-term development projects in Honduras, I was still in high school, but I began to think about traveling and working abroad.

I received my bachelor of arts from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May of 2000. I majored in English, Spanish-American literature, and comparative literature. Although I began Spanish classes in the seventh grade, it wasn't until I studied abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico, after my second year in college, that Spanish came alive for me. Opportunities to speak Spanish were abundant; speaking Spanish was even a necessary survival skill, and I began to excel. The trip also solidified my interest in undertaking development work in a Spanish-speaking country.

As an agroforestry community development Volunteer now, I try to combine agriculture with forestry; while I work with farmers, I teach them to protect the land by reforesting and using soil conservation techniques. After three months of Peace Corps Spanish and technical agroforestry training, I was

placed in the southwest part of the country, in a small village in the mountains called El Mundito, which translates as "the little world." We have no running water, no electricity, and no paved road, and it truly is its own little world. We have one generator in the town, which is occasionally turned on to play the traditional *bachata* and *merengue* music and light up the dance floor.

I also work with villagers to establish organic home gardening. We have organized a group within the community to pass out seeds, talk about nutrition, and learn how to make and use organic fertilizers and pesticides. The people of El Mundito are not accustomed to planting and eating vegetables, and most suffer from malnutrition.

Currently I have a grant to build 20 latrines within the community. Although the project provides the materials for the latrines, the people provide all the labor. When I arrived there were no latrines, and this has been a health problem for the people.

Aside from these main projects, I work with the farmers' association and a women's group, and I teach English classes.



Angela in front of a nursery of tree grafts that she and the farmers planted

