



Fundación Centro Experimental Las Gaviotas

CENTRO LAS GAVIOTAS

Résumé

The Foundation Centro Las Gaviotas has deserved the following distinctions, among others:

First National Prize of the Environment. One of the three members of the jury was Mostafa K. Tolba, Former director of the United Nations for the Environment Program Agency. (1979).

Report of Colombia in the United Nations World Conference on the Human settlements - HABITAT - carried out in Vancouver, Canada. (1976).

Example Nr. 1 in the United Nations World Conference, about Technical Cooperation among developing countries, Buenos Aires, Argentina. (1978).

Colombian Junior Chamber honored the Director of the Center, as one of the ten executives of this year (1.979).

Mention of honor of the Colombian Society of Architects. (1983).

Worker of the culture, of the Cultural Integration Institute of Quirama, Rio Negro, Antioquia. (1983)

Central report in the World Conference of the Club of Rome, held in Bogotá. (1983).

Stamp of the Colombian air Mail in homage to Gaviotas (1983).

World Prize from ZERI (zero emissions) of United Nations University in Tokyo. (1997).

The newspaper El Espectador, declared Gaviotas one of the 100 more important feats in Colombia, in a special fascicle. (2001).

The international press, as the New York Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Der Spiegel Wall Street Journal, Le Monde, Journal de Geneva, Hong Kong Standard, Bionics, L'espresso, Newsweek, Audubon, Reader's digest, El Excelsior, Magazine of the Inter American Bank of Development, among others has highlighted the achievements of Gaviotas in its first pages.

International personalities, that visited Las Gaviotas in the Orinoco, have expressed this way:

"Champions of the imagination and of the common sense"

Gabriel García Márquez

Literature Nobel Prize

"Gaviotas: A place where one thinks tropically"

Richard Evans Schultes

Director of Harvard's Botanical Museum.

"Gaviotas, example for the world"

Aurelio Peccei

World president of the Club of Rome

In 1998, The American Editorial Chelsea Green, published Alan Weisman's book:

"GAVIOTAS – A VILLAGE TO REINVENT THE WORLD"

In its back cover he says:

IN 1971, A GROUP OF COLOMBIAN VISIONARIES AND TECHNICIANS DECIDED TO PROVE THEY could thrive in one of the most brutal imaginable environments: their country's sweeps, rain leached eastern savannas. Despite the constant threat of Colombia's political turbulence, this is now the setting for one of the most hopeful environmental success stories ever told.

For more than three decades the scientists, artisans, peasants, former-street Kids, and Guahibo Indians living in a village called Gaviotas have elevated phrases like *sustainable development* and *appropriate technology* from cliché to reality. Sixteen hours from the nearest major city, they invented wind turbines that convert mild tropical breezes into energy, solar collectors that work in the rain, soil-free systems to raise edible and medicinal crops, ultra and - efficient pumps to tap deep aquifers-pumps so easy to operate, they're hooked up to children's seesaws. The United Nations named the village to model for the developing world. Others call it to utopia. But Gaviotas founder Paolo Lugari insists, Utopia literally means no place. We call Gaviotas a topia, because it's real."

Yet the heroes of this story are not only human beings and their technology. In the shelter of millions of Caribbean pines, which the Gaviotans planted as a renewable crop, an unexpected marvel has occurred: the regeneration of an ancient native rain forest.

Weisman added a part to the book published in 2009. It has been published in Korean, Chinese, and Japanese.

Gabriel García Márquez has called Paolo Lugari “the inventor of the world”. The story of Gaviotas, a village alchemizing peace and prosperity in a stricken land, will change the way you think about that world.

In April 2004, Robin Lane, inaugurated in Oregon State the play called *Enthusiasm*, about the history and life of Gaviotas.

In May 2007, Carnegie Mellon United States University awarded Paolo Lugari the honorary Doctorate in Science and Technology.