

20 CULTIVATING PEACE

25 WITH OUR HAND ON THE PLOUGH, LOOKING AHEAD



SEMBRANDOPAZ' ANNIVERSARY

Twenty years ago, Ricardo Esquivia moved back to the Caribbean Coast after having supported the region at a distance for over a decade. Upon arrival, local leaders welcomed him and they supported one another to create a tool that would transform society, from vulnerability to sustainability; a tool that would sow peace wherever it went; a tool that would be moved by the hope and resilience of the people. This tool, and the community that surrounds and creates it, is called Sembrandopaz, which was legally founded on July 15, 2005. This year, Sembrandopaz celebrates 20 years of work in the Region.

Over the course of two decades, Sembrandopaz has accomplished experiencing challenges and successes along the way.

To celebrate and mark this significant moment, we are preparing a very special event called 20 Years Cultivating Peace, for Friday July 18 at our main office in Sincelejo.

This special day will offer time to reflect back on our history and also to look forward to our hopes of the future. The 18th will include a variety of activities, including storytelling, special presentations, delicious, typical food and, as always, encounters and reenounters. Furthermore, during the week of July 14, we are organizing a schedule where guests will have the opportunity to visit communities, our Farm and Nature Reserve, and also the beach!



We want to extend a very special invitation to you to join us at this event! To register, please fill out the Google Form found here:
<https://forms.gle/4rsGDy358gNV7TuH6>

Each one of you has offered your friendship, support and accompaniment over the course of these 20 years; we know that would not be here without you. Thank you so much for your Support. We continue cultivating Peace, and we invite you to join us in that work, and to celebrate with us! We'll see you in July!



Campaign for 20 years

There is lots of work to be done yet Help us reach our goal of raising \$20,000 USD for our 20th anniversary. Let us know if you'd like to make a donation!

Anniversary week

July 15: Visit to Farm Villa Barbara

July 16: Visit local communities

July 17: Visit the Morrocoy Reserve

July 18: Anniversary Event

July 19: Visit to the beach



Scan the QR code and register to participate



SEMBRANDOPAZ

In Sembrandopaz, we use a metaphor to describe our work: a bird, flying towards the Cultivation of Peace, transforming the region.

The head of the bird is the organization's leadership, which guides our work and provides our vision towards an integral peace. Two wings are required for a bird to maintain flight, working together in balance and harmony. The cultivation of peace is built with a balance of political, economic and environmental dimensions. In Sembrandopaz, one of these wings represents our Political Culture department, which incorporates democratic participation, human rights, public policy, trauma healing, conflict transformation and restorative justice work. The other wing represents our Economy for Good Living department, which focuses on moving from vulnerability to sustainability by integrating economic, environmental and productive work.

Birds are not always in flight, however; at some point they must land. For us, the bird's feet represent the live, practice models we have in our Experimental Farm Villa Bárbara and Morrocoy Nature Reserve. As Ricardo often says, if it exists, it is possible, therefore these two spaces are places where our methodology towards a cultivation of peace is demonstrated as an endogenous model for others to see and participate in.

The tail of a bird stabilizes its flight pattern, so we understand the tail to represent our administrative department. Finances, relationships and alliances, organizational structure, communications and human talent areas are critical components of stabilizing and sustaining the organization.

Lastly, the body of the bird represents the core of our identity - our values, commitments and methodologies. Ethics and Spirituality, Art and Esthetics, and Action-Reflection cycles guide our work, assuring the quality and integrity of our work.



OUR WORK

In our **Political Culture** work, Sembrandopaz is encouraging spaces for citizens to reflect and dialogue around social, economic, environmental and cultural issues, and create avenues for these spaces to support the development of a dignified life for the Montes de María region. This work is organized with a multi-level methodology that includes local-level support as well as regional and national level coordination and collaboration. These diverse scenarios allow for the consolidation, unification and autonomy of civil society in transforming their social reality.



In our **Economy for Good Living** work, we are encouraging food security, sustainability and sustainability through agroecology education, endogenous models, rainwater harvesting, environmental conservation and protection, product transformation and commercialization, organizational strengthening and microloans. Specifically, we work at encouraging the role of women as agents of change in the region.





The Experimental **Farm Villa Barbara** is a model where we display examples of water harvesting, planting techniques, use and creation of organic fertilizer, home gardens, native plant development and conservation practices towards a healthy Tropical Dry Rainforest. In this sense, the Farm works as a space of restoration and conservation, as well as education for the Montes de María region.

In December 2023, Sembrandopaz received over 1,000 acres from the Crecer en Paz Foundation, which we named the **Morrocoy (Tortoise) Nature Reserve**. The majority of this land is a nature reserve of the tropical dry forest, which is one of the most endangered forest ecosystems in the world. Furthermore, it includes a 24-acre parcel that includes a reservoir, tree nursery, creek, storage areas and wooden buildings with dormitories.

We are excited to use this area for ecotourism and environmental education where visitors can come and stay to birdwatch, walk the trails, and learn. Currently, we are running two programs on the Reserve, including Forest School for children, and Ecological Protectors for youth, engaging the communities around the reserve. Through these programs, we are teaching them to learn about, and love and care for, the forest and its inhabitants, and as well take care of themselves and each other, incarnating our work towards a cultivation of peace.



Ricardo Esquivia Ballestas, Founder and Executive Director of Sembrandopaz, is an afro-Colombian human rights lawyer, grassroots community organizer, and peace activist. A devout Mennonite committed to non-violence, Ricardo has worked a lifetime to pursue justice and foster peace in Colombia. In the 1980's, he worked in dangerous conditions, supporting farming communities on the Caribbean coast area; in the 1990's, he continued to promote human rights work in Bogotá by founding and directing the work of Justapaz, the Christian Center for Peace, Justice and Nonviolent Action; and in the 2000's he returned to the Coast at the peak of violence to support displaced communities.

Ricardo's work protects conscientious objectors, empowers displaced afro- and mestizo communities, and reaches across religious and social divides in a fractured society. He is a recognized leader for human rights and peacebuilding in Colombia as well as a creative educator and a trusted mediator and negotiator at all levels of society.



¡Get Involved!

The support, participation, wisdom and ideas of our network of friends around the world has always been a key to our success at Sembrandopaz. Some of the ways you can join our work is through:



Delegations: Come spend some time with us and get to know our work on the ground!



Dialogue: Stay in touch with us, your wisdom and connection is invaluable!



Donations: There is always a need, every size of gift helps!



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