



both, Luis Camargo, © ZERI Foundation



The community center mural, with a detail showing the banner which can be translated, "Maturity consists of making dreams come true."

Protocol. Such contracts would offset the buyers' carbon emissions (and those resulting from overseas transport of the water) by financing the planting of new, biodiverse forests.

The second mechanism for financing the reforestation effort is ecotourism. Colombia is a nation of extraordinary biodiversity, owing to its location in the tropics and its range of habitats, from coasts on the Caribbean and the Pacific, to the three spines of the Andes that divide the country with peaks as high as 5,800 meters above sea level, to the vast plains and rainforests of the eastern provinces. Among the attractions of the eastern savannah is the pristine Tuparro National Park, which lies just across the Río Tomo from Marandúa. Although the domestic violence that has plagued Colombia has limited tourism and ecological research, the potential for future development is enormous.

In the spring of 2005, after almost 10 years during which the conflict prevented the visit of any outsiders, foreigners and Colombians alike, the authors had the privilege of visiting Las Gaviotas and Marandúa with tours led by Gunter Pauli. The timing of the first visit, in May, was dictated by the filming of a documentary by Fuji TV that would be broadcast in early June during a state visit by Colombian President Uribe to Japan.

Through efforts such as water sales, international site visits, and high-level diplomacy, the Marandúa project is becoming a reality. This growing fruit represents the organic development of the dreams and efforts of many people: Paolo Lugari himself, the Colombian government, the Air Force commander-in-chief and his deputies, a Belgian entrepreneur who believes in Colombia, and many others who trust

in the great potential offered by the richness and biodiversity of the country. The ultimate dream is that the reforested savannah will become home to hundreds of thousands of people who will be able to live in peace and contribute with their work to generating wealth in one of the cleanest environments in the world.

Spanning one wall of the community center in Gaviotas is a colorful mural painted by a local artist who signs his work only with his ID number. The mural portrays the past, present, and future of Las Gaviotas, along with the artist's dreams: residents and their children at work and at play, making music and dancing amid a rich company of indigenous wildlife. In the center of the mural is a sign: "Maturity consists of making dreams come true." Paolo Lugari is fond of saying: "If you aren't dreaming, you must be asleep!" The waking dream of Lugari and his fellow Colombians shines as a beacon of hope in a troubled world.

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For more information about issues raised in this story, visit www.worldwatch.org/ww/gaviotas.