

INKATERRA SPONSORS WORKSHOP ON CACAO MANAGEMENT AND CHOCOLATE PRODUCTION

One of the main activities at Inkaterra Hacienda Concepcion is the cacao excursion, a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the millenary cacao tree that was revered by many Pre-Hispanic civilizations. It does not only allow travellers to discover its history and virtues, but also the key role it plays in Puerto Maldonado's sustainable development, as cacao is one of its most successful agroforestry projects.

Aiming to improve the management of cacao and chocolate production, Inkaterra and cacao expert Iván Murrugarra organized a workshop on the subject at Inkaterra Hacienda Concepción. Held from June 9th to 11th, the workshop educated personnel in charge or involved with the diverse aspects of production, harvest and processing of cacao, as well as on the production of chocolate.

It was a good opportunity to determine the viability of future projects related to the sowing, raising and production of cacao in all its aspects, as well as to train Inkaterra guides on the standards of the cacao excursion, which offers a visit to cacao tree plantations and allows travellers to assist chocolate production at Inkaterra Hacienda Concepción.

Key aspects on the management of cacao were covered during the workshop, as well as the steps to produce several products such as cacao liquor and cacao paste.

The workshop led attendants to an entrepreneurial approach towards cacao, and the experts arrived to important conclusions upon its closure. After analyzing cacao plant and fruit morphology, three species of cacao and a hybrid of the *Theobroma* genus were classified throughout the plantations at Inkaterra Hacienda Concepción and Gamitana Field Station. On the other hand, an uncommon species was found in hotel grounds and it could even be a new species to science. Scientific studies will take place to confirm this information, which might bring many benefits to the area.