

## Interview with Rie Sato about the Leda Settlement

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Though winter seems to have only just begun, it is in fact almost over. Here in NJ, where this author is from, we've seen an unusual winter season with fickle weather ranging from Floridian temperatures during the week of Christmas to below freezing temperatures the following week. The jury is out on the types of weather to be expected in the final weeks of the season. We might have a giant snow storm or walk the streets with short sleeved shirts in February. What is certain is that as winter leaves us, warmth is on its way and so too are the activities enjoyed with thermal freedom.

For those at the Leda Settlement, warmth in the US and other regions of the Earth means the return of visitors to the property (summer in the US is winter in Paraguay). In celebration of the impending summer projects, we present a short interview with a Japanese participant who visited Leda last year:

This is a part of an interview recently made with Ms. Rie Sato who attended the Japanese 2015 Youth Service Project in Leda. Rie is a graduate of Waseda University where she majored in Human Science and Environmental Science.

**Question: What was your motivation for being part of the service project in Leda?**

**Rie:** I have had a strong interest in the environment and that is why I choose Environmental Studies as my major. I wanted to know more about the environment and situations in other parts of the world so coming to the Pantanal/Chaco regions was especially appealing. I think we all have something special to offer and by volunteering we get a chance to give something back.

**Question: How was your experience?**

**Rie:** I worked with the Indeo children and stayed in the local village. I worked on planting trees that have good health benefits. The situation there was very different from what I am used to in Japan! To start, there was no shower or 'proper' toilet. It was hot and the physical labor was hard and then I realized how difficult it was for the missionaries who first came to this region. I began to appreciate their hard work. Once I adjusted my own attitude, I could form a strong bond with the local people and feel joy in my work and in sharing with the people. We came to serve but instead we received a lot of love. This is the amazing gift that service can bring.

**Question: How was your impression of the Leda Settlement?**

**Rie:** I was impressed with the grand nature. It was amazing to see the birds and the various animals. At night you could see millions of stars in the sky and every ten seconds a shooting star. I could watch for hours lying on the ground and looking up. When I think of Leda I long to go back.

**Question: What is your future plan?**

**Rie:** I learned about sustainable development in agriculture and fish farming in Leda. I want to work with a local non-profit organization to start to develop sustainable development. My dream is to introduce the idea of the Leda Project to local communities as a way to promote harmony between people and nature and create an ideal village movement.