



# Annual Report 2010



## Annual Report 2010

### *Introduction from the Executive Director*

At the end of 2010 we look back on nearly 4 and a half years of progress. Since our beginnings in September of 2006 Yanapuma has managed consistent growth as an organization. This is due principally to the hard work and dedication of its founders, teachers, staff, volunteers and interns, all of whom have given their time and effort in support of our mission to improve the lives of indigenous and marginalized communities.

I have often observed to those who have inquired that actually, in the 4 years that we have been active, we have developed not one, but three separate initiatives concurrently – the foundation, the Spanish school, and a volunteer organization – Volunteer Ecuador.

This explains why we have worked so hard these past 4 years!

For the first three years, and a good part of the fourth, the organization as a whole has lived on a knife edge, as we have committed every spare cent to the work of the foundation. We saw this as necessary in order to develop a body of work achieved and a reputation for being able to carry out sustainable community development work in the absence of assured funding from other sources. We realized that in the long run this was unsustainable, arriving at the end of each year with nothing in the bank, or even requesting an advance on future work to be able to pay the year-end bills.

In 2010 we took the decision to change this situation, and to begin a process of separating a little the Spanish school and the volunteering department from the foundation in order to be able to build up a reserve in case of unexpected events like the near coup that took place in Ecuador on 30 September this year, which could have adversely affected our income if the situation had worsened or continued for a period of time. Our long-term survival depends on being able to withstand fluctuations in income, for which we need to act prudently and begin to develop a reserve.

We have been aided in this process by the approval of funding proposals for the work of the foundation from several sources in 2010 which gave us for the first time a significant resource for our work. This has been a major achievement for the foundation, and one on which we tend to continue building in the coming years.

This year has also been a good year for the Spanish school with an overall increase in the number of students. With each additional student the school becomes more profitable, and the success of our “Study and Travel” programs in particular in 2010 has served to increase our income. Our online classes have also continued to expand, especially after the launch of a dedicated website - [www.spanishonlineclass.com](http://www.spanishonlineclass.com).

Our volunteer programs have also grown during 2010, both in terms

of the groups that we handle each year and the individual volunteers who come to us under the “Volunteer Ecuador” program. This program places willing volunteers with worthwhile projects around the country, vetted by Yanapuma. In part the program was inspired by the horror stories of many volunteers who had paid a lot of money to other organizations only to be disappointed by the project at which they arrived. Unfortunately volunteering has become a big business with plenty of companies intent on charging as much as they can without providing the necessary level of oversight and service to their volunteers. Thus, Yanapuma charges a nominal fee to cover all the costs of running the department and providing the level of service that guarantees a good experience for the volunteer with any surplus going to the work of the foundation. The world financial crisis that struck in 2008 made its effects felt in 2009, and the after-effects have lingered into 2010. But we have noticed an increased confidence in general, a greater willingness to travel and all the signs are that 2011 will be a good year in which we can expect to see continued growth for the organization as a whole. What is certain is that the founders, staff, interns and volunteers at Yanapuma will continue to work towards realizing our vision and mission, supporting the work of the foundation through dedicated funding and also through our own economic activities in the Spanish School and Volunteer Ecuador.



Our work as a foundation continues to be at the same time fascinating and frustrating. We struggle with the philosophical and ethical questions of how to provide sustainable growth opportunities for marginalized communities. We have

realized that our partnerships with communities are intense relations that fluctuate according to personal and political factors within the community itself, and we work to maintain our equilibrium and focus as a team without being drawn one way or another by changing events. Yet at the same time we are forever adapting to new situations on the ground; moving forward when there is an opening and retreating when the way is blocked.



A fundamental consideration is the subtle differences between our cultures that only become apparent through time and reflection on our work. Each of us grows up within our own culture, absorbing its worldview and developing a set of skills that are mediated by this system. To process change is an immense challenge when that kind of change lies outside one's skill set as provided by one's cultural heritage. One of the most pertinent and touching remarks was made by a member of the cacao growers association in Bua to Giovanni Toapanta, our agricultural expert after a group visit to Salinas de Guaranda where a group of indigenous communities led by an Italian padre who has spent many years helping them develop productive enterprises. Our aim was to inspire the Tsa'chila to develop a vision for themselves of their future. His remark translates something like this:

*“It is so hard for me to sustain a vision of the future . . . but I will make sure that my son grows up with this ability to have a vision of his future.”*

The Tsa'chila were until very recently a forest-dwelling people who



lived by hunting, fishing and small slash-and-burn plots in the rain forest that provided for all their needs year round. The challenge of adapting to a globalized world is precisely that of developing a vision of the future that will provide them with a compass to define a path to living as Tsa'chila in a new social context. It is an ability that we take for granted, but one which has not been necessary in their lives.

Our goal as a foundation is to be able to help – facilitating the processes, offering options, possibilities and potential paths, without defining the content or direction. It is a task that will continue to fascinate and frustrate us for years to come.

Andrew Kirby, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

## Yanapuma Spanish School



Overall during 2010 Yanapuma Spanish School experienced a satisfactory level of growth and development. The school remained primarily dependent upon receiving students via its web pages (70%), walk-ins (15%) and from the agency Het Andere Reizen in Holland (15%).

The challenge for 2011 is to move towards working with more agencies to receive students from additional sources as the principal means of expanding. To this end we have put in place measures to make Yanapuma more attractive to agencies. These include starting to offer group classes at beginner level and to increase our commission levels.

The latter has been a struggle to establish due to the tight market in which Yanapuma operates. There are over 40 Spanish schools in Quito alone, and hundreds in Latin America. We have a

certain advantage in that Quito is recognized as one of the best places to learn Spanish in the world and our website is well positioned. We have worked during 2010 to make our programs more professional, to train the teachers in our methodology, to develop suitable materials, and to optimize our web pages.

Edison Rendón, our academic coordinator, has been instrumental in developing our methodology and translating this into training for our teachers and the development of high quality materials along with Caterine Vera our principal teacher. This is one of the areas that will set Yanapuma Spanish School apart in the future. Another important facet of our school is attention to the social activities and excursions for students. Founder and teacher Vinicio Quichiguango has been instrumental in developing these activities as well as constantly inspiring students to participate and get the



*Students enjoy an evening visit to the historic center of Quito*



*"Study in an indigenous community" program in Estero de Plátano*

most out of their stay in Quito and Ecuador. Students often comment positively on the social life at Yanapuma and our experience has been that many students have continued to study with us beyond the time they had originally planned. This is a testament to the dedication of teachers and staff who work constantly to ensure that students enjoy and value their time with us.

During 2010 we received in total 659 students, an increase of 37% over the previous year. Particularly successful have been our "Study and Travel" programs in which students travel with a teacher to an Amazon or cloud forest lodge, or on one of several set itineraries that explore the Andean sierra and Pacific coast regions. These programs have been especially attractive to older, retired or semi-retired students who relish the opportunity to travel with the relative safety of a teacher and local guide while they study Spanish. Our growth in 2010 has taken place despite the very limited means available for promotion. One of our challenges for the future is to make available a larger advertising budget that will help us to get the word out more and make some strategic alliances.

On the administrative front we made two significant changes during 2010. In May we handed our accounting needs over to an external accounting firm, e-Valora. Their extensive knowledge, resources and skills will allow us to much more effectively manage the accounting needs of the organization as a whole than the in-house system that we were previously using. Straight away we began to see a radical difference.

We also contracted the services of a firm of lawyers rather than

working with individual lawyers as before. Although the cost is higher, we feel more secure in the knowledge that we are receiving the best advice in an environment in which the laws are prone to constant change as the Ecuadorian government overhauls its legal and administrative systems.

At the end of 2010 we also purchased a new administration program that we began using at the start of 2011. This will free up time in the office from administrative duties that were done by hand with the previous administration system, as well as producing on demand the statistics that we need to evaluate the progress of the school.

As a growing and relatively new school we spend a greater proportion of our income on generating new teaching materials and on ongoing training of our teachers. Both of these are necessary expenses, seen as an investment for the future. In addition to further refining our flagship Professional Medical Spanish program we have also begun to develop materials for the Beginner Group classes that we will run in 2011. We have also offered monthly workshops for our teachers, designed to implement our methodology and familiarize teachers with an expanded repertoire of teaching methods and resources.



*Students on a weekend trip to the snowline of Cotopaxi volcano*



*Students taste exotic fruit as an in-class exercise*



*Small group class on the terrace*



We also raised the hourly rates that we pay our teachers for 2011. We have not raised the class prices, which puts a strain on the organization to remain solvent, and to a large extent we are gambling on continued growth during 2011 to lower administration costs so that we remain profitable. We recognized that it is necessary to encourage our teachers by raising their pay and maintaining the enthusiastic and dedicated workplace ethic that impresses our students.

Pay for teachers in Quito varies widely and our pay scale is on the high side of the average. We also pay a relatively higher percentage of the overall class price to our teachers compared to other schools. But we see this as a good investment.



*A parrot poses for a student at Yachana Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon*

At the end of 2010 we look forward with anticipation to 2011. As previously mentioned we are gambling to a certain extent on having more students in 2011 in order to remain profitable, having raised teacher pay but not prices. At the start of 2011 we are designing a publicity campaign that will hopefully produce the desired

result. But one thing we have seen is that every year is different and there is no telling what the future might hold.

Another challenge that we have faced this year at the level of the organization in general has been deciding whether to unite the Spanish school and the foundation as one organization. When we first started, the lawyers who handled the processes set up the Spanish school as an ACP (Asociación de Cuentas en Participación), a relatively simple and quick form of setting up a partnership while the approval of the foundation would take several months. This

allowed us to quickly get the school running legally. Thus the school was recognized by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education and constituted as an ACP.

But the statutes drafted by the original lawyers for both the ACP and the foundation were very sloppily cobbled together from previous work that they had done, which created problems for us in the ensuing years. We sought advice from several lawyers as well as the ministries of Education and Social and Economic Inclusion (MIES - which regulates the foundation) regarding the legality of including the school in the foundation. The main problem is that this would effectively put Yanapuma under two ministries (Education and MIES) for the same organization, which may not be tenable under law.

Ecuador's laws are changing as the government moves to regulate foundations, which had previously served as a wide-scale method of laundering money and avoiding taxes, and the answers we got varied depending on the perspective of each person. At the end of 2010 we continue to weigh the pros and cons of folding the school into the foundation or setting up a separate limited company for the school.

## Volunteer Ecuador, Groups and Interns

Yanapuma's Volunteer Ecuador program unites willing volunteers with worthwhile projects in Quito and beyond for a nominal fee. The projects that Yanapuma supports have all been visited and vetted by our staff and our volunteer coordinators arrange the

volunteer's stay and accompany each volunteer to their project to ensure that everything is well organized. The coordinators also



maintain contact with the volunteer during their volunteer period via email to ensure that everything is working out well.

During the first year of this program in 2009 we hosted 92 individual volunteers. In 2010 this total rose to 121. Of these volunteers, 44 were situated in projects in Quito and 77 in projects outside Quito.

In November of this year, our principal volunteer coordinator Frances Henry left us after 3 years in the role to return to her native Australia. We were sorry to see her go, and appreciate the great job that she did during her time with Yanapuma, coordinating both individual volunteers and groups from various organizations. She was replaced by Kelly Schussler from the US and Lucas Emmerson from the UK.



During 2010 Yanapuma worked with the following volunteer organizations and agencies: The Leap UK, Frontier, Outlook Expeditions, and Het Andere Reizen of Holland. In addition we hosted groups from Thinking Beyond Borders from the US, Theale Green School from the UK, and Colège Edouard Montpetit from Quebec.

At the end of 2010 we reviewed the year's work and projects, removing some that had been problematic or which had not received volunteers, and renewing our agreements with the remainder.

### **In Quito**

During 2010 Yanapuma worked with the following projects in Quito:

- Parque Itchimbia – conservation work and ecological restoration
- Fundación Niñez y Vida – work with children and youth
- FUNGERES – recycling with indigenous population of Quito

- Conocoto Schools – teaching English and computer studies
- Camp Hope – working with children with learning difficulties
- CENIT – organization that works with street children in Quito
- Peluchitos Daycare Center -
- Fundación Cecilia Rivadeneira – several projects with sick children in Quito
- Fundación Gorritas Azules – working with adults and children with severe learning difficulties
- CEMOPLAF – clinic in Quito
- CEMEDSO – general clinic in Quito
- Clinica Jerusalén – clinic in Quito
- Clinica Guamaní – health center in south Quito

### **Outside Quito**

During 2010 Yanapuma worked with the following projects outside Quito:

- Jacinto Collahauzo School – teaching English in an Amazon community
- Municipio de Tena – several projects with vulnerable populations in the Amazon town of Tena
- Yanacocha Animal Rescue Center – animal welfare and rescue
- Arajuno Lodge – volunteer in community work and ecological restoration in the Amazon
- El Arca – animal rescue center in the Amazon
- Fundación ADIN – Animal rescue in Guayabillas in the sierra north of Quito
- Jovenes para el Futuro – work with youth in the sierra town of Ambato
- Ugshapamba – environmental and agro forestry in the sierra
- Maquipucuna – conservation and organic coffee farming in

the sierra

- Brethren y Unida – reforestation and sustainable agriculture
- Planet Drum – reforestation and ecology on the Pacific coast
- Pacific Whale Foundation – monitoring whales
- Rio Muchacho – organic farming work
- Cerro Seco – conservation and park maintenance on the Pacific coast
- Hacienda Tranquila – conservation and community work on the Galapagos Islands
- El Poste – work with the indigenous Tsá'chila
- Finca Sarita – organic farming and cacao production
- Hospital Delfina Concha de Torres – medical work
- Jambí Huasi – medical clinic and holistic center in the sierra
- Paushiyacu clinic – health clinic in the Amazon
- Amupakin – natural childbirth center in the Amazon

Yanapuma is always grateful for the extra help that our international interns provide both in the school and the foundation. At times they bring specific skills that we lack, and at times they just bring their enthusiasm and dedication. But they form a vital part of the work of the foundation and the school.

To carry out internships with Yanapuma we received 11 students in 2010 from the following universities: Institut d'Etudes Politiques d'Aix en Provence, Union College- NY, St. Olaf's College, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Loma Linda University, NTI College- Leiden, KHM University College- Mechelen, University College- London, University of Melbourne.

### **Chilcapamba**

During 2010 Chilcapamba was a destination for groups from the LEAP UK, receiving 4 groups during the year. These groups carried out a variety of projects in and around the community under the supervision of our local director Alfonso Morales.

This community has always been a favorite of the groups, they feel welcome there, enjoy the food, appreciate the projects that they are working on, appreciate the local environment and enjoy the interaction with the community.

During the year the groups worked on the following projects:



### **Chichicorumi**

Chichirorumi has always been a favorite destination for LEAP groups. The Andy family who run the Kamak Maki center are welcoming, and provide a variety of activities to keep groups occupied in their free time. The monkeys and other animals that roam around the center are also captivating to the volunteers, although one of the monkeys in particular, Lucas, is too inquisitive and steals anything he can get his hands on which gets tiring after a while.

Unfortunately, for the last year or so there have not been projects that our volunteer groups could carry out there, until September of this year when we sent one group. This group worked on creating rooms







for accommodation in the upper floor of the museum.

A frequent experience working with communities has been that they come to a point where they see the volunteers more as a source of income than as a source of labor and resources to carry out work in the community. This has happened in Chichicorumi as well and it always complicates the relationship trying to maintain the original objective of helping

the community achieve its goals with the aid of volunteers rather than sending them there to carry out work that is secondary to the income that the community receives from the volunteers' presence.

### **Caimito**

Yanapuma is happy to support the work of biologist George Fletcher in his efforts to make the Cabo San Francisco region more sustainable and to create a biodiversity corridor around Caimito. During 2010 we sent 3 LEAP groups to Caimito where they worked on various projects. These included continuing work on teacher accommodation and new classrooms for the local school and environmental and agricultural work, pruning cacao trees and composting and other work on local farms that help to make their agriculture more sustainable.

One of the criticisms that volunteers have made of their stay in Caimito is the lack of community involvement. It is a very small community and the volunteers stay in a volunteer cabaña which tends to isolate them somewhat from the activities and interaction with the rest of the community. This was exacerbated in September when the group experienced three weeks of nearly non-stop rain which further isolated them and made the work unpleasant.

### **Bua de los Tsa'chila**

During 2010 Yanapuma sent 1 Leap group, a group from Edouard Montpetit College, a group from Thinking Beyond Borders and 2 groups from Outlook Expeditions to Bua. Our aim is always to integrate the work of these groups into our overall plan for the community. The presence of the groups does have a positive effect on the outlook and attitudes of community members and helps to inspire a renewed awareness of the value of their own Tsa'chila culture. In addition of course there is a direct economic benefit with the groups staying in local homes. This always provides us too with the opportunity to discuss topics such as nutrition, hygiene, and clean drinking water with family members with the practical end of caring for their foreign guests.



*Giovanny works with a volunteer on planting cacao trees in Bua*

## *Yanapuma Foundation*

### **Introduction**

In general it has been a good year for Yanapuma Foundation with successes that we can be proud of. But the year has not been without its challenges and upsets.

We considered ourselves very fortunate at the end of 2009 to have two significant projects approved for 2010. One of these was from the InterAmerican Foundation (IAF), a project to focus on the social processes of development in the community of Bua. The other was approved by the Program of Small Donations from the United

Nations (PPD) and was intended to improve cacao production and promote reforestation in the Tsa'chila community of Bua and the adjoining mestizo community of San Jacinto del Bua.

These two projects turned out very differently and provided a series of challenges to Yanapuma that raised many questions about our work and approach. In the end we were able to make them both an intense learning experience for the foundation as well as for the community, and although it was extremely difficult, in the end our relationship with this community was enriched and deepened and the stage was set for our continued work with Bua in 2011 and beyond.



In November of 2009 we were joined by Daniela Romero from Chile as projects coordinator. She stayed with us through to the end of the InnerAmerican Foundation project in Bua, returning afterwards to Spain. We were also sorry to see Azalia Cruz leave, our director of projects and one of the founders of Yanapuma, in July. We decided not to rush into hiring another director straight away, preferring instead to finish the year with a process of evaluation and examination of the direction, processes, and methodology of the

foundation that will set us up for future project work. As part of our need to establish ourselves on a firm economic basis we will not hire a replacement until sufficient funding is assured to be able to support the additional salary.

In addition to Daniela Romero, permanent field staff for the foundation were Giovanni Toapanta (agriculture and reforestation) and Guadalupe Peralta (social/community work). They were aided by intern, Charlotte Lulsens from Belgium and Maddy Shearer from Australia. In addition, agronomist Paulina Sanguano worked part time in the community of Bua.

The mission of Yanapuma is to carry out sustainable community development. Our two guiding principles are that our work should be based in the participation of the community as the leading force in their own development, and that we should aim to integrate our work across the various axes that contribute to sustainability – agriculture and the environment, education, health and well-being, and sustainable economies. Beyond this we had not managed to define our methodology with sufficient clarity, although we had elaborated upon our principles as a guide to how we should be working.

At the end of 2010, once our major projects were finished and all reporting requirements satisfied, we sat down as a team and began to focus on defining our methodology, evaluating our past successes and failures for direction. Out of this process we produced a document, published on our website, that identifies our principles, methodology, and methods across the areas in which we work. Recognizing that our work is primarily social in nature, that we are dealing with the adaptation of indigenous and marginalized populations to the requirements of living in a more globalized context, we have focused on the social processes that underlie sustainable change, making this an integral part of our other work in the areas of agriculture, the environment, health, education and

sustainable economies.

Reports of the work we have carried out in each of the communities that we are involved with follow.

### **Bua and other Tsa'chila communities**

During 2010 Yanapuma has continued to focus on the Tsa'chila community of Bua where we were awarded funding for two significant projects, from the InterAmerican Foundation and the UNDP.

### **InterAmerican Foundation (IAF)**

The project funded by the IAF was a one-year project designed to encourage the social processes that underlie community development, focused towards tangible results in the areas of reforestation, sustainable cacao production and education. The project worked with each of the various social groups in one way or another, with the aims of increasing organizational capacity, developing leadership skills and fomenting cultural self-esteem.



One of the first things we realized is that the project was too ambitious, with too many parts, and we were forced to rewrite, removing certain overly-ambitious activities in order to make the project manageable.

The project used some innovative methods in-

volving theater and puppetry from a local theater group to explore cultural values and attitudes. Interactive presentations were followed by discussion sessions to draw out reflections and

conclusions. In the end we are not really sure whether these were effective as a means of promoting change in the participants in relation to the effort and organization that was necessary to realize this part of the project.

However, throughout the project we were able to maintain a high level of involvement from the various social groups and witnessed appreciable growth in individuals' ability to express themselves as well as growth in self-esteem and organizational ability. But with the project being just one year long, we realized that we need to continue this work for several years for it to become well enough established to be self-sustaining.

A notable success was a demonstration vegetable plot in the local school, Abraham Calazacón. This was organized by Paulina Sanguano, who formerly worked with Yanapuma on several small projects before being hired to work as a teacher in the school. A group of up to 14 children created and maintained the vegetable plot, producing radishes, cilantro, tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbages, and other vegetables. The project



created considerable interest among parents, and several children requested help to establish vegetable plots in their homes.

Fortunately Yanapuma received funding from the Ferguson Charitable Trust for exactly this purpose and we were able at the end of 2010 to begin working with 25 families to establish vegetable plots as well as nurseries for growing saplings on their farms.

At the end of the project we produced a short video and a brochure that explain the results of the project in detail. These are available on our website: [www.yanapuma.org](http://www.yanapuma.org).

With funds left over from the project we organized a trip in December to Salinas de Guaranda where an Italian priest has worked for over 40 years with the local population in the



development of businesses based on local production. Our aim was to inspire the Tsa'chila to develop a vision of what is possible for them. One Tsa'chila commented that he was impressed that a community high up in the cold sierra was offering them chocolate that they had made when the Tsa'chila themselves live where the cacao grows but have nothing like that.

One unexpected positive result from the visit was the formation of a group of youth who had gone on the trip and were excited about the possibilities of doing something, although they had no idea what. They requested help from Gudalupe Peralta to develop their presentation and public speaking skills. They had observed that her work with other adults in the community had made them much more assertive in public and better able to express themselves and so had been moved to seek similar help. We will seek ways to harness their enthusiasm to create positive development in the community.

#### PPD (Small Donations Project of the United Nations).

The project sponsored by the UNDP turned out very differently, and we were forced after just three months to halt the project. We had overestimated at the point of submitting the proposal the ability of the Tsa'chila to respond positively to the demands of a largely production oriented project such as this was. The main focus was on producing trees for reforestation as well as improving cacao production. Part of the problem was that we were already engaged in the IAF project and time constraints made it hard for the same community actors to be involved in both projects. There was also confusion at times about which project they were actually responding to. From the start we found ourselves racing to meet the deadlines set in the project and almost dragging the Tsa'chila along behind us in order to keep up.

An additional factor was the predictable about turn by the local



Consejo Provincial who had promised to provide a considerable amount of both materials and funds for the project. They made a great spectacle of signing the agreement with Yanapuma, inviting TV, radio and press to the event, but when it came to keeping their part of the agreement everything got lost in the bureaucracy. The project had included working with the nearby mestizo community of San Jacinto del Bua on a joint reforestation project. But this community also could not come up with \$1400 to buy fencing wire to isolate the planting sites from their cattle, despite the fact they had \$14000 for their local beauty pageant! We have seen that various funding agencies require collaboration with local agencies as a prerequisite for receiving funding. But our experience has been that it is much better to leave them out of the picture as the end result is inevitably disappointing.

At a meeting with the UNDP at which community members were also present we presented these difficulties and requested a three month moratorium during which we could regroup, work with the Tsa'chila to respond to the demands of the project. But although the UNDP could provide some flexibility in the project they were unable to defer the timetable of disbursement of funds, which required spending each trimester's disbursement before the following payment could be made. Thus we were forced to abandon the project. Additional factors from Yanapumas side were that we were in the process of changing over our accounting to the new external accountants which complicated our



ability to register and report spending.

Cancelling the project caused a great commotion in the community and something of a rift between Yanapuma and the different groups. We strove to stress our ongoing commitment to the community with funding from other sources, but had to overcome the feeling in the community that we had deprived them of a considerable amount of funding, and the inevitable gossip that Yanapuma had run off with the funds.

But we were determined to use events to explore the issues that we are working on with the Tsa'chila. Once the project was officially closed we held a meeting with the principal actors involved in the project and presented a full set of accounts for the project so that they could see that Yanapuma had not gained anything financially from quitting the project, which was the suspicion amongst some.

We were surprised about a month later to receive a call from the Tsa'chila asking us if we would consider taking on the project again as they had been in direct contact with the UNDP who had offered the services of another foundation to take over from Yanapuma. Without knowing the exact details it appeared that the Tsa'chila did not have much trust in the other foundation and thus were requesting that we become involved again. We expressed interest, but in the end the project did not continue as the Tsa'chila began to realize the amount of work involved in such a project when the onus was put on them, which eventually worked in our favor.

In the end the PPD project was an intense learning experience on all sides and we realized that the Tsa'chila are still a few years away from being able to respond well to a production oriented project with specific time-bound deadlines.

### Other Projects in Bua

In January we hosted a group from Col  ge Edouard Montpetit from Quebec. 14 girls spent 8 days working with the cacao growers sowing cacao trees. They stayed with local families which was a

great experience all around. The teachers who accompanied them vowed to make it an annual trip, and organized another visit for January 2011. Before leaving they requested to donate



left over funds to a scholarship for a child from Bua. But we told them at that time that we could not do that because there is a considerable amount of work in setting up a scholarship program and we did not have the resources to devote to it. But prior to their arrival in January 2011 they once again raised the issue and this time we agreed to begin a scholarship program similar to our program in Estero de Pl  tano, for 5 children the first year. The college has promised at least 2 scholarships and Yanapuma will seek the remaining 3. We planned to entrust the local Cabildo with the process, supported by Guadalupe, with the involvement of the community bank in the disbursement of the funds. However, due to delays in elections of the new cabildo at the end of the year and uncertainties about their readiness, we decided to postpone this project for a further year to give the cabildo more time to prepare themselves for the task of overseeing the awarding of scholarships.



In January we began a project to create tree nurseries with 10 families. These nurseries produced 10,000 trees that we bought from the families with a donation from the US student group from Thinking Beyond Borders. Originally planned to be



planted in the nearby community of San Jacinto del Bua as part of the PPD project, these saplings were destined for the Tsa'chila community of Los Naranjos, to be planted in October.

At the end of the year we set up a series of meetings with each of the social groups in Bua – Cabildo, Cacaoteros, Cajas Solidarias I y II, Escuela Abraham Calazacón, Shinopi Bolón cultural group and the Reforestation group, to begin a participatory planning process. These meetings provided some interesting insights into the problems and challenges faced by each group. From our notes we produced a plan for each group that we will use as the basis for planning and project proposals in the coming years. More information about these meetings is available on our website.

### Bua Conclusion

Our relation with the community of Bua has been through several turns in 2010 as we have continued to understand in greater depth the uniqueness of the Tsa'chila culture. We have long understood that as a deeply non-confrontational culture the Tsa'chila will never say no outright. Thus it has been a challenge for us to understand when a “yes” is a yes-yes or a yes-no. Some community members are now aware through continued contact with Yanapuma of this facet of their own culture which they had previously not recognized, and we can half-jokingly ask them if their “yes” is a real yes or actually “no.”

This process of holding up a mirror to their own culture is actually an important facet of our work with the Tsa'chila. Adapting to the needs of a globalized context where they have to interact with mestizos and outsiders in order to survive as a culture requires of them learning new abilities and skills. While we have no desire to change their culture, we do see the need for them to learn how to interact on a different basis. We have often heard from local



face in moving from hunter-gatherers to farmers on the edge of a large city within one generation.

We have realized more and more that the basis for interaction for the Tsa'chila is personal connection and trust, centered around the family. Thus they will initially sit back and assess a person rather than being interested in what they claim to be able to offer. And their participation is less mediated by themselves as an individual rather than the person as part of a family. For Yanapuma this means beginning to focus less on the social groups as the unit of development and more on each family. We have been frustrated in working with groups because we failed to realize that the concept of working in a group is an alien one for the Tsa'chila. Our nursery project for producing saplings, for example, was very successful precisely because it involved working with the families on their farms, rather than forming a group of individuals whose families are not directly involved in the same project.

The other revelation for Yanapuma this year has been to recognize the difficulty that the Tsa'chila



organizations and individuals that the Tsa'chila are lazy, untrustworthy, two-faced, non-colaborative, etc, etc. But these people have never taken the time to understand the uniqueness of their culture and the challenges that the Tsa'chila



face in developing a vision of the future. Again, this is something that has not been a part of their culture as hunger-gatherers. Developing a life plan is something that we take for granted, and thinking 5 years or more ahead to achieve defined objectives is second nature for us. But not so for the Tsa'chila, and beginning to make them aware of this difference is another facet of our



work. The greatest hope is that the children can learn this, but it is still important to work with the adults as they continue to influence their children at home.

We also recognized this year that the Tsa'chila felt embarrassed or reticent to admit to us that there was the possibility of working with another organization, in this case the Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion (MIES) which had proposed to the Tsa'chila that they could fund projects in the community. We of course expressed that we are happy to work with any other organization that can bring needed resources to the community, a statement that brought a sense of palpable relief to the group we were talking with. It seemed strange to us that they should think in this way, but this just illustrates once more the difference between our cultures and the need to remain alert to such differences.

What is certain is that there will be other revelations for us as we continue our work with the Tsa'chila in 2011 and beyond. But we look forward to continuing to work with this unique culture with the hope of expanding our work to the other Tsa'chila communities and helping them to preserve their culture in the face of the immense challenges that confront them.

### Los Naranjos

Yanapuma's involvement in the Tsa'chila community of Los Naranjos resulted from the inability of the parish council of San Jacinto del Bua to come up with \$1400 as their contribution to a reforestation project first proposed as part of the UNDP project involving Bua. The money was to buy fencing wire to keep the cattle from the areas to be reforested.

Thus Los Naranjos, a community that had already expressed interest in working with Yanapuma and creating closer ties with Bua, became the site for our reforestation project. As the Tsa'chila do not keep cattle there was no need for preventive measures to protect the trees.

In October a group of gap year students from Thinking Beyond Borders in the US arrived to plant 8500 trees that had been grown in Bua. It is a much smaller community than Bua and so in many ways much easier to deal with as there is less political division and the size is more manageable, although it is also more remote and harder to reach.

The community was keen to host the project. Previously they had had a Peace Corps volunteer stationed there for 2 years. But the Peace Corps had decided not to continue working there as their volunteer had contacted Leischmanesis.

Preparatory work involved Guadalupe talking with host families that were to receive volunteers. Most had no toilet, nor spare bedroom, so these had to be constructed from local materials. They were also trained in hygiene, potable water, and nutrition to receive the

volunteers.

The TBB volunteers spent a month planting the trees in difficult terrain, challenging and arduous work. But the experience was a positive one, especially with the host families, and the community much appreciated their efforts.

At the end of the year we were in discussions with another foundation (FASCA – Fundación Acción Social Caritas) working in the parish of Puerto Limón to collaborate on a parish wide reforestation project also related to nutrition which is their specialty. There are 4 Tsa'chila communities, including Los Naranjos in the parish of Puerto Limón.

### Estero de Plátano

With the focus at the start of 2010 on the two major projects in Bua Yanapuma lacked the resources to carry out much work in Estero de Plátano. We raised funds through our Christmas fundraiser to continue the scholarship program that we had begun the previous year, increasing the number of scholarships to 10.

We learned a lot from the first year in which two of the children dropped out during the year due to different circumstances. For the second year we solicited more participation from the parents to

support their children through the process and provide the necessary environment at home for them to study.

We also increased the role of the community bank in managing the funds. The money was handed over to them and they lent it



out, gaining interest on the funds invested. The scholarship children were encouraged to start investing too, rather than spending any left over money on snacks and sweets. The result was that they began earning interest on their money too, which encouraged them to save further. Overall the result was very positive.

The presence of interns Amelia Brandt from the US and Emilién Amblat from France at the start of the year was a positive influence as she helped the students study and tutored them to catch up to their peers. One of their early observations was that due to the poor quality of their primary education in the community once they reached college they were already at a disadvantage. Amelia handed over to Nik Khotari and Allie Cuzzo, two interns from Union College in New York, who spent 8 months living in the village and were able to continue tutoring and looking after the scholarship students.

Nik and Allie also involved themselves with other groups in the community, particularly a group of youths, the women's group and the governing committee, as well as the health center.

At the end of 2010 we were able to begin sending Guadalupe Peralta, our social/community worker, to the community on a regular basis to begin a project with the youth in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights funded by the Souter Trust of Scotland. In addition she worked with other groups on their organization and goals. As in Bua, this is a fundamental need and one of the principal reasons that such a community falls behind in its development. The women's group is seeking to develop small businesses in the area of tourism, with food stalls on the beach when there are tourists.

Guadalupe will become increasingly involved with the youth to work on the sexual issues. Teenage pregnancy is very common with girls as young as 11 getting pregnant, usually to older males in the community in their 20s. Issues of sexual rights in a small community can be very fraught with even the mothers involved sometimes reluctant to face the issues, and so we are aware of the need to

proceed with caution. But reducing pregnancy among young girls is a fundamental step to increasing their educational possibilities and improving their prospects for the future.



In December we delivered 3 crates of books to the Viña del Mar school, the result of a fund established following the death from cancer of Lynn Kirby, wife of Yanapuma Scotland

trustee Stewart Kirby.

Previously we had been dismayed to discover that one of two laptops that we had donated to the school had disappeared. The previous director was the principal suspect, but as the donor had not delivered a document to sign confirming the donation, we were unable to pursue the matter any further. The lesson is to always ensure that we have a signed document as backup for any later dispute.

At the start of the year we had been involved in setting up a potable drinking water project along with Fundación Agua Muisne, a foundation based in the area, with a donation from an anonymous donor. But consistent problems over finding a suitable site and disputed ownership of possible sites consistently undermined the process. At the end of the year we are considering other alternatives but still hold out hope that we will be able to find a suitable site for the system.

At the end of the year we can see progress in Estero de Plátano. The community is beginning to get more organized and take on more responsibility. Working with the women appears to be a more reliable method. The women have a generally low opinion of the ability of the men to organize and see things through, and there is a

disproportionately high level of alcohol consumption among the men with all that that implies socially and economically.

### Caimito

Yanapuma's involvement with the work of biologist George Fletcher has mostly been restricted to sending groups of volunteers. 3 groups from the Leap UK and one from Theale Green School, also from the UK, went to Caimito to carry out various projects for the benefit of the community. These included working on the local school, constructing class rooms, teacher accommodation, ecological bathrooms, and a kitchen.

Other projects that the groups have carried out are related to agriculture, particularly sustainable cacao production, and creating and maintaining a productive garden at the school.

In August we visited Caimito with Karie Phillips, a representative from Denver Zoo to see how the zoo might get involved with George's project to create a biodiversity corridor, uniting small plots of land that have either been abandoned by farmers as unproductive or bought by people from outside to preserve. There are several key plots that are for sale, and in order to stem the encroachment of agriculture and clear felling of the forest, George is trying to raise the funds to purchase plots in the name of the community. Yanapuma will continue to support this effort in 2011 and we are seeking funding sources for this work.

The Cabo San Francisco area, in which both Estero de Plátano and Caimito are situated, is a biodiversity hotspot. With its new marine reserve offshore, which according to studies contains greater biodiversity than the Galapagos although it only has 3% of the Galapagos' area, it is more important than ever to work to preserve the land to avoid run-off and contamination of the marine reserve.



## *Conclusion*

Each year of our 4 years of existence has been different and has presented its own challenges and rewards, for the Spanish school, the volunteer department, and the foundation. Attending to all three is in itself a great challenge.

During 2010 the Spanish school has continued to grow, although modestly, despite the limited resources at our disposal for publicity and promotion. Dedicating a larger budget to this area will be a key requirement for 2011 if we are to maintain our growth and increase profitability.

In the areas of academics, administration and social activities, the school is on the right path, and we will continue to develop and refine each of these areas. The key to growth will be increased publicity and alliances with agencies and international professional bodies, although the latter may not begin to bear fruit until 2012.

Likewise, the volunteering department showed a modest growth during 2010 which we intend to build upon in 2011, working with more individual volunteers and groups of volunteers. A key to realizing this goal will be to reach out to make new contacts with organizations and agencies that are seeking placements for volunteers.

We had hoped in 2010 to begin forging more contacts with universities in the US and other countries to promote service learning opportunities such as those we have provided for a group from Eastern Illinois University and individuals from Azusa Pacific University, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Union College, St. Olaf's College, and Loma Linda University. During 2011 we will continue to seek contacts with these and other academic institutions.

The steepest learning curve in 2010 has been in the foundation, and finding the best method of delivering our services to a community remains our priority. At times we reflect that our focus on the

Tsa'chila culture raises questions and problems that are unique to that particular culture. Thus, defining a methodology based on our experiences with them we may find that it is not applicable to other communities and situations. We see similarities with the challenges to our work in Estero de Plátano, but need to keep in mind the culture-specific details that emerge from each community's experience and history.

To work with communities on development is frustrating, exasperating at times, and the difference between decisions and plans hatched in the office, even after exhaustive consultation with the community, and the reality of realizing those plans in the field weeks or months later can create tensions within the development team that can dishearten and increase the frustration levels all around. We have experienced our share of this too during 2010, and have learned that we need to continually work on open communication and expression in order to avoid this pitfall, and especially to avoid it spilling over into the community itself to create confusion and uncertainty.

We need to remind ourselves too that the things that frustrate us most about working in one or other community are exactly the reasons why we need to be there helping community members to resolve these issues and cultivate their own abilities. We know it would be much easier and faster if we just went in and did the work. But we also know that this is not a sustainable solution. Patience and a sense of humor are perhaps the two most important characteristics to maintain.

As we look forward to 2011 and beyond we are considering just how the foundation should grow in the future. This will affect our funding strategy and team development, and will be an important process to attend to during the coming year.

*08 February 2011*

*A draft financial statement for 2010 will be added soon.*

