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Annual Report

2011



Annual Report 2011

Introduction from the Executive Director

It is always something of a cliché to comment on how fast the year has flown past, but for all of us at Yanapuma this year really has sped by! Which is to say of course that we have been extremely busy as we continue to grow and develop as an organization, having now completed 5 years since our inception in September 2006. A fact that I always highlight when talking of our development is that we have in fact built three organizations simultaneously during this period – a professional Spanish school, a non-profit NGO and a volunteer organization. It has required an enormous amount of energy to attend to all three, and helps to explain why we always feel so busy!

If I was to choose one word to sum up the year 2011 for Yanapuma it would be “consolidation.” While we have sought to keep growing as an organization, we have felt the urgent need to attend to the systems by which we maintain order. Ways of doing

things when the traffic is quite small can easily become strained once the numbers begin to grow, and we have at times found ourselves passing way too much information between way too many people in order to organize our students and volunteers activities.

But by the end of the year we are happy to report that we have streamlined our processes considerably, and are ready for a considerable increase in activity in 2012.

One of the major realizations of 2011 was that we have grown as far as we can as a Spanish school through relying mostly on our internet presence. We are well ranked in the search engines and there is not a great deal of room for growth through students finding us directly online. The same is not quite so true of the volunteer side, as the website that promotes volunteering is actually the foundation website, which is mostly optimized for search terms to do with being a foundation rather than volunteering. So there is work to do there in 2012 to attract more volunteers.

So we turned during 2011 to finding ways to make contact with more agencies to promote the Spanish school and volunteering. As a result we became members in March of the World Youth Student Education and Travel Confederation (WYSETC), and attended the conference they held in Barcelona in September. This resulted in several new contacts, principally for volunteering, but with a good number of new programs that combine volunteering with Spanish instruction. So we are hoping that this will provide us with a significant increase in student and volunteer numbers in 2012.

We also worked a little at promoting our online classes through our dedicated website: www.spanishonlineclass.com. There is a boom at the moment in the growth of online language classes, and it is a very competitive market. We have an advantage on price due to being located in Ecuador, and discovered late in the year that there is also a potential market sub-contracting to the online

Spanish schools in the more expensive countries. By the end of the year we had grown to around 40-45 online students each week, and although these generally do not take many hours of classes per week, it does make a significant contribution to our income.

Of course, all the above activities are aimed at providing core funding for our real work which is the Yanapuma Foundation – promoting sustainable development among indigenous and marginalized communities throughout Ecuador.

Throughout 2011 we carried out projects in some of the Tsa'chila communities as well as beginning to expand to others, as well as in the coastal villages of Estero de Plátano and Caimito. While we can provide funding for our core costs and some small project money from income from the Spanish school and volunteer activities, we are reliant on outside funding to carry out specific projects.

In 2011 we were fortunate to be able to work on a fascinating and productive project sponsored by the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust of the UK. In the community of Bua, we created vegetable plots and tree nurseries for over 20 Tsa'chila women, and taught them about nutrition and using vegetables in their family's diet. You can read about it below, but to offer a brief appraisal, it taught us a great deal about the particular cultural worldview and experience of the Tsa'chila, and gave us significant clues as to how to work with them in the future.

We were also able to use this project as a way of experimenting in terms of the way we administer and record project work. From this we learned a great deal which will also serve us well in future projects.

At the close of the year we are fortunate to have funding for projects to work with the Tsa'chila in Los Naranjos, and in Estero de Plátano. We have further funding applications pending and hope to be able to piece together sufficient funding to keep us all busy in

2012, if not to expand the scope of our work.

To sum up our experience in the foundation, 2011 was a successful year of project work from which we learned a great deal – both what to do more of and what to do less of in 2012 and beyond.

Overall, we are pleased to have finished another year, our second to date, with a positive bank balance, no mean feat considering the difficult international financial situation. Each year we grow more, we learn more, and we look forward to the following year with keen anticipation of expanding our ability to realize our mission of promoting sustainable development among some of the indigenous and marginalized communities of Ecuador.

Below you will find a more detailed report of all our activities during 2011, which I hope you will enjoy reading.

Andrew Kirby, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Yanapuma Spanish School

With a difficult situation internationally due to the ongoing financial crisis Yanapuma Spanish School faced a challenging year for growth. In a competitive market for Spanish schools we have always sought to differentiate ourselves by the quality of the product that we offer and by the intimate link between the Spanish school and the work of the foundation. These are the two decisive factors in the decision of many students to study with us.



By the end of the year we had registered 507 students during the year, with 67% of those finding us directly through one of the websites. This gave us an average of 21 students per week in the school, although this number varied according to high and low seasons during the year.



Having realized that the principal website, yanpumaspanish.org, had reached almost as far as it can go in terms of attracting students directly, we set about finding ways to increase sales through agencies in Europe, the US, and the rest of the world.

We realize that there is still considerable room for improving the visibility of the online Spanish class website, spanishonlineclass.com.

In June we became members of the World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation (WYSETC), which allowed us to attend their annual conference in Barcelona. This was an opportunity to represent both the Spanish school and the volunteer department to agencies from all parts of the world interested in sending students and volunteers to Ecuador. The event was successful for Yanapuma and we made several solid contacts to begin working in 2012 on a variety of particular programs suited to each agency's needs. Many of these combine Spanish classes with volunteering.



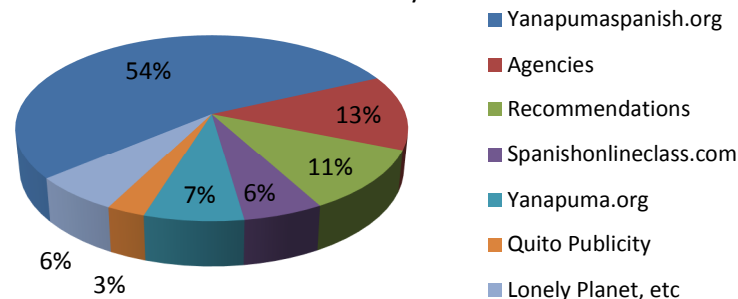
One of the problems we faced in working with agencies is the need to offer sufficient commission. We have always worked to keep our prices as

reasonable as possible for the individual student booking directly with us, which has not left us sufficient margin to be able to offer significant discounts. However, for 2012 we have raised our prices sufficiently to be able to allow us to work with agency discounts but without threatening our individual customer base. In part this has been done by offering group classes to the agencies which are more profitable for us. We look forward to receiving more students from agencies during 2012.

We also introduced a \$20 registration fee, with the caveat that this would be a direct donation to our scholarship fund for the children of Estero de Plátano to study at secondary school. We found that students never objected to this, and as the Spanish school works to fund these scholarships anyway, it became a way for us to reliably fund them, rather than waiting until Christmas each year to fundraise.

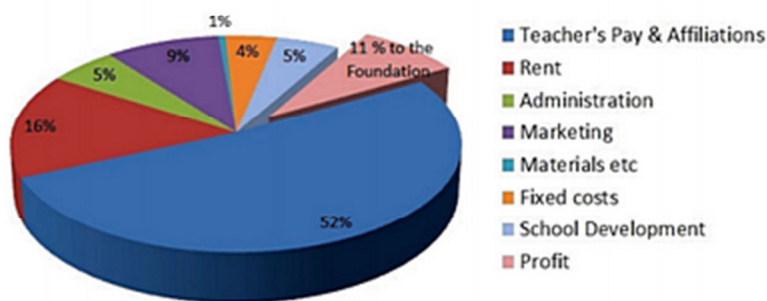


Source of sales by % 2011



During 2011 we also produced a graphic to inform students at the school how their tuition money is spent (*below*). Based on figures for 2010 and the start of 2011 the diagram shows how our income is divided up and what is left over for funding the work of the foundation.

How is your tuition money spent?



At the start of 2011 we installed a new administration system with the aim of streamlining our processes of managing students and interns and how we monitor classes and invoicing. The period for learning how to fully utilize the new system occupied the best part of the year as we were always busy coping with the day to day running using the previous system. But by the end of 2011 we had everything in place to begin administrating the organization with confidence using the new system which is from the US and is called ServiceCEO.



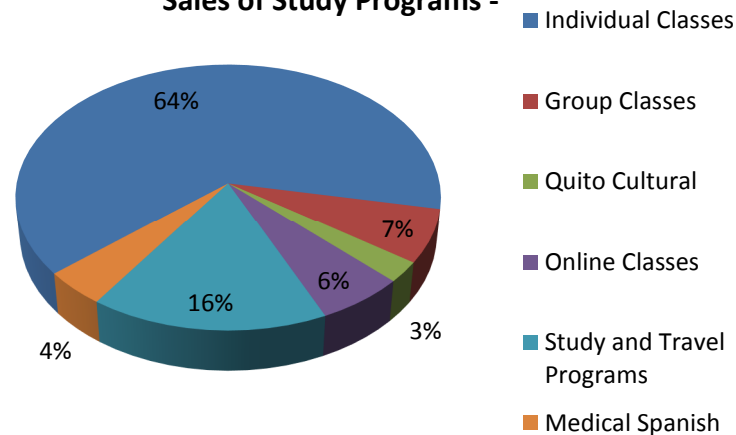
While the great majority of the classes sold were individual one-to-one Spanish classes, our other programs also

made a significant contribution to sales. These are the Quito Cultural and Volunteer Quito packages, and the Study and Travel options.

The Study and Travel packages are 9 programs that explore different parts of Ecuador with a Spanish teacher. These include 20 hours of Spanish classes as part of the program. The most popular destinations were Yachana Lodge, Ruta de los Volcanes, and Ruta del Sol. The other programs are Suchipacari Lodge, Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve, Northern Andes, Cuenca Cultural, Mindo Biohostal, and Esmeraldas Province.

In addition we set about trying to figure out how to offer classes to students who wish to study Spanish in the Galapagos Islands. Because no new immigration to the Galapagos islands is allowed, it is not possible for us to send a teacher there to set up a school. We were also unable to find suitable candidates who already live in the Galapagos. So in the end we decided to offer the classes online. We have designed land-based tours that include 20 hours of online classes. These can be either taken in the evenings in the Galapagos, or at a subsequent time that suits the student.

Sales of Study Programs -



Throughout the year we continued to work on developing teaching materials that fit with our methodology. We have adopted the communication methodology that is promoted by the Cervantes Institute as being the optimum way to encourage students to learn the Spanish language. Getting away from a purely grammar-based style of teaching is hard, as all Spanish teachers in Ecuador are currently certified by only one organization that is using traditional grammar-based methods to train its teachers.

Although we have held regular workshops and trainings with our teachers, the familiar methods that they are used to using are hard to replace with new methods and materials. We have thus embarked on a process of applying to the Ministry of Education to become approved as an organization that can certify teachers using the new methods. We expect this to be a fairly lengthy and bureaucratic process, but the advantage will be that we can train teachers from the start in methodologies that will be more effective.



Conclusion

We have always been ambitious for the Spanish school. As a source of funding for the foundation, it is important to develop a successful and well-respected, professional school.

Although the school did not grow as much as we would have hoped for during the year, the overall growth was around 20%, which given the difficult international financial situation, is an acceptable increase. As indicated at the start of this report, we used the year to consolidate ourselves in terms of our administration, systems, methodology and materials. As a result of these activities, we are well set for growth in 2012, knowing that we will be able to handle a considerable increase with ease.



Volunteer Ecuador, Groups and Interns

Our volunteer department continued to be busy during 2011 with 103 individual volunteers during the course of the year and 13 groups from various countries. By the end of the year we had realized that there was too much work for just one



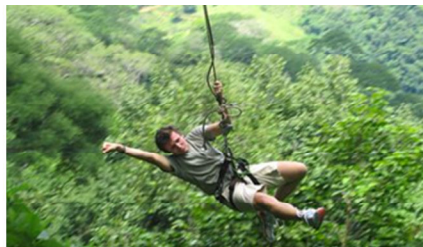
person to handle on their own. Kelly Schussler, our volunteer and intern coordinator did a heroic job during the year, but we realized that we were going to need to have two persons working full time to handle the extra volume that we expect for 2012.

Our aim in creating “Volunteer Ecuador” has always been to link willing volunteers with worthwhile projects to create a win-win situation, while at the same time earning enough from these activities to pay the associated costs and make a reasonable profit that we can invest in the foundation’s project work.



During the year we calculated, based on 2010 figures, that each individual volunteer costs us around \$55 for the administrative costs, taking into account the associated expenses and paying staff to handle inquiries. The cost of accompanying volunteers to their projects is additional. Thus what we charge for volunteering - \$85 for projects in Quito, and \$185 for projects outside Quito – is a reasonable charge, and returned us a modest profit for our work in the foundation.

During the year we sent volunteers to 9 projects in Quito and 29 projects all around Ecuador. We also began to send volunteers to the Galapagos to work in Hacienda Tranquila on the island of San Cristóbal where they were involved in environmental work, extracting invasive species and reforesting with native species as well as working with local children in the school.



We are happy to report that we had no serious incidents of any kind during the year with injuries, accidents or major traumas to volunteers.

There were a few minor complaints which are always to be expected, and we tried to respond to these as best we could.

We have always tried to survey our individual volunteers after they have finished volunteering with us so that we can continue to improve the way that we do things as well as to ensure that each project is running well from the volunteer’s perspective. The problem is that most of them take off for other parts straight away and we rarely see them again in our offices. Sending a Word document via email for them to fill in rarely yielded a response. So in September we set up an account with Survey Monkey and created a quick online survey that volunteers could fill in. Results have been better, although still not as high a response rate as we would like. But we have more information with which to continue improving our Volunteer Ecuador program.

On 10 October we sent our first group of volunteers to the Galapagos Islands to work with Hacienda Tranquila on the island of San Cristóbal. We also sent a number of individual volunteers for various periods of time. Volunteers are involved in a variety of activities during their 3 weeks there. These include taking out invasive species, working on the farm’s organic vegetable plots, reforestation with local species, and working with children from the local school.

In September and October we received a group of 16 students from US organization Thinking Beyond Borders (TBB). Their annual visit took them to the community of Los Naranjos where they were involved in planting trees in the surrounding parish of Puerto Limón. The students study water issues here in Ecuador as part of a round-the-world gap year experience.



This year the terrain in which they were busy was especially challenging, so that at the end of their month of planting trees they had only managed to plant 6000 of the ten thousand that we had grown. Fortunately the army offered to help us plant the remaining trees after the group had departed.



The contribution of the TBB group is a significant part of our work in the area. The land was virgin rainforest in the 1960s, and since then has been rapidly cleared and converted to agriculture. We aim to reforest the riverbanks with help from local authorities to preserve and protect the water courses.

During 2011 Yanapuma also hosted 5 groups from Outlook Expeditions of Wales. The groups travelled at different times to the Amazon where they worked with the Sinchi Aqua Center, a grass-roots, women's crafts organization that is developing a museum and visitor center with the aim of improving the income of their families through tourism and the sale of crafts. The groups worked on construction of cabañas and the creation of a forest path, as well as learning a great deal about the Kichwa culture of the Amazon rainforest.

Thirteen students from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, USA volunteered in Quito during March. Their office of Active Citizenship and Service organizes various service trips for their students, including one called the "Ecuador Project", which is a month long program. Four volunteers worked with special needs children at Camp Hope, 4 volunteered with the sexual health education program at the CEMOPLAF clinic, 2 volunteered with

children at Peluchitos daycare in southern Quito, and 2 did trail maintenance at Parque Itchimbia. On the weekends, the students travelled to Otavalo, Baños, and Cotopaxi.

In January, April, July and September we received groups from the Leap UK. These volunteer groups spend between 6 and 10 weeks working on community projects around Ecuador. This year, in September, we began to offer the Galapagos as one of the 3 destinations for the 10 week groups. This resulted in an increase in the number of volunteers, and the group for January 2012 was our biggest group ever, with 26 volunteers in total.



We were also fortunate during 2011 to continue our productive relationship with Union College, New York. Two new Minerva fellows, Shelby Cutter and Alex Brockwehl, arrived in July to spend 8 months in the village of Estero de Plátano. There they continued the work of encouraging and tutoring the scholarship students, as well as working with them and other youth on questions of sexual and reproductive health and rights. In addition they were involved with the various social groups of the community, helping them to organize and improve their way of operating.

In late July and early August we hosted a group from the US organization World Bridges. Six volunteers from low-income families came to Ecuador and worked at Maquipucuna Reserve for two weeks.

Conclusion

Overall, it was a successful year for the volunteer department. Our membership in WYSETC will be instrumental in

attracting more volunteers in 2012, and we will continue to work to develop links with universities and international organizations to bring individual volunteers and groups to Ecuador.

Our work with volunteer and student groups is undertaken with the aim of incorporating their efforts into our overall aims as a foundation. Thus, groups make a positive contribution to the communities and projects that they visit, which makes it a rewarding experience for the members of the group.

On the basis of the groundwork that we have laid in 2011 we are confident in our abilities to handle an increased number of individual and groups of volunteers in 2012.

Yanapuma Foundation

Introduction

During 2012 our work in the foundation focused in several Tsa'chila communities, as well as in Estero de Plátano and Caimito on the iPacific coast. Funding for our work came principally from the Ferguson Charitable Trust, income from volunteer activities, and Yanapuma Spanish School, as well as from the Souter Charitable Trust, individual small donations, and funds from Thinking Beyond Borders and Sotogrande International School.

In March we were pleased to welcome Silvia Perugachi to the team as a project coordinator. She holds a Masters in



International Affairs from the New School of New York. We were only able to fund her salary part-time in 2011, while we seek funding to turn it into a full time position. She joined Giovanny Toapanta, our agricultural expert, and Guadalupe Peralta, our social/community worker, helping to coordinate activities, plan future projects and manage various processes in different communities.

In May and June of 2011 we signed two accords with the Junta Parroquial of the parish of Puerto Limón in the province of Santo Domingo and FASCA(Fundación Acción Social Caritas) to undertake a reforestation project starting in September. We are also discussing a larger-scale and longer-term project to reforest vulnerable areas of the parish in which 3 Tsa'chila communities are located.

For Yanapuma this opened up a means of working with local authorities. In the past we have always had negative experiences working with local government, who all too often have demonstrated themselves to be keen for a good photo opportunity, but disappear when it comes time to put their money on the table. However the president of the parish of Puerto Limón has demonstrated considerable commitment to improving the local environment through reforestation of water courses and other vulnerable areas. So we were happy to begin working with them.

We carried out a project in the Tsa'chila community of Bua to grow 10,000 saplings to reforest riverbanks in the parish. Six thousand of these were planted out, under challenging conditions, by the 16 students of Thinking Beyond Borders during one month in October. The remaining 4 thousand were planted out by the army and local students.

The second accord was signed with the Pontifica Universidad Católica of Santo Domingo, for their student to



carry out research that will be of value to Yanapuma and the communities that we work with. We received financing from the Royal Geographical Society and Shell in 2010 to fund 3 students to complete their theses. But universities like the Católica like to sign accords before proceeding, so we spent considerable time waiting to get the accord agreed so that we can then begin to seek suitable students.

We did however manage to fund one student in 2011, from the Facultad de Dirección de Empresas (Business Studies department) of the Universidad Autónoma de los Andes, Santo Domingo campus. The thesis of Geovanny Diaz investigated the use of processed chicken manure in the cultivation of different crops in combination with other types of fertilizer. His aim is to set up a business processing chicken manure from a number of local poultry producers for sale to farmers and horticulturalists.

Tsa'chila communities

Ben Hughey, a student of Dartmouth College, came down during January and February to work on mapping the borders of the Tsa'chila communities of Los Naranjos, El Poste and Peripa. Our idea was to establish the current boundaries as a reference to prevent further incursions in the future from surrounding mestizo neighbors. It is estimated that the Tsa'chila have lost nearly 50% of the land originally ceded to them in the 1960s. The resulting maps were presented to each community



upon completion. We stressed that the information gathered belongs to each community individually and that we will not share it with anybody unless specifically authorized to do so by each community.



In January we began a series of classes to teach basic computer literacy to members of Bua, Los Naranjos, El Poste and Peripa, in conjunction with La Vida, a UK organization that funds projects in Latin America.

The classes started in Bua, but due to political processes in the community we were obliged to withdraw after completing only one of the three planned modules. The classes moved to Los Naranjos, and then to El Poste and Peripa in turn throughout the year. On completion of all the classes we will donate two used PCs to each of the communities with the exception of Los Naranjos. The Colége Edouard Montpetit donated two brand new computers and a printer to the school in Los Naranjos with funds that were left over from their project with the cacaoteros of Bua in January.



The Colége Edouard Montpetit first sent a group of students to work with the cacao growers of Bua in January 2010. They returned in January 2011 to continue the work, helping the cacao growers in maintaining the demonstration plots that we set up in 2009. Their presence was an incentive to the group to stay on track with the development of their organization and commitment to improving their cacao production.

We have witnessed how easily the Tsa'chila let projects fall when they receive no immediate benefit. For a project like cacao,

which takes at least 3 years to achieve results, it has been especially difficult to keep the growers motivated. So the efforts of the students of Colége Edouard Montpetit are especially welcome.

Ferguson Charitable Trust

We began a project with a group of women in Bua, funded by the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, to set up vegetable plots and sapling nurseries, as well as to teach them about nutrition and how to use the vegetables that they would produce. The project followed on from a vegetable garden that we had established the previous year in the local school with funding from the Inter American Foundation. The children involved were inspired, as were some of their parents, on seeing how relatively easy it was to produce fresh vegetables.



With this project we radically changed our form of working with the Tsa'chila, for the first time focusing on each individual family rather than trying to bring them together as a group. We had realized that the Tsa'chila are not used to collaborating as a group and that many of the problems that we have had in maintaining projects with them stem from this inability as a culture to work



together for a common good. Their past history has not required this of them, and so it is not a natural ability that they have.

We began to work with 21

women and 3 men. Although the project was aimed at women, 3 men also requested to participate, one of them because his wife was simply too shy to attend the initial meetings that we held to explain the project. But as the project was aimed at benefitting families we were happy to include the 3 men as well.



Twenty-four vegetable plots were created, fencing them against the pigs and chickens that wander around freely. One part of each was given over to a space for bags filled with earth in which to sow seeds of native tree species for the reforestation project in Puerto Limón. The rest was prepared for a variety of vegetables – spinach, chard, radishes, tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, lettuce, cabbage, turnips, cilantro, parsley, and more.

At the start there were several setbacks due to the bad weather and heavy rains that washed away the first and second sowing of seeds. But eventually we managed to get seeds to sprout and to begin to produce vegetables. Some fared better than others, and some families had more or less success with different vegetables.

At the same time we employed a local health promotor, Janet Llanos to visit each household in turn and prepare nutritious lunches with the women. At first the women were a little wary, as the Tsa'chila



often are with new things, but after a while they began to clamor for more help in expanding their repertoire in the kitchen.

On the 24th of August we held a competition for the best “huerto familiar” awarding prizes for the most outstanding production and maintenance of the vegetable plots. This was followed by a competition for the best salad produced from the vegetable that they had grown. Both were joyous affairs, and it was heartening to see how far they had progressed during the 10 months of the project.

We count this project as one of our better successes and a template for future work as a foundation. We created a short video that can be viewed by following this link: <http://www.yanapuma.org/videos/ferguson.php>

As a result of this project we conceived of two subsequent stages, increasing production and finally beginning to produce sufficient quantity of excess vegetables to be able to sell in the town of Santo Domingo. Towards the end of the year we began to seek funding for these subsequent stages as well as to replicate the same project in other Tsa’chila communities.



Other Projects in Bua

At the request of the Cabildo of the Tsa’chila community of Bua we sat down and worked out exactly how much we have invested as a foundation in the community over the past 5 years. This was a mammoth task for us, combing through all our previous records to extract all the relevant expenses. It will be easier for us in the future now that we have an efficient admin and accounting

system in place. But for this occasion we had to manually search through invoices and receipts for the earliest years when our accounting system was not optimally organized.

The results were quite astonishing, even to us. We had planned to present the numbers at a meeting of the general assembly of the community but the meeting in December was cancelled at the last minute. We look forward to presenting our report in the new year.

We summed all the direct interventions over the years, including project funding, donations, money spent by our volunteers, interns and staff on accommodation in the community, wages paid to Yanapuma staff and other expenses.

The total is a surprising \$181,278.07. Of that total, \$49,470.59 came directly from Yanapuma’s own income.

Los Naranjos

We were pleased to learn in November that we have been awarded £5,000 by the Onaway Trust of Scotland, a contribution to our work with women farmers in the community of Los Naranjos to improve their cacao production as well as to work on improving their cultural and personal self-esteem and organizational abilities.



In December we began organizing a group of women to create new plots of improved cacao to sow up to 8,000 new saplings by April or May when the dry season starts. This project will be completed in 2012.

In October we carried out a project to plant 10,000 trees in

the parish of Puerto Limón, within the boundaries of which lie 3 Tsa'chila communities. These were planted by students from the US organization Thinking Beyond Borders. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and the difficult conditions on the ground we only managed to plant just over 6,000. But during November, with help from parish authorities and the Ecuadorian army we succeeded in planting the remaining 4,000 trees.



During 2012 we will monitor their progress and fill in any gaps should some of these trees not survive. The weeds grow incredibly fast in the tropical climate, especially with the added humidity of the river banks, reaching as high as 3 meters in a matter of months!

Lisa Hoffman and Jennifer Wilson, with their son Zey, spent 7 weeks living with the Tsa'chila in Los Naranjos. During their time there they worked with the leaders of the cultural center and youth on creating a book on medicinal plants and Tsa'chila culture and stories, in the school teaching English, as well as spending time getting to understand the dynamics of the Tsa'chila culture. Having the opportunity to witness more closely than we do the details of daily life and the challenges that the Tsa'chila face, they were able to give us valuable information and feedback to allow us to improve the way that we interact with the Tsa'chila in the future.



We were delighted to learn in December that we had been awarded a grant of nearly \$10,000 from the United Nations Trust Fund for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People's fund. This funding will allow us to work during 2012 in the community of Bua for one year with women and youth on issues related to leadership, cultural self-esteem and organization aimed at developing micro-enterprises based on crafts production.

As we look forward to another year of working with the Tsa'chila, we constantly bear in mind the following factors that are particular to the Tsa'chila culture and history, and which profoundly affect the nature of our work with them:

- ♦ The Tsa'chila in general only produce about one third or one quarter of what their mestizo neighbors produce from the same area.
- ♦ By tradition the Tsa'chila hunted and fished, and practiced slash and burn agriculture. Lacking an agricultural background they have tended to rent out their land to mestizos to farm, sharing the crop. This has not led to very sound soil management.
- ♦ In the 1960s the government ceded the lands communally to the Tsa'chila, who had no concept of land ownership. Since then it is estimated that they have lost nearly 50%. With steady growth of their population since then, now there are many young Tsa'chila who do not have enough land to farm to support their families
- ♦ Today the problem of unequal land distribution continues unresolved, with some Tsa'chila having many hectares while others have almost nothing
- ♦ The Tsa'chila tend not to trust mestizos and outsiders for the various bad experiences that they have had during the last 50 years. This has resulted in further isolation and a lack of progress on all fronts, as well as a very low sense of personal and cultural self-

esteem

♦ There do not exist adequate forms of collaboration and organization among the Tsá'chila, as their previous way of life did not require this. Their traditional forms have become maladaptive in the present circumstances

Estero de Plátano

The decision to begin charging a registration fee for each student studying in the Spanish school produced nearly \$4200 to sponsor the students for 2012. In combination with extra funding raised through our Christmas fundraiser this will pay the costs of monitoring and administering the program throughout the year. Any remaining funds will be used to purchase educational materials for the school.

Additionally, a school group from Colége Edouard Montpetit in Canada donated \$600 for 2 new scholarships. This extra funding enabled us to consider expanding the program to other communities along the coast such as nearby Quingue or Caimito for 2012 and beyond.

Serendipitously, Union College announced that they would like to station 3 interns in the area for 9 months, rather than 2. Thus we will be able to help new scholarship students in these communities to cope with the transition to high school. Our experience has been that their primary education is of such low standard that they really struggle to keep up with the demands of studying in high school. So it takes some fairly intensive tutoring and support to enable them to cope.



At the end of 2011 we were sponsoring 11 children to study

at secondary school. The first student to graduate will do so at the end of the next academic year that runs from April until January. Our work with the scholarship recipients in Estero de Plátano has been facilitated by having two Minerva Fellows from Union College in New York stationed in the village for up to 9 months each year. In May, the first two fellows, Nikhil Kothari and Allie Cuozzo, finished their time there after spending 9 months not only working with the scholarship students, but also with the local school, other youth in the community and various social groups, trying to help them realize their goals and overcome the many impediments that they face.

They were followed by two new fellows in August, Alexander Broeckwell and Shelby Cutter. They raised \$802 for a book project for the local school so that students would be able to read the same book during the holidays and discuss it among themselves as a means of promoting their reading and comprehension and verbal expression skills.



They also coordinated a group of volunteers from UK organization Gap Force who were already working in the area in the construction of a playground for the children of Estero de Plátano.

Using the remainder of a fund from the Souter Charitable Trust we continued to offer workshops and training in sexual and reproductive health and rights for the youth of the village. Help with these issues was also given by interns Amelia Brandt and Jamie San Andres who worked with the youth over the course of the year. Jamie was instrumental in setting up a marimba dance group and starting to gather donations to buy material to create their costumes.

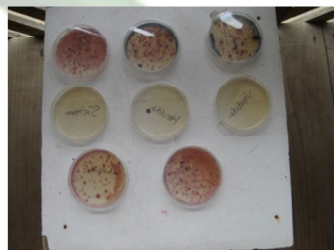
Amelia also worked on a project to test the various water sources in the village and produce educational materials for the

community about their water quality and its effects on their health. A video is available here: <http://www.yanapuma.org/videos/Water%20is%20Life.php>

In June we invited the 11 scholarship students to Quito for 2 days. For most this was their first time in Quito, and we took them to the President's Palace, a tour of the historic center of Quito, and to the Universidad Central de Quito to learn about studying at university. After a fun visit to the movies in the evening they boarded the night bus back to Atacames and Estero de Plátano.



On 25 April we inaugurated a water purification system in the village. For this we partnered with Fundación Agua Muisne, a local NGO that installs similar systems in communities along the coast. We had spent over a year looking for a suitable site for the plant, finally settling on constructing it in the local school with the blessing of the director and the school authorities.



From the start we were well aware that installing the equipment would be the reasonably easy part. In Estero de Plátano the social capital necessary for successful development is mostly lacking, a factor that is a constant problem in the work of the foundation. We knew that it would be no different with the water system.

Initially we appointed a person to manage the water system, sterilizing and filling 5 gallon containers and selling them for 25 cents each. We selected a single mother to administer the system as a means of obtaining an income for herself and her children. The

school received its water for free. Our two interns were able to support the process, even delivering the 5 gallon containers to the door for a small extra fee.

An initial problem was a slightly bad taste to the water due to a malfunction of one of the filters. Unfortunately a good number of people got to taste this water and it was hard afterwards to persuade them that the problem had been solved. So at the beginning sales were slow, and after a few months the person appointed began to not show up some days, making it even more difficult for sales to increase.

By the end of the year our interns were pretty much in charge of the water system, and we began to seek ways to re-launch the program.



Caimito

The community of Caimito sits in the coastal rainforest of the Cabo San Francisco. Our contact there, George Fletcher is a biologist who has lived there for several years, working to encourage sustainable cacao production and conservation of this important ecological zone. We have sought ways of supporting George in his work, sending groups of volunteers to aid in construction and agricultural projects at various points.

Another opportunity presented itself in a funding proposal

for the IUCN “Purchase of Nature” grant that we prepared with the substantial help of Jonny Crabb, a project manager from the UK.

We proposed to purchase around 120 hectares of the forest around Caimito for conservation and sustainable use by local communities. We were pleased to be selected as one of 12 projects from an original pool of 87. However, only 5 were finally selected for funding, of which we were not one. We intend to resubmit an improved version of the proposal in 2012.

Within the foundation we took the decision during late 2011 to seek funding that will allow us to work more in the Cabo San Francisco region. It is an area of significant biological significance with coastal rainforest and a marine reserve offshore. But it is under increasing threat and each year suffers new invasions and destruction by illegal loggers and ranchers looking to expand their farms.

Conclusion

During 2011 we have been fortunate to work with a number of groups and individual volunteers whose efforts have helped Yanapuma to move forward with its mission of helping indigenous and marginalized communities move towards sustainable development. Likewise, with the generous help of the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, the Souter Trust, and other organizations, in addition to the funding supplied by our own volunteer activities and Spanish school, we have undertaken work that we can be satisfied with on the whole.

We recognize that the kind of work that we seek to accomplish requires spanning a divide in cultural understanding and experience that can be frustrating at times for the apparent lack of progress. But we have learned that progress is by no means linear, and that the processes are long-term, requiring many years to bear

fruit.

With that in mind, we remain committed to the mission that we have identified for ourselves, ever mindful of the challenges, and always searching for better ways of achieving the goals we set out to achieve with those client populations that we serve.

At times we reflect though on our mission and activities, trying to develop a perspective that makes sense of the processes that we engage in on a daily basis. We examine the social, political, cultural, economic and personal factors in all our lives as these relate to the daily struggle of the indigenous and marginalized communities of Ecuador.

As founders of Yanapuma we set out with the mission to promote and encourage sustainable development in indigenous and marginalized communities in Ecuador. As time has gone on and we have gathered experience through the projects that we have carried out, we have continued to reflect on what our mission actually means, both to us and to the populations that we serve.

On the face of it, it is fairly obvious that we intend good, and that sustainable development is a worthy goal. But to establish the philosophy that underlies our efforts on solid ground is not easy. Observing the situation in the most general of terms, Yanapuma represents an intermediary, between a globalized capitalist system that continues to spread relentlessly to each corner of the globe, and that has generated excess wealth, part of which can be “reinvested” in the kind of work that we do with those populations that are still on the margins of this expansion. But is the effect of our work not merely to help them get sucked in to the capitalist system?

A traditionally semi-nomadic, forest-dwelling culture like the Tsa’chila, or the idyllic situation of the village of Estero de Plátano in the Pacific ocean rainforest, represent what anthropologist Marshall Sahlins referred to as the “original leisure societies.” To this day, although the changes around them have been stark and rapid, their

cultural values and style accustom them to only working the bare minimum to get from day to day.

We were struck when visiting the vegetable gardens set up in Bua through the Ferguson Trust grant by how many Tsa'chila were just sitting around outside their homes chatting and passing time together. Their mestizo neighbors see them as "lazy," and to us it does seem odd that they would most often prefer to do nothing than to experiment with expanding their farms or growing vegetables, for example. Likewise, the fishermen in Estero de Plátano, after a few hours at sea, return to spend the rest of the day lounging by the shore chatting and playing cards.

What then is our role in their lives? What should it be? Are we just seeking to increase their income-generating potential so that they will become consumers themselves?

One of our axioms has always been that we are aiding in a process of cultural adaptation, that their way of life is under threat and unsustainable given the way that Ecuador and the world is changing around them. This is particularly clear in the case of the Tsa'chila whose endless forests with bountiful game and fish are gone, and who are now forced to remain on their lands practicing a



form of agriculture for which they have no cultural antecedents. Our aim has always been to help them to adapt to this new situation in a way that is culturally appropriate, for it is abundantly clear that they have been left behind in the development that is taking place in the province



that bears their name.

One of the greatest problems in achieving this is that our vision of their situation is distinctly different from their own, and that given our desire to work in a collaborative and participatory way at all times, it has proven extremely hard to arrive at a meaningful con-sensus.

In conservation last May with a young Tsa'chila from the community of Chiguilpe who is more politically and culturally aware than most Tsa'chila, his assessment is that in 10 years there will be no Tsa'chila culture anymore. He works to preserve and promote Tsa'chila culture and history, against the wishes at times of his wife and against the best interests of his family, for it is a role that does not earn him as much as he is capable of earning by merely using his identity as a Tsa'chila for his own gain.

Such pessimism from a young Tsa'chila who is capable of bridging the cultural gap is not encouraging, and forces us to consider deeply what we take to be our role in the future of the Tsa'chila culture. We are forced to ask what the meaning and value of culture is in the 21st century?

We may be accused in our work as a foundation of “de-politicizing” the situation of the populations that we work with. After all, they never perceived themselves as poor or in need of assistance until global economic development expanded to their doorsteps, and we do not perceive generally of their situation as being political in nature. But it is our global capitalism that creates the notion of poverty, and the return of some small measure of resources to such communities in the form of “charity” for “development” may serve two purposes. First it may expiate our guilt for being instrumental in creating their “poverty,” in the first place, and second it may be interpreted as merely creating the conditions for them to enter the system as the providers of cheap produce and raw materials and a new market for manufactured goods that the global system needs to maintain its growth. All these communities are full of TVs, DVD players and cell phones, even if there is no reception or signal!

But as a foundation we would defend the right of the people



in these communities to have DVDs and stereo systems, to live fully in the modern world with its conveniences and distractions. The question of whether this is sustainable for any of us in the long run is a still unanswered question!

As an NGO working in these communities, we propose to aid in the processes of “raising their indices of development,” as stated in the Millennium Development Goals. These are formulated more in terms of raising nutritional and educational standards, improving access to rights and services, etc. But inevitably there is an outflow of materials and resources and an influx of manufactured goods that serves the interests of the global economy. In the end our aim is to allow local people to retain a measure of control over their local resource base and to interact with a reciprocal sense of fairness and dignity with the culture that surrounds them.

We will continue to ponder these questions as we continue to expand our work in 2012 and beyond, locating our efforts in a philosophy and methodology appropriate to the task of aiding the populations that we work with. And we thank and look forward to the continued support of those individuals and organizations that have entrusted us with their resources up to this point.

28 February 2012

A draft financial statement for 2011 will be added soon.