

...a cooperatively run NGO whose aims are to facilitate sustainable practices in poor urban and rural communities throughout Ecuador, and to encourage intercultural exchange that fosters mutual benefit and learning in a globalizing world.

A BiMonthly Newsletter

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For this special Christmas edition of the Yanapuma Newsletter, we would like to focus on one of the communities with which Yanapuma works, Bua de los Tsachilas. This community has demonstrated a strong desire to improve its current situation and has enlisted Yanapuma to assist in this process. Additionally, as Christmas is a time of red hats and colorful decorations, the cultural practices in Bua fit right in with the visuals of the season.

Bua? Tsachilas? Huh?

Bua de los Tsachilas is a community located near the city of Santo Domingo, about 3 hours west of Quito. Bua contains the largest population of the seven remaining groups of the indigenous culture, Tsachila. Tsachilas are immediately identifiable by the women's multi-colored hand woven skirts and the men's cropped hair, dyed red with paste from the "achiote" tree.



Yanapuma has been working with the community of Bua for about nine months. Since the beginning of their relationship, Yanapuma has sent 9 interns and 12 short-term volunteers to do work in the community, ranging from researching water and sanitation to

constructing ecological toilets (see project highlight on page 3). Through a combination of community discussions and external research, several "solvable" problems have been identified in Bua. Currently the community (with the assistance of Yanapuma) is working to address the following areas: unsatisfactory educational facilities and materials, insufficient health services, poor sanitation systems, dangerous agricultural conditions, lack of sustainable economic options and a lack of potable drinking water.



Additionally, the cultural group in Bua has been working to develop sustainable tourism, as an additional source of revenue and a way of preserving their cultural practices.

The Christmas Spirit

Despite all of the work which the community members in Bua and Yanapuma are investing in the development project, material needs are often an obstacle. Additionally, more human power is always useful. Below is an outline of Yanapuma's Christmas Fundraiser and how you can help the people in Bua this Christmas season.

Problems:

Currently, children at the schools suffer from a lack of proper, up-to-date textbooks and have no access to educational materials at home. This limits the children's ability to excel in school. Despite this lack of materials, there is a sincere desire for education. For example, two interns were sitting at a hacienda and the local children were so eager to learn that they were looking through the interns' dictionary and Lonely Planet, asking questions and trying to read the texts.

Additionally, the school suffers from a lack of proper furniture. Classrooms are overcrowded and although new classrooms have been built, there are no funds to furnish them (see below)

The Christmas Spirit (cont.)

And here are ways that you can help Bua this holiday season:

Donate:

This Christmas Yanapuma is raising funds for the school of Bua de los Tsachila to buy educational materials and basic furniture like desks and blackboards for new classrooms. These classrooms were built by an organization, Corp Ecuador, this past summer, but the school has not yet been able to afford to put this much needed space into use.



Volunteer

Another option is coming to Ecuador this holiday season and volunteering your time rather than your money. Some possible short-term volunteer projects include:

- Working with the group of parents from the school to build the new furniture for the classroom



Fundraise:

Another alternative is to organize a fundraising event in your community. This could range from simply passing on this appeal to your friends and family to the traditional bake sales and car washes.

Other possibilities include:

Teach Spanish for donations: Those of you who completed Spanish courses here in Ecuador or know Spanish from elsewhere can offer private Spanish lessons in return for donations to the school in Bua. Yanapuma can even provide you with educational materials if you are interested.



Ecological Toilets in Bua

Building ecological toilets in Bua was Yanapuma's first project in assisting the Bua community in developing sustainable practices and improving overall public health

Last Spring and Summer Yanapuma had several interns living and working in Bua while studying the health and sanitation situation in the community. Based on the findings of these investigations and the desire of the community to improve their health situation, the idea of building ecological toilets was developed. Additionally, the presences of an ecological toilet at the cultural center is an asset in the creation of an infrastructure to receive tourists for longer periods of time.

The Process

In July 2007 Yanapuma carried out a pilot project to construct three eco-

logical toilets. One is situated in the cultural center of Bua, and the other two in extended families of the community where they are used by between 14 and 20 people per day. These ecological toilets were constructed with the donation from the 12th Midlothian cubscout troop of Edinburgh, Scotland and the work of a group of English and American volunteers over a three week period. The ecotoilets were constructed using ferro-cement, a technique which encases wire mesh inside a thin wall of cement, that produces a relatively light but strong wall. Other parts wherever possible were made of recycled plastic containers to be easily replaceable and low cost.

The construction process was coordinated with an educational campaign in the local school about the environment, hygiene and health, biology, etc. School groups were invited to view the construction and learn about the benefits.

The Application

The first follow-up was conducted in September. The comments in-

cluded a desire for a urinal inside, signifying that men would prefer to urinate in the toilet rather than outdoors (as Yanapuma was advised), a desire for higher walls to conceal ones head after standing, a desire for a railing for the elderly and a fear from small children that they might fall in.



Generally, even the negative comments indicate to us that the toilets are being used. We are now hoping to follow-up on the originally three toilets through the investigations of Linda Kroeze on how to develop sanitation education and awareness which will hopefully lead to the construction of more of these toilets in the community.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE WATER AND SANITATION SITUATION AT ABRAHAM CALAZACON WAS CONDUCTED. SUBSEQUENT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF WATER IN THE SCHOOL TO PROVIDE RUNNING, POTABLE WATER WITH ADEQUATE DRAINAGE, AS WELL AS IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PENDING SUFFICIENT FUNDING AND ENGINEERING EXPERTISE.

GATHERING OF BASIC BACKGROUND STATISTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMUNITY TO ASSIST IN UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY AND FACILITATING NEEDED/ DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT WAS CONDUCTED

ECOLOGICAL TOILETS WERE CONSTRUCTED

AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS WAS CONDUCTED, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OF HEALTHIER AND MORE ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING PRACTICES

WORK WAS CONDUCTED TO SET-UP A RECYCLING AND WASTE REMOVAL PROGRAM AT ABRAHAM CALAZACON SCHOOL, WITH THE VIEW OF USING IT AS A FLAGSHIP PROJECT BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO ENCOMPASS THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN THE FUTURE

PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL CONDUCTED

AN ENGLISH CURRICULUM DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE TOURISM NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY WAS DEVELOPED AND TAUGHT TO INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS

A SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED REGARDING THE HEALTH ISSUES FACED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

AN INVESTIGATION WAS CONDUCTED REGARDING THE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURES AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY



Update on Operations and Activities at Yanapuma

General

The foundation finished planning its activities for 2008, with plans to continue working with Bua, La Chimba, Chichicorumi, Wachimak, Caimito. Using this plan, Yanapuma can commit both human and financial resources, and start looking for funding for specific projects.

Additionally, Yanapuma formally decided to begin working with the community of Estero de Platano on the coast. Primarily this will involve agricultural work with the organic cacao project of George Fletcher in Caimito, but will hopefully expand to working with health and recycling/trash removal, and later with the school.

Finally, Yanapuma is very close to being able to recommend a system of legalization, through a Quito lawyer who drafted statutes for the legalization of indigenous communities and projects through CO-DENPE.

Bua de los Tsachilas

Yanapuma has hired a full time employee to serve as Community Project Coordinator in Bua. This position will be internally funded until outside funds are acquired.

La Chimba

Two students from Holland have committed to a project with La Chimba and surrounding communities in the development of tourism, both for La Chimba and towards a regional strategy.

Quito

Leigh started volunteering with FUNGERES on their recycling project in the historic center of Quito.



Chichicorumi

Paulien from Holland continues to teach in the school of Puka Chicta and Yanapuma is looking urgently for a follow-on teacher to start in March or April so that the children can complete a full academic year of English and receive certification. There is someone who can cover May or June if necessary.

Adam Wright completed his internship, having made a significant contribution to the development of tourism in the Kamak Maki project, both in the development of the infrastructure and ideas for the future, and in investigating questions of the legalization of the project.

Carly Leusner finished her internship at Kamak Maki. Her project to write a book on traditional medicine of the area with Alonso, the local director of the project, reached its goal, although there is scope for the addition of more information on different plants by a subsequent student. Carly will continue working on the project in the US to do the layout, etc.

A former Cultural Exchange visitor who went there with her two children has informed Yanapuma that one of her sons is doing a fundraiser for the school of Puka Chicta and has over \$200 so far.

Estero de Platano

Andy and Azalia visited in November to talk with a group of families who are developing a tourism project there. They also met with the doctor who runs the small dispensary there who is interested in receiving trainee nurses and doctors to work with the community on diagnosis and prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.

Zack Hawkins completed a 3 month stay in the community as part of his coursework requirements for Azusa Pacific University.

Kristien, from Holland, is currently in Estero de Platano helping in the design of jewelry and crafts. The community has set up a workshop to produce these items but lacks the necessary design abilities and knowledge of what might sell to a wider audience.

Wachimak

Yanapuma has maintained contact through Jacobo with the community. Yanapuma pledged to visit in mid January of 2008 to discuss how to continue working with the community, but have stressed to Jacobo the need to solve the problems of alcohol related domestic abuse within the community.

Caimito

A group of volunteers worked on conservation and reforestation with George Fletcher, a biologist who is working to teach the community more sustainable methods as well as to create a biocorridor uniting many small parcels of forest that are individually owned into an umbrella conservation organization.

Rompopo: a traditional Christmas drink recipe from Ecuador, much like eggnog

- * 1 l milk
- * 1b sugar
- * 2 cinnamon sticks
- * 1 bottle Aguardiente or other alcohol
- * 8 egg yolks

Boil the milk, sugar and cinnamon together in a pan until the mixture turns a pink color. Remove and allow it to cool down. Beat the egg yolk and then add to the milk. Boil again. Remove and allow to cool. Add the Aguardiente. Place the drink in a bottle in the refrigerator.

