

A co-operatively run NGO whose aims are to encourage sustainable practices in poor urban and rural communities throughout Ecuador and to promote cultural exchange that fosters mutual benefit and learning in a globalizing World.

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 4: March/April 2008

Introduction

March and April saw a lot of activity at Yanapuma. As always we were all extremely busy, occupied both with the continuing development of the school and with ongoing projects of the foundation. We have been fortunate to receive a good number of Spanish students which helps to cover our basic administrative overheads, and has kept us solvent despite having to replace thousands of dollars worth of computers that were stolen in February.

We have continued to focus our efforts on the community of Bua, where the learning curve has been pretty steep as we grapple with some delicate and complex issues that challenge our ideas of how we carry out the foundation's mission. Development is an area filled with theoretical and practical challenges, and great theories often come up against stubborn realities as we attempt to help the community move forward.

Azalia, our Projects Director commented in early April that in certain areas we could move a lot faster, but getting the job done is not always as important as encouraging active participation and confidence among community members. Balancing the drive to achieve results with the need to develop ownership is the key to making projects sustainable in the long term. As a foundation we are engaged with the community in a mutual process of learning that will benefit both.

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Azalia talks with members of a women's group in La Chimba

Website Revamped

During April a local software and computer company, Infocorp was contracted to freshen up the design of the Yanapuma Foundation website and add some new features like a more professional weblog system and a proper photo gallery. Hopefully this will help in the long run to raise the profile of the website on Google and other search engines as well as making the site more fun, informative, and easier to navigate.

Check us out at:
www.yanapuma.org



A recent school dinner



Launching Eos Ecuador

Two of the founder members of Yanapuma, David and Andy have teamed up with two Ecuadorians, Pablo and Yadira, to create a new travel agency, Eos Ecuador (www.eosecuador.com). The principal aim of the new agency is to promote community-based tourism. Yanapuma Foundation is working with several communities in the development of a form of tourism that is run by and for the community, and this new initiative is in line with our holistic and integrated philosophy and approach.

We have seen too many community run tourism projects that either have failed, or which limp along without ever taking off properly because no effort is put into their promotion. EosEcuador will begin to work with a few select communities at first, to raise their profile and offer them as reliable community run tourism destinations.

Eos will also offer the more standard tourist destinations and activities such as Galapagos, Amazon, adventure tours, et cetera, in order to make ends meet. The added advantage for anyone booking these types of tours through Eos is that fully 50% of the profits of Eos will be donated to Yanapuma foundation to invest in the development of sustainable and responsible tourism.

Steven joins the Yanapuma team...

Steven Barnes from the UK, joined us as an intern in January to coordinate and lead the volunteer groups that we receive. Impressed by his abilities, in April we offered him a full time position with Yanapuma, to continue leading the groups. This



Steven hard at work with volunteers

involves working virtually 10 weeks at a time on three, 3-week projects with a couple of weeks off at the end to recuperate before the next group arrives.

Intern News

In April, Fran from Australia started to work alongside Steve as coordinator for the volunteer groups that Yanapuma hosts. Her first assignment is to work with a group of 10 volunteers in La Chimba on renovation of the old hacienda. This will be followed by 3 weeks at the project Kamak Maki in the Amazon, before finishing off with 3 weeks of conservation work at the coast, with George Fletcher in Caimito.

Brian, who joined us in January is preparing to spend time in the coastal community of Estero de Platano working on recycling. His task will be to figure out how we can set up a waste management and recycling system in this relatively isolated community. One of the problems is getting someone, either the municipality or private enterprises to take any interest in the trash and recyclable materials that pile up in the community.

Celine, from France, spent 1 month in the Peluchitos daycare center, teaching children and their parents about dental hygiene. She succeeded in getting a donation of toothbrushes and toothpaste from Colgate and Palmolive to distribute to the children, plus she arranged for free dental check-ups for them through the Central University of Quito dental school.

Janine, a medical student from Holland has been working to design a nutritional study of the community of Bua. This study will examine the eating habits of the Tsachila, focusing on children, and the attitudes and beliefs of the Tsachila that affect their diet, and be carried out in May.

Jordan, a volunteer from the UK, spent two months teaching English in a school in a poor neighbourhood of Quito called Amable Arauz.



Linda and Matt are both studying at Sydney University in Australia. They joined Yanapuma for a year in March. Their first assignment is going to be to spend time in the community of La Chimba, where they will investigate the problems surrounding bilingual education in the local school.

In addition they will be looking at the possibilities for integrating cultural traditions and memory of the Kayambi people into the geography of the village, taking their history out of the traditional museum setting and putting into the community itself where it will serve as an educative force for both residents and visitors alike.

April saw several students finishing their internships with us:

- Pascal finishes working on the Bua map and returns to Canada but hopes to return at the end of the year
- Brittany and Leigh finish teaching English in Bua and return to the US
- Cliff finishes working on the GIS part of the Bua map and continues travelling on to Brazil
- Neika finishes working in our offices and continues travelling, but will return soon
- Linda finishes her study of medicinal plants and their use in Bua and continues travelling to Peru
- Andrea finishes her work on the genealogy of the community of Bua and returns to the US.

We are sorry to see them all go, but wish them all the best in their future endeavours.



Kamak Maki in Chichicorumi

Project News . . .

Bua

During the months of March and April the following activities took place in Bua:

Organic cacao and plantains project

For several months, after a meeting back in November when farmers expressed a desire to learn organic methods of cacao and plantain production, the idea was talked about around the community. Finally a group of 30 farmers has coalesced to commit themselves to the 200 hours of training provided by INCCA (Instituto Nacional de Capacitación Campesina) This is the minimum number required for INCCA to go ahead and provide their service over a 6 month period. The training would cost each farmer \$10, \$5 at the start and the remainder at the end. Yanapuma has offered to help these poor farmers by paying the second instalment for those that complete the course. Giovanni, our full-time agricultural expert in Bua is investigating the markets for these products as part of our integrative strategy. One part of the project is to help the Tsachila live in a less toxic environment, something they have expressed concern about, and the other part is to ensure that they have a market for their produce that will also yield an economic benefit.

English classes

Brittany and Leigh continued with the English classes they had started in February. Classes ended in towards the end of April when they both had to leave. Unfortunately there was nobody able to take over immediately, but we hope to have someone starting in May to keep the classes running. The materials for the class were developed jointly by Brittany and Leigh and the booklets were printed thanks to a donation by Brittany's parents. The classes have been a success so far, a hit with adults as much as with the children of the community.

Map making

Pascal continued with the project to create a map of the community. This involves walking about 30 kilometers per day, sometimes in extreme heat with a GPS device and marking points that are later transferred to an aerial photograph of the area. *Cont...*

Future Plans . . .

As our experience grows at Yanapuma we are becoming more and more convinced that we must seek ways to fund full-time employees who can work in communities in a variety of capacities, from agricultural specialists to community workers to educators and health specialists. It takes a sustained effort to create sustainable changes in a community. Our next step will be to look for a suitably qualified Ecuadorian to work in the community of Bua on communication, participation and empowerment. This will involve working with different sectors of the community to develop skills that will allow them to begin to take part in local processes and direct their own programs and projects. The lack of these skills amongst the Tsachila is a major reason that they have become so marginalized and it is also important to try to fold these concepts into the school curriculum so that young Tsachila grow up with these abilities.

...continued

These points are connected together to show the outlines of individual farms. Pascal finished his time with Yanapuma at the end of April, and reckoned that the task was about 20% complete. We are actively searching for new interns to take on this task. This project has created considerable debate within the community and has complicated the work of the foundation in many areas. The basic idea grew out of the need to identify where everyone in the community lives in order to be able to deliver services to the entire community. Some farms are relatively isolated; up to 11 kilometers from the main road that runs like a spine through Bua. In addition, the need was expressed by some farmers to measure and delineate their land as well as to plot the actual boundaries of the community.

Rumours began to spread that we were making the map in order for the municipality to charge taxes to each farmer, something they have been trying to do for a while. Also, a rumour spread that Pascal was going to take the map back to Canada and sell their land there. To cut a long story short, it appears that there are a very few people in the community who profited greatly by appropriating a lot of land when the government ceded the land to the entire community back in the 1950s. So while some have up to 150 hectares, others have only two or three, and there are now young Tsachila who have no land on which to begin to farm. As Guillermo, the school director put it, this is something that has been under the surface for years, and which needs to come out and be dealt with. And it will come out eventually with or without the help of Yanapuma. So it appears that the majority of the community is behind the making of the map, but they need constant reassurance and explaining what it is being done for. Pascal has also begun to train two young Tsachila in marking GPS points and transferring data to the computer as a way of involving them in the process, and a Tsachila committee has been set up to oversee the project. We are aware of the need to make absolutely sure that the information does not get into the wrong hands.

Hopefully we will be able to find a student who will be able to continue with this work during the coming months.

Continued . . .

Bua Projects continued . . .

Engineers Without Borders

In March Yanapuma hosted five engineers from the Portland, Oregon branch of Engineers Without Borders who travelled to Bua to look at designing a solution for the water and sanitation problems that negatively affect the Abraham Calazacon school. Once we have a good plan we will start to look for the necessary funding to begin carrying out the changes.

One help in this respect is that we will be hosting in September a group of students from the US, through *Thinking Beyond Borders*. This new organization is setting up a round-the-world study program that focuses on specific development issues on each continent. Yanapuma will be setting up a project in Bua for the group of up to 16 students that focuses on water issues. Hopefully we will have a firm plan from *Engineers Without Borders* by then and be able to start the work. This might include a combination of ecological toilets and an artificial reed bed system to clean the grey water.

Caimito

In April a group of volunteers from the UK went out with Steven to work with biologist George Fletcher in the village of Caimito on the Esmeraldas coast. An isolated community on a dirt road that runs through rainforest close to the sea, it has a small school where the group carried out construction work as well as starting a small garden to grow food for the school children.

Kamak Maki

In March Yanapuma had a group of volunteers from the UK in Chichicorumi, working on the Kamak Maki project, starting work on construction of a new ethnographic museum.

Across the Napo river from Kamak Maki in the community of Puka Chicta, Jake and Natalie from the US spent five weeks teaching English, carrying on the work of Paulien who was there for 6 months. According to Natalie, the kids were a bit rowdy and undisciplined, but they had a wonderful time there and wished that they could have stayed longer.

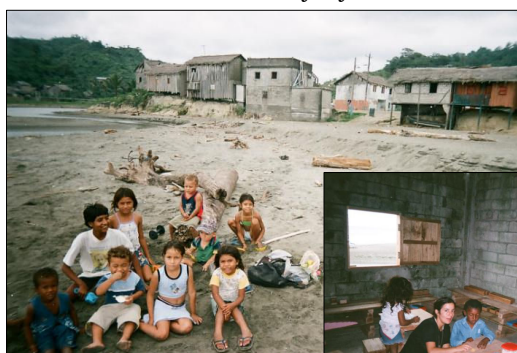


The new museum takes shape in Kamak Maki

General . . .

Yanapuma has been working with a Quito lawyer to draft a set of general statutes that we can apply to the communities that we work with in order to get them legalized. Under Ecuadorian law each community or project needs to be legalized as a "persona juridica" which then obliges them to comply with the requirements of the tax and other laws. We have been working to create a broad enough set of statutes that will be applicable to the range of projects that we are involved with. These are now ready and we are in the process of making the first applications for the project Kamak Maki in Chichicorumi and the Shinopi Bolon cultural center in Bua.

The legalization process is being handled by CONDENPE (Consejo de Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador), an organization set up to deal with indigenous rights and affairs, and is expected to take about three months in total for each project. But we are not going to hold our breath, being well used to Ecuadorian bureaucracy by now!



Quingue beach and daycare center



Donations . . .

Through the generosity of the Mary Bruton Open Door Montessori School in Dublin, Ireland we have received a donation of 2000 euros (approximately US \$3050). This came to us through Hannah, a Spanish student who studied with her partner Mungo at our Spanish School recently. The pair volunteered with the foundation Niñez y Vida. The donation will be split between Niñez y Vida, who run their projects using Montessori principles, and the daycare center in Quingue, between Caimito and Estero de Platano on the Esmeraldas coast. This daycare center is run by Christina, partner of George Fletcher who runs our projects in Caimito. Chris runs her daycare center using Montessori principles as well, and is keen to introduce these methods into local schools.

March and April Photo Gallery



Steven with volunteer group in Chichicorumi going native



Flora and fauna of the jungle



Volunteer girls dress up in typical sierra style



A cooling swim after a hard day's work at Kamak Maki



Volunteers in Bua de los Tsachila



Volunteers take time off to explore the sirera on horresback



Studying Spanish in Estero de Platanos



Spanish Students in La Chimba clima towards the snow line