

A co-operatively run NGO driven by the enthusiasm of its staff and volunteers to promote sustainable development in marginalized communities throughout Ecuador and to promote Cultural Exchange for mutual benefit in our increasingly globalized world

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

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Introduction

The start of a new year brings with it fresh challenges and hopes, and we at Yanapuma look forward with optimism to what lies ahead. In our 4 years of operation we have learned that each year is unique and that we must be ready to adapt to the needs of the moment both in the foundation and in the Spanish school.

We have also learned that Quito has been elected the Cultural Capital of Latin America for 2011. There will be special programs and events throughout the year highlighting its history and showcasing its culture. We look forward to sharing its treasures with new students during the rest of the year.

Finally, we wish all our friends and supporters the very best for the remainder of 2011!

School News

January and February saw the school busy, with a good number of students, from a wide range of countries and a wide range of ages. Many took advantage of our "Study and Travel" programs as well as our Quito Cultural

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package. For 2011 we have also launched Beginner Group classes and a package that combines beginner classes with visits to places of cultural and historic interest around Quito. These will start in March, and we are hoping that these will attract a growing number of students who are interested in group classes.

We decided only to offer group classes at beginner level because one-to-one classes really do present the optimum learning experience to the student and in the end are more economical both in terms of time spent studying and money spent on classes as learning is much faster when the teacher is focused uniquely on one student's learning needs. From intermediate level onwards individual classes are much better for the student, even though they are not as profitable for Yanapuma!



Students sit down to eat after cooking class

Exploring Quito

Quito has the best preserved historical centre in all of Latin America, which makes studying here the perfect opportunity to explore its many museums, churches and other cultural treasures. We also regularly take students to enjoy the night life in places like La Ronda (below) where many cafés, bars and restaurants serve typical Ecuadorian food and drinks. There is also live music as well as free concerts and presentations to create the perfect night out.



Students explore the historic center—La Ronda at night

Dartmouth College student Ben Hughey has spent 8 weeks working with 3



Tsa'chila communities to produce accurate maps of the boundaries and main landmarks of their communities using GPS. The finished maps in various forms were presented to each community. We stressed to each group that the maps are their property and that we will not share them with anyone without written permission from the community.

Unfortunately Ben did not have enough time to fill in more detail on each map—farm boundaries, areas of original forest, etc., that would have helped in projects that we are planning to reforest vulnerable areas and create biodiversity corridors. But the communities are grateful for all that he accomplished during his time in Ecuador.

Foundation News

We began the year focused on two projects, one in Bua and the other in Estero de Plátano. The project in Bua is funded by the Ferguson Charitable Trust and involves working with families in setting up vegetable plots and nurseries to grow saplings on their farms. The vegetable plots have proven a popular idea after our project with the InterAmerican Foundation in which we set up a vegetable garden in the local school. Several of the children requested that we help them set up similar plots at home, and other parents were also inspired to start growing vegetables.

It seems strange to think that though the Tsa'chila have farms, they know nothing about growing vegetables. For us this just underscores the abrupt change in Tsa'chila lifestyle that has taken place over the last 40 years as they have gone from being hunter-gatherers practicing slash-and-burn in small plots in the jungle, to being "farmers." But their knowledge is still very limited and for adult Tsa'chila it is hard to get beyond their ancestral belief that all you need to do is make a hole in the ground with a sharp stick and drop the seed in and come back in a few months to see if there is anything to harvest.

During the last year we have come to realize just how deep-seated this system is still in their mentality, and it has explained why it has been such a struggle with the Tsa'chila to help them improve their cacao production. Although they want increased production (current production is only 20-25% of their mestizo neighbors) and continue to request our help, we have encountered a persistent unwillingness to stick with the program that is necessary to realize this increase in production.

Another project that we started in January was funded by La Vida from the UK. We bought two used computers to start offering classes in computer skills to residents of Bua. Together with a laptop that was donated by Outlook Expeditions and a computer already donated by Yanapuma this gave us a total of 4 machines to begin the classes. Eighteen people signed up for the classes, and the first day 40 people showed up! Unfortunately one of the computers was slightly damaged in transit, but we managed to fix it. Due to the popularity of the classes Yanapuma bought another used computer and we set up classes 4 days a week instead of the 2 days a week originally planned. Currently there are 10 people to a class with 5 PCs. The project with La Vida was originally planned to run for 6 months, but as we have doubled the number of classes it will now run for only 3 months. But we hope to receive additional funding to continue this project which has proven to be in great demand.



Los Naranjos.

On 14 February we held a meeting with the community of Los Naranjos to talk about projects and funding, soliciting ideas from the community in a variety of fields. We will use the information gathered as the basis for writing project proposals this year, with the aim of helping this relatively remote Tsa'chila community in its efforts to develop sustainably.

Mapping

In January, intern Ben Hughey from the US began mapping the boundaries and other important markers of the Tsa'chila communities of Los Naranjos, El Poste and Peripa using GPS. These maps will provide important information for the defense of their territories against further intrusion from colonists. Ben's research in Quito revealed that there is no existing map of the boundaries of Los Naranjos.

Estero de Plátano

The project that we are carrying out in Estero de Plátano is funded by the Souter Charitable Trust of Scotland, and is for our work with youth on issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as our ongoing scholarship project to improve the education level of the community by sponsoring 10 students to study in high school. Interns Nik and Allie continue to work with these students to improve their chances, as well as working with the youth under the supervision of Guadalupe, our social/community worker to raise awareness in youth of their rights and obligations in the realm of sexual and reproductive health. Through this project we hope to have some impact on the number of teenage pregnancies in the community, and help youth to make informed choices.

February sees a group of volunteers from the Leap UK in Estero de Plátano working on construction of a new classroom for the local school, as well as creating the base for a clean drinking water project. This project has been stalled for a year while the community failed to come up with a space in the village to site the equipment which filters water through various filters to produce clean and fresh tasting water. Finally we spoke with the director of the Viña del Mar school who agreed to site the equipment in the school grounds. The system will produce free water for the school and 5 gallons will be sold for 25 cents to the families in the village. We still have to work with the community to figure out who is going to manage the system each day. But the maintenance will be done by Fundación Agua Muisne who are providing the equipment and overseeing the installation. The funding for this project came from an anonymous donation at the end of 2009.

Annual Report

Our 2010 Annual Report is now available online at this address: <http://www.yanapuma.org/pdf/Yanapuma%20Annual%20Report%202010.pdf>

The financial statement is still in process. Due to the fact that we changed accountants and systems mid way through 2010 it is taking a little more time to extract the numbers, but these will be published as soon as we get them.

Students, Interns, Volunteers . . .

Teressa van der Linden left us in February to return to Holland after interning in the Spanish school for 4 months. She is replaced by **Helen de Meyer**, from Belgium, who will also work in the Spanish school.

Judith Huijser began working for the foundation in promotion and marketing. She has been spreading the word about our volunteering projects, linking us to various websites in different countries.

Ben Hughey from the US has been working on mapping the Tsa'chila communities of Los Naranjos, El Poste and Peripa, wading through rivers and hacking through the brush to create accurate boundaries.

Spanish student **Jonny Crabb** from England has been using his professional abilities in helping in the preparation of funding proposals for the foundation for our partnership with biologist George Fletcher in the Cabo San Francisco área o Esmeraldas.

Volunteer News

During January and February the volunteer department has been kept busy. We hosted a group of 10 girls from the **Edouard Montpetit College** of Montreal who spent two weeks working with the cacaoteros in Bua, maintaining and fertilizing the plots they created last year.



We also hosted two groups from the **Leap UK** (above and right) who carried out projects in Chichicorumi in the Amazon, Chilcapamba in the sierra, and Estero de Plátano on the Pacific Coast. In addition there were 19 individual volunteers placed in projects in and outside Quito.

Coordinators Lucas and Kelly also visited potential new communities for volunteer projects in the Amazon region, one with an indigenous women's group near Misahualli and the other in primary forest close to Macas. We look forward to starting to offer these as volunteer locations in the near future.

Donation/Funding News . . .

The good news is that we raised sufficient funding to continue offering 10 scholarships in Estero de Plátano for the academic year that begins in April.

We had planned to offer 5 scholarships in Bua this year too. We dropped this idea due to internal factors in the community. The elections for the new cabildo were supposed to take place in early December, but were delayed, and the new cabildo was not finally confirmed until after the end of the school year. Thus we were not able to work with the cabildo to seek candidates before the holidays started. Nor were we able to confirm spaces at the local colleges for the students from Bua. In addition, there exists a perceived lack of objectivity in the new cabildo, and along with the other factors this has led us to judge that it would be too risky to start the scholarship program this year.

Teachers from the Edouard Montpetit College in Montreal, who arrived with a group of students in January to work with the cacao producers of Bua, had promised to fund two of the scholarships. But we decided, with their approval, to use these funds along with additional funding from Yanapuma to buy two computers for the school in the Tsa'chila community of Los Naranjos. We received a petition from the school to help with an intern to teach English and computer skills. So buying the computers is a first step towards beginning to help these Tsa'chila children.

The Spanish school is now charging students a \$20 registration fee, which is actually a direct donation to the scholarship fund. In this way we will put the program on a more secure footing without having to panic each year about whether we are going to receive enough funds to cover the ongoing scholarship costs.

Volunteering with Yanapuma

Working as a volunteer offers the perfect opportunity to practice your Spanish on a daily basis, as well as giving you the chance to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. In our experience, the most memorable part of a traveller's trip is often the contact they made with people while volunteering, and the thing they most often come back for.



November Photo Gallery

