

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

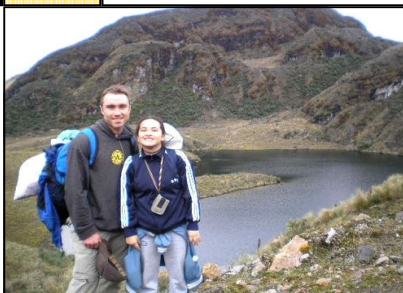
Issue No. 5: May/June 2008

Introduction

May and June, just like the previous months have seen all of us at Yanapuma extremely busy. Projects take on a life of their own at times and we end up running to keep up with events. Although May is the quietest time for the Spanish school, we took advantage of this time to prepare new educational materials and have recently finished work on a course in medical Spanish. We have plans to create similar courses for business, development, and educational Spanish.

Over the course of the next year we are facing a possible financing shortfall that we are working now to try to resolve. Our policy is to commit 100% of the funds received for specific projects to the proposed project, generating our administrative costs from our own activities. However, we do commit our own income to projects too when we see the need, and it is this plus increased costs in general that have opened up a financing gap over the coming year. Fortunately we have a new intern, Kathryn from the US, who is going to work with us on seeking funding over the next few months.

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Ben and Betty on a recent weekend hike

School News

Additional Office Space!

On the 1st of July Yanapuma will expand into the adjoining offices in our building. We have been concerned for some time that we may outgrow the current space as we continue to expand the school. With the new offices we will have about 50% more space for both the foundation and the school, with places for about 12 individual classes at a time, giving us capacity for 24 students per day, and a room specifically for group classes.

Project News: Kamak Maki

Over May and June Yanapuma sent two volunteer groups to Kamak Maki to continue various construction projects. More work was done on the new museum building, and across the river in Puka Chicta the groups worked to construct a new kitchen for the school. The community had been trying for years to get funding from local authorities without success, and so were thrilled that we made a donation of over \$800 for materials and furnished two groups of volunteers who worked alongside fathers of the children to construct the new kitchen.

Two further projects that the community of Puka Chicta requested help with are to collaborate on a women's agricultural project and to create a safe supply of drinking water. On a recent visit we heard that a doctor had diagnosed most of the children with significant and debilitating parasite infections, probably due to the fact that their drinking water has already passed through several communities before reaching them. Parents have been advised to boil their water, but children often take water from wherever they can when they are thirsty. There is a natural spring close to the village and the proposal is to build an elevated tank to supply the whole village.

Congratulations!

Yanapuma congratulated Alonso and Rebecca of Kamak Maki on Sunday 29th of June as they celebrated 50 years of marriage with a church service in the local church of Puka Chicta. They were married originally in traditional Kichwa style at the age of 14, after Alonso's father found a suitable young girl for his son among local families. They went on to have 12 children of their own, the youngest of whom, Juan, is working on the projects with volunteers in Kamak Maki. The reception in Misahualli was attended by about 300 family members.



Donation News

Paul Templeton, who visited Yanapuma in May from **Sotogrande International School (SIS)** in Andalusia, returned to Spain and after discussions with his board of directors confirmed that they are prepared to support us with up to \$12000 of funds for projects this year, in addition to helping with the purchase of land in Quingue. Our first wish was to fund a social/community educator in Bua for the first 6 months which has been agreed. Plus we will be able to provide some seed funding for Matt and Linda's project to develop Kichwa classes via internet in the communities around the Cayambe region.

You can find out more about SIS by going to their website: <http://www.sis.ac/index.php>

Project News: Bua

Our resident agricultural expert, Giovanni, has been busy working with the community of Bua during the last two months. Much of his time though has been spent working more on the social-community side of things, as that is where lie many of the problems that the Tsachila experience. Conscious of this problem, Yanapuma have been working for a while to secure funding for a second full-time employee who can focus on building communication skills, leadership, and participation among the Tsachila community of Bua.

Fortunately, we have recently been given the opportunity to hire such a person for an initial 6 month period and are keen to start as soon as possible (see Donation News). The post will include not only working with the adults of the community to create better communication between the different organizations and with outside agencies and bodies, but will also include a strong educational component. This will involve working with the children of the Abraham Calazacon school to create a new generation of Tsachila who are ready to take part in the development of their community

We are also continuing to work on the map-making project. Tatiana Espinosa, a student at the Facultad de Geología Minas y Petróleo, Escuela de Ingeniería Medio Ambiental de la Universidad Central del Ecuador is continuing to plot the farms of Bua residents using GPS, working with two young Tsachila. She will also be working on her thesis on an environmental topic related to the conditions in Bua. The process of making the map is finding broad acceptance in the community despite early problems.

Organic Farm Visit

On the 21st of June Giovanni took a group of Tsachila to an organic farm, Finca Sarita, where they were able to spend a couple of days learning about organic agriculture, visit a collection center for organic cacao and get a much clearer idea of what the possibilities are for getting away from the use of chemicals on their land. All returned from the journey enthused (see Michel's report below).

Reforestation Project

Alfonso, the director of the Shinopi Bolon cultural group, with the help of Giovanni, petitioned the local municipality for a donation of 2000 trees of different species that will be divided among the families of Bua as part of a reforestation initiative (*continued*).



Volunteers help to unload the saplings

The trees were collected from the municipio in Santo Domingo with Yanapuma's help and Giovanni drew up a plan with the community to plant and care for the 2000 saplings.

May also saw a group of volunteers from the UK in Bua finishing off construction of a cabaña started by a previous group. The result is a beautiful structure that will be used to house guests and visitors wanting to stay at the cultural center Shinopi Bolon (*see photo gallery*).

Michelle is studying International Affairs and Economics at the University of Puget Sound and is working through the summer on organic and fair trade certification.



Visit to Finca Orgánica Sarita

I left early Saturday morning with four Tsáchila interested in organic cacao farming as well as Giovanni, to visit the Finca Orgánica Sarita located in the province of Manabí. We were greeted warmly with a lunch made entirely from produce and products from the organic finca. "Organic" itself was a new experience for the Tsáchila; before arriving, we had had to clarify the definition of organic as being produced without chemicals. In the finca with a Tsáchila helping to harvest his cacao, I asked if the finca was organic, and he replied that it was "almost organic" because he only used "a few" chemicals. The exposure to this new world of agriculture was the most valuable experience we took away.

After lunch, Servio showed us his family's array of sustainable projects, and we relaxed in his all-natural bamboo cabins (mine 10 meters high in a tree!) before learning about the lunar phases that should be considered before making agricultural decisions. That night we even made crude chocolate from toasted cacao beans, a delicious way to connect the cacao beans that the farmers cultivate with the final product that is so rarely produced in Ecuador.

The next day we visited a local organic cacao finca, and Servio taught us the importance of pruning the cacao trees to allow for ideal light and shade ratios, and each of the Tsáchila had hands-on experience. On our last day, Servio took us to meet a technician who works for Anecacao, the Ecuadorian union of cacao exporters. He showed us some cacao plants that had been grafted, a process we had learned the day before. Finally, we went to a *centro de acopio*, or a collection center that had been certified organic and fair trade. A cooperative of cacao producers bring their cacao *en baba*, or still wrapped in the sweet pulpy covering, to be bought by directly by the *centro*, at a much higher price than the intermediary. An employee even showed us the new electric pruning tools that the cooperative had just bought with their fair trade premium account. Seeing the tangible benefits of the fair trade and organic certification seemed to act as the *chispa*, or spark, that was needed. Their excitement grew, and it was as though they could see a glimpse of their futures with better agricultural practices and a stronger communal organization. Back in Bua, two of the Tsáchila have agreed to act as agricultural promoters, receiving training and dispersing the information to the others involved in the cacao growers organization, with the hope that the training will lead to higher quality products produced in a sustainable manner.

More Project News . . .

Caimito

Estero de Plátano

One of our interns, Bryan from the UK, started his work in Estero de Plátano on waste management and recycling. He is coordinating with Katie, a Peace Corps volunteer who is stationed there for two years. Together they have been working to set up recycling in Estero as well as to work with local organizations and bodies to figure out how the collected materials will be taken away. Hopefully this will be done in conjunction with all the small communities down this stretch of coast.



We also are continuing to help them with the process of legalizing their organizations, of which there are two, a craft enterprise and a tourism initiative. We recently met with a representative of FURARE, a foundation that has helped set up a craft production workshop in Estero, to see how we can push this project forward in collaboration.

One of the problematic aspects of working at the coast is the prevailing culture of individualism that makes the concept of working with a "community" quite a challenge. Estero has a few families that are keen to move ahead and are willing to put in the effort to make things better. We work with these families, but always with an eye to how to spread the benefits to the rest of the community, the school, the health center, etc. These families themselves are tired of trying to work with the rest as they have seen too many initiatives fizzle out for lack of participation. So our work is something of a balancing act in Estero as we seek the best way forward along various axes.

Scholarship Program

One of the big problems faced in Estero de Plátano is the lack of secondary education and the costs involved if they want to pursue more advanced education for their children. For Yanapuma this is an important part of the development of the community. For this reason we have decided to start sponsoring the children of Estero to continue learning.

From our own funds we will sponsor 5 children, initially for one year but with the idea of seeing them through all 6 years of secondary education. We will seek funding from other sources to increase the number of children studying. This will be done in coordination with investigation of the colleges themselves to see that what they will receive will be worthwhile. We have heard too many stories of teachers who just don't show up and of colleges that are badly run. If you would like to learn how you can sponsor a child, please visit this page of our website:

<http://www.yanapuma.org/en/FundingNeeds.php>

Over the last two months we have sent two groups of volunteers from the LEAP, UK to work with George. They have continued to work on construction of new classrooms for the school as



well as some conservation work. Unfortunately, the second groups stay was spoiled by a member of the community with a long history of mental problems. Normally he has never been any trouble, but this time took to hanging around the volunteer cabaña and making a nuisance of himself. Finally he had to be taken away by the police and sent to Quito for psychological treatment.

The group decided that they could not stay there, although they held no grudge against the community itself and felt bad leaving. But we organized at short notice for them to continue their volunteering in Bua. Fran, their group coordinator, had quite a challenge dealing with the whole issue but came through it really well.



Demonstration Plot

We also received confirmation that Sotogrande International School, whose Director, Paul Templeton was in Ecuador in May visiting some of our projects have agreed to help George to purchase a plot of land in nearby Quingue to use as a demonstration plot to help the community develop more sustainable agricultural practices and to improve their diets. The expected cost including all the legal work is about \$2500.00.

Emily, a former Spanish student from the US has also been working out in Caimito with Crys, George's wife, helping in the daycare center that she runs as well as in the local school and on other projects that are ongoing in Caimito.

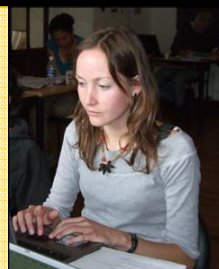
Student and Intern News

Martin, from Ecuador, and **Dominique**, from France, are working in the school in Bua. Their initial task was to teach English, but they are also starting to work in other areas, on nutrition education, health and hygiene, etc.

Pamela from the US and **Sophie** from France, are teaching English to the children in the school of Puka Chicta. They will be there until the end of July and the beginning of August. Although it sometimes seems to us perhaps a little bit inappropriate to be teaching English in small schools like this, it is a request that they make, often with the observation that those of their student that go on to study in the colleges of larger towns find themselves behind other students who have already studied English and computers in their own schools.



Noemie, from the Instituto de Ciencias Políticas de Aix-en-Provence arrived at the end of May to start a 9 month internship, continuing the great work done by our previous interns from the same university. She will be particularly involved in refining the model for sustainable development that we have been working on since we started, and looking at strategies for implementation.



Ben who is from the US, went to work in the hospital Delfina Torres de Concha in the town of Esmeraldas for two months. So far it has been an intense experience working in the emergency room in this under-funded and understaffed hospital, at times frustrating and saddening, like when young patients die.

He has been surprised by the level of trust and confidence placed in his hands, but he has risen to the challenge and continues to help save lives on a daily basis. His regular updates show the strength of his commitment to the work he is doing and willingness to contribute to the work there.

Idalia is studying for a Master's at Columbia University in New York, and is working this summer with the Tsachila of Bua to strengthen their self-esteem, communication and leadership.

Strengthening Community

As a social work intern working with the Tsachila in Búa from June through August my tasks are to organize and hold workshops in areas of leadership, self esteem, human relationships and communication to serve the Búa community. These are issues that the community has voiced to Yanapuma and that past volunteers/interns have noticed. I visited the community along with two other interns and I spent a week and a half visiting with community members and learning about the culture. I stayed at cultural center, Shinopi Bolon, where the president of the cultural group and his family reside. The president, Alfonso, a very important and recognized individual in the community served as one of many community members that helped me understand the issues facing Búa from the community's lack of participation in community projects to the need of workshops on leadership skills.

After reflecting on the various conversations and meetings I had in Búa there are several social issues that the community voiced. First, the Cabildo is currently struggling with: the lack of participation of some of its members, the resignation of the Sindico (Trustee) and lack of organization. This is causing difficulties in the Cabildo and the community is becoming increasingly disappointed in their performance of handling community issues. Second, the areas of self esteem, human relations and effective communication skills are topics of interest for many. Third, offering workshops on leadership and motivation skills is needed to support the Búa de los Tsáchila community.

Overall, with the feedback from the various community members I will be working along with other Yanapuma interns and programming staff in developing a series of cultural sensitive workshops covering these topics of interest. The goal is to offer workshops that provide concrete skills and utilize creative methods that connect with the Tsáchila culture. Some ideas are using interactive methods such as group activities and the arts to address these sensitive topics that are often difficult to discuss culturally. The workshops will take place during the months of mid July and August.



Project News: La Chimba

Two of our interns, Matt and Linda from Australia and Sweden, have spent a month in La Chimba investigating the problems associated with education, in particular with bilingual education.

They uncovered a complex and difficult set of social dynamics in La Chimba that make it very difficult to do much to change the educational situation. However, they found that there are more openings in some of the surrounding communities. But the question that they finally came to as being of most importance was how they, as two “gringos” who do not speak a word of Kichwa, can possibly contribute to the development of bilingual education and the preservation of the language and its associated culture.

Their innovative answer is to design a program based on the concept of podcasts and MP3 recordings of Kichwa classes that can be stored on a server and downloaded by any school with internet (or on CD by those that don’t). Along with this goes a program to teach the participating schools how to record their own students speaking Kichwa, talking about their own communities and cultures and upload this to the server for sharing. For schools that don’t have qualified Kichwa teachers or materials, this will be a great resource, freely available, interactive, and attractive to students because it uses computers and technology and allows them to make their own recordings.

Matt and Linda set up a first run to demonstrate to a few schools around the La Chimba area to gauge interest and get feedback. The response was overwhelmingly good with teachers coming up with ideas and suggestions and committing to work on the project. The next stage is to develop something a little more professional that we can use to seek partners and funding to develop the first set of classes over the summer. A group of teachers has already expressed interest in working over the summer on this project, supervised by our own Vinicio who is a qualified linguist and-



Other News

In April we succeeded in developing a system for helping communities and organizations to become legal entities through CODENPE (Consejo de Nacionalidades y Pueblos del Ecuador) that is relatively easy and without great cost. The next step was for us to investigate the obligations that these newly legalized entities would face from the tax offices (SRI).

The system of sales tax is complex and tedious in Ecuador and hard to comply with, even with the help of an experienced accountant. So it seemed to us that there should exist some way for making it relatively easy for communities whose members can sometimes hardly read and write, never mind make calculations of how much sales tax to pay or withhold dependent upon who they are buying from and whether the retention should be 5, 8, or 12 % of the sales tax sum, and filling in the forms monthly with all the relevant invoices and other forms that the SRI demands.

But the answer from the lawyers of the SRI is that all are equal under the law and that they must comply like everyone else, hire an accountant like everyone else, and submit their forms each month. They seem to have no concept of what life is like outside their own circle and the difficulties that isolated communities will have in complying with these requisites. Indeed, we have heard of communities that have succeeded in legalizing themselves, registered with the SRI, but never declared as they are supposed to do until one day the inspector arrives and imposes fines of \$1000 to \$1500 for the previous two years or so, which of course they are completely unable to pay.

The advice we received from the lawyer who helped us draft the statutes that we use for legalization was to advise the communities not to register with the SRI and for us to teach them how to defend themselves against the SRI if they should ever turn up. This lawyer is himself involved in trying to raise awareness of this issue with the new assembly of Ecuador as well as with the SRI itself. But we are not holding our breath!



May and June Photo Gallery



Volunteers relax in Montañita



Relaxing in Papallacta hot springs



Public transport at the coast



LEAP volunteers at work in Kamak Maki



A weekend climbing adventure



More fun in Montañita



White water rafting in Tena



Crafts for sale in Otavalo market



Volunteer in La Chimba



LEAP volunteers celebrate in Kamak Maki



Trainee midwife in Esmeraldas hospital

