

## Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 7: Sept-Oct 2008

### Introduction

Let's start by wishing all our supporters a *Happy and Prosperous New Year!* From all of us at Yanapuma we wish you success and happiness in 2009.

Looking back on 2008 in general it has been a good year for both the Spanish school and the foundation. We nearly doubled the average number of students, from 5 to 10 per week over the course of the year. Next year we aim to reach an average of 15 students per week. But with the forecast of difficult financial times to come during 2009 it will require some sound planning and strategic action to achieve sustained growth.

On the volunteer side, 2008 saw the launch of our Volunteer Ecuador Program. This program works to connect willing volunteers with sound development projects throughout Ecuador for a very reasonable fee. The aim is not to make a great profit, but to cover our costs and the wages of those involved in arranging the volunteering, with any extra going towards the development projects in our own communities.

The second half of 2008, particularly in November and December

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saw a concerted effort to improve the organizational structure of the foundation in order to better carry out our projects. This is, of course, an ongoing process that will take some time to fully develop and which will always be undergoing revision as we grow.

2008 also saw the opening of Eos Ecuador, our travel agency and tour operator that will develop and market community-run tourism and donate its profits to other development projects. It has been a hard slog to get Eos off the ground, with an immense amount of work needed to gather all the relevant material and information together.

All in all we are cautiously optimistic for 2009, and hope to continue

forward with the continued aid of our friends and supporters.



Students tasting exotic fruit as a class exercise

### Christmas Appeal

This year's Christmas Appeal aimed to raise funds to allow some of the children of **Estero de Plátano** to study at secondary level. This project came about at the suggestion of a community member who had heard a volunteer mention that it might be possible to find scholarships. We thought it was an excellent idea for a fundraiser and set out to fund up to 6 children for the first year of study. At the time of publication we have funding in place for 5. So it is still not too late if you would like to make a donation for one more to begin receiving secondary education. See the Donations page of our website for details.

During 2009 we will seek funding to keep the program going in the future, adding 2 or 3 new students each year as they finish elementary level. If you are interested in helping with this project wherever you live please email us to find out how you can become involved.

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



### Preserving an almost extinct language . . .

Matt and Linda, who had worked incredibly hard and with great success on the project to teach Kichwa using electronic media, went off into the depths of the Amazon to visit some tiny communities of the Sápara culture. Once judged to have died out completely, there are still about 200 Sápara living in 10 small communities. They are struggling to maintain their culture and traditions, and especially their language as there are only 4 remaining elders who can speak Sápara. Although a couple of linguists are among the only outsiders to have visited them, they have left no usable material that can help the Sápara to keep their language alive (currently there are 3 different alphabet systems, none of which the Sápara consider correct!). Matt and Linda showed them the book that they had written for Kichwa, which caused great excitement and led to the Sápara requesting that they create similar materials to allow them to teach their language to their children before it is too late.

In 2001 the Sápara culture was recognized by UNESCO as part of the "Intangible Heritage of Humanity." The Sápara have a small . . . (continued page 2)

## New School Programs for 2009

New for 2009, we are introducing three programs that we hope will make Yanapuma Spanish School more attractive to prospective students from diverse backgrounds.

The **Medical Spanish Program** is aimed at professionals and students in the health-care field who want to learn Spanish for their work or future careers. A dedicated set of course materials has been designed by our academic coordinator, Edison, to teach students how to work in Spanish in a clinical setting, be they doctors, nurses, midwives, or other specialists. The course also includes a one-month practicum in a clinic or hospital in Quito with a \$200 donation for needed materials.

The **Gateway to Latin America Program** is designed for young travellers arriving for the first time in Latin America. Two weeks of travel Spanish are combined with safety and health briefings, an introduction to Latin culture and history, cultural excursions, safe accommodation, and help planning travel itineraries. A great way to meet other like-minded travellers, this program will set young people up for a safe and enjoyable journey through the rest of Latin America as well as reassuring their parents that they are well prepared.

We have also developed **Online Spanish Classes**, aimed at those who either cannot afford the time to travel away from home to learn Spanish, or for those who will be coming to study with us and who would like to get a head start on their classes here by studying live online with their Yanapuma teacher. Using the latest technology and software, these classes will offer exceptional value for money and a great way to learn Spanish.

### Inaugurating the Ecological Toilets in Bua School

December 5 saw the inauguration of the EcoToilets in the school in Bua. Azalia arranged for there to be no classes that day. Instead each class in turn was given a tour and lesson in how to use and look after the new toilets by Azalia and Giovanni. This was followed by entertainment by a clown and puppets with an environmental theme.

On a related theme, Tatiana, who is studying for a Masters' in Environmental Studies at the Universidad Central, carried out a second test for coliform bacteria in a sample taken from the first ecotoilet that we constructed last year in the cultural center Shinopi Bolon. The results were excellent with an average count of only 3 coliforms per kilogram after 8 months of storage of the dried material. This result is very encouraging in view of the relatively high humidity of the Santo Domingo region. Tests with a hydrometer in the chambers of the ecotoilets in the school reveal that the humidity there is lower than in Shinopi due to the relative openness of the location, which should result in equal or better results at the school.

*(continued from page 1)* landing strip which is the only access to their communities, and a small solar panel and satellite phone for emergency contact.

We are proposing to create both written and electronic materials for them and to install a computer and extra solar panel to allow them to record and develop materials. It is essential from our perspective to include all community members in the process of creating their own materials.

The entire budget for the project is expected to be in the region of \$10,000 which we hope to secure from several sources. [Click here for more details.](#)



### Donations

A generous anonymous donation of \$5000 during November and December was put towards the development of the administrative and organizational capacity of the foundation. This process is underway and will continue in 2009. It will allow us to better serve the communities that we are working with through the development of systems for developing, carrying out, and evaluating projects. Specifically the funds are supporting the work of Kyle as Project coordinator, working with Azalia (below) and the current interns, and Giovanni (above) in his ongoing efforts in agriculture on behalf of the Bua community.



*Azalia teaches schoolchildren from Abraham Calazacon school how to use and look after their new ecotoilets*

## Students and Interns . . .

**Kathryn Bowden** continued her fundraising efforts on our behalf during November and December, getting past the first round in several of the applications that she had made.

**Shanti Freitas** carried on working with the Volunteer Ecuador program, organizing everything while Stephen was on vacation, and accompanying new arrivals to their volunteering posts.

**Fran Henry** continued hosting LEAP groups, accompanying them to their projects and managing them throughout their stay in Ecuador.

**Noemie Pedrot** carried on with her work on the methodology of Yanapuma, as well as starting to work with the artisan group in Estero de Plátano.

**Jane Higgins** left us in November to continue her travels after lending a huge hand in the development of the Volunteer Ecuador program.

**Mathew Tasker** and **Linda Westberg** continued to work on Mushuk Muyu, their project to teach Kichwa using electronic media. In addition they travelled out to a remote Sápara community (*see front page*).

*A big thank you to all of them for their efforts during 2008!*

## Volunteers . . .

**Josefa Lasbleis** has taught English for 3 months in the school Abelardo Flores, work which has been much appreciated by staff at the school. Josefa comments that it has been an exhausting but very worthwhile project, and that she has achieved a great acceptance by the children and staff alike which has been very rewarding in itself. She will be with us almost until the end of January.

**Gena Steffens** is working in the Parque Itchimbia in Quito on the Volunteer Ecuador program.

**Inga Gorzolla** continues to work in the Peluchitos daycare center in the mornings, until March

**Priyanka Rao** is working with CENIT, with street children teaching them about hygiene and nutrition until next May.

**Natalie Emmons** is carrying out research on children's perception of their origins as well as teaching English in two schools in Conocoto.

**Nina Townsend** is working at CEMOPLAF until May next year.

**Jamie Gunsing** is a student of pedagogy, carrying out an internship with Niñez y Vida until May next year.

**Thomas Proost** is working at Alandaluz teaching English, accounting, finance and organization in tourism to staff and the local community on the coast.

## Project News . . .

### Estero de Plátano

November and December saw a lot of action in Estero de Plátano, with a group of Yanapuma staff and interns working on different projects in the community. Marc began a health survey designed to gather background information, the results of which will be used to plan future actions in this field. Noemie and Dayna worked with the artisan group on promotion and sales of their products. Kyle talked with different segments of the community with the aim of including more people in the processes that we hope to develop there.

One of the key issues that sparks a lot of debate amongst staff and students is how to encourage more participation by the community. Divisions within the community, which were not so evident when Yanapuma started to work in E de P begin to emerge, making it hard for all to maintain a balance between working with the few who have always been active, but maybe with too much emphasis on their own gain, and encouraging new members to become actively involved in the processes of development. In all cases we seek to develop a long-term view in community members and the perseverance to see the processes through to the end.

### Bua

Giovanny, our resident agricultural expert in Bua, carried out training workshops with staff and children on how to look after the worms that are chomping their way through all the organic waste generated by the school, turning it all into a rich humus. The next step is to start a kitchen garden in the school, a demonstration plot to grow vegetables using the fertilizer produced by the worm farm.

Giovanny has also maintained progress with the group of cacao growers, developing a plan to set up a 2 hectare experimental plot that will test different varieties to see which grows best in Bua, as a prelude to increasing cacao production by small growers there.

We have been working with the school to try and get the local authorities to give us the materials needed to renovate the disused health center. If we can achieve this then the funds that we have will go further in training local health brigades and running workshops on health related topics. But it is a long and hard process trying to get the commitment, despite the constant pledges by local politicians that they are working to help small communities like Bua to develop.

### Paula Brown

Paula worked as a volunteer in Bua during November and December in the field of nutrition, especially paediatric nutrition. She interviewed many mothers and observed the diet and nutrition of the local children, writing up a series of recommendations that we will use to work in this area. She also did a great job contacting all the local authorities and organizations that work in this field in the Santo Domingo area and putting together a list of resources that we can draw from as we get the new health center under way.

November and December Photo Gallery

