

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 7: Sept-Oct 2008

Introduction

September 1st inaugurated our 3rd year of operation as a foundation and Spanish school and we carry on, cautiously optimistic of another year of continued growth, despite recent turbulence in world financial markets. We have yet to see how this may affect travel and potential funding.

Our main project focus has been on construction of the ecological toilets for the school in Bua about which you can read more below. Another exciting moment was the launch of "Mushuk Muyu," teaching Kichwa via internet, on 03 October (see page 4). We also began a review of our work during the last two years with each community that we are involved with as a prelude to defining our work for 2009.

September was a peak month for the school which kept us all busy, but October saw numbers start to decline as is usual at this time of the year. We expect this decline to continue until the New Year when students will begin to arrive again after the holidays.

But overall, numbers are up on last year; a trend we hope will continue. Our plan until Christmas is to withdraw a little from project work to focus on the internal organization of the foundation and school, and to forge a clear vision of how we are going to develop over the coming years. We have raced ahead over the past two years carrying out projects, a tactic we saw as necessary in order to have some solid achievements under our belts and demonstrate our dedication and capabilities. But now it is time to consolidate, organize, envision, and develop plans that will allow us to achieve our goals within a strategic framework.

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The first years we have been overly reliant on the work of our students and interns, who have helped us enormously to achieve results with scant resources. We will always continue to offer internships, but we aim to develop more funded positions for professionals in the field of development under whom interns and students can work on specific projects.

We will also continue to nurture collaborative relationships with key organizations that can help us deliver the necessary resources to a particular community.



Thinking Beyond Borders students enjoy a final celebration with the Tsachila of Bua

Thinking Beyond Borders

The 16 students from TBB who worked for a month on the ecological toilets stayed in pairs with host families in the Bua community. For many of these families it was the first time that they had hosted any foreigner in their homes. Azalia, our Director of Projects worked with intern, Shanti, to prepare the families for the experience. The results were positive all around, both students and families enjoying their stay, and many were sad to say goodbye.

The students are on a round-the-world study program, and during their stay in Bua were focused on the problems of water and sanitation. They went on to Machu Pichu in Peru before flying to China where they will study education. From there they will visit Vietnam, India and South Africa before returning to the US.

You can read about their experiences in the community of Bua, and view their multimedia presentations by clicking on the link below and then clicking on "Ecuador". During their stay these students not only contributed mightily to the ecological toilets project, but unearthed a great deal of interesting information about the community and its history in relation to water.

<http://voices.thinkingbeyondborders.org/>

Project News: Baños Ecologicos en Bua

On the 8th of September we began construction of ecological toilets in the Escuela Abraham Calazacon in Bua with the aid of the Portland, Oregon chapter of Engineers Without Borders. We were joined on the 16th by a group of 16 students from Thinking Beyond Borders who came to spend a month living with host families in Bua and to study the water situation.

The project involves construction of 6 dry toilets. These are toilets that work by separating the urine from the solids. The urine is stored for a short period before being released to fertilize a row of fruit trees that we planted during inauguration on the 31st of October. The solid material has lime, wood ash or dry leaves added and desiccates over a long period of time to the point where the pathogen content is reduced to safe levels.

The construction took advantage of a difference in level between the school and the playing field of about 3 meters to construct deep chambers with plenty of capacity to store the solid material. Each toilet consists of two such chambers, only one of which is in use at any particular time. Once it is filled it is sealed and the (page 2)

(from p1) other chamber is put into use. The sealed chamber is left for up to a year to reduce the pathogen content to safe levels. The resultant material can be used to fertilize fruiting and other trees (see report of sample analysis from the cultural center Shinopi Bolón).

The construction work was supervised by Don Capelo, a local builder, with his two assistants. Engineers from EWB and students from TBB helped with the building and installation of the tubes and pipes that lead away the urine.



From the start the idea was to make the system as fool-proof and maintenance free as possible. One aspect of this was to make the chambers as large as they are to increase the potential storage time to the maximum. Another innovation was to install a urine storage tank, into which the fresh urine is introduced at the bottom with the aid of a baffle to reduce turbulence within the tank. As the level rises, the aged urine finally flows out of an outlet at the top into tubes that lead to perforated tubes situated on a gravel bed for diffusion. The aging process reduces ammonia and increases the urea content, making it a more effective fertilizer that will not "burn" the roots of the fruiting trees. We also had a fibreglass insert specially made that acts as a separator, and which can easily be removed for cleaning.

The final painting of the new toilets and clean up of the site was carried out with the aid of parents of the school children. This was timed to coincide with a "Cabinete Itinerante" (see right), which provided a chance to demonstrate the baños ecológicos to local officials.



Welcome Back Kyle!

Kyle Muther from Philadelphia, who worked with Yanapuma last summer in Bua, has returned to Ecuador to work with Yanapuma after finishing his Masters degree at St. Andrew's University in Scotland. He will be working as Projects Coordinator as well as helping to organize and streamline processes within the organizational structure of the foundation. We are glad to welcome him back.



Worm Farm in Bua School

Giovanny, Yanapuma's full time agricultural expert, constructed two beds to create a worm farm that will take all the organic waste from the school and turn it into a rich humus and fertilizer. This is one more way for the children to learn about the relationship between humans and their environment and to learn positive ways to act ecologically.



Universidad Central Students work in Bua school.

Azalia, our projects director organized that X students from the Universidad Central del Ecuador worked for X weeks with children of the Abraham Calazacon school to bring them up to the academic level to pass on to the following school year.

News In Brief:

Community Reviews

Yanapuma Foundation has begun a process of evaluation of the past two years work with each of the communities that we have been involved. The idea is to assess our successes and failures with members of each community and to look forward to the following year and the projects that we will pursue with each. We started with Bua on the 26th of September, and Caimito and Estero de Plátano on the 20th and 21st of October, and Chichicorumi on 27th of October.



Provincial Government in Escuela Abraham Calazacon

On 31 October the school in Bua, named after the first Tsachila governor, Abraham Calazacon (left) hosted a "Gabinete Itinerante," a visit by provincial government aimed at outlining their projects and strategies and eliciting ideas and requests from the local population for the coming years.

Yanapuma took full advantage of this opportunity to present its work in Bua to officials from the ministries of the environment, health, education public works, and others.



New Students and Interns . . .

Marc Julmisse: Student of Public Health and Humanitarian. Assistance from the USA, will be working in Estero de Platano to carry out a deeper diagnostic of the community, to give us more information on the current situation and needs of the community. She will do this through a process of focus groups, community interviews and community asset mapping. She has worked for a nurse for the past 10 years, with specific expertise in women's health issues, and will also be helping out in the understaffed health centre. She will be here for a year, and after carrying out the diagnostic (which is scheduled to be finished by February 2009), she will be carrying out a specific health project, which will be determined by the results of her assets and needs assessment.

Dayna Erickson: is from the USA, taking a break from her work as a supply chain manager. She will be working in Estero de Platano to organise the group of artesanias who have the equipment and the training to make crafts to sell to tourists (donated by another NGO), but have not had the initiative to get the products to market. Her tasks are then to motivate the artesans to restart the production process, and help them bring their products to market. Here til Dec/Jan depending on progress of project.

Leslie Arney: student of Environmental Health from the USA, will be working teaching English in Estero de Platano, and working with the youth group there along themes of the environment and in the development of the school orchard, and support the activities of Katie, the Peace Corp volunteer who is there. Here til mid Jan.

Justine Bonnet is from France, and will be working in tandem with George in Caimito on his various projects. She has good degree of knowledge about Permaculture, and will be here for one year.

Lily Chestnut is a student of Geography from the USA. She is carrying on with the GPS mapping project in Bua. She has nearly finished all the measuring, and will complete the map and hand it over to the community so that we can get other projects that are reliant on the map underway. She will be with us until December.

Kristian Jebesen from Norway, will be working with Eos Ecuador to develop community-run tourism projects around the country. Here potentially until March 2009.

Paula Brown is a Pediatric Dietitian from the UK who will be working in Bua to improve the nutritional standards of the children in the school, following up from the work done earlier this year by Janine. She will begin by doing research on nutrition during pregnancy and the first 2 years. She will be here until the end of Dec.

Current Students and Interns . . .

Dorien Straathof from Holland, has been studying Spanish for the last month, and has now gone to Bua to teach English at the school. She has experience teaching English in India before this and is here until mid December.

Nathalie Branderhorst, Marleen Best and Jenneke Swinkels Students of midwifery from Holland. Are carrying out practical work experience in midwifery in the hospital Delfina Torres in Esmeraldas. They all have considerable experience in midwifery from their respective courses, but the experience in Esmeraldas will undoubtedly extend their expertise as they are working 24 hour shifts as is the norm at the hospital! They are with us until December.

Alexander Dunn is a medical student from Australia. He is helping out at Peluchitos in the afternoons while taking Spanish lessons in the morning. One month volunteering.

Pim Biemans is a labour lawyer from Holland. After spending a month in the Spanish school he has now gone to Tena through the Volunteer Ecuador Programme to work in the Casa de Mujeres to help with women's rights issues. He will be there for a month but is looking to stay longer.

Leo and Maria Antonia Winthagen volunteered for a month in the school Abelardo Flores where they taught English and Mathematics to students during the holidays. Their approach was innovative in that they used puppets, drama and music in their teaching. This strategy proved very popular and they received very positive feedback from the parents who commented that the love, respect and patience that they displayed in their work encouraged even those children with learning difficulties to attend classes during the holidays.



Neeltje van Krieken from Holland is working in Camp Hope, a school for disabled children through the Volunteer Ecuador Programme for one month.

Priyanka Rao from the USA is working in CENIT (El Centro de la niña trabajadora) through the Volunteer Ecuador Programme for one month.

Inga Gorzolla: from Switzerland back at Yanapuma again, will be here for 6 months. Working in Peluchitos day-care centre, helping the staff develop more teaching materials and in improving the planning processes for the children's activities. Also taking Kichwa classes from Vinicio, and helping Maria in the office in terms of reorganising and streamlining administrative processes. She will be with us until March 2009.

Project News:

Puca Chicta: Legal at last!

On 27 October Yanapuma staff traveled to the Amazon community of Puca Chicta to deliver their newly approved statutes legalizing the community. As a thank-you the community laid on a full presentation of song and dance by the local children and dance groups accompanied by "chicha de yucca" a mildly fermented drink that is traditionally made by getting the older women to chew the yucca and spit it into a pot with water where it is left to ferment for a few days.



This was followed by a delicious lunch of fish and local fruits and vegetables, including the not-quite-so-delicious but interesting "Mayon", a large white grub that grows inside the local chonta palm.

LEAP in Caimito and La Chimba

A group of UK volunteers worked for 3 weeks in the community of Caimito. They were involved in further construction of a house for a teacher in the school, which has been a major impediment to attracting a good teacher to work there. This work will be finished by a subsequent group in January. The group also worked on farms around the community to prune and nurture organic cacao trees for the production of organic chocolate.

Their next stop was La Chimba in the Andean sierra where they worked on the hacienda, which is being renovated as a community, cultural, and visitor centre. They painted the outside walls and did finish work in general.

Their final project which will continue into November is at Kamak Maki in the Amazon rainforest where they will be continuing work on the ethnographic museum and medicinal gardens, accompanied by Caroline Offer, a journalist from the Daily Telegraph who will write about her experience.

Bua Map is Finished!

The work started by Pascal Fassler and Cliff Jones last year and continued this year by Tatiana Espinosa and Lily Chestnut, to make a map of Bua using GPS was finally finished on 30 October after 3 days walking around the very limits of the community to see if the original boundaries are still intact.

It will take a week or two to put all the details into a coherent map that we can then present to the community as a tool for future planning and development.

Mushuk Muyu: Online Kichwa classes . . .

Mathew Tasker and Linda Westberg

The last couple of months have been a lot of work, but a very productive period for the project. We have completed unit one of a beginner level kichwa, comprised of 12 interactive language classes, a legend and a story on the life of an indigenous activist from the Cayambe area, Tránsito Amaguaña. We have also developed an exercise book to compliment these classes filled with photos of local places and people, plus some cultural information relating to the classes.

Having pieced together a complete unit and some serious brainstorming we finally decided on a name, Mushuk Muyu, which means new seed. The next step involved holding our breaths and officially launching the project in the community of San Pablo Urku. For us it was a chance to showcase what we had accomplished and to invite government authorities and foundations to join the project. It was also an opportunity to give the material to the directors and students from surrounding schools.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Many present commented that the material was innovative and highly didactic, and many were very enthusiastic at the prospect of now having an opportunity to learn kichwa right from their homes. These sentiments were further reinforced later in the week when the teachers involved in the project were contacted by colleagues congratulating them on the work.

Now we are moving into "phase two" of the project in which we hope to give full ownership to local participants and authorities. We met with the director of educational materials for the country, and he was very positive and even spoke of the possibility of printing the material for the whole Sierra region and hosting the material on their website. So for now we are concentrating our efforts on obtaining this support in more concrete terms.

To see a first sketch of what the project might eventually look like and some of the materials that have been developed, log on to: <http://www.yanapuma.org/mushu/index.html>



September and October Photo Gallery

