

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 12: July-Aug 2009

Introduction

July and August have been two hectic months for the Spanish school, although with the economic gloom we have not seen the high student numbers in July that we would have predicted. But still, year on year we can happily report that numbers are up 50% on last year and we are likely to finish the year that way. Our Study and Travel programs have been especially successful, with many students traveling with their teachers to explore the Andes, the coast and the Amazon on different packages. Our main problem was having enough teachers who could travel on the right dates. These packages have been especially popular with our older students who appreciate being able to explore Ecuador with a companion teacher.

We have been kept busy in the foundation too, with some important developments in Bua in the areas of health and agriculture (see Giovanni's report on page 2). Paulina has continued to monitor the use of the ecotoilets that we have installed there, and we have edited our first short video that explains the first project (see bottom right).

We also hosted a total of 6 volunteer groups in the last two months which kept Fran, our volunteer coordinator, extremely busy for a month or so. . . .

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. . . These groups went to various communities to carry out different projects in construction and education.

The most exciting news in the Foundation was that during the last week of August we received confirmation that a grant proposal written and pursued by Kyle with the **Interamerican Development Foundation** has been approved. The funds, nearly \$30,000, will provide much needed training for the Tsa'chila of Bua in self-esteem, leadership, and organizational skills, oriented towards improving their ability to improve their agriculture, especially in organic cacao production, and to move towards commercialization of cacao products.

Webpage News . . .

Over the last 2 months we have been reworking the Foundation's web pages, seeking ways to make all the information more accessible, and especially working to redesign the pages related to Donations, adding new options for Memberships and Sponsorship. Let us know what you think!



Happy Birthday Yanapuma!

On 1 September Yanapuma turned 3 years old! To mark the occasion we incorporated several activities into our busy schedules – a lunch for staff and teachers, a barbecue for students, staff and teachers on our rooftop terrace, and a celebratory meal for the founding members. (See photos above & below!)



Our First Video!

One of our plans for a while has been to develop short videos of our work and school. We are happy to announce the publication of our first video on the first ecological sanitation project that we carried out in Bua in July 2007. Click: www.yanapuma.org to watch it!

School News:

Staff and teachers continue to meet together to develop our methodology. These meetings explore current teaching methods and compare these against several different theories and methodologies developed by Paolo Freire, Lev Vygotsky and others. Our aim is to define a very specific methodology, appropriate to our social and ecological mission, that will permeate our methods and materials and provide an integrated approach to Spanish teaching at Yanapuma. We expect this to be a fairly lengthy process, but are excited at the prospect of venturing collectively into new territory.

On a practical note, with the success of our Study and Travel programs this summer we are in the process of developing several new options that we will launch for students who wish to travel while they study in 2010.

We were also excited to hear that Yanapuma is now one of the Spanish schools in Quito featured in the latest edition of **Lonely Planet**.

Project News . . .

Estero de Plátano

The last two months have seen several developments in Estero de Plátano. A volunteer group from the LEAP UK worked to build terraces behind the school to develop space for growing food for the school. The group also worked on finishing a new dining room, a project started by a previous group. Among their off-duty activities there the group went out in a fishing boat to watch the whales that pass by at this time of year.

Click here to read a recent news story from one of these volunteers.

Part of our strategy with the volunteer groups is to use them as a means of helping the community to develop their organizational capacities. This means that community members have to plan the volunteers work and leisure activities and coordinate among themselves, budget and purchase materials, and supervise the work. Volunteers also stay with families which means that we can offer advice about hygiene and nutrition in a very concrete situation, as well as encouraging them to budget and plan.

For this latest group, things worked out better than with the first group, especially in relation to the homestays which were much appreciated by the volunteers. However, the work organization still lacked the proper dedication and coordination, factors which were discussed in a meeting with the community after the group's departure. The decision was taken to send the next group to Caimito, just a few kilometers down the coast instead, to give the community time to consider how they want to develop, with the possibility of receiving another group in January if they can demonstrate a greater level of organization.

We continue to count on the great work being carried out by long-term volunteer Leslie Arney as she works with school children and community members on environmental, health and sanitation issues.

Bua News . . .

On the 19th of August the community of Bua received a visit from the Prefecto of the province of Santo Domingo at our invitation. He was taken on a tour of the projects that we have been working on for the last 3 years. The aim was to talk about making an agreement for next year in order to further extend the work that we have been doing.

A visit was made to the ecotoilets that we built in the Cultural Center where Alfonso Aguavil (picture) and our Paulina Sanguano described their experiences and the use of the resulting fertilizer (humanure!) in the cacao project.

At a visit to the cacao cloning nursery one of the cacao promoters . . .



EWB visit to Puca Chicta . . .

The engineers from the Portland Oregon branch of **Engineers Witout Borders**, who worked with us on the ecotoilet project for the school in Bua in 2008 returned to investigate the possibility of installing a potable water system in the Amazon community of Puca Chicta. They were somewhat dismayed at the start to discover that a project was underway financed by a local politician seeking election. However, as is so often the case, he lost the election and promptly abandoned the project – one of several half-completed and abandoned projects that the village has witnessed.

The group took water samples back to the US for analysis. We look forward to receiving their recommendations and plans to finally get safe drinking water to the community.

. . . Rafael Aguavil explained the importance of their investigations into the adaptability of various clones received from INIAP as well as the importance of moving away from monoculture to a polyculture of species that associate well.

They also visited one of the family nurseries set up on 20 different farms by our Giovanni to grow trees for reforestation this October. These include cacao, teak, melina, pachaco, balsa,



and fruiting trees – species chosen by the participant families according to their needs. These trees will be planted in October by a group of students from Thinking Beyond Borders.

One of the challenges faced by Giovanni and Paulina is to break down the traditional concepts of local authorities of how to “help” communities like the Tsa’chila. Our success in projects with the Tsa’chila is based on starting small and in a form that is appropriate to their needs and culture, rather than arriving with a ready made “product” that we can simply deliver to them. The participation of community members is an essential part of any process of development.

The Prefecto was impressed to find the Tsa’chila themselves displaying ownership of the projects and being able to talk with confidence about their work. Empowering the Tsa’chila is a vital part of our work as a foundation to make what we do sustainable.

Students and Interns . . .

Saskia Heijnen left us in August, after spending nearly 4 months working in and for Estero de Plátano. Yanapuma is grateful for her efforts on behalf of this community. Aside from working with children in the school on health and hygiene education, she produced a very useful report on the water and sanitation issues that affect the community. To read it: www.yanapuma.org/en/Archives.php

New intern **Friederike Hoppe** from Germany arrived at the end of August to begin a 4-month internship focused on publicity and marketing for the Spanish school and Foundation.

Emilian Amblat from Institut d'Ecoles Politiques in France joins us as part of a long line of distinguished interns from this institution. He will primarily be working on the development of the EcoEscuelas concept to apply to marginal rural schools.

Emily Burnett, after 7 months working with Yanapuma as a volunteer group coordinator left us at the end of August. She gathered rave reviews from the volunteers under her care and will be much missed. We wish her safe travels as she continues to travel through south America.



Laure Sandoz, after 6 months of volunteering in the school in Puca Chicta and a little traveling around Ecuador with her boyfriend, left to return to Switzerland. Her work and donation to the construction of a new classroom and library were very much appreciated by the community, and she will be missed.

Helen Street from the UK, joined Yanapuma as a part-time volunteer in August to work on fundraising in our offices, specifically looking at possibilities for funding from the UK.

Leslie Arney continues her sojourn in Estero de Plátano, currently working on water and sanitation education with the youth group and with community members, as well as carrying on with environmental education and tutoring the scholarship recipients. Her efforts on behalf of the community are much appreciated.

Edward Cracraft from the US, spent a month teaching English in Bua before cracking a bone in his foot and having to return home. The community was concerned to know that he was OK and to express their thanks to him for his efforts.



Developing Yanapuma . . .

Aside from our daily work to keep the school, volunteering and various projects running, we are also involved in ongoing work to strengthen our organizational infrastructure. Thus we are laying the base from which we will more adequately be able to administer and manage projects and project finances in the future.

We are currently designing and carrying out staff and employee evaluations, in addition to developing 1 and 3-year plans for the activities of the Spanish school, the volunteer projects and for the foundation.

We plan to build on our strengths and ensure that we learn from our mistakes so that we can move forward with confidence as we continue to grow.

Donation, Membership, Sponsorship, Small Project Funding

Choose how you would like to support Yanapuma in the future. Visit our foundation website (www.yanapuma.org) to read about the ways that you can help us to carry out our mission. A little goes a long way, and every dollar helps.

Outlook Expeditions Groups . . .

In July Yanapuma hosted a total of 4 groups from UK schools to carry out short projects in 2 Tsa'chila communities. Two groups worked in Bua with the local cacao promoters, helping them plant more cacao saplings and maintain their current trees.

The other two groups worked in the community of Chiguilpe where they helped in the construction of new buildings for an ethnographic museum and visitor center.

These groups carry out short volunteer projects as part of their expedition to Ecuador which also includes adventure and hiking in the Andes and the Amazon

Future Plans . . . Eco Escuelas

We remain committed to developing the EcoEscuelas idea in Ecuador as a means of improving education in environmental issues and the infrastructure of schools in marginalized communities. Our plan is to begin a pilot project in 2010 in one or two schools, seeking funding to develop a model that we can promote nationwide, linking schools in developed countries with poor schools here in Ecuador.

Schools in rural areas are often a key focal point for community activity, and so we envision being able to diffuse information and new techniques in many communities through promotion of the EcoEscuelas concept.

We envision in the long term collaborating with the Eco-Schools movement in Europe, the Ecuadorian Ministries of Education and Environment, and other organizations to promote environmental education and improve infrastructure in marginal schools with the aim of producing a new generation that is aware of environmental problems and their solutions.

July and August Photo Gallery



Sponsor a Child in Estero de Plátano for only \$300 During 2010

**100 % of your donation will go directly to supporting a years
worth of high school education for children living along
The Pacific Coast of Ecuador**

**To complete our funding goals we seek to
sponsor 15 students**

This means we only need \$4,500 in 2010!

Help us reach our goal today by sponsoring a child!



Make a lasting difference: Help us raise \$1000 to assist the Tsachila community set up a cacao co-operative.

Community members of Bua de los Tsachilas have been working hard to set up a cacao co-operative. They have been trialing different methods of growing cacao. Their aims are to rediscover the traditional chocolate of the Tsachilas, and to grow a business that will sustain their community and culture.

Just \$1000 will purchase essential equipment to dry and ferment the cacao produced by the co-operative. This is the next vital step to realising the vision of the community. 100% of your donation will go directly towards to the cost of the equipment.

Every donation, no matter the amount, will make a significant contribution to raising the total, and to making the vision of the community a reality!

