

An Ecuadorian non-profit 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 and True Ecuador Travel!

A bimonthly newsletter

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Introduction

Welcome to our summer newsletter! July and August are always the busiest months of the year at the school, especially July. Often there are fewer students in August as the start their travels in late June and July and then go off traveling for August. Our youngest student was just 6 years old, and our oldest - well, that would be indiscrete!! We were delighted to host young travelers, families with young and teenage children, as well as middle-aged and older students at both schools. Our focus on teaching students to communicate in Spanish offers the best alternative to the many many Spanish schools whose teachers are stuck in the old grammar-based methods of teaching.

For the foundation, July saw the end of a project that has spanned five years, co-funded by the Inter American Foundation, and the month was taken up with writing the final reports and preparing the accounts for the final auditing which took place at the start of August. We are await-

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ing the final report, although all should be good. More information on the final contributions of each party are on the following pages.

We were also busy with volunteers and university groups from the UK, US and beyond carrying out different programs in some of the indigenous and marginalized communities that we work with. Their contributions are greatly valued and help to move along the work we are trying to carry out with these sites.

The summer has also seen a burst of activity for the travel agency, with individuals, families and study groups arriving for their various programs in the Amazon rainforest, the Andean sierra, and the Galapagos Islands.

We have been so busy in fact that we did not even have time to get around to sending the newsletter on time!



Volunteers visit the Basilica Cathedral in Quito



Group Spanish class in Quito

Study Abroad, Service Learning, Global Studies, and Educational Travel in Ecuador!

Yanapuma Foundation and Spanish School and True Ecuador Travel offer the perfect combination for individual students and volunteers looking for a gap-year or internship experience, as well as for groups from universities and other international organizations looking for educational travel options in Ecuador.

We can provide Spanish courses, make all travel and accommodation arrangements, and set up volunteering and service projects all over Ecuador.

And we have connections with the indigenous communities that we are working with through our own foundation and over 30 grass-roots organizations and communities in Ecuador and on the Galapagos Islands.



Spanish School News . . .

As predicted, July and August were busy months for the Spanish schools in Quito and Cuenca. Over the past few years the typical profile of our students has changed considerably. The backpacker crowd has moved on to Asia and beyond and one sees many many fewer in the streets of Quito now. Instead we are happy to receive more serious travelers whose visits to Ecuador involve more dedicated language studies, educational travel, family vacations, and of course older students contemplating relocating from the US or Canada to Ecuador to take advantage of its benign climate and relatively economical cost of living.



In addition to the regular classes hosted at both schools we have continued to develop the online Spanish classes. Our Spanish teachers offer classes online to students from all over the world – from North America and Europe to Asia and Australia. As in the Spanish schools here students range in age from 6 to 70 and beyond.

For younger students the online classes offer a good way to supplement what they learn in school or college



where classes tend to be very grammatical, improving greatly their communication skills.

For older students the classes offer a relatively economical and convenient way of developing a skill that will help them in their profession. While for older students it is a chance to learn about and explore another culture and way of life beyond their own, from the comfort of their own home.

These developments are making us think more profoundly about how best to develop materials and resources for the future that will be of equal service in the classes in Quito and Cuenca as for the online Spanish classes.

Volunteers and Interns . . .

We were delighted to welcome a group from **the Leap UK** at the start of July. The group spent 6 weeks in Ecuador, with two and a half weeks in the Andean community of Agato, living with host families and working on community projects. They also got to visit the famous Otavalo Market as well as other local landmarks. Then they went off to the Galapagos Islands for a stint working on conservation, rooting out invasive species and working on an organic farm. To finish off they spent a few days at the Gaia Amazon Center, relaxing and exploring this part of the Amazon region.

We were also pleased to welcome a group from the **Sotogrande International School** in Spain. The group visited the Tsa'chila community of Bua, staying at the Shinopi Bolon Cultural Center and working on projects there as well as in the local school. In the middle of their stay the group traveled to the coast where they spent a few days in the village of Estero de Plátano to learn about a very different Afro-Ecuadorian culture. One of their projects was to donate a Mac tablet to the school in Bua, loaded with interactive materials to help teachers with new materials.

During July and August we welcomed 5 groups from **Outlook Expeditions**. Groups carried out short volunteer projects with the Tsa'chila, at the Sinchi Aqua center and the Selva Vida project in the Amazon.

In August we welcomed 12 new volunteers for the German government sponsored **Weltwärts** program. These volunteers arrived in Quito for orientation and Spanish classes before heading out to their individual project placements. They will spend nearly a year working in small communities, assisting teachers and teaching English and other subjects. These volunteers can make a valuable contribution to these institutions during their full academic year of assistance. They will return to Quito for ongoing development and support during their time in Ecuador.

Project News . . .

The biggest news for Yanapuma Foundation during these two months has been the termination of the project co-funded by the Inter American Foundation. The project spanned five years in the end and worked on improving cacao production, developing vegetable gardens, offering nutrition and diet education and reforestation with native and productive species.

An extract from the final report shows the following contributions during the life of the project:

Source	Budget	Final Spent
Inter American Foundation	\$211.350,00	\$209.250,00
Yanapuma Foundation	\$101.400,00	\$100.235,00
Beneficiary Contributions	\$234.000,00	\$275.051,00

As part of the project the field team, comprising Janeth Llanos, Cristina Calazacon, Wilson Calazacon and Rafael Machin worked with a local videographer, Humberto Morales to produce a video highlighting the learning that has taken place during these years. The video will be uploaded to YouTube soon!

Interested parties can also read the final reports (in Spanish) on the foundation website at <http://yanapuma.org> (they will be uploaded soon, we promise!!)

As mentioned in the volunteer section, we also were pleased to welcome the group of German volunteers



whose contributions over the coming twelve months to the small local and indigenous schools where they will be teaching and assisting will be significant.

After discussions with staff of Sotogrande International School upon their return to Quito we began to think about how to best help to preserve and promote the Tsa'chila culture. Although the local school in the comuna Bua will be expanded to include all years of high school, so far there are no Tsa'chila teachers to teach at high school level. So we reviewed the situation with donations and funds for education and realized that we



could squeeze out enough to support one of the current Tsa'chila teachers at primary level to gain a qualification to teach at secondary level. This will take a couple of years, but we believe it is a sensible move in order to have native Tsa'chila teachers who can help to incorporate cultural activities and values in the secondary school environment.



Interns

Claire Masure from France, after getting settled in to life in Quito and helping out in the office for the travel agency and Spanish schools, went down to Cuenca to take over coordination of the students there. She has also continued to work on creating short videos of various tours and excursions in and around Quito and Cuenca for posting to our Facebook page. Claire has also produced very useful videos on how to negotiate the booking engine for our online Spanish classes which we have made in 5 languages – English, German, French, Italian and Russian!

Adriana Amburu, student of public health at George Warren Brown School of Social Work spent 10 weeks living in the Tsa'chila community of Bua where she worked in the local school on a project related to health and nutrition with the children there. She was joined for part of this time by **Andrea Gallego**, a native Ecuadorian who lives in the US and who got first hand experience of living with the Tsa'chila culture.

True Ecuador Travel . . .

True Ecuador Travel was created to offer educational travel opportunities for individuals, families and groups around Ecuador. Visits can be of any length and may include Spanish courses, visits to any of the indigenous communities that we work with, volunteering and service projects, and regular tourist visits to the Amazon rain forest or the Galapagos Islands.



In August we carried out fact-gathering visit to the Galapagos to further develop our own land-based programs that have been selling well so far this year. We offer an online app where visitors can access their Galapagos program details, upload documents, view private documents for them, and read about the history and environment of the Galapagos as well as seeing a 4-day weather forecast.



The information gathered on the trip about different excursions will be added to the website very soon as things begin to quieten down a bit. And of course this is the time of year when we begin to gather prices and costs for next year to update all our programs for the international agencies that we are working with.

You can read about our land-based Galapagos tours here: <https://true-ecuador-travel.org/land-based-galapagos.html>

