

A co-operatively run 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!

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 25: Sept-Oct 2011

#### Introduction

Welcome to our 25th newsletter!

The past two months have flown past. The start of September always sees a new crop of students in the school as the summer travellers return home and a new batch of travelers lands in South America for the first time. Our student population continues to be very diverse, both in terms of ages and in terms of country of origin. Students have ranged in age from 10 to over 60, and come from all corners of the globe. But we have materials and activities for everybody, and continue to arrange a variety of weekday and weekend excursions and free activities most days of the week.

Our online classes continue to grow too, with a growing number of students taking classes via internet. Some of these are students who have already studied with us but just want to keep practicing while

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they are at home. Others connect with us from as far away as Japan, Ethiopia, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, Australia, and Alaska.

In addition, in early October we were delighted to once again begin a program of teaching young students from Sotogrande International School in Spain.

Work in the foundation has centered around a project to create vegetable plots in the Tsa'chila community of Bua along with sapling nurseries, and education in the use and nutritional value of the vegetables that they are growing. We also began teaching PC classes in the Tsa'chila community of El Poste, and continue with our work in Estero de Plátano. You can read more about all these projects on the following pages.



*Thinking Beyond Borders students take a break from their tree planting labors to visit a waterfall near Santo Domingo*

#### Yanapuma turns 5 years old!

At the start of September Yanapuma celebrated its 5th birthday. It is hard to believe that we have been going for 5 years now, the time has flown by so fast!

During these 5 years we have seen sustained growth in all areas—the Spanish school, the volunteer department, and the foundation itself.

Now we look forward to another year, no doubt with new challenges to overcome, but with considerable experience under our belts to help us to respond to the ever-changing situations that we face.

#### Leap onto the Galapagos!

On 10 October we sent our first group of volunteers to the Galapagos Islands to work with Hacienda Tranquila on the island of San Cristóbal.

The 6 volunteers have been working to control invasive species such as the wild blackberry that are pushing out native species and drastically altering the ecological balance and biodiversity of these precious islands. In addition they have been working in the preparation of compost and clearing fields on the farm to make way for the planting of native species.

Weekends were free to explore the incredible and unique diversity of the islands—hiking, snorkeling trips, and just lounging on the beach were some of the regular weekend activities.

Up until now we have been sending individual volun-

teers to work with Hacienda Tranquila, but we will be sending groups regularly throughout the year. Geovanny, who runs Hacienda Tranquila says there is a huge amount of work to do there, not only on the farm, but on San Cristóbal in general, to get rid of the invasive species and help native flora and fauna survive these incursions.

We are happy to be able to help Hacienda Tranquila realize its mission of saving the endemic Galapagos flora and fauna.



## Project News . . .

### Ferguson Project in Bua

During September our project in Bua to create vegetable plots and sapling nurseries came to maturity. The project initially got off to a slow start due to adverse weather conditions, an excessively wet spring, which repeatedly damaged the young seedlings and washed away many seeds. But with perseverance and a little adaptation, the project took off and was widely accepted as being very successful in the end.

The 21 Tsa'chila women and 3 men who were involved in the project learned to grow a variety of vegetables – lettuce, chard, parsley, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, radishes, cilantro, and cabbages. As would be expected, some had better luck with one or other crop and others less luck, but overall it was a valuable learning experience and one which created a sense of confidence in the Tsa'chila participants.

At the same time, the same families filled over 10,000 bags with soil and compost to plant seeds of local tree species. The saplings were tended over a 6 month period, ready to be sold to Yanapuma for a reforestation project in the nearby parish of Puerto Limón. In total 10,000 trees were raised, and on the 12th of September these were transported to the parish to be set out close to the zones in which they were to be planted. This work was carried out by a group of students from Thinking Beyond Borders, which you can read about below.

Another aspect of the project was to teach the women about the nutritional value of vegetables and to show them how to incorporate these into their daily diet to better improve the nutritional intake of their families. With the aid of a local specialist, Janet, we visited each family in turn throughout the project, showing them how to prepare simple and nutritious dishes using the ingredients that they were growing. Initially quite reserved, the Tsa'chila women soon warmed to the notion of learning new methods, and began asking for more of these classes.

At the end of the project, on 7 October, we held an official closing ceremony at which we held a competition for the best salad (see photos!). These were judged on ingredients, presentation, taste, dressing, nutritional value, color, etc. It was extremely difficult to choose an overall winner as each one had its own touch to recommend it.

From talking to the women and men at this event it was plain that there is a great deal of interest in continuing to develop their abilities from this initial project, with several commenting that they want to expand their vegetable plots for next year. Thus, we will

seek funding to continue the process, improving methods and yields, planning more precisely the sowing and harvesting dates, scaling up so that there is excess produce for sale, and working towards small-scale commercialization.

Concurrently we will continue the sapling nurseries as a source of additional income and for local reforestation.

### Donation News . . .

\$630.00 was raised by Alex and Shelby for their book Project in Estero de Plátano through an online fundraiser. This project will buy books for the library of the Viña del Mar school so that the children can read the same books during the holiday period (January to April).



### Thinking Beyond Borders . . .

On 19 September a group of 11 students from Thinking Beyond Borders arrived to spend a month planting trees in the parish of Puerto Limón. The trees were grown in the Tsa'chila community of Bua, and the group stayed in the community of Los Naranjos, situated in the parish of Puerto Limón, while they went out each day to plant the trees.

By the end of the month, due to the difficult conditions in which they were working (*photo above!*), they managed to plant 6000 trees. These were predominantly local species with some fruiting trees such as avocado, orange, lemon, and tangerine.

The group comes each year on the first leg of a round-the-world study year. In Ecuador their focus is on water issues. The students made several videos of their experience and took plenty of photos that you can view from this page: <http://tbbwest.shutterfly.com/>

The rest of the trees will be planted with the aid of local school children and local volunteers during November.



## More Project News . . .

### Estero de Plátano . . .

During September and October Union College interns, Shelby and Alex have continued their work in Estero de Plátano, working with the scholarship children, the youth group, and other groups such as the community bank and women's group.

They also held an online fundraiser to raise money to buy books for a summer school reading program. The idea is to buy sufficient copies of several books so that they can get a number of children to read the same book at the same time in order to be able to discuss the book and encourage each other in their reading. Reading ability is a key skill for them to learn, and to date unfortunately the children do relatively little, if any, reading outside school. The annual holidays at the coast are from January until April.

By the end of October they had raised \$630.00.

### PC Classes in Los Naranjos . . .

On 12 September we began a series of computer proficiency classes in the Tsa'chila village of El Poste. Intern Jamie San Andrés is living in the community while she gives the classes, as well as giving English classes to children.

The Tsa'chila have requested these classes as they recognize that they represent the way forward for them as a culture and a means of helping them preserve their way of life within the new context as they are increasingly exposed to life outside their relatively isolated villages.

### Spanish School Methodology and Development . . .

One of the principal challenges for the Spanish school this year has been to continue to align our teaching and methodology with the work of the Cervantes Institute in Spain. In addition we are adopting the Common European Framework of Reference for languages as a tool for measuring our students' progress.

These two tasks involve adapting our current materials as well as developing new resources that adequately reflect modern research in to how second languages are learned.

Another vital factor is re-training our teachers in new methods, breaking away from the old-fashioned, grammar-based method of teaching. Unfortunately this is the method that is still used to train new teachers in Ecuador, and once they have learned this way of teaching it is hard to teach them new methods.

It is a considerable investment on our part to achieve these goals, but one that is vital for our continued growth as a professional Spanish school, and to establish ourselves as leaders in Spanish language instruction.

## Intern and Volunteer News . . .

Volunteer group leaders **Jemma Swan** and **Rebecca Johnson** leave us in early November after spending several months working with different volunteer groups as well as here in Quito in our offices. We thank them both for their considerable efforts and dedication to the task of keeping our volunteers happy and occupied, and we wish them both well for the future!

Intern **Jamie San Andrés** switched from working in Estero de Plátano to the Tsa'chila community of El Poste where she began to give classes in computer use and English.

Dutch intern **Nicky Broeckhaven** arrived in October to take Spanish classes before heading off to the Tsa'chila community of Peripa where she will give PC classes while she carries out her own research.



### Leap - 3 projects

A group of volunteers from the **Leap UK** have been busy working on different projects during their 10 week stint in Ecuador.

They started off in Quito working for a couple of weeks, half the group at Parque Itchimbia carrying out environmental work and the rest at a local school in a poor neighborhood in the south of Quito, teaching English.

Next they spent 3 weeks in the Tsa'chila community of Bua where they worked on re-roofing the cultural center and building a bridge across the Shinopi river. In between they got to spend a few days relaxing at the coast in the surfing town of Montañita.

After Bua it was off to the Galapagos Islands, to Hacienda Tranquila on San Cristóbal for 3 weeks. And after working so hard there, their last week in Ecuador was spent on an adventure tour down the Andes, kayaking on Quilotoa crater lake, trudging above the snowline on Chimborazo volcano and cycling down again, and white water rafting in Baños, beneath the smoldering Tungurahua volcano to end in the historic town of Riobamba.



## September & October Photo Gallery

