

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

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 33: Jan-Feb 2013

### Introduction

This year we are looking forward with confidence to continue growing and developing as an organization. Now in our 7<sup>th</sup> year, we have lived through several ups and downs brought on by both local and international factors, and we expect to face similar challenges in the future.

The re-election of the government of Rafael Correa for another 4 years marks one less concern. Previous to his arrival in office Ecuador had seen 9 changes of government in 10 years, rampant inflation, widespread bank and economic collapse, rioting and general chaos. But his re-election with nearly 60% of the overall vote signals 4 more years of stability for Ecuador.

The biggest news for the Spanish school at the close of February is that we have taken a lease on a building in the historic town of Cuenca where we will be opening a second school in March. We had been considering various options when the opportunity arose, and so we just decided to go for it! (*see next page*)

The volunteer department has been very busy too, with a large group of volunteers from the Leap UK, as well

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as a return visit from students from the Colège Edouard Montpetit from Quebec. You can read more about their visit on the following pages. We have also received a good number of individual volunteers for projects all around the country.

In the foundation we finished the first period of our project funded by the Inter American Foundation, for which we had to prepare a report and arrange verification visits. This was all well received, and we continue with enthusiasm on to the next phase.

As with any project, there is a natural evolution, and so we have made several adaptations, based on recent events and observations that we are sure will lead to better results in the future. You can read more about our progress on the following pages.

We are also happy to announce that our annual report for 2012 is now available online (*see right*).



Local cacao promotor Rafael Machin explains the process of planting out the new cacao trees during an evaluation visit for the Inter American Foundation in February.

### Annual Report 2013 . . .

Our latest annual report for the organization is now available online. Click on the link on our home pages: <http://www.yanapuma.org>

The report details the events of the past year for the Spanish school, the volunteer department and the foundation.

A financial statement will be added towards the end of March or start of April once it is prepared.

### Quemando el Año Viejo . . .

On December 31st each year the tradition in Ecuador is to burn an effigy that represents something bad from the previous year's events—a disappointment, a disliked person, a failure, etc. A note is pinned to it explaining the significance of the effigy.



These effigies are created and sold on the streets in the last week of the year, often taking the form of famous characters, politicians and cartoon characters.

At the end of the day on 31 December staff from Yanapuma along with students gathered to burn an effigy that we had made during the day.



## School News . . .

This year got off to a somewhat slower start than previous years. While generally there are predictable ups and downs throughout the year, the pattern in January and February was somewhat different to other years. Rather than a large influx of new students at the start of January, the numbers gradually increased over the first 6 weeks, and we are happy to report that we were full by the end of February.

As always, a good number of students traveled with their teachers on our Study and Travel programs.

At the start of February we got the chance to rent offices in a prime location in Cuenca. This historic and well-preserved city has become the number one destination for retired Americans outside of the US. So we are hoping to be able to tap into this market for Spanish classes along with general students who want to visit the city of Cuenca and its surroundings.

In contrast to Quito, Cuenca is a very conservative city, with stores and businesses closing at 6.00 pm, and little to do in the evenings. We have offered a Study and Travel option to explore Cuenca for the last couple of years, and it has been quite popular. Now students will be able to study in Cuenca for a week or two at a much lower cost than on the Study and Travel package.

Carina Nicolalde, one of our teachers in Quito, will move down to Cuenca, at least for the first 6 months, to act as administrator and teacher and help us get the school up and running in March.

As always, we had a full calendar of activities throughout the week and at weekends for our students, such as the Ecuadorian cooking class featured in the photo below.



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## Our New School in Cuenca!

We are looking forward to getting started in March on the development of our new school in Cuenca. Situated in a historic building close to the cathedral and the center of Cuenca it is an ideal spot, and a building much in keeping with the style of our school in Quito.

We anticipate that a good number of our students studying in Quito will elect to spend a week or two studying in Cuenca for a change of scenery, and the chance to explore this historic Andean city and its surrounding cultures and stunning scenery.

## Donation News . . .

**Annie Steward** has pledged a monthly donation of \$100 to the Sinchi Aqua Women's Center in the Amazon region. Yanapuma's role is simply as a conduit to pass this money on to the center.

In February we passed on the donation of \$400 made by **Lisa Hoffman** and **Jennifer Wilson** to the community of Los Naranjos for them to be able to repair the computers they have in the school.

**Natalie Emmons** sent us a donation of \$150 to help train the Tsa'chila to use chemicals safely.

**Laura Sandoz** sent us a donation of \$200 in January

**Corliss Jacobs** sent us a donation of \$100 at the very end of December.

**Maria Marone** sent us a donation of \$340 also at the end of December.

**Thank you all!!!**



## Project News . . .

The end of January marked the point for the first reporting period of our project with the Inter American Foundation, covering the first 8 months of the project. It offered us a good opportunity to quantify and reflect upon our progress. The project got off to a slower start than we had planned because we needed to get permission from the Tsa'chila governor to work in 4 of the communities. This became a political issue that took us a month or so to tiptoe through, causing us a delay.

But by the end of the first 8 months we had planted 21,400 of the 26,000 cacao trees on 52 plots of land in 3 of the 4 communities. We had also created 54 vegetable plots on family farms and sown them with the first batch of seeds of cucumber, spinach, tomato, chard, lettuce, cilantro, parsley, peppers, etc. At the same time our nutritionist had visited a different family each day to show the women how to prepare vegetable and incorporate them into their daily diet.

One of our principal aims from the start of working with the Tsa'chila has been to encourage them to take ownership of the processes of development and we have sought to train Tsa'chila to take charge and not rely on outside help. We are happy to note that we have made considerable progress in this area. In cacao, two Tsa'chila promoters, Rafael Machin and Wilson Calazacón of Bua, have taken the lead role in the project to sow the remaining areas with new cacao plants and to train farmers in the new techniques to improve their yields. We are now looking to see if we can replicate this process, with these two promoters starting to train Tsa'chila in each community so that in two or three years each community can have its own cacao expert, avoiding the need for them to seek outside help.

It is also a pleasure for us to be working with Cristina Aguavil as nutritionist and cook. She continues to develop her skills in teaching other Tsa'chila women how to include vegetables in their daily diet and the nutritional qualities associated with each. We are now looking to see how we can encourage at least one woman in each community to learn the same skills and to become local promoters in their own community.

We would like to do the same with the vegetable plots, teaching persons to be promoters in this area, but as these skills are still completely new to the Tsa'chila it may take us more time to be able to make progress in horticulture.



## Volunteer and Intern News . . .

At the start of January a group of 21 volunteers from the Leap UK arrived in Ecuador to start a 10 week program. They started by volunteering for 3 weeks in the village of Chilcapamba in the Andean sierra close to Otavalo. From there they have went on to Hacienda Tranquila in the Galapagos Islands where they helped to eradicate invasive species. Finally they went to the Tsa'chila community of Bua where they planted 4200 cacao trees in addition to helping with traditional construction of cabañas.

We were also happy to receive a group of 12 students from the College Edouard Montpetit of Quebec, Canada. The group arrives each January to work with the cacao growers in Bua. The group planted cacao trees, applied



fertilizers and cleaned around existing trees. Their return each year has been an inspiration to the cacao growers in Bua, encouraging them to carry on developing their cacao plots. We have found in our work in the foundation that it has been very hard to maintain the focus on cacao with the Tsa'chila as culturally they are not used to planning as far ahead as the 3 or 4 years that it takes to see results from the new cacao. But the group's annual return has pricked them into action each year, and we are beginning to see the results at last.

We also received a number of individual volunteers during the first two months of the year. These were placed in a number of projects in Quito and around Ecuador, including on the Galapagos Islands. In addition, a number of new interns arrived, and you can read about these below:

**Robin Stienaers**, a student of Tourism and Communication from Holland joined us in February for a 5 month internship. He will be helping us to get the word out about Yanapuma!

**Sabine Biermann** joined us in February for a 5 month internship in marketing and publicity.

**Myrthe Oudejans** from HZ University of Applied Sciences in Holland joined us in January for a 7 month internship, focused on helping Yanapuma define and develop its image and presentation.

**Cherry Stovall** from the US left us after working on mapping with the Tsa'chila. She will be returning in March to work directly with the Tsa'chila, continuing her GIS/GPS work with them.

*We are always happy to consider applications from students and recent graduates interested in carrying out internships with Yanapuma. These can either be carried out in our offices, in the foundation projects in the field, or in any of the organizations that we have established links with in Ecuador.*



