

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

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Introduction

Summer has been in full swing here at Yanapuma, with the Spanish school, the volunteer department and the foundation running at full speed to keep up with the numbers of students, volunteers and groups that have passed through during these two months.

It has meant that a lot of the internal development of the organization has had to be put on hold as all human resources were dedicated to the daily tasks of making sure that everything ran more or less smoothly. But that is normal for our summer period and we have been glad and thankful to be so busy!

July and August are usually the busiest months of the year for the Spanish School, and this year has been no exception. The school has been full with students as young as 15 and up to their 60s. Quite a few of these have elected to go on one or other of our "Study and Travel" programs. The Ruta de los Volcanes has been as popular as ever, leading students on 5 days of adventure down the spine of the Andes, visiting the spectacular crater lake of Quilotoa, above the snowline on Chimborazo volcano, and white water rafting and bicycling in Baños under the shadow

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of the currently active Tungurahua volcano.

In August we said goodbye to our longest-attending student David Chambers, who studied with us for an 14 months before returning to the United States. We prepared a special farewell lunch in the school of "maito," fish cooked Amazon-style, wrapped in leaves and cooked with palm hearts (*see photo right*).

Since receiving the good news that the Inter American Foundation will be sponsoring us for 3 years to work in 4 Tsa'chila communities, we have been frantically busy working to lay the groundwork for the start of the project which took place in mid-August. We were pleased to welcome a new member to our team in August (*see inside*), and together we began planning and dovetailing our two existing and complementary projects in the Tsa'chila communities with this new project.



Maito ready to eat!!!

Yanapuma Foundation and Spanish School

Yanapuma is really 3 organizations in one: a non-profit NGO, a Spanish school and a volunteer organization. Our overall mission is to promote sustainable development in indigenous and marginalized communities in Ecuador.

Yanapuma Spanish school and our Volunteer Ecuador programs provide core funding for the work of Yanapuma Foundation. Likewise, our growing online Spanish courses, as an offshoot of the Spanish school, provide extra funding to maintain the foundation in operation.

In September we will celebrate 6 years of steady growth on all fronts!

New Project Funding! . . .

On 5 July we received the important news that a proposal submitted at the start of the year to the **Inter American Foundation** has been accepted for funding. This new funding will allow us to continue our work with the Tsa'chila culture for the next 3 years, helping them to improve the quality and yield of their cacao, creating vegetable plots and giving nutrition workshops, and working towards commercialization of their products.

In 2010 we carried out a pilot project along similar lines in the community of Bua. This new project will apply the lessons that we learned in Bua, and advance the overall development of 4 of the Tsa'chila communities – Bua, Los Naranjos, El Poste, and Peripa (*read more inside*).



We are excited to get started on the project which dovetails very nicely with our two current projects funded by the Onaway Trust of Scotland and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The project will require extensive additional funding from Yanapuma. Students' and volunteers' contributions through studying and volunteering with us will form a vital part of our ongoing efforts over the next 3 years!

Foundation News . . .

Giovanny, our agricultural expert, has been busy during July and August working with the Tsa'chila farmers of Los Naranjos in a project sponsored by the **Onaway Trust** of Scotland to improve their cacao production. In addition, a number of women farmers are producing saplings in small nurseries for a reforestation project in El Poste in September and October. So far they have nearly 4000 saplings nearly ready for planting out.

Giovanny was also kept busy working with a group of volunteers in late July from the Leap UK, creating vegetable plots for families in Los Naranjos. These will be sown in September as women learn to grow vegetables to improve the nutrition of their families.

Meanwhile, Guadalupe, our social/community worker has continued working with a group of women and youth in Bua on the project sponsored by the **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues -Trust Fund for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples**. The aim of the project is to strengthen the ability of women of the Tsa'chila culture to organize themselves and establish and maintain economic activities in order to raise the indices of development of their families. Training in organizational ability, leadership, and cultural self-esteem is combined with training in economic and administrative skills, and funding for micro business initiatives that will also fortify their community bank.



In July we formally delivered the most recent version of the map of the community of El Poste to the gathered "asamblea." This was updated by Giovanny after several days of GPS work to include measurements of a number of local farms. The primary use for Yanapuma is to know the size of the plots that we will be working with to sow improved versions of cacao.

Giovanny sat with the owners of each plot to show them its actual size.



A group of young Tsa'chila perform at the opening of a new school building in the community of Los Naranjos.

At Yanapuma we seek to encourage such demonstrations of interest in the traditional culture of the Tsa'chila, both in music and in artistic and crafts production. Currently we are financing the production of a report on traditional crafts of the 7 Tsa'chila communities as part of a project to develop micro-enterprises based on their traditional cultural heritage. Together with training in basic accounting skills and administration, and market research, we aim to offer the possibility of additional sources of regular income for a number of Tsa'chila women and youth.

Organizational Changes at Yanapuma . . .

At the very end of August we successfully finished the process to legally separate the Spanish school from the foundation. The Spanish school is now a separate limited company, although nothing at all changes in terms of our vision and mission. The move was realized because of changes in the laws in Ecuador over the last couple of years that are designed to clear up a lot of the confusion and grey areas that have characterized the way things have been done in the past here. When we originally set up the foundation we were told that it was best, and acceptable, to have the Spanish school within the foundation, even though each is controlled by a separate ministry (Educación and Bienestar Económico y Social) which could cause problems on either side. Since then several lawyers have given us different and conflicting advice on what to do. In the end we opted to go the route of setting up the school as a limited company as the clearest alternative. As with all decisions, there are pros and cons, but in the end we believe the pros will outweigh the cons.

The accounting controls are stricter for a limited company, and donations from the company to our work have to be handled with increased attention. But having completely separate accounts for the foundation will be of great benefit and give a much clearer picture of the financial situation of the foundation itself apart from the Spanish school and volunteering. The Spanish school becomes an external benefactor of the foundation along with our other supporters, still committed to donating its profits to the vision and mission that set us on this path nearly 6 years ago.

Volunteer and Intern News . . .

At the start of July Dutch intern **Laura Zuidema** (right) left us after spending 6 months working in the volunteer department. She was a great help in keeping the department running during that time and will be missed.



In mid-July three new interns arrived from **Union College** in New York. The three are all recipients of the Minerva fellowship, a competitive award that allows them to spend 9 months abroad learning at first-hand about development and the challenges that small communities face as they adapt to the globalized context. The three interns, **Aaron Glosser**, **Alagra Bass** and **Sarah Gagnon** spent 3 weeks in Quito brushing up their Spanish and getting accustomed to being in Ecuador before moving out to Estero de Plátano where they will spend the next 8 months working with the 13 scholarship students, the local school, the women's group and other sectors of the community.



In July and August we were lucky to count on the support of local tourism student **Mercedes Grefa**. She is from the Amazon town of Tena, and spent 8 weeks interning with us as part of her studies in tourism. She received new students and accompanied other students on the excursions for the Quito Cultural program, as well as leading several weekend excursions.



July and August was especially busy with volunteer groups. Nine groups arrived from **Outlook Expeditions** to carry out projects in the Amazon region, at Sinchi Aqua and Tami Ayura projects, as well as with the Tsa'chila in the community of Los Naranjos.

A group of 15 volunteers from the **Leap UK** spent 2 weeks in Otavalo volunteering in Chilcapamba in the mornings and studying Spanish in the afternoons, and then 3 weeks either with the Tsa'chila in Los Naranjos or in the Galapagos working on an environmental project at Hacienda Tranquilla.

Volunteer Department . . .

Our two new volunteer coordinators are **Angela Winston** and **Victoria Allende**. They arrived just in time for the summer rush and have spent most of July and August looking after some of the 12 or so groups that have come through, in addition to the individual volunteers that have volunteered through us.

Towards the end of August things slowed down a little bit and they were finally able to start on the task of reviewing our current Volunteer Ecuador program offerings and updating the list of worthwhile programs to offer our volunteers.

Donation News . . .

We were grateful to receive a grant from UK organization **La Vida** at the start of August for the purchase of 5 used PCs and monitors and a printer. These were delivered to Estero de Plátano at the same time as our 3 new interns arrived there. They will be used to give computer proficiency classes to the various social groups there, the community bank, the women's group, the artisans, as well as to the scholarship and other students. At the end one PC will be donated to each group with the remainder being donated to the school.

In July we received two small donations from students: \$5 from **Gyro Rynestad** (we didn't have change!) and \$170 from **Ingrid Kleinman**. We also received a donation from **Shayne Lennox** via the website for \$10.

Dutch student **Susanna Boers** made a donation of \$200 to the Clinica CEMEDSSO where she volunteered in July. This raises to \$800 a fund to replace the lights in their operating theater.

Gail Rock and her son Liam arrived with a donation of clothes and school supplies that we handed out in the Tsa'chila communities (see photos on page 4)

These small donations are always useful for funding extra activities and we commit 100% of them to direct expenses, such as providing materials for the youth of Estero de Plátano to continue developing their marimba group.

Staff News . . .

Silvia Perugachi left us in July. Silvia worked with Yanapuma from March 2011 to the start of July, helping in the coordination of projects and planning and development.

We were pleased to welcome her replacement, **Cecilia Vallejo** to our team. She has a degree in Socio-educational Research from the **Universidad Tecnológica America**, as well as considerable experience working in other NGOs and organizations in Ecuador. Cecilia took over from Silvia, and will be coordinating the projects for the foundation, especially the new Inter American Foundation project that started at the beginning of August.



July and August Photo Gallery

