

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. 22: Mar-Apr 2011

Introduction

During the last two months we have seen the wettest spell that we can remember in Quito! But this has not dampened our volunteers and students' spirits too much, and we have been kept busy on all sides. As usually happens at this time of year, student numbers decline during April, although May will be busier than usual in the school.

Our Study and Travel programs continue to be very popular with students of all ages and from all walks of life, particularly the "Ruta de los Volcanes" tour and the week at Yachana Lodge.

Our Beginner Group classes, a new program that we launched in January, are beginning to take off as we receive more reservations. Although individual classes are the optimum way to learn, we have designed a special program that will take absolute beginners through the first 4 weeks of material to get a good grounding in the Spanish language. From there onwards we rec-

Contents	Page 1	Intro & News
	2	School & Other News
	3	Project News
	4	Photo Gallery

ommend individual classes as the best and fastest way to learn.

We received a big group of volunteers from the Leap UK at the start of April, and they will spend 10 weeks working on 3 different projects in the Sierra, the rainforest and the Pacific coast. We also received a good number of individual volunteers to take part in projects with partner organizations across Ecuador.

Lastly, our financial statement for 2010 was finished by the end of April. Its production was complicated by a change of accountants during the year, and the consequent extra work in combining the two different systems to produce a unified financial account of the previous year. You can view it online here: <http://www.yanapuma.org/en/financial.php>

Cabo San Francisco

We have been working with George Fletcher of Caimito on a project proposal to purchase plots of the forest in the Cabo San Francisco area. George has been working for several years with the dream of creating a biodiversity corridor by uniting the many patches of forest and abandoned farmland that comprise this ecologically important area.

Jonny Crabb, an experienced project coordinator is working with Yanapuma and George, gathering data and preparing the proposal. There exists considerable interest among local actors and organizations to help in the preservation of this last coastal rainforest, but nobody has been willing to take the lead. Yanapuma can potentially seek ways to unite these diverse bodies into a coherent or-



ganization that can begin seeking ways to preserve and replant this forest.

Currently there are dozens of plots of varying size, from just a few hectares upwards. Some of the owners live and farm there, others have bought plots as small conservation lots, and others are larger organizations such as Ecociencia who own two large portions. Most of the owners do not

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Students attend the traditional Easter Friday parade in Quito.

have legal title to the land, nor the means to go through the legal process to acquire it.

We also hear that there are plans to put roads through certain portions, and in our experience, once a road goes in the first thing to come out are the trees as loggers move in, quick to seize the chance to make a fast profit.

And as the area offshore is now a marine reserve, reckoned to have greater biodiversity than the Galapagos, despite having only 3% of its area, it is of vital importance to protect the forest in order to protect the reefs.

We also hear that squatters have moved into the area, an event that marks a threat to the forests, as they will immediately seek to take advantage without concern for the environment.

Spanish School Programs . . .

Since our earliest days Yanapuma Spanish School has developed a number of programs in distinct areas for students with diverse interests and needs related to learning the Spanish language. The following is a brief description of our various offerings, aside from our regular individual Spanish classes.

Beginner Group Classes and Package: A series of 4 weeks of classes starting on the first Monday of each month, either just classes or classes plus cultural visits around Quito

Quito Cultural Package: Regular classes combined with visits to places of cultural and historical interest around Quito. Can be taken for up to 3 weeks.

Volunteer Quito Package: One month of Spanish classes combined with volunteering in one of several projects in Quito—children, youth, teaching, environmental, etc

Study and Travel Programs: Nine unique programs that spend a week exploring the Amazon rainforest and cloud forests, the Andean sierra, or the Pacific Coast, traveling with your own teacher.

Professional Medical Spanish Program: A one-month program for intermediate Spanish speakers working in the health professions. In Quito this program includes a practicum, but it can also be taken online. There is also a **Weekly Medical Spanish Program** for those whose Spanish is still basic, or who do not need to learn quite so much.

Online Spanish Classes: You can continue to study online after studying here in Quito with your own live teacher via the internet. Our online learning center caters for students from all corners of the globe.

We continue to refine and develop these and additional new programs in response to the needs and preferences of our diverse student population.



Our regular weekend excursions explore the ecological, social and cultural diversity of Ecuador. From adventurous activities like bicycling down Cotopaxi volcano, to visiting craft markets in Otavalo, weekends in indigenous communities in the rainforest or sierra, relaxing in thermal springs, and hiking around crater lakes, every weekend there is something different!

Intern and Volunteer News . . .

Judith Huijser, from Holland, finished her internship with Yanapuma in mid-April. She worked on the creation of a short video about the school to offer to agencies to promote our Spanish programs. A similar project is being undertaken by Dutch student **Femke van Wezel**. She is making a short video about volunteering with Yanapuma with a similar audience in mind.

A group of 13 volunteers from the **Leap UK** arrived on 1 April to begin a 10 week stint of volunteering in various communities. The group split into two with one group going to Estero de Plátano, and the other to Chilcapamba for their first projects. They are accompanied by volunteer coordinators **Ariel Climer** and **Brenna Hull**.



Donation News . . .

Colège Edouard Montpetit of Canada donated \$900 for the purchase of 2 new PCs and a printer for the community school of Los Naranjos. When we announced that we would be offering computer proficiency classes 48 people turned up to register!

David Moreano donated \$84 to the work of the foundation.

Trustee of Yanapuma Scotland, **Stuart Kirby**, donated £400 in March.

Joe de Leon, a Spanish student, donated \$25 to our projects.

We are always happy to receive donations, and we pledge 100% of funds received to direct project costs. You can donate by going to this page: http://www.yanapuma.org/en/donate_home.php

Check out our websites:

<http://www.yanapumaspanish.org>— Spanish school website

<http://www.yanapuma.org>— Foundation website

<http://www.yanapuma.org.uk>— UK Foundation website

<http://www.spanishonlineclass.com>— Online classes website

Foundation News . . .

Yanapuma welcomes **Silvia Perugachi** to the team! Silvia is an Ecuadorian who graduated from the New School in New York with a Masters in International Development, during which time she found time to volunteer in Africa. Silvia will be working on project coordination as well as getting hands-on experience in the communities we are working with. One of her first tasks was to begin giving computer classes in the Tsa'chila community of Los Naranjos, along with helping in the preparation of new funding applications.

Tsa'chila Communities

In Bua, Giovanni continues to work with local women and their families on a project to create vegetable plots along with small nurseries for growing saplings for sale and reforestation. This project is sponsored by the **Ferguson Charitable Trust**,



and will also involve a local nutritionist who will work with the families to incorporate more vegetables into their diet. Guadalupe is also working with the women on promoting self-esteem and increasing their organizational capacity to be able to improve their ability to generate greater income for their families. One recent problem has been the heavy rains that have tended to damage the young vegetable seedlings. But these can be replanted easily.

During the first weeks of March intern **Ben Hughey** finished mapping the boundaries of 3 Tsa'chila communities – Los Naranjos, El Poste and Peripa. All 3 lie within the parish boundary of Puerto Limón. None of these communities had a map of their territory previously, and we were unable to track down the original maps or coordinates of the territory that had been ceded to them. Before returning to the US, Ben was able to present the finished maps to members of each community.

We emphasized to each community that the map is their property, and that we will not share any details without prior written consent of the cabildo of each community.

As a result of the mapping process all 3 communities expressed interest in working more with Yanapuma. Thus we



Page 3

began a process of participatory evaluation of each community, meeting with community members to explore their history, lifestyle, habits, farming, social groups, aspirations and needs. The process was spearheaded by Giovanni and Guadalupe with the assistance of Silvia and Lucas. The documents that we produced from these meetings will form the basis for project proposals in the coming months. You can access the finished reports on our website on this page: <http://www.yanapuma.org/en/ProjectsBua.php>

All these communities are considerably poorer than the community of Bua, being more remote and smaller, and the needs are correspondingly greater.

In April we began a project in Los Naranjos to train community members in the use of computers. This project was originally started in Bua but halted due to political processes in Bua after the election of a new cabildo. We are waiting to see how the situation develops before offering to resume the classes. The project is funded by **La Vida**, a UK NGO, who provided funding for providing the classes as well as 2 used PCs. Along with 2 used PCs provided by Yanapuma and 2 new PCs donated by the **Colège Edouard Montpetit** of Canada, we began giving classes to all the school teachers, plus cabildo members and other interested members of the community.

We hope to be able to repeat this project in the other Tsa'chila communities as well as in Estero de Plátano.

Estero de Plátano

Jamie san Andrés joined the volunteer leader team to host a group from the Leap UK, but we quickly decided to better use her talents as an intern stationed in the community of Estero de Plátano.

Interns **Nik Kothari** and **Allie Cuozzo**, who had spent nearly 9 months in Estero working with various social groups, tutoring the scholarship students, working on sexual and reproductive health with youth, and organizing volunteer projects, finished there at the beginning of April. As the new academic year at the coast begins at the start of April, it was fortuitous to have Jamie available to work with the 2 new scholarship students and the 9 returning students, to help them settle in and ensure that they make maximum use of their scholarships. This work has been funded by the **Souter Trust** of Scotland.

Clean Drinking Water System Inaugurated!

On 25 April the project to provide clean drinking water to Estero was finally inaugurated. After searching for nearly a year to find a suitable plot of land on which to site the system, a volunteer group laid the cement foundations and built the containment on the grounds of the local school.

The project was financed by an anonymous donation and carried out with the help of **Fundación Agua Muisne**. Unfortunately, Yanapuma staff were unable to attend as the torrential rains provoked a series of landslides, closing the road for 2-3 days. We hope to have photos for the next newsletter!

March and April Photo Gallery

