

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 in Quito is now in full Bloom, with blue skies and temperatures rising up to around 27 degrees Celsius (80 F) during the day but dropping to around 16 C (60 F) at night. Perfect weather for our Spanish students, volunteers and interns to explore the rich history and culture of Quito.

Paradoxically, at the Pacific coast in these months the temperature is rather cool and the weather predominantly cloudy. But this is the time of year to enjoy whale watching off the Ecuadorian coast as the humpback whales pass on their annual migration between Hawaii and Alaska, passing so close to the Ecuadorian shores that you can easily spot them from the beach in places like the village of Estero de Plátano, where Yanapuma is sponsoring 13 youth to study at high school. The \$25 registration fee that each Spanish student pays goes directly to this fund.

May is usually the quietest month of the year in the Spanish school, and this year has been no exception. But June starts to see numbers rise as the summer approaches. But both May and June have seen record numbers of volunteers, both individuals and in groups. Yanapuma collaborates with around 30 grass-roots organizations, communi-

C o n t e n t s	Page 1	Intro & News
	2	Project and School News
	3	Student, Intern, & other news
	4	Photo Gallery

ties, health centers and clinics in Quito, Cuenca and all around Ecuador, placing volunteers in these centers that need all the help they can get. In return, the volunteers gain valuable experience working diverse areas – from daycare centers and schools to animal rescue and environmental projects, conservation and agriculture, youth work and health centers and clinics.

In our Quito offices, our two volunteer coordinators Angela Winston and Emily Branson have been doing an excellent job coordinating the activities and placements of our individual volunteers as well as managing the groups from the UK, Ecuador and the US. You can read more about these on the following pages.

The work of the foundation has continued to progress satisfactorily, principally with our project with four Tsa'chila communities sponsored by the Inter American Foundation. In addition we have begun another year of sponsorship for the youth of the village of Estero de Plátano to continue studying at high school.



A new look for the website!
<http://www.yanapumaspanish.org>

In May the website for Yanapuma Spanish school was re-launched with a more modern template and new design.



As part of our regular activities in the Spanish school we spend a half hour learning about some of the many exotic fruits that Ecuador has to offer. Students get to learn vocabulary to describe the fruits as well as getting to actually taste them! On other days we try some of the many different snacks and delicacies that Ecuadorians enjoy.

Internship vacancy in Cuenca!

Currently Yanapuma is seeking an intern to help with the development of our new school in Cuenca. We need a motivated, outgoing and sociable person to work at least half time in the school. Duties will include meeting and greeting new students and orienting them to the school and Cuenca, carrying out publicity and marketing activities in Cuenca to recruit new students, escorting volunteers to their placements on the first day, and generally assisting in the establishment of the school.

In addition we are interested in forming a new project in Cuenca for the foundation, and we are seeking to establish a group of interested persons from the retired "gringo" community to help in the development of the project. Our idea is to provide aid to some of the aged homeless and very poor of Cuenca. We hope that there will be a good group from among the retired population to consider giving something back to their adopted community of Cuenca.



We can supply accommodation in Cuenca, and perhaps a small stipend to the right candidate. If you are interested please email us through the contact form on the website.

Spanish School news . . .

We have taken advantage over the past couple of months when things have been a bit quieter in the school to continue with our plans to develop our methodology and teaching practices, adding new learning materials and renovating some of the materials in our existing programs. We are committed to ongoing improvements in the way the school functions, investing continually in methods and materials to ensure that we provide the very best in Spanish tuition at Yanapuma.

The biggest news of the past two months has been the renovation of the website for Yanapuma Spanish School. The original website was inaugurated in 2006, and since then there have been many changes to the coding systems used to develop websites, which meant that ours had become very old-fashioned and out of date. So we felt it was time to do a fundamental redesign using the very latest technology and coding, to produce a clean and equally informative website for the Spanish school. You can see the results here: <http://www.yanapumaspanish.org>

Regular Activities and Excursions

Each month we publish a calendar of regular activities and excursions for our Spanish students and volunteers. These consist of weekday activities in the afternoons or evenings, including free salsa clases, visits to museums and the historic center of Quito, traditional cooking classes and crafts activities.

In addition we offer a weekend excursion each weekend, either 1 day or 2 day. Students can sign up for these activities which are posted in the school.



Donation News . . .

Annie Steward made a donation of \$100 to Sinchi Aqua Kichwa women's center in the Amazon región.

Max Moutschen made a donation of \$150 to the Sinchi Aqua Kichwa women's group after working with them.

To donate via Paypal use: donate@yanapuma.org



Volunteers and Interns . . .

We were happy to welcome back **Lisa Hoffman and Jennifer Wilson**, along with their son **Zey**. They spent time last year living with the Tsa'chila in Los Naranjos, and returned this year to spend a month in the same community. They brought with them some books and other materials that they had created demonstrating the traditional plants of the Tsa'chila and their medicinal uses.

This time they helped members of the community to envision and plan new projects that will benefit them in the future, related to sustaining the culture and maintaining their history. We are happy to collaborate with efforts of this nature that provide a sense of continuity for the Tsa'chila and help them to overcome the cultural restraints that have prevented them from being able to organize themselves and define their own futures in a positive way.

We were sorry to see Belgian intern **Max Moutschen** leave us in June. Max was carrying out an internship with Yanapuma as part of his studies in Tourism and Sustainability. During his time in Ecuador he worked at the Sinchi Aqua Kichwa women's center in the Amazon on marketing and co-lead one of the Leap volunteer groups.

We were also sorry to see Dutch intern **Robin Stienaers** leave. Robin was interning with us as part of his studies in tourism. He helped us with the publicity and marketing for our new school in Cuenca as well as tourism plans.

Sara Tillería, an anthropology student from the Universidad San Francisco in Quito spent a month in May and June in Estero de Plátano where she worked with the scholarship students who started their new academic year in late April. We are grateful for her efforts at this critical time in the new school year for the scholarship recipients. We are also delighted that Sara will continue to help Yanapuma by acting as a group leader for the next group from the UK that arrives at the start of July!

The **Leap UK** volunteer group that arrived at the start of April stayed with us until the middle of June, working on projects at Hacienda Tranquila in the Galapagos, Chilcapamba, and the Tsa'chila community of Bua. In the Galapagos volunteers worked to help eradicate invasive species to preserve the endemic flora and fauna of the islands. In Chilcapamba volunteers helped on the maintenance of the water system they use to irrigate crops as well as . . . In Bua volunteers worked on sowing 8000 seeds of local tree species that we will plant out in October with the aid of a group from Thinking Beyond Borders from the US.

In May Yanapuma hosted 4 volunteer groups from **Academia Cotopaxi**, a high school in Quito. Each group traveled to a different community – Chilcapamba in the Andean sierra, Los Naranjos and Bua Tsa'chila communities, and Sinchi Aqua in the Amazon region. The students stayed in cultural centers in each community and carried out volunteer work as part of a program in Global Citizenship.

In May we welcomed a group of students from **Vanderbilt University**. For the third year in a row they have come to Quito to carry out volunteer projects in some of the centers that we support in Quito. Their volunteering forms part of an initiative in Active Citizenship and Service. Their coordinator Lauren Moon also came to Quito to observe their programs and progress.

Project News . . .

IAF Visit

In May we were pleased to carry out a 3-day revision of our project with the Tsa'chila sponsored by the Inter American Foundation along with a representative from this organization. The visit was more of a "soft" review of the progress of the project, visiting the farms and homes of a number of participants to gather impressions and try to gauge the overall impact of the project so far.

It is not easy to apply a hard assessment of this type of project which has long-term goals and is as much concerned with empowering people through giving them confidence in their own abilities and inspiring them to make positive changes than with achieving concrete goals. Of course, there are concrete goals in terms of the number of cacao trees planted, the number of vegetable gardens sown, and the number of cooking and nutrition workshops given, but measuring the overall effect of these activities is another question entirely.

We are more concerned with the long-term effects, and the ability of the Tsa'chila participants to take on these activities as their own. To allow this to happen, attitudes have to shift, and individuals have to be given the opportunity to develop confidence and belief in their own abilities to be able to manage the same processes with less and less support from Yanapuma until they become self-sustaining.

In July we will have completed the first year of the project, although in fact July represents the point of approval of the project by the IAF. In reality, we did not get to start until September/October due to the time it took to recruit beneficiaries and to go through the process of getting consent from the Tsa'chila governor and the cabildos of each of the communities that we are working with. This latter took the most time due to the complicated nature of Tsa'chila politics!

Reforestation project . . .

We have initiated a project through the cultural center Shinopi Bolón of Bua to sow up to 8000 seeds of local tree species for a reforestation project that we will carry out in October with students from Thinking Beyond Borders. We are excited to be able to hand over complete responsibility for the project to Alfonso Aguavil, the director of the cultural group, as the Tsa'chila become more capable of organizing and directing small projects.

We will purchase the saplings from the group in September to transfer to the location where they will be planted out.

May and June Photo Gallery

