

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

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Introduction

A series of light earthquakes has had much of Quito on edge during a couple of weeks in August, but we are happy to report that there was no major damage due to the tremors that got up to around 4.5 on the Richter scale at their peak.

Summer in the Andes is much like any other month in the Andes, the altitude moderating the temperature, making it spring-like all the year around. It has been drier in the last two months as we would expect, warm in Quito but relatively chilly in Cuenca as the summer tends to be there.

July was very busy in both schools, with students and volunteers who are traveling for the summer taking their Spanish classes and volunteering. August, by contrast was much quieter, a pattern we have noticed over the years, as students set off to travel the rest of Ecuador or South America. But September will get busy again as a fresh group of travelers kicks off their South American adventure with Spanish classes in Ecuador.

The big news for the Cuenca school is the addition of **Alexandra Antkoviak** as the student and volunteer coordinator there. Alexandra is from the US and

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graduated from Berkeley with a degree in psychology.

The volunteer department has been busy over the last two months with groups from the UK and US, as well as many individual volunteers from various countries around the world. Our three volunteer coordinators each look after different groups and activities in general, as well as planning for the future growth of the department.

Yanapuma foundation completed the second year of the project funded by the Inter American Foundation with the Tsa'chila culture of the province of Santo Domingo de los Tsa'chila. We completed our 4th semester report on our overall progress, and a brief summary of the financial investment in this project is provided below. We also welcomed two new fellows from Union College NY to work in Estero de Plátano.

On this and the following pages you can find out in more detail what we have been up to!



Classes at the school in Cuenca



A group activity at the school in Quito



A small group class in Quito

Tsa'chila Project—2 years completed!

On 11 July Fundación Yanapuma completed the first two years of our project funded by the Inter American Foundation (IAF). Below is a brief summary of the contributions of the IAF, Yanapuma through the Spanish School, and volunteer activities, and other sources such as volunteer groups and universities.

Proyecto FIA - hasta julio 2014

Fuente	Monto	%
Contribución de la FIA	\$ 100.800,53	57%
Contribución de Yanapuma	\$ 45.939,95	26%
Contraparte de grupos etc	\$ 29.227,16	17%
Total del proyecto por 2 años:	\$ 175.967,64	

Yanapuma Foundation

The mission of the foundation is to promote sustainable development among indigenous and marginalised communities in Ecuador. Core funding for our activities is provided by the Spanish school and volunteer activities through a "social entrepreneurship" business model. Each student contributes to the progress of our development work.

You can read much more about the foundation on its own website:

<http://yanapuma.org>

School News . . .

July is always a busy month for the Spanish school as people set off on their summer exploration of South America, and both schools have been full to the brim with international students of all ages and levels. This had put on temporary hold our advances in the development of new programs and materials as all our teachers were fully occupied with classes, but as things slackened off a little in August we were able to resume these developmental activities. Academic director **Edison Rendón** continued with the renovation and expansion of materials for our Medical Spanish programs as well as our general teaching materials.

We also worked to set up a new system for our calendar of activities and events in both Spanish schools. The new electronic calendar of events for Quito and Cuenca is online at: <http://www.yanapumaspanish.org/wp/quito-calendar/>. Instead of having only a monthly calendar available, the new calendar will display the entire year's activities. The calendar forms part of a WordPress installation to provide additional materials, videos and resources through the website for our Spanish students, and will be expanded in the coming months.

July and August also saw a good number of students taking advantage of our **Study and Travel** programs, with many spending a week or two studying in Quito before taking off with a teacher to explore the Amazon region, the cloud forests, the Andes or the Pacific coast, before spending the final week or two studying at our school in Cuenca.

Combining these programs offers the chance to explore as much of the country as possible in a limited time while still focusing on learning Spanish. Our integrated system of class reporting and evaluation means that each student can pass from one teacher to another with a full account of their progress and activities to date. And for the very luckiest ones, the got to spend a week exploring the Galapagos Islands with one of the land-based tours that we offer through a local agency in the Galapagos. Visiting the Galapagos is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and well worth the investment if you have the time!



The school in Cuenca in July

Volunteer News . . .

Our volunteer coordinators were kept very busy in July with several groups. There was a group of volunteers from **The Leap UK** who spent 6 weeks volunteering in two projects – a communit project in Chilcapamba in the Andes and on a conservation project on the Galapagos Islands. As a reward for all their hard work they then spent the last few days in the surfing town of Montañita on the coast for some well earned R&R.

Groups from **Outlook Expeditions** also spent time volunteering on projects at the Sinchi Aqua Kichwa Women's project, helping with construction and maintenance of the infrastructure of this worthwhile project run by a group of Kichwa women of the Amazon.

Cristina, one of the coordinators, has also been busy working on expanding our medical practicum options after the Ecuadorian government introduced new regulations that made the public clinics wary of accepting our interns until the legal implications have been resolved. We already have several options in Quito and Cuenca and around Ecuador in general.

Staff and Intern News . . .

We were delighted to welcome **Alexandra Antkoviak (right)** as our new coordinator at the school in Cuenca. Alexandra is no stranger to Ecuador having worked as a teacher in Otavalo in 2011 before working as a marketing and business development executive in California.



We were also delighted to welcome **Samantha Muratori and Gabriela Romero** from **Union College, NY** to spend the next 9 months working with Yanapuma (see next page in Yanapuma Foundation News).

Meanwhile, French intern **Marion Cholieu** has continued to develop our volunteer offerings in Cuenca and work with the school to organize the volunteers and the school activities while she works on her thesis for the **Université de Savoie**. We are grateful for her efforts.

We were sad to say goodbye to **Cecilia Vallejo** who has worked for us as projects coordinator for the foundation for the past two years. However, we are happy for her as she is moving on to a post that represents a good move for her career. She has done a great job in organizing the field team and maintaining the flow of information to create our regular reports on the IAF project, and she will be missed.

We were also sad to say goodbye to French intern **Mathilde Hernaut** from the university **Sciences Po Bordeaux**. She spent 3 months working in the volunteer department in Quito as well as acting as translator for a research project with the Tsachila.

Geography student from **Durham University Jenny McWhirter** spent 4 weeks in Ecuador working on her thesis investigating the discourse and effects of voluntourism on an indigenous culture like the Tsachila.

Foundation News . . .

Estero de Plátano

We were delighted to welcome **Samantha Muratori and Gabriela Romero**, two new fellows from Union College. They arrived in July and after taking a couple of weeks of Spanish classes they



went out to Estero de Plátano where they will spend the next 8 months working with the local groups there on sustainable social enterprise development. Part of their work will also involve working with the “becados,” the 11 youth who are currently receiving a scholarship to allow them to attend high school. This is an especially important year as no less than 5 of them will be graduating at the end of the year. Sam and Gaby are keen to look into the possibilities to get some of them on to university and will be working towards this end during their time here in Ecuador.

They are being supervised by **Kelly Schussler**, who after working with us as a volunteer coordinator left to pursue her Masters in Social Work, and has now returned to continue working with us here in Ecuador. We look forward to a productive year with Sam and Gaby.

The Tsa’chila

July 11 marked the end of the second year of the Inter American Foundation (IAF) project to improve cacao production, create vegetable gardens, improve nutrition and develop organizational skills among the Tsa’chila culture in 4 of their 7 comunas. Aside from taking time to prepare the 4th semester report on our activities for the IAF, it was time for us to reflect on our progress to date in preparation for the final year of the project and beyond.

Our aim is to create independence for the Tsa’chila, avoiding paternalism and dependence on Yanapuma. It is all too easily for the Tsa’chila themselves to become dependent on receiving our support, despite the fact that we constantly emphasize that we are just a stage on the way for them. While some do understand this concept, others tend to want to rely on the arrival of volunteer groups for the extra income they receive, although for us these groups provide an opportunity to learn new skills that they will one day be able to apply to other types of visitors.

However, overall the IAF project has continued to develop satisfactorily, especially in the area of cacao where our two local promoters **Wilson Calazacón and Rafael Machin** have dedicated themselves to learning as much as they can about all the processes that go towards creating and maintaining a project like this one. We have high hopes that within a year or two they will be perfectly able to handle projects on their own, at which point we will consider that our job is done!

With the vegetable gardens progress has been a bit more complicated due to several factors. Some Tsa’chila have a very short-sighted view of things and we discovered that

they signed up for the project mostly because they would receive some tools at a subsidized cost, meaning that they were never really interested in growing vegetables. So this explained the slow progress with some families. Others have not been eager to incorporate vegetables into their daily diet which resulted in a diminishment of interest on their part.

Additionally, the climate is a hard one in which to grow vegetables and to a certain extent we are still searching ourselves for the best methods and vegetables to promote there.

As the Tsa’chila do not like to fail at anything, experimentation that is a natural process of growth for us is not easy for the Tsa’chila, and some have withdrawn for this reason. But at the same time, new families have joined in, having seen the success of other families nearby, and we are hopeful that in the long run the habit of growing at least a couple of different vegetables on a regular basis will take root and grow organically (forgive the puns!).

A Life History!

French sociologist **Richard Couedel** has been putting the finishing touches to his account of the life story of **Alfonso Aguavil**. The words are all Alfonso’s, based on accounts given over a period of months since the start of this year. Alfonso was born into the traditional life of a Tsa’chila



when there was still virtually endless rainforest on the Pacific side of the Andes down to the ocean. From the first incursions of the mestizos and foreigners to cut down the jungle for timber and agriculture, Alfonso has witnessed the drastic changes that have taken place to the Tsa’chila way of life. The next step is to seek a publisher for the book, for which Alfonso will be named as the sole author.

Yanapuma’s field team prepares the 4th semester report for the FIA at our offices in Quito.

As part of our drive to create independence among the Tsa’chila, all members of the team were involved in the write up for the first time, helping to collate and interpret the statistics and create the graphics to include in the report.



July and August Photo Gallery

