



## **Annual Report of Yanapuma Foundation and Spanish School, 15 August 2006 - 15 August 2007**

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### **Background:**

#### **Origins of Yanapuma**

Yanapuma Foundation and Spanish School celebrated its first birthday on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2007. With eight founding members, comprised of 6 Ecuadorians, and one American and one British (see appendix F), the foundation set out to promote sustainable practices in indigenous, rural, and marginalized communities throughout Ecuador. Yanapuma means black puma in Kichwa, and is traditionally the animal that is the guardian of the natural world, acting as intermediary between humans and nature to maintain balance.

The foundation developed from the observations of several of its founder members that many foundations are ineffective and wasteful in their use of resources, most often adopting a piecemeal approach to development that appears disconnected from the populations that they purport to support, with little long-term benefit.

From the very beginning the focus on Yanapuma has been on working in a fully participatory manner, encouraging ownership of the projects by the community, the foundation serving merely as an organizing force and as a conduit for resources and training to promote sustainability and self determination from a grass-roots level. In addition Yanapuma seeks to work in an integrated manner, working across all the major axes in the recognition that these are inter-related and that sustainability has to exist in all these areas for a community to truly prosper. It was recognized that in practice this will mean coordinating with other organizations in order to deliver the necessary services to a particular community, in pursuit of which the foundation will seek strategic partnerships. A third principal is to work in a fully transparent manner with communities to assure mutual understanding and cooperation and to build and strengthen local organizational infrastructure for the benefit of the community.

The founding members also set up a Spanish school as a source of income for the foundation to cover its administrative overheads. The aim is to be able to offer potential sponsors the advantage that a percentage of donations does not have to be subtracted to pay overheads, thus committing 100% of monies received directly to project expenses. During the first year the developmental focus has been heavily on the Spanish school in order to keep the foundation afloat. This has involved developing the

website, publicity materials, teaching methodology and materials, and the infrastructure of the school to provide a welcoming environment, as well as all the associated activities and accommodation options of a good Spanish school.

### **The First Year:**

Suitable offices for the Foundation, and more importantly for the Spanish School, were found in a historic colonial building on the edge of the Mariscal, the main tourist area of Quito. These provide a large, open area that serves as an attractive learning environment for students, as well as ample offices for the Foundation.

The foundation began with two existing foreign contacts; an agency in Holland that sends Spanish students and volunteers, and an organization in the UK that sends 4 groups of volunteers per year for 6 and 10 week volunteer programs. These two contacts provided an immediate, although basic, level of income for the foundation and Spanish school on which we were able to begin to build during the first year. While the UK volunteer groups have remained fairly constant, the number of students coming through Holland declined over part of the year. This was felt to be perhaps due to the cost of the Spanish classes, but the agency itself reported that there was just less interest in Ecuador this year than in previous years. However, there are signs that business from Holland is increasing at the start of our second year.

Separate websites for the foundation and the Spanish school were put online. The foundation website in particular was initially successful, particularly through an association with postings for students and interns on Idealist.org. The foundation received many inquiries from talented students seeking to do internships. From August to May the foundation had two or three interns working on an integrated system of development for use by the foundation as a guide to working with its communities. In June this number swelled to 8 with summer internships that focused mostly on developing participatory methodologies. This time was a learning experience for all, and mistakes were made by both Yanapuma staff in their organization of the interns and by the interns in the carrying out of their tasks. But fortunately, through maintaining open lines of communication these errors were turned into true learning experiences that have allowed us to emerge much the wiser. In August and September these interns left and were replaced by two or three more long-term interns to continue their work.

Two of the founding members of Yanapuma decided to leave the foundation during the summer. The parting was amicable, although somewhat of a relief for the remaining 6 members who had all become increasingly concerned with the difference in the workrate, although to be fair, in both cases this was somewhat due to personal circumstances. However, the remaining 6 members emerged more committed and stronger as a group.

A redesign and relaunch of the Spanish school website in June, with increased funding for publicity and promotion proved effective and the ranking of yanapumaspanish.org rose considerably in Google, which began to result in more inquiries.

In general the first year was a huge learning experience for all members of the Foundation and the Spanish school, who put in long hours and long weeks with minimal pay in order to be able to move ahead. Initially classes were taught by the Ecuadorian founders who are all qualified Spanish teachers. It was decided that they would only teach one student each per week as otherwise they would not have enough time to devote to their other responsibilities in the foundation. In the summer period it was necessary to contract several outside teachers to cope with the number of students. One of these, Betty Benitez, was subsequently contracted full time to teach and to work on the development of teaching materials. In addition, a 6 week internship for a local student, Gabriela Patiño, turned into a full time job as receptionist and general office worker.

On the foundation side, existing contacts with several rural communities resulted in small projects, and work for a few long-term volunteers. Over the summer, in the community of Bua, this led to some successful projects including the building of 3 ecological toilets with an \$850 donation as a pilot project, the initiation of a recycling project, work in the school on the water supply and teaching

English and other subjects. A proposal to the Portland, Oregon chapter of Engineers Without Borders was successful and a group will visit towards the end of 2007 to look at how to solve the sanitation problems of the school. In general we began to recognize the need for a sustained presence in the communities that we work with and began to look for suitable students and interns to maintain the work of the foundation in each community. The need for working to empower and encourage the community to be actively involved in its own development also became clear as a methodological requirement.

The foundation began to work with two daycare centers in the north and south of Quito, receiving a \$1000 donation for one to build a children's outdoor play center. Donations were also received for two rural schools totaling \$1000, and another anonymous donation of \$500. Volunteer projects were arranged for another UK organization that resulted in a donation of around \$300 for a small school at the coast. A Christmas appeal for the community of Wachimak raised over \$600 for medicines and basic items for the community. Yanapuma made several small donations for specific items or to augment other donations in order to complete projects.

Problems were encountered in the foundation's work with the community of Wachimak due to two alcohol-related incidents in the community that revealed an undercurrent of domestic abuse that spilled over into an incident of sexual harassment between an anthropologist studying there and a drunk local man. Our activities were suspended and an effort made to bring in suitable help for the community in forging a suitable and sustainable response that both guarantees the safety and dignity of all members of the community as well as the success of a program of community-based tourism.

Other communities in which the foundation was involved were Chichicorumi in the rainforest, La Chimba and Peribuela in the sierra. Three coastal projects with groups of volunteers were not entirely successful, each for different reasons. The foundation continues to look for suitable communities with which to work at the coast, and to develop suitable methods of working with them.

Yanapuma began a novel Cultural Exchange program, designed as a bridge between volunteering and tourism for those communities that are in the first stages of their tourism project. Initial reactions have been favorable and it is beginning to generate press coverage, especially in the UK.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, to celebrate the first complete year, the 6 remaining founders spent the day in the Parque Metropolitano reviewing successes and failures and outlining a plan for the future. The format for the day was based on a report, the result of individual interviews by a Belgian student and volunteer who specializes in industrial and management psychology, followed by a celebratory dinner. On the organizational and administrative side it has been a struggle to get the foundation legalized and to set up suitable systems and to fully understand the complexities of Ecuadorian law in order to comply with all the necessary requirements. An early disaster with a recommended accountant proved costly to rectify as we had to pay a new accountant to review and rectify 6 months of previous accounts, including dealing with changes to our previous monthly tax declarations. But the result has been positive and we are now confident that we are receiving sound financial auditing and advice.

However, we have still to fully develop our own accounting system to produce the kind of reports that we need. A database system for tracking students, volunteers and interns, classes, accommodation, arrivals, etc., will also eventually be linked to the accounting system to generate automatic invoicing.

### **Summary:**

- Yanapuma Foundation and Spanish School opens its doors on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2006.
- Legalization of the Spanish school as ACP
- Christmas fundraiser for Wachimak raises over \$600.00
- Legalization of the Foundation
- Donation of \$800 for El Inca women's prison to teach English and Music from ex-volunteer
- Work in El Inca women's prison psychology department with psychology students
- Work in Don Soto daycare center and barrio La Union daycare center

- Launch of yanapuma.org and yanapumaspanish.org
- Launch of the Cultural Exchange program
- Development of a post-study survey to improve the Spanish School
- \$1000 donation to build play center in barrio La Union
- Meeting in Puyo with members of different communities to view ecotoilets
- Departure of 2 founders of the foundation
- Three three-day Participatory Rural Appraisal workshops (PRAs) carried out by students and staff in Wachimak and Bua communities
- Completion of Ecotoilets project in Bua de los Tsachila
- Initiation of recycling project in Bua de los Tsachila
- Anonymous donation of \$500.00
- Relaunch of improved yanapumaspanish.org website
- 3 day tourism training workshop in Wachimak by staff and interns
- Organized 3 day Red Cross safety and first-aid training for Wachimak community
- Donation of \$600 for Guale school and \$400 for Abraham Calazacon school from Albyn school
- Installation of closed water system in Abraham Calazacon school in Bua
- Bua was selected by Engineers Without Borders for a project in partnership with Yanapuma
- Yanapuma hosted 23 students and interns during its first year
- 10 visitors visit communities on the Cultural Exchange program
- 32 weeks of group volunteer projects in 5 communities
- Environment Las Americas adopts Yanapuma's code of conduct for visiting an indigenous community
- The Spanish school had 92 students and taught 212 weeks of classes during the first year
- August 15<sup>th</sup> 2007, reflection day and celebration by founder members

### **Activities:**

#### **Yanapuma Spanish School**

The Spanish School began in August, 2006 with students from the agency in Holland. Distribution of flyers to hostals and public places led to one or two walk-in students,. But numbers were low in the first few months, as was expected for a brand new school. Initially there were only between 1 and 3 students in the school during any particular week. April and May of 2007 represent the lowest period as it is low season. July was busiest month with up to 11 students per day during the month. In total during the first year, 212 weeks of classes were taught to 92 students, an average of 4 students per week. Our aim is to have at least 12 students per week.

The school began by offering 3 basic options; straight classes, an immersion package that includes volunteering and cultural visits in Quito, and the possibility of study in a community. The option to study in a community did not take off during the first year, but shows signs of being taken up with the increased popularity of the website.

An ongoing project during the entire year was the development of educational materials that reflect the philosophy of the foundation as well as being effective teaching materials. New contract teachers are chosen for both their ability as teachers and for their affinity with the aims of the foundation.

Throughout the year an effort was made to offer the services that other schools offer their students in relation to excursions, social activities, choice of accommodation in homestay, hostel or hotel, travel advice, etc. We did not always achieve the ideal, but over the course of the year there was a definite improvement in the level of services offered by the school.

The development of a post-study survey form was another important step in the improvement of the school, allowing students the opportunity to comment anonymously on their experiences with Yanapuma.

It was realized that the website is key to developing the school in the long run, to which it end it was reworked and relaunched, and a budget was set for linking the site to other paid sites as well as free link sites in order to raise its profile. The result was that the website began to be ranked more highly by Google, and we began to receive direct inquiries through the new site. This remains a priority for the coming year.

### **Yanapuma Foundation: General**

Yanapuma Foundation began with contacts to some indigenous communities as a result of previous commitments. We understood from the start that we would work with only a few communities at a time, but in an integrated and collaborative fashion, and began with the resolve to develop an integrated model of sustainable development that we could use as a guide for our work. This was mainly done with the collaboration of a number of interns from various countries. After one year we are beginning to see a model taking shape that contains 7 principal axes (health, education, cultural preservation, environmental protection, income generation, waste management, agricultural production). Two issues that have surfaced in this regard from work that we have carried out with communities are that we need to be committed to resolving any potential underlying issues such as domestic violence and excessive alcohol consumption, especially in regard to developing programs that involve visitors and tourists, as well as to protect the volunteers who visit these communities on our behalf. In addition, we need to work consistently to empower the community itself; strengthen its organizational structures and ability to make informed decisions, and to give the community faith in its own abilities to make changes.

The foundation began three projects in Quito; in the El Inca women's prison, and in the daycare centers of La Union neighborhood in the south and the Don Soto daycare center in the north. Volunteers were sent to each, both as part of the immersion Spanish program (only two days per week) and as long-term volunteers. A donation of \$1000 was received to build a play center for the La Union daycare, which was purchased from a local contractor and assembled with the aid of family and foundation members on Sunday 22 April. Overall, within the foundation there was a level of frustration that we could not help these centers more, especially the Don Soto daycare center which has many needs beyond just sending volunteers.

In addition we partnered with the foundation Niñez y Vida, which runs several projects in the city for children. Several long-term volunteers worked for them. The projects in the women's prison were to teach English and Music to women prisoners which was sponsored by a German ex-volunteer to the prison, and to work with the psychology department, sending psychology students to work alongside prison psychologists. Unfortunately the foundation's work in the prison petered out due to excessive and frequent changes of bureaucracy that ended up taking up disproportionate amounts of foundation member's time to resolve. It was felt that it would be more productive to concentrate our scant resources in places where our input would be welcomed rather than constantly blocked. However teaching English and Music continued, financed by the donation from Germany.

In June two of the original founder members decided to leave. Although there was no major falling-out, it had become apparent that the priorities of these two members lay elsewhere whilst the other 6 were all working very hard. Thus, their departure was welcomed and subsequently the remaining members were able to reorganize and continue with greater confidence. It was felt that the foundation's work with the communities had not really taken off up to this point due to a lack of commitment and engagement from the member charged with this responsibility. There was an immediate and marked improvement in this respect over the summer.

The foundation has been very successful in attracting a large number of talented interns, mainly through announcements placed on Idealist.org. We also began with two French and one Dutch intern who all spent from 4 to 8 months working for the foundation. In the summer this number swelled to 8

or 9, all working on various projects, both theoretical development and field testing. Two students from Azusa Pacific University program in Global Studies recommended Yanapuma after their experiences with us which resulted in a further 3 students signing up for internships with us.

The foundation arranged a volunteer project at the coast for a UK organization, sending 10 schoolgirls to the school of Guale in Manabi. We purchased \$250 worth of materials with money they sent us in advance, and at the end of the project the girls left \$1000 with us to split 60/40 with the school of Guale and the school in Bua.

During the year the foundation hosted 4 groups of volunteers from the UK, 23 volunteers in all who carried out projects in Chichicorumi, Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve, Peribuela, Bua, and 3 different locations at the coast for 3 weeks each. Groups arrive for 10 weeks, receiving orientation and Spanish classes in Quito for a few days before going out to the projects. These are organized so that volunteers get to experience the Amazon jungle, the sierra, and the coastal region, the three principal environments that Ecuador offers. The summer group is only 6 weeks and they visit only two projects instead of three. Groups pay for their own stay and include a small donation. When well managed this allows for the purchase of a considerable amount of materials for the projects. The results have been good, despite having consistently had problems with the projects at the coast. Communities there tend to be more fragmented and harder to work with, and promised projects often have not materialized on the arrival of the volunteers.

Chichicorumi has proven a dependable place to send volunteers where we can guarantee that they will work and enjoy their stay. The project at Bellavista was changed to Peribuela as the sierra phase because volunteers preferred to work directly with communities rather than with a private reserve. Peribuela has proven a good community to work with too. The project at Bua was the first one for these groups directly organized and executed by Yanapuma, and was a great success, resulting in the construction of 3 ecological toilets. We continue to look for good projects to undertake with these groups at the coast.

Another issue that has surfaced as important to resolve is the legal status of the tourism programs that we are working with. The communities of Chichicorumi, Bua, and Wachimak are struggling with the question of legalization, and Yanapuma has pledged to help to investigate the most efficient and least onerous way of becoming legal entities. A key question is how to do this in a way that minimizes tax liabilities, accounting requirements and charging sales tax, as these are such small-scale projects that will not be able to afford to comply with the complex regulations imposed on them if they choose an inappropriate method of legalization.

### **Projects in Bua de los Tsachila**

Perhaps the greatest success of the foundation in its first year has been the work in the community of Bua. An initial idea to build an ecological toilet for the Shinopibolon cultural center received a boost from an unexpected donation of \$850 that enabled us to build two additional ecotoilets in situations where they will get substantial use and we will be able to monitor them closely to gauge their effectiveness. We contacted the press and held open days during construction, invited local politicians, demonstrated them to groups of school children, did newspaper and radio interviews, and generated a lot of interest. Subsequently many people in the community of Bua and surrounding communities have asked about how to get or build them. A survey was designed for regular application to gather reliable data on the use of the ecological toilets.

From this project the foundation began to work more with the children in the school, and to introduce a recycling project in the community with the help of the municipality. In addition we sponsored a sealed water system for the school to provide safe drinking and hand-washing water for the 250 children and staff of the school after testing the quality of the water in the well. Contact with a US chapter of Engineers Without Borders has led to a project to solve the overall water and sanitation problems of the school which are quite severe. We are hopeful that this will take place in 2007/8. We have been lucky to have had several very talented interns working in Bua, and have become aware as a result of their

efforts of the necessity to maintain a presence in the community through students and volunteers as well as with regular staff visits. By this means we can demonstrate our commitment to the community and generate a level of confidence, as well as having people there to carry out specific functions with regard to our projects.

A group of interns carried out a 3 day participatory appraisal with between 30 and 50 members of the community. They were testing the applicability of this method for the model that we are developing as well as using the opportunity to gather relevant information from the community and inspire them to become involved in making positive changes. The result of these workshops was felt to be a success overall, although there were certain points at things did not work as expected (see appendix Av).

Bua has also been set up as a Cultural Exchange Program destination.

An outline proposal for the Portland, Oregon chapter of Engineers Without Borders was selected in a competition as a project that they would like to pursue. This will involve sorting out the dire sanitation situation in the Abraham Calazacon school, as well as permanently solving the potable water situation that Yanapuma temporarily solved this summer. It is planned that a group will make an initial site inspection later in 2007.

### **Projects in Wachimak**

Yanapuma's involvement in Wachimak began with support of the tourism project that was already under way in the community. Although it had been in existence for nearly 4 years, like most community-based tourism projects it had not taken off. The community had received a few volunteers to work in the school and daycare center, but little more. Yanapuma staff visited at Christmas after having launched an appeal to buy parasite medication for the children. We raised over \$600 that was spent on medicines, clothes, educational materials and some basic food items.

We began sending volunteers to Wachimak for a month or more at a time. We also planned a three day participatory process with the community to be carried out by interns. Unfortunately there occurred an incident involving a female anthropologist who had been studying there for several months and living there with her husband (unconnected with Yanapuma) who was sexually assaulted by a drunk member of the community. Together with a previous incident involving a drunk member of the community going around the community with a knife trying to stab his wife, this brought into question how we could proceed with a tourism program. It was also unfortunate as the incident came to our attention only the afternoon before the group was supposed to arrive in Wachimak. A miscommunication between staff resulted in the interns not being fully briefed before they got to the community which caused them to criticize the foundation roundly about its procedures, something which under the circumstances was warranted. But subsequent meetings with the interns turned this incident into a learning experience for all.

The decision was taken to suspend our projects with the community pending the resolution of these incidents in the community. We sought help from the local municipality and the department of human resources to send out a psychologist capable of dealing with the issue of domestic abuse in the community. It was thought to be best to do this as something independent from Yanapuma and not connected to our projects there. For the community of Wachimak it represents something of a critical point. If they cannot work as a community to overcome such problems then it will be impossible to promote Wachimak as a tourist destination. Importantly though, Wachimak has been promoted as a Cultural Exchange Program destination with an organization through which a sizeable donation will accompany each visitor, and is beginning to attract interest, with several visitors scheduled to go there later in the year. One scheduled visitor was redirected to another community in September pending a visit by the foundation to decide on the future there.

### **Projects in La Chimba**

During the course of our first year Yanapuma has not been very active in La Chimba. We have sent two long-term students/volunteers to work with the community. In addition it has been promoted as a

destination for the Cultural Exchange Program, receiving 3 visitors during the summer of 2007. Feeling that we have sufficient resources, the decision was taken to become more involved with La Chimba in the coming year.

La Chimba is a well-organized and relatively large community, so we need to plan carefully how we can support the already existing structures of the community.

### **Projects in Chichicorumi**

Chichicorumi has principally been a location for group projects. The project is called Kamak Maki and is run principally by one extended family, that of the director of the project, Alonso Andy.

Volunteers have constructed a kitchen/dining area for the visitor center, volunteer and visitor accommodation in another cabana, and have begun work on a new ethnographic museum building. All these are traditional structures using bamboo walls and leaf roofs. In addition they have maintained the botanical and medicinal gardens.

Chichicorumi has also become a Cultural Exchange Program destination and 6 visitors went there in the summer of 2007. All reported having had a great experience.

At a meeting in August with Alonso Andy we pledged to help them with the legalization process and to help them design a tourism program as the main priorities. The foundation also needs to work on making more contact with the community in general, to which Alonso is well connected.

### **Evaluation**

We feel fortunate to have survived the first year which has been a huge learning experience for all. The 6 remaining founder members have worked very hard, with long hours, for an extremely basic remuneration (starting at \$180 per month in August 2006 and rising to \$240 per month in August 2007). But all are unanimous in seeing the need to sacrifice in order to move ahead, and we have generated a level of confidence amongst ourselves to face the future. The successes have been rewarding and significant in terms of the development of the foundation and the Spanish school, and the setbacks and mistakes have been relatively minor and have led to realization and growth.

Remaining challenges are:

- to fully develop our administrative system
- to develop an accounting system that will satisfy our future needs for reporting and seeking funding
- to begin to seek funding for larger programs
- to increase the number of students attending the Spanish school
- to find a more efficient way of organizing the long-term students and interns without whom we could not achieve nearly as much for the foundation and the communities that we work with
- to network and build up relations with other organizations
- to continue developing and refining our methodology as a foundation



**Financial Report:**

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## Appendices

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