



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. 14: Christmas 2009

Introduction

It is hard to believe that another year has drawn to a close. For all of us at Yanapuma it has flown past with so much activity in both the school and the foundation.

The school has remained surprisingly busy up until Christmas which has been a blessing as our expenses have been relatively high these last 2 months, and we finished the year with our income and expenses roughly equal. It remains a priority for next year to work towards having a reserve that we can draw upon if times get hard, but for now we are thankful to have finished the year even.

Our aim for 2010 with the school is to increase the number of students to an average of 20 per week. Although we felt it unwise to increase our prices for this year, we hope that an increase in student numbers will lower the overhead costs sufficiently to keep the school profitable.

On the foundation side we were all delighted to learn at the start of December that our application for funding from the UN Small Donations Fund was successful. The funds will provide resources for a two year project in reforestation and cacao production in Bua and nearby San Jacinto del Bua. Read more on page 2.



A school weekend trip, tubing down the Napo river in the Ecuadorian Amazon

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Azalia, our Director of Projects, after a long struggle to obtain a visa to travel to the US, finally got the green light to go there for a special medical surgery that she needs. She will return on 11 January. We wish her well and a safe return to Quito.

We also launched our annual Christmas Appeal, once again seeking funds to support the children of Estero de Plátano to study at secondary school as a means of improving their own and their community's opportunities for development in coming years. Visit our webpage to learn more.

At the close of the year we look back with satisfaction at the continued growth and development of the organization, happy that our hard work has yielded results and grateful for the support we have received from former students, staff, and the organizations that have supported our endeavours. During 2009 our staff has grown to 18, with an additional 10 contract teachers in the Spanish school.

New Faces . . .

Yanapuma is pleased to welcome **Daniela Romero Waldhorn** as our new Coordinator of Projects. Daniela is from Chile and has lived for the past several years in Spain. She has a Masters degree in Development Cooperation from the Universidad de Valencia, and has worked on various projects with youth and adults.

We also welcome **Guadalupe Peralta** who began work with Yanapuma in December. She is a community worker with a Masters in International Environmental Rights and a Bachelors degree in Social Communication. She has previous experience in various communities in the sierra. She is working with the Tsa'chila of Bua on community development around the issues of self-esteem, leadership and organization through a grant from the Interamerican Foundation.

Charlotte Lulsens from Belgium also joins the team as an intern. She has a Masters degree in Development Administration and Planning from University College London. She will be monitoring and controlling our projects in Bua in 2010.

New "Socios" for Yanapuma

We are also pleased to announce that Academic Director Edison Rendon and Agricultural Program Director Giovanni Toapanta will become "socios" of the foundation. Due to their outstanding contributions to the development of the organization and their level of dedication, the founders decided that they would make ideal candidates to assume the responsibilities of guiding Yanapuma in the coming years.

New Funding!

In mid-December we received news that Yanapuma has been awarded a one-off grant of £4000 sterling by the **Souter Charitable Trust** of Scotland. This will fund our work in Estero de Platano in education, especially in the area of sexual and reproductive rights education, a vital task in view of the extent of teenage and even pre-teen pregnancies that occur in this area.



Daniela, Guadalupe and Charlotte

School News . . .

Yanapuma will be pleased to welcome **Dr Janet Roccanova** as a new member of the Yanapuma team in mid-January. Formerly director of study abroad programs for the University of Kentucky, Janet will assume the post of Director of Academic Programs in which capacity she will be working to develop study abroad, service learning, and other research related programs in Ecuador, for international students from the US and other countries as well as developing links with international organizations and institutions.

Staff, Students and Interns . . .

After a year spent volunteering in Estero de Plátano **Lesley Arney** said goodbye to the community to return home to the US. During her time in Estero she worked with local youth on issues of sexual and reproductive rights and general education, with volunteer groups organizing projects, as well as being a key person for Yanapuma in the community. We are very grateful for her contribution to Estero de Plátano and know that she will be missed by the community.

After nearly 4 months spent working on publicity and marketing for the foundation and school **Friederike Hoppe** left in mid-December. She created a video for the school which you can see on the school's website, and one for the school in Bua which is on the foundation website in the new "Schools" section. We are grateful for all her hard work under pressure!

Emilien Amblat and **Veronica Auzias**, from École d'Études Politiques in Aix-en-Provence in France continue working on the development of the eco-schools concept and on other projects in education in the communities of Bua and Estero de Plátano.

Megan Bomba left us in December after spending 4 months working on projects with Estero de Plátano (*see E de P news*). We thank her for her considerable efforts on behalf of the community.

We also said goodbye and thank you to **Tamasin Knight** from the UK, who developed health promotion materials for the Integrated Health Centre in Bua.

Other News . . .

In 2010 Yanapuma will be sponsoring 3 Masters theses for students of the Universidad Central through a grant provided by the **Royal Geographical Society** and **Royal Dutch Shell**. The three theses will research improved cacao production, reforestation with natural species, and post-harvest processing of cacao in Bua. The funds will support the candidates expenses during their research activities in Bua and the results will contribute to our continued work with the Tsa-chila.

In December we were pleased to receive a copy of the book written by former volunteer **Carly Leusner** about the medicinal plants of the Amazonia with information supplied to her by Alonso Andy of Kamak Maki. He has spent many years researching and using the many medicinal plants of the area and is an invaluable source of local information. The book was presented to him at the end of December.

We also received a donation on behalf of Kamak Maki from former volunteer **Adam Wright**, who collected funds amongst friends and family in Texas. These were also delivered to Alonso Andy at the end of December.

Volunteer News . . .

As December was fairly quiet in the volunteer department, coordinators Fran and Shanti took advantage of the time to get out and vet some new projects for our Volunteer Ecuador portfolio as well as review existing projects that we support. An updated list of the organizations that we work with is on our website under the "Volunteer" menu. We hope to continue expanding this program during 2010.

The students from **Thinking Beyond Borders** who spent a month working in the community of Bua on a reforestation project also made several short videos about life and conditions in the community of Bua. We have linked to them from our foundation website, on the home page and in the new Schools section under Abraham Calazacon school.



Sotogrande International School Funding

Yanapuma has received funding for the current academic year 2009/10 from **Sotogrande International School** of \$15000. This is being awarded as a mix of earnings from the online classes that we are currently giving to some of their children and project funding. Together with Sotogrande we are looking for ways to increase forms of earning the funds awarded rather than relying on a purely donation relationship.

The funds will be used for a mix of projects, new and ongoing, with emphasis on ways of creating links between schools like Sotogrande and children in rural marginalized schools like Bua, promoting cultural exchange, and developing the EcoEscuelas concept in Ecuador.



Mushuk Muyu online!

We have been waiting since September for the publication of the texts by the Ministry of Bilingual Education for the Mushuk Muyu project created by **Mather Tasker** and **Linda Westberg**. Although this has still not yet happened, the materials are being put online on the department's website. Follow this link to learn more:

www.dineib.gov.ec/pages/interna.php?txtCodiInfo=193

Additionally we were delighted to learn that Microsoft, for its one-laptop-per-child project in Ecuador will preload the Mushuk Muyu (Kichwa) and Yanawka (Sapara) materials onto the computers that will be distributed.

Project News . . .

Estero de Plátano

In conjunction with **Fundación Agua Muisne** we are pursuing a project to install a micro enterprise to produce very cheap and clean drinking water for the village. A temporary setback occurred when the person who had agreed to allow the project to be sited on part of their land pulled out saying that their son wanted to build a house there one day. We continue working with the community to find a suitable spot for the water purification equipment.

Intern **Emiliano Amblat** spent quite a bit of time in the community during December talking with the children who had received the scholarships and their parents in preparation for next year's round of scholarship funding. December also saw volunteer **Lesley Arney's** year-long sojourn in Estero de Plátano come to an end. Read more in "*Intern News*"

Megan Bomba, who is part of the Graduate Group in International Agricultural Development at UC Davis, wrote up her study of health and nutrition in Estero de Plátano which is now available in the documents section of the foundation website. Her excellent analysis of the diet and nutritional problems of the community is an important contribution to the work of the foundation and clearly spells out the importance of working on these issues in the future.

We also launched our annual **Christmas Appeal** towards the end of December to once again support children of Estero de Plátano to study at secondary level.

Bua de los Tsa'chila

The foundation's work in Bua has been given a big boost by the award of two grants for 2010. One is from the Interamerican Foundation and will provide a social/community worker to work with residents on issues of cultural self-esteem, development of leadership skills and organizational abilities. This work will be focused towards the practical outcomes of improving cacao production, developing a vegetable plot at the school, and creating family tree-nurseries.

The social/community worker will work with local groups (cabildo, cultural center, cacao growers association, women's community bank, teachers) to strengthen their ability to successfully carry out their tasks and duties. This is an essential step in making our work sustainable. Yanapuma has hired **Guadalupe Peralta** to the post of social/community worker on an 8 month contract which we hope we will be able to renew if all goes well.

The second major Project for Bua in 2010 involves reforestation in conjunction with the nearby mestizo community of San Jacinto del Bua. The collaboration between Tsa'chila and mestizo is a major breakthrough for us, as previously the Tsa'chila have always shied away from involvement with their mestizo neighbors. But they have come to recognize the need to collaborate to protect the rivers that have diminished severely and become polluted over the past years through deforestation and unsustainable agricultural practices. These problems affect the entire region and need to be addressed on a wider scale, beyond the borders of Tsa'chila territory.

On 10 December at a ceremony organized by the (continued)

Bua de los Tsa'chila—continued

Consejo Provincial, Yanapuma signed the official project documents relating to the reforestation project that we will be carrying out over the next two years with financing from the Small Donations Fund of the United Nations.

Both of these projects will include various groups within the community—the women's community bank, the cabildo, cultural center, cacao growers association, and the school, and a focus of all activities will be to train these groups to be able to manage projects, giving them the tools to manage their own development in the future.



Giovanny, Charlotte, Guadalupe and Daniela meet to plan our work in Bua

Kamak Maki/Puca Chicta

At the end of November Azalia and Andy traveled to Kamak Maki for a meeting with Alonso Andy, the director of the project Kamak Maki. The aim was to review the past year and see what we can achieve together in 2010. We have mainly used Kamak Maki as a reliable location to send volunteer groups to carry out construction projects related to the development of the ethnographic museum of Kichwa culture and visitor center. Some resentment was expressed by Alonso that Yanapuma had not lived up to his expectations during the year, a criticism we had to accept, having talked about providing training in accounting and other skills. Unfortunately we just did not have the resources to spare during 2009. But are hoping to remedy this in 2010 and restore our relationship with Alonso and his family. He is truly one of the unsung heroes, working constantly to improve life in the surrounding communities, and fully deserving of our support.

We also crossed the river to visit Puca Chicta with information prepared by the Portland branch of **Engineers Without Borders** who visited Puca Chicta in the summer to investigate solutions to their drinking water problems. The community has a spring next to the village that appears to be a good option for a reliable and safe drinking water supply. One idea is to build a tower and pump the water so that the village can have piped water to their homes.



Intern Emiliano helps prepare "ceviche" on the beach in Estero de Plátano during a recent visit

November & December Photo Gallery

