

Annual Report 2015

Introduction by the Executive Director

In September 2015 Yanapuma Foundation completed its 9th year of operation as a non-profit NGO in Ecuador, continuing its mission to promote sustainable development in indigenous and marginalized communities around the country and to promote cultural exchange between members of developed and developing countries.

Our activities in pursuit of these objectives were to continue the project work that we have been carrying out with the addition of funding from the Inter American Foundation, as well as continuing our own scholarship program for disadvantaged youth and receiving groups of international volunteers to carry out a variety of projects with some of our partner organizations.

Yanapuma works on a “social entrepreneurship” model, generating income from our own commercial activities – our Spanish schools in Quito and Cuenca and other traveling programs, hosting and placing individual and groups of volunteers in suitable projects, and now our new travel agency – True Ecuador Travel.

The past year has been a challenging one financially as a major shift in tourism affected the number of students attending the Spanish schools. We have noted a number of reasons for this change, which has been felt across many sectors in Ecuador that work with tourists and visitors. One reason has been the strength of the US dollar, which is also Ecuador's currency. A change from around 1.25 or 1.30



euros to the dollar down to around 1.05 to 1.10 to the dollar has meant that it is significantly more expensive for European students to come to Ecuador, and indeed we have heard that many have chosen to study in Spain or Portugal instead of crossing the Atlantic to South America.

Equally, both Peru and Colombia have made great strides in attracting tourists, including Spanish students which has had a corresponding affect on the numbers coming to Ecuador. A number of our own students have commented that they have or will study for a week or two in Colombia as well, for example.

In reality we have seen a roughly 25% reduction in the number of students each year for the past 3 years as the global pattern shifts. We now receive very few backpackers, who have been the mainstay of the Spanish school industry here in Ecuador for a good 15 or more years. Many choose



to go to Southeast Asia instead these days. Now it is their parents that come to Ecuador, along with families with children who want to study Spanish and travel together. So our student profile includes an increasing number of older students and families with children. Fortunately many of these are also choosing our Study and Travel programs and other offerings from our travel agency such as Galapagos tours, which has helped to offset the general decline in numbers.

Nevertheless, the work of the foundation continued in 2015 with significant advances, especially in regard to our principal project co-funded by the Inter American Foundation. The start of this project was the hardest part, but after two to three years, everything has begun to run more smoothly. We are especially proud to mention that 3 of our 4 field staff now are Tsa'chila themselves, replacing our original non-Tsa'chila field staff.

In our scholarship program for disadvantaged youth of Estero de Plátano to study at high school we were pleased to see that 5 of them graduated in 2015. Now we recognize that we need to work on helping the community to create jobs within Estero de Plátano itself in order to help in the development of community-run businesses to take advantage of the gradual development of tourism on that part of the coast.

We have also been developing scholarships for the Tsa'chila community of Bua and will be able to add one more in 2016, bringing the total there to 3 scholarship recipients. These are funded by Colège Edouard Montpetit of Canada and

Kindred Spirit of Spain. In addition we hope to be able to increase the number of scholarships for Estero de Plátano. We had to reduce the number from 11 in the previous year to just 8 last year to make ends meet.

In addition to these activities, which will be described in more detail below, we have continued to collaborate with over 35 grass-roots organizations and communities to receive individual volunteers, interns and volunteer groups. These are important contributions to the projects they visit, not only for the resources they bring in terms of person-power and financial contribution, but also for the opportunity that they offer these communities to learn to organize themselves, plan, accommodate and feed the volunteers.

In summary, 2015 has been a year of reasonable progress for Fundación Yanapuma that we can look back on with satisfaction. In our project work we remain focused on avoiding paternalism and on creating self-reliance and confidence within our client population. As we start 2016 we are keen to develop new partnerships with universities and other organizations to bring new resources to the populations that we work with and to offer them in return the opportunity for cultural exchange and learning.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AS' followed by a stylized flourish.

Andrew Kirby, Ph.D.
Director Ejecutivo



Structure of the organization

During 2015 Fundación Yanapuma maintained the same structure and organization as in previous years. Fundación Yanapuma is a registered Ecuadorian non-profit NGO under the Ministerio de Inclusión Económico y Social. As such we are not permitted to generate our own sources of income as a non-profit. It was for that reason that we were obliged to separate the Spanish schools from the foundation and run them as a business which then pays the overheads for the foundation. This arrangement now includes True Ecuador Travel as well, as a limited company and travel agency registered with the Ministerio de Turismo.

Finally, Yanapuma Foundation as a separate registered charity in Scotland has continued to provide funding and resources to Yanapuma in Ecuador, principally through receiving funds into its UK bank account from volunteer groups and donations to disperse to Ecuador for project work. The two foundations are entirely separate, and Yanapuma Foundation of Scotland files its own documents and reports under the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator for approval on an annual basis. Up-to-date information can be viewed online here: <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/search-scottish-charity-register/charity-details?number=SC040519#results>

Yanapuma Spanish School

While a report of the Spanish school, volunteering activities and travel agency is not strictly required of an annual report

of the Fundación Yanapuma, we include it here as these undertakings are linked both by the direct provision of financing for projects and the activities that are engendered by students and volunteers for the foundation. Our form of social entrepreneurship links our for-profit activities with the work of the foundation, and makes the foundation dependent upon the successful management of these businesses.

The year 2015 was the most challenging year that the Spanish schools have faced so far. We have seen a year-on-year decline since a peak in 2012/13, with fewer backpackers traveling to Ecuador to start their South American odyssey each year. With the departure of our student coordinator in Quito in August, we took the decision not to replace her, but share her duties between several staff in order to reduce the costs.





However, it is not all negative news as we have seen an increase in the number of retired travelers and families traveling to Ecuador with their families to study Spanish and explore. According to agencies that we are in contact with, Southeast Asia is gaining in popularity for young backpackers, both for price and more English being spoken there.

The result is that although the number of students has diminished, those older students who have studies with us have often opted for our Study and Travel programs and purchased tours to Galapagos and Amazon lodges through us, which has compensated somewhat for the decline in numbers. Meanwhile, in the school in Cuenca the student population has consistently been composed of older students who either already live in Cuenca or who are visiting to explore the possibility of retiring there in the near future.

In July of 2015 our student and volunteer coordinator Juliet Barret left us to move to Spain to follow a Masters course. She was replaced by Linda XX who was already resident in Cuenca.

In 2014 we were seeking to adapt by developing more group classes which are generally more profitable and require fewer staff, who nowadays have to be employed permanently for either 20 or 40 hours with benefits, whether or not we had students for them to teach. However this has proven problematic due to not having sufficient numbers of students in the school to be able to offer classes at all the necessary levels. In 2015 we investigated the possibility of



collaborating with one or more of the other schools in the association of which we are members to combine students and more easily conduct small group classes. But there has been no progress in this so far, although it remains an option for the future. Instead, we took the decision that we would continue as we currently are with both schools for 2016, knowing that we will survive any further downturn in student numbers through the income from volunteer groups and our travel agency.

When we first set up Yanapuma, the Spanish classes were 100% of the income for the foundation. Since then their importance has declined to the point where they now represent only about 30% of our income. For that reason we can afford to continue for another year to see what the situation is then and consider our options at that point.

What is certain is that rather than dedicate a budget for marketing for the Spanish school on its own, our marketing



budget will be focused on developing new relationships with international organizations and universities to develop educational travel programs, study abroad, service learning and global citizenship type programs. These may also include Spanish courses, but will also include travel and possibly volunteering. Thus the Spanish schools will still have a place in the overall business model of Yanapuma.

Volunteer Department

Our volunteer department had a very busy year in 2015. In addition to individual volunteers seeking placements with reliable grass-roots organizations and communities, we received groups from various international organizations to carry out projects that contributed to the work of the foundation.

We were delighted to welcome back Janneke Robbe from Holland. Janneke was pretty much our first volunteer coordinator way back in 2007 when she came as an intern. Now she works alongside Cristina Lopez, keeping the volunteer department organized and on target as we continue to expand the number of groups that we receive each year.

In addition to the hard work of Cristina and Janneke, we were grateful for the added help from a number of volunteer group leaders and interns:

Alonso Alvarez
Isabel Morris

Juliane Ziegler
Sofia Falconi
Lorea Urquiaga
Jelle Ooms
Chelsea Encababian
Vania Michelini
Luis Osorio
Jesse Macarthur
Samantha Muratori
Gabriela Romero
Lacey Reimer
Gerardo Reyes

Among the volunteer groups that arrived in 2015 were the following:

The Leap - UK (4 groups)
Thinking Beyond Borders – US (2 groups)
Outlook Expeditions – UK (7 groups)
Vanderbilt University – US (1 group)
Colège Edouard Montpetit – Canada (1 group)
Pacific Discovery – New Zealand/US (2 groups)
Harvard Forum on International Development (1 group)
Eindhoven University (1 group)



The volunteer groups from the Leap and Thinking Beyond Borders provided invaluable help with the Tsa'chia planting around 16,000 saplings during the year in the 4 comunas that we are working with as part of the “edible forest” project. In addition these groups contributed to ongoing projects in the Andean sierra in the communities of Chilcapamba (Leap) and XX (TBB). The Leap groups also spent time in the Galapagos Islands working on a conservation project with local partner Hacienda Tranquila on the island of San Cristóbal. Of course, they also took some time to explore the famous and fascinating Galapagos archipelago.



The groups from Thinking Beyond Borders bring a donation of \$2000 which we use to purchase the trees from the

nursery of the cultural center Shinopi Bolón in Bua along with a supplementary payment by Yanapuma for the extra



cost which this year was \$460. Likewise each volunteer from the Leap brings a small donation which is used to purchase materials and supplies for the project work that they carry out.

The groups from Outlook Expeditions visited various locations including Tsa'chila communities and the Selva Vida project in the Amazon region. The groups volunteer for 5 days as part of their adventure in South America. These groups bring their own donations, raised by their respective high schools which they donate directly to the projects they are working on. Yanapuma organizes the previous delivery



of the materials they are going to use on the project so that the groups can make the most of their short time there and jump right in to the work when they arrive.

Two groups from New Zealand-based Pacific Discovery arrived in February and July. The volunteer portion of their gap-year program involved working in the community of Agato in the Andean sierra close to Otavalo, about two hours north of Quito. The connection with this community was made by former group leader Maria Jose XX, an Ecuadorian and now-graduated anthropology student who had worked previously with the community. Yanapuma was involved in organizing other aspects of their travels throughout Ecuador and setting up their second volunteer placement on the Galapagos Islands with Hacienda Tranquilla.

The group of students that came from Vanderbilt University in the US took Spanish classes in Quito and volunteered in various projects for one month while they stayed with local host families.

We are always pleased to receive a group from the Col  ge Edouard Montpetit from Quebec in Canada. This year was the 5th year that they have returned to work with the Tsa'chila cacao growers of Bua. Their presence has always acted as a spur to the cacaoteros, encouraging them to press forward with their project to improve the quality and yield of their cacao. In addition to working on some of the farms they group brings a donation of \$1000 for materials and supplies for their work.



For the first time in January of 2015 we received a group from Harvard University – The Harvard Forum on International Development (HFID). The 6 volunteers from various disciplines spent two weeks in the Tsa'chila comuna of El Poste working with the cacaoteros, and contributed with a donation of \$200 for fertilizers and other materials. They made a video of their experiences which can be viewed here: <http://www.yanapuma.org/videos/chocolate.mp4>

We also welcomed a group of 19 architecture and construction students from Eindhoven University in Holland who spent a week at the Shuar community of Selvavida in the Amazon region, working on construction of new caba  as and learning about traditional construction methods.



Other help came in the form of interns Lacey Reimer and Gerardo Reyes from Union College, who spent from August to the end of the year in Estero de Plátano working with the scholarship recipients there. They took over from Samantha Muratori and Gabriela Romero who lived in Estero de Plátano from August 2014 to April 2015.

We were happy to expand our collaboration with KulturLife of Germany to receive 5 volunteers on the German “Weltwärts” program. This government-sponsored program covers a volunteer's expenses for a whole year for them to volunteer in a single project. Unfortunately, the budget is very small and Yanapuma does not gain anything from the program, but we have been able to find placements where the community or organization will offer to contribute so that the volunteer can live for a year and offer their services teaching English, working with children with learning difficulties and on development projects. Being there for a whole year is a significant help and Yanapuma is happy to

collaborate without reward in order to connect these willing volunteers with worthwhile projects.

The volunteer groups and individual volunteers who offer their time to volunteer with Yanapuma provide a vital contribution to the work of the foundation, as well as providing some income that allows us to continue our work. Having witnessed an increase in volunteer activity we decided that we should work towards increasing the linkage and collaboration between the volunteers and the work of the foundation and make the volunteers' contributions as meaningful as possible in the context of the projects that we carry out.

Yanapuma Foundation

In 2015 the foundation worked principally on the third year of our project co-funded by the Inter American Foundation. The three axes of this project are to improve cacao production for farmers of the Tsa'chila culture, teach families how to grow vegetables to include in their diet, and offer nutritional education. Added to this focus are projects connected with developing micro-enterprises for the cultural centers and groups, reforestation both as protection of the water courses and soils and the provision of sources of improved nutrition, and scholarships for youth to finish their high-school education.



In the coastal village of Estero de Plátano we have continued with our project to provide scholarships to deserving youth to study at high school, in addition to providing help for other groups in the community such as the women's group.

Finally, we have contributed to projects run by other grass-roots organizations and other local communities in other parts of Ecuador which will be described below. As ever, in 2015 an important aspect of the work of the foundation was to encourage independence in any client population and to avoid paternalism. These tend to be natural pitfalls of any development work and have to be carefully planned against.

Vegetable production and the “Edible Forest”



During 2015, as part of the IAF project, we continued with the theme of creating and teaching beneficiaries how to maintain vegetable gardens in the Tsa'chila comunas of Bua, El Poste, Peripa and Los Naranjos. The work was supervised by Janeth Llanos who has been working on the IAF project since the start and lives in Santo Domingo. She has considerable experience now working with the Tsa'chila and in her visits to each family accompanied by our Tsa'chila nutritionist Cristina Calazacón, she has gained acceptance for her dedication and ability to teach these valuable skills.

As ever, during the year new families entered the project while others dropped out. In balance there were more

families joining than leaving, and in fact we now manage a waiting list of interested families wishing to learn how to grow vegetables, inspired by the success of their neighbors. So at the end of the year we have 62 families participating, producing tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, aubergines, spinach, lettuce, parsley, cilantro, cabbages, carrots and more.



Constructing a new vegetable garden

An increasing number of the families are now independent and fully able to maintain their vegetable gardens, having mastered the ability to save their own seeds and produce compost from kitchen scraps and other organic material. We hope to have a significant number totally independent by the end of the project to create the critical mass for the vegetable gardens to become self-sustaining throughout these comunas.

The plots have been plagued from the start though by pests, especially ants, which abound in the rainforest and are constantly cutting off the best and most tender leaves to take back to their colonies.

However, Janeth has worked with the most successful families to develop natural methods of keeping the pests under control and passing this knowledge on to the other families involved. Ants also made it impossible to produce compost using worms as these are a great delicacy for them. For that reason we switched to producing compost from vegetable scraps and other organic materials.



Other plagues were caused by the relatively high humidity that is typical of this region. We realized that vegetable gardens are more of a highland sierra concept and perhaps not best suited to a tropical, formerly rainforest environment. As a response to this situation we were introduced by one of our volunteer coordinators, Rachel Worthington, to the concept of the “edible forest” or analogue forestry.

The idea behind the edible forest is to reforest, largely with native species, but also with other introduced species that have particular use for human beings. Thus we can re-

create some of the original forest of the region while ensuring that there will always be a supply of nutritious foods that is available year-round. In addition of course this will encourage greater biodiversity and the return of some of the species that have been pushed out of the region through increased agricultural land use.

In September of 2015 we began transplanting saplings with the help of volunteer groups to 14 test plots of around 1 hectare each in the 4 comunas. The saplings were grown at the Shinopi Bolón cultural center in Bua where the participating families are learning to maintain a sapling nursery as a micro-enterprise. We hope to finish creating these plots in April or possibly July of 2016 as volunteer groups arrive and the necessary funding becomes available.

Nutritional and diet education with the Tsa'chila

Our nutritional expert, Cristina Calazacón, worked alongside Janeth Llanos during the year, helping the families with vegetable plots to learn how to incorporate the vegetables into their daily diet. While this has been a struggle for a few families, the vast majority have reacted very positively, welcoming the additional foods into their daily diet. The traditional Tsa'chila fare has become very restricted flavor-wise and nutritionally over the past decades, with a focus on starch such as white rice, noodles, yucca and plantain, with little protein and almost no vegetables or flavoring. So new additions to their diet have generally been welcomed and some beneficiaries have even noted that their families seem more resistant and healthy.

One of the great advantages for Cristina is that she can teach them in their native language, Tsa'fiki. Although all of those under 50 or 60 years old speak Spanish, the older persons still understand things better in their native language. Spanish words are introduced to fill in for words and concepts that do not exist in Tsa'fiki.



Cristina has carried out regular visits to families during the course of the year as well as developing materials to print and use in her visits. She has also carried out several workshops, although these are always problematic as the Tsa'chila do not really like to get together for such things, preferring to do everything from home if possible. An integral part of the project has been to encourage Cristina herself to develop new skills and abilities and to learn more so that after the end of the project she will be more independent and capable of working at a higher level in the realm of nutrition and diet among the Tsa'chila.

Cacao production with the Tsa'chila

Over the course of 2015, under the direction of Tsa'chila Rafael Machin and Wilson Calazacón, the project to improve the quality and yield of the cacao in the 4 comunas continued to develop. We are now entering the period when the first harvests of cacao are beginning to take place and it is especially exciting and a little nerve-racking to see this process starting. It has been a long process to get the



beneficiaries used to thinking so far ahead and committing their time and effort to something that they were not convinced at the start would produce a viable return.

However, the first trial plot of cacao that we established back in 2011 is now producing a good quantity of national cacao pods and has been useful for continually reminding the cacao growers of the potential benefits of growing this type of cacao. Many Tsa'chila farmers have expressed a preference for a variety called CCN51 which produces a high yield of

low quality cacao. As we discovered last year, the concept of quality is not something native to Tsa'chila culture or understanding due to their hunter-gatherer origins – quantity remains the supreme indicator of success. But this is changing as many begin to understand that although the national varieties may produce less, there will be a greater reward through a higher price for a better product.

The question of price differentiation however is one that is still under development on a national level. There are many small and large cacao cooperatives where they have succeeded in producing organic cacao that they sell to specific buyers for a better price. But as yet no regular mechanism exists in the market to recognize this difference so that if farmers sell to any regular wholesaler, all the cacao gets mixed together and the price they receive is the same as for the poor quality cacao.

One of our primary objectives remains to find ways to encourage the Tsa'chila to group together to form an association that will be able to take advantage of their unique identity to market their cacao as a special product. Towards the end of 2015 Wilson and Rafael began to investigate how to re-animate the cacao growers association which collapsed in 2011. Now there is increased interest and we believe that the time may be right to promote this association again.



At the same time Wilson and Rafael (above) are beginning to experiment with the next steps in the process of fermenting and drying the cacao prior to roasting it and separating the kernel from the outer shell to produce pure chocolate nibs. The further along the production chain that they go, the more stable the price becomes. So it is well worth looking to developing added value to the cacao harvest.

One additional activity for Wilson and Rafael has been to continue their high school studies at the weekend so they can finally graduate from high school. That is on top of the visits they have made to other cacao-growing associations to learn about their methods and procedures as part of their own professional development. This kind of networking is invaluable as they move towards creating the association and organizing the sale of Tsa'chila cacao.

Another important aspect of their work during 2015 has been to train new promoters in each of the 4 comunas. Passing on their knowledge and expertise to younger cacao farmers in each community will help to improve the overall knowledge level of the farmers with local help always available to answer questions and give advice.

The most significant event of 2015 for Wilson and Rafael was an invitation through the Inter American Foundation to take part in a series of meetings in Brazil at Iguazu, on agroecology. This opportunity represented a just reward for their years of hard work and dedication to learning new techniques for improving cacao production and teaching those techniques to their fellow Tsa'chila farmers. They were able to network with farmers running similar projects from throughout South America and learn from their experiences while sharing their own.

The IAF Project Summary

At the close of 2015 we were finishing the 7th semester of the project co-funded with the Inter American Foundation. Up until January 2016, the end of the 7th semester, we produced the following table to show the relative investment in the project to date:

| Contributor | Total Pledged | Spent So Far |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Fundación Inter Americana: | \$211,350.00 | \$158,067.00 |
| Fundación Yanapuma: | \$90,400.00 | \$69,634.00 |
| | \$301,750.00 | \$227,701.00 |



The table above shows the total investment made over three and a half years of this four-year project with the percentages that the FIA and Yanapuma respectively have made.

As the project moves into its final phase in 2016 we will continue to encourage the independence of our field staff so that they develop the necessary skills to be able to continue in the future without Yanapuma's support. We will of course continue to support them over any transition period. At the start of 2016 we will begin to plan ahead and decide what our strategy will be as a foundation in the following years. We are grateful to the Inter American Foundation for the opportunity that we have had to develop a project over a 4-year timespan, and maintain our commitment to helping the Tsa'chila to adapt to a new set of circumstances as a culture.



Yo Me Acuerdo – by Alfonso Aguavil

Early in 2015 we finished the final editing and composition of the life history of Alfonso Aguavil, the founder of the cultural center Shinopi Bolón in Bua. The material was organized by French sociologist Richard Couedel who spent a year living in Bua, interviewing Alfonso and transcribing and organizing his account of his life and the changes he has witnessed since he was born into the

traditional Tsa'chila lifestyle in the rainforest that once covered the entire western side of the Andes down to the Pacific ocean.

We produced an initial e-reader pdf version which we offered for sale to our ex students and volunteers while we seek the means to get the book published here in Ecuador. In addition to offering first-hand insight into the cataclysmic changes that have affected the Tsa'chila culture, the book forms an important historical document.



Scholarships in Bua

In 2014 we began to offer two scholarships to youth to finish high school, an extension of the project we have been running in Estero de Plátano for several years. The funding



was provided by the Colége Edouard Montpetit of Canada, who have been working with the cacao producers of Bua for the past 6 years. The school year in Santo Domingo runs from March to January. Lacking the support of interns or volunteers in Bua we turned to one of the teachers in the local school to take charge of the scholarship students, checking in with them regularly to ensure that they are staying on target with their studies and making good use of the scholarship. We pay him a small monthly fee for his efforts.

We were delighted to receive the news that we could add a third scholarship starting next academic year for a new student in Bua. This will be sponsored by the Spanish NGO Kindred Spirit. This is the non-profit arm of Sotogrande International School, an organization that Yanapuma has been involved with in previous years, receiving funding from them for small projects as well as increasing our income through offering online Spanish classes to some of their students.

Scholarships in Estero de Plátano

We were fortunate in 2015 to continue with the aid of two interns from Union College, New York, Samantha Muratori and Gabriella Romero . Their stint in Estero de Plátano ended at the end of April, and they were replaced in late July by new interns from Union College, Gerardo Reyes and Lacey Reimer.

Unfortunately, in 2015 we were unable to maintain the 12 scholarships that we had the previous year there due to a



decrease in the number of students attending our Spanish schools. It is the \$25 registration fee from each student that goes towards the scholarships that largely funds the program. But we were able to fund 8 scholarships for the 2015/16 academic year. We rely on the interns there to find new candidates and make recommendations. With 5 of the previous scholarship recipients graduating successfully at the end of the year we were able to add just one more.

These scholarships are worth \$340 per academic year, and are funded by a combination of the \$25 registration fee and our annual Christmas fundraiser. Most of the funds go towards transport costs, getting them from the community to the towns where their colleges are situated.



One of our ongoing challenges in Estero de Plátano is to help the community to create sustainable sources of income for the graduates. As tourism is beginning to develop there this becomes a possibility. However, to date there are not any options, so graduates begin to look at moving away from their community in order to be able to earn some money. With the help of the Union College interns we are seeking ways to develop initiatives and opportunities that will provide an income in Estero de Plátano itself.

Selvavida – Shuar natural reserve

During 2015 we were happy to support Cesar Tucupi, a native Shuar, in the development of his project called Selvavida. It is a reserve dedicated to preserving the rainforest and the traditional way of life that the Shuar have developed there over thousands of years.

We were able to send a number of groups and individual volunteers there over the course of the year to carry out construction projects as well as working on local agriculture and reforestation projects. The groups included groups from Outlook Expeditions and a group of architecture students from Eindhoven University in Holland.

Chilcapamba community developments

In the community of Chilcapamba in the Andean sierra, there is a mix of indigenous Kichwa and mestizos. The

mestizos tend to own the lower ground while the indigenous have been pushed higher up. However their land is still very fertile and the only limit is water. This year the volunteer groups continued digging 14 kilometers of trenches to lay plastic pipes to bring water to the community and into the homes of many of the residents. Another activity was helping to build a house in the community. We always comment to volunteers that they may be fortunate in their volunteering to see one project more or less from start to finish. But more often than not that is not the case, but we at Yanapuma see the difference that their combined efforts make in the long term.

Under the organized leadership of local coordinator Alfonso Morales, there are any number of projects to carry out in Chilcapamba, and we look forward to continuing to support them in 2016.

Hacienda Tranquila – Conservation on the Galapagos

We were happy to continue supporting the work of Hacienda Tranquila on the Galapagos Islands during 2015. We were able to send a number of volunteer groups and individuals to work on conservation projects and sustainable agriculture.

Principally the work involves uprooting and eradicating invasive species of plants that replace tradition food supplies for the endemic fauna such as the giant tortoises. It is an endless job and one we are happy to continue supporting in the future. In addition the volunteers get the chance to take part in horse therapy with children with



learning difficulties from the local community. This makes a welcome break on some days from the back-breaking work of rooting out the invading plants.

Donations and project funding in 2015

Our annual Christmas fundraiser at the end of 2015 raised a total of \$2060.00 for our scholarship fund up to the time of completing this report. One hundred percent of these small funds goes directly to the project cost.

Conclusion

The year 2015 was at the same time a difficult year for our money-raising activities through the Spanish school but a successful year in the volunteering and project work of the foundation. As ever, we continue to juggle the tasks of maintaining sufficient income with attending to the project work that we are committed to. Often times it has to be said that the foundation work waits for us to have the time to devote to it. Lacking a full-time director of projects due to financial constraints makes keeping up with the activities of the projects a constant challenge.

Due to the squeeze that we felt in 2015 from a reduced student population, we cut down on full-time staff from around 24 in 2014 to just 19 in 2015. Although this meant that additional tasks had to be taken on by all of us, at the end of the year we were still in good financial shape.

One of our tasks was to properly launch our new travel agency, True Ecuador Travel. Again, due to resources we did not get as far with this as we would have hoped, although we did start to generate income through selling Galapagos, Amazon and other tourist activities in Ecuador. The website is slowly rising up the ranking in the search engines and we fully expect to see further growth in 2016.

Our project co-funded with the Inter American Foundation was due to complete the great majority of the work at start of 2016, with a few further discrete activities to carry out in the first half of the year. However, we have been very economical in our use of the funds that we have and we are hoping to be able to extend the project until the end of 2016 in order to continue developing the themes that we are working on.

We will also continue to develop relationships with universities and other international organizations to achieve our mission of promoting cultural exchange through study abroad and related types of programs. This is another area in which the lack of staff holds us back. We are especially keen to develop programs around our school and offices in the historic city of Cuenca, which is an ideal venue for students in a wide range of disciplines to experience a different culture and environment.



Notes

Readers wishing to learn more detail about the work of the foundation over the past year or years are advised to read our bi-monthly newsletters. These can be viewed or downloaded online here:

<http://www.yanapuma.org/en/news.php>

Please feel free to email us with any questions or comments. You can contact us at: volunteer@yanapuma.org