

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 19: Sept-Oct 2010

Introduction

On 1 September Yanapuma became 4 years old. But due to the pressures of finishing off projects and the general level of activity, we did not get around to celebrating this achievement until the 7th of October! (*see photo right*) During these 4 years we have managed a sustained growth in all departments, despite the world financial turmoil that has generally affected study abroad and international travel. It is a learning process and we hope to take advantage of all we have experienced in the past 4 years and use this as a tool for development in the years to come.

The Spanish school has remained busy well into October with many students opting to take our traveling classroom packages. As ever, we have a mix of students – of all ages and from all parts of the world. We expect things to quieten down in November and December when fewer students opt to travel, but we hope that it does not quieten down too much before the new year arrives! (*continued right*)...

Ecological Sanitation...

One of our early observations when we began working in ecological sanitation was that building ecotoilets one by one from cement and blocks was not a valid solution to such a wide scale sanitation problem. With 140 families just in the village of Bua where we started the project, it would take us 3 years of nearly constant work with groups of volunteers just to complete this one village! So we began to look around for alternatives, focusing on the need to develop a prefabricated unit that could be delivered to each family, leaving us free to work on the education, monitoring and evaluation.



To this end we are happy to begin working with UK Masters student Timothy Jones from the University of Liverpool. He has taken on the task of coming up with viable designs for ecotoilets that will be cheap to mass produce using recycled materials. These will be developed for both rural and semi-urban areas. The aim is to integrate all aspects of the problem into a viable solution that

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The foundation has been extremely busy, especially up until the end of September when the final reports were due for the InterAmerican Foundation project. October has seen Giovanni occupied in the Tsa'chila community of Los Naranjos, supervising a project for planting 10,000 trees with students from **Thinking Beyond Borders**.

But towards the end of October things had quietened down sufficiently for us to finally be able to take a deep breath and initiate the process of evaluation and planning for the next year or two. During November we will evaluate our past experiences and use these as a springboard for future growth in the foundation, putting in place the necessary processes and practices to maintain ourselves well in the future.



Celebrating our 4th Birthday!

The Almost Coup!

On 30 September we were astonished to see events unfold in Quito and around the country prompted by a suspension of duty by the police force. Subsequent events emphasized how thin the veneer of order is in this society and how quickly chaos can erupt if there is not sufficient police presence. Fortunately, by the end of that same day order was restored and those who sought to undermine the government of this country by their undemocratic methods were defeated.

Many students and volunteers react positively to their first encounter with latin culture – its spontaneity, impulsiveness, and sense of personal engagement. What we witnessed on the 30th of September was the darker side of these same characteristics. I guess it reminded us that we live in Latin America!

not only takes care of the sanitation aspect, but also the political, social and financial aspects of integrating a sustainable technology into a developing society. We are hoping that through combining our practical experience with engineered designs we can raise the finances to develop a pilot project to produce the first batch for installation and evaluation.

Project News . . .

Bua

At the end of September we handed in to the InterAmerican Foundation the final reports for the project that we have been carrying out there for the last year. This has involved working with several groups – the Cabil-do, the Reforestation group, the Cacao Growers group, the school Abraham Calazacòn, the Shinopi Bolòn cultural group, and the women's Caja Solidaria. Although there were specific aims for each group, the central focus was on issues of self-esteem, leadership skills, and the development of organizational abilities.

On 11 October we accompanied an IAF representative on an evaluation visit to Bua at which we met with members of some of the above-mentioned groups. We view the project as a great success, having seen significant developments over the past year in the attitudes and abilities of some of the Tsa'chila, which will help them significantly in the future to manage their own development. As our final aim is to make our work truly sustainable we have been encouraged to see this positive development, although we recognize that there is still a long way to go in order to fully realize our goals.

Now that we have finished this project in Bua we have organized a series of meetings with each group in turn in order to initiate a process of participatory planning. During late October these meetings focused on hearing the plans and dreams of each group as well as reviewing with us what has worked and what has not worked over the past year. Out of all this we will produce a plan with each group which will serve as a guide for future fundraising and project development.

In general, the past year has been a challenging one for the relationship of Yanapuma with the community of Bua. But we have seen each challenge as an opportunity for growth, and thankfully the community has reacted similarly. Thus, we are now much better placed as a foundation to understand and respond to the needs of this unique cultural group in their struggle to adapt and survive in a globalized context.

Estero de Plátano

During September and October our 2 interns from Union College have settled in to their roles in the community and have worked hard to understand the dynamics and relationships within the community that affect their ability to develop. They have also been actively working with the students who have received the scholarships to keep them on track, as well as offering their time to work with students in the school who need help with homework.

Guadalupe, our social/community worker has visited Estero several times to begin working with some of the groups there such as the women's group and the community bank.

Los Naranjos

From 25 September to 23 October a group of 15 students from Thinking Beyond Borders worked in the community of Los Naranjos, another Tsa'chila community, planting 10,000 trees of native hardwood species. Giovanni organized the project, with the support of Lucas Emerson, an intern working with us to organize volunteers. The trees are being planted to protect the water courses and sensitive areas. The trees were grown in the community of Bua and bought from the individual family growers to plant out in Los Naranjos. Our aim is to get families in Los Naranjos to grow trees during 2011 that we can then buy from them to plant in Bua or another Tsa'chila community, thus encouraging the development of small scale family tree nurseries as an additional form of income and a way to reforest individual farms.

This is the first time that Yanapuma has worked in the community of Los Naranjos, and the first time that families there have received foreigners to live in their homes. Guadalupe spent time beforehand in the community preparing them. Many families had no toilet, or spare bedroom, and these were all built from local materials prior to the arrival of the group. Hosting the students was a source of income for each family as well as being an opportunity for Yanapuma to introduce topics such as hygiene and nutrition to the families. In the end the homestays were a great success for both the students and the families.



TBB students explore the historic center of Quito

Other News

Visit by EWB Pittsburgh: In September we received a visit from EWB Pittsburgh who are working on water issues in the sierra community of Tingu Pucara. We are interested in a pilot project to construct an ecological toilet in this community. Although Yanapuma is not keen on continuing to construct these one by one, we are interested in a project that is in a different climatic zone which will give us additional data on how urine-diverting toilets work in a cooler, drier environment.

Staff and Interns . . .

Daniela Romero, who worked with us for a year as projects coordinator left us in September to return to live in Spain. We thank her for all her hard work during the year and are grateful for the opportunity to have learned much from her, as well as wishing her well in the future.

Lucas Emerson, from the UK, returned to Ecuador after studying and interning with other organizations over the past few years. He will be working with us to organize the volunteer side of Yanapuma as well as involving himself in the work of the foundation. Lucas holds a degree in Development Studies.

Kelly Breslin joined Yanapuma in September as the volunteer group coordinator. Kelly is from the US. She will be with us for at least a year and will also coordinate the activities of individual volunteers in our Volunteer Ecuador program.

Stephanie Buri from the US joined us in September as an intern to work in the foundation. She is mainly focused on working in Bua, filming the cultural education program there as well as helping in the production of a plan for each of the community groups, and involving herself generally in our work.

Teressa van der Linden from Holland joined us in September to work in the Spanish school. She is a student of tourism management and is helping in marketing and publicity as well as other aspects of managing groups of students.

Alanna Dixon left us after working for 4 months in Volunteer Ecuador. She returned with her husband to Canada where they will be settling down to start a family. We will miss her energy and contribution but wish her well in the future!



More School News . . .

Cervantes Institute . . .

In October our Academic Director, Edison Rendón, spent two weeks on an intensive course given by the Cervantes Institute. The institute is a public body charged with promoting the teaching of Spanish. At Yanapuma we are working to bring our methods in line with the focus and methodology of this prestigious organization.

Ongoing Teacher Training . . .

On 22 October our teachers got together as part of our ongoing Project to develop teaching methods and materials that reflect our methodology and approach to teaching the Spanish language. Two teachers lead the presentations on different themes for discussion with the group.

Volunteers . . .

On 4 September Yanapuma welcomed a group of 7 volunteers from the LEAP UK. During September and October they worked on projects in the community of Chilcapamba (construction of stalls to exhibit crafts and other community projects), Caimito (work on new classrooms for the school and conservation) and Chichicorumi (construction on the ethnographic museum).

Foundation Website Facelift . . .

At the start of October the foundation's website (<http://yanapuma.org>) was given a refreshing facelift. We are still working on updating the content and seeking ways to make all the relevant information more readily accessible.



Donation News . . .

Stephen Muther, father of former project coordinator Kyle, donated \$300 to the scholarship fund in Estero de Plátano for 2011.

Former Spanish student **Corliss Jacobs** donated \$400 for a scholarship in Estero de Plátano for 2011. The money was raised through the sale of Ecuadorian scarves.

These scholarships allow the best students in Estero de Plátano to continue their education at high school level. Most children end their education at 11 or 12 years old, which becomes a major barrier to the future development of the community as there are not enough people with the skills to develop small enterprises or help organize the community. Currently we are sponsoring 10 children per year at a cost of \$300 each. The money goes to buy the necessary uniforms, books, materials and transport to and from the high school.

If you are interested in donating to our Scholarship Program please see this page of our website for more details: http://www.yanapuma.org/en/donate_home.php

We are planning to extend this successful scholarship program to the community of Bua in 2011. Their school year also starts in April and we hope to be able to initially sponsor 5 scholarships.

If you are interested in sponsoring a child in Bua you can do so by donating through the link above.

Yanapuma received a donation of £2000 from Alasdair and Susanna Jacks destined for Fundación Niñez y Vida, a Project in Quito where their daughter Katrina volunteered. Sadly Katrina passed away while in Peru due to altitude problems. Our condolences go to the family.

September-October Photo Gallery

