

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. 40 May-Jun 2014

Introduction

April and May can often be the quietest months of the year for Spanish classes and volunteering, with things beginning to pick up in June as the summer vacation period approaches. However, Yanapuma remained fairly busy during both May and especially June, in both our schools – Quito and Cuenca. All indications are that July and August will be very busy indeed with only a few spaces left in group classes for the summer!

Staff of the foundation have been hard at work in the two months that mark the end of the 2nd year of the project funded by the Inter American Foundation. In that time we have sown over 26,000 cacao trees and 4,000 thousand Valencia orange trees with 75 Tsa'chila farmers. From planting out the trees to harvesting the first fruits takes about 3 years, and the intervening period is for training and developing the necessary skills to assure that the trees remain healthy and provide a bountiful harvest. In addition we have continued to promote the vegetable gardens with 83 Tsa'chila families, growing a variety of

C
o
n
t
e
n
t
s

Page 1	Intro & News
2	Project and School News
3	Student, Intern, & other news
4	Photo Gallery

vegetables, along with offering nutrition training and advice on how to incorporate these vegetables into the daily diet.

In addition, we have kicked off a new academic year supporting 11 students in the village of Estero de Plátano and two students in the Tsa'chila comuna Bua to study at high school. The funding for this program comes directly from the \$25 registration/donation that each student makes.

Our volunteer department has also been quite busy over the past two months, with groups from the UK, as well as a group from Vanderbilt University, in addition to a number of individual volunteers that have been placed with some of the over 35 organizations with which Yanapuma collaborates in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands.

You can read more about all these activities on the following pages.



Volunteers white-water rafting in Baños!



Cotopaxi volcano rises out of the clouds on the flight from Quito to Cuenca.

Joy retires from Cuenca!

At the end of June we were sad to say goodbye to **Joy Brandt**, who has been volunteering as our student coordinator in the school in Cuenca for the past 9 months. Joy has worked hard to help us build up the school in Cuenca, and her dedication and effort (despite being newly retired!) has been an inspiration, and much appreciated by all of us here at Yanapuma.



Joy at Ingapirca with a student from Cuenca

On Friday 20th of June we held a farewell party for her at the school at which around 70 students and guests took part in a pot-luck supper.

Joy moves on to a couple of months of well-earned relaxation in the mountains around balmy Vilcabamba before returning to the US.



Crowds gathered in the Parque Carolina to cheer Ecuador as they played in the World Cup. Unfortunately the team did not progress beyond the first round

Spanish School News . . .

During May and June our academic director, **Edison Rendón**, finished updating our two Medical Spanish programs, adding new core materials, videos, readings and specialty materials. The program is offered at two levels – the Introductory Medical Spanish program and the Professional Medical Spanish program. The former consists of up to four 20-hour modules, while the latter is one 80-hour course that includes a medical practicum at a clinic, health center or hospital in Quito or Cuenca.

This year we are working to firmly implant in the Spanish school our methodology and teaching methods in preparation for expansion in 2015. Aside from our regular academic Spanish course we are working on materials for those students whose ambitions are more modest and who are looking to learn enough Spanish to be able to communicate adequately while they travel.

We also announced at the end of June that we will be increasing the price of our online Spanish classes, as we have not done so for over 18 months. The classes will increase in price from \$8.50 to \$10.50 per hour. Current students have until 5 July to buy classes at the old price.

Our school in Cuenca has been busy during May and June. As there are a good number of retired Americans taking classes the balance is different there and many of these students only take a few hours per week of clases, which makes scheduling a little more complicated.

In Cuenca we will also be delighted to welcome **Alexandra Antkowiak** as our new student coordinator. She will take over from Joy Brandt who left at the end of June. Currently we are fortunate to have the help of intern **Marion Cholieu** from France. Marion has been updating our current volunteer placement offerings in Cuenca for our Spanish students.



Volunteer News . . .

May and June have been busy months for the volunteer department with groups, individual volunteers and study abroad students.

Two groups from the **Leap UK** that arrived in April continued their volunteer placements in May and June, spending time first in the sierra community of Chilcapamba where they worked on painting the local school and other maintenance projects. A group also spent time in the Tsa'chila comuna of Bua, where they built a new cabaña at the cultural center. In addition the groups also took turns spending nearly 3 weeks on the Galapagos working on a conservation and agriculture project on the island of San Cristóbal. Of course, they also had time to visit some of the other islands and enjoy the spectacular scenery and environment of the Galapagos Islands.



We were pleased to receive a group of 8 volunteers from **Pacific Discovery**. The group spent two weeks volunteering in the sierra community of Chilcapamba before traveling a little and visiting the Sinchi Aqua project in the Amazon rainforest. After that they went to the Galapagos Islands for a short tour before returning home to the US.

In June a group of 8 students from **Vanderbilt University** arrived in Quito to spend 4 weeks volunteering in various projects around the city and taking Spanish classes. Yanapuma welcomes international students for Study Abroad, Service Learning, and Global Citizenship programs.

A particularly trying situation that has developed and still remains unresolved is that the Ecuadorian government has brought in new regulations that require interns to be affiliated to social security and to be paid. The situation with volunteers of course is unclear and we have had several meetings with lawyers from the Ministerio de Salud to try and get an agreement signed with them that our volunteers can continue to volunteer in public hospitals, health centers and clinics. Until then, the health centers are unwilling to accept volunteers, fearful that they might be fined. This has caused difficulties for students who arrive expecting to be able to carry out a medical volunteer placement while they learn medical Spanish. We continue to try to resolve this issue, but the bureaucratic wheels grind slowly!

Foundation News . . .

Festival de ensaladas!

On the 13th of June Yanapuma staff organized a special Salad Festival in the community of Bua to showcase the work of the foundation over the past year. Aside from a competition to judge the best salad made of local produce, there was a competition to produce the best chocolate, a prize for the best kept cacao plot, a prize for the best kept vegetable garden, a best drawing competition for the children from the local school, and a special cup for both men and women's football teams – cacaoteros versus huertos familiares. We designed T-shirts for participants in both projects.



We were helped by the assistance of faculty from the **ESPE (Escuela Politécnica del Ejercito)**, staff of the local **Ministerio de Salud**, and from **MAP Internacional**.



A group of children led by **Franklin Aguavil** performed traditional Tsachila music and dance, inviting the audience to participate in the dancing.

On 11-13 of June we were subject to our annual audit by the Inter American Foundation. This is a great opportunity for us to learn more about the processes of record-keeping for this type of project and we are glad to say we came through it well, with only very minor observations on things to take

into account for the following period. As the IAF fund accounts for the overwhelming majority of our external funding it is good to know that we have the procedures in place for correctly managing such funds.

On 27 June we held our monthly meeting of the foundation team here at our offices in Quito. In addition to reviewing the month's progress and problems in the current projects we looked ahead to the 11th of July which sees the completion of the first 2 years of the Inter American Foundation project.

French sociologist **Richard Couedel** continues his work with the Tsachila. Having spent the first couple of months working with Alfonso Aguavil of the centro cultural Shinopi Bolón, he has moved on to working in more general cultural themes, getting involved with the radio station, Somba Panim. He has also begun an evaluation of our project with the FIA to date as part of our ongoing monitoring and evaluation. We are keen to gather perspectives on the work that we do, especially from the Tsachila themselves, and we see Richard with his sociology training as being well placed to assist us developing a rounded perspective on the effects of our work among the Tsachila.

In early May our 11 scholarship recipients from Estero de Plátano and 2 recipients from Bua began the academic year. Unfortunately for us, we have not had sufficient staff to be able to get out to Estero de Plátano to complete the paperwork and welcome the newest additions to the scholarship group. We managed to disburse the first funds so that at least they could buy their uniforms and supplies, and start taking the bus every day to their college. We are looking forward to the arrival of our two newest interns from Union College to help the scholarship students of Estero de Plátano to cope with their studies.

Other News . . .

At the end of June we were delighted to welcome back **Kelly Schussler** as a coordinator. Kelly worked for Yanapuma from September 2010 until June of 2012 when she returned to the US to pursue her Masters. She graduated earlier this year and will be joining us to work between the volunteer, foundation and Spanish departments.



Donations . . .

We are always happy to receive small donations from current or former volunteers and students. Our policy is to use 100% of any small donation for direct project costs.

A small donation can make a big difference by allowing us to invest in something worthwhile that perhaps does not fit directly into our current project work but which is nevertheless a valuable contribution to the overall development of the community.

To make a small donation via Paypal you can send it to donate@yanapuma.org. You can also donate directly into our bank account. Email us for details.

May and June Photo Gallery

