

An Ecuadorian non-profit 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 and True Ecuador Travel!

A bimonthly newsletter

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Introduction

In general, the last three months of the year are a time for looking forward to the following year, updating programs and prices and making preparations for what is to come. We could always do with a crystal ball to help us in our plans, never quite knowing what to expect of the future!

The months of October and November usually see a gradual reduction in the number of students attending the Spanish schools, giving us time to devote to the development of new materials. However we have been busier than expected during these two months, which is a good thing!

We have also been busy updating our Galapagos land-based programs in time for next year. We have made one or two changes based on the observations of previous clients, to make the programs better and to assure that clients optimize their time exploring the Galapagos without making them too hectic and pressured.

In the foundation we have been focused on re-organizing our volunteer department in order to be

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able to channel resources in the form of willing volunteers to worthwhile projects where their individual or group efforts will be recognized and appreciated. We have also focused on developing support for the scholarship program for deserving youth to continue their studies.

As every year at this time, we launch our **Christmas Fundraiser Appeal** for support for our scholarship program. The best tool for development is local capacity building through education.

We hope you will consider helping us by donating whatever you can afford so that we can continue to encourage deserving and disadvantaged youth to finish their high school studies and even go on to post-high school study.

As we prepared to publish this 66th bi-monthly newsletter we came across the pertinent message from UNESCO (*right*).



Communing with the ancestors in Quito

Dia de los Muertos

El famoso “Día de los Muertos” se celebró en Ecuador, como el resto del Latino America el 2 de noviembre. En esta fecha se cree que las ánimas de los difuntos vuelven para disfrutar de la comida ofrecida por sus familias.

La ofrenda hecha suele incluir alimentos, agua, dulces, alcohol, incienso, flores y objetos de recuerdo. Es una fiesta tradicional en la que se tiene la creencia de que los difuntos conviven con la familia para consolarlos y confortarlos por la pérdida.

CHRISTMAS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER

Since 2008 we have collected funds to support deserving underprivileged youth to study at high school. The \$25 registration fee for Spanish students goes directly towards this fund each year. 100% of all funds received go for scholarships and Yanapuma pays all admin expenses from its own funds.



To donate please follow this link: <https://www.yanapuma.org/en/EdePScholarships.php>

Each scholarship costs \$350 for the year. Please consider giving any amount—Give the gift of education this Holiday Season!

Tax deductible in the UK and US—see inside.

As the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** marks its 70th year, UNESCO is launching a digital campaign on the #RightToEducation, a right that is at the core of its global mission to ensure equal access to quality education.

In many parts of the world, physically accessing learning facilities can be a major challenge. Limited infrastructure and distances between homes and schools can stop learners from accessing education. Fees related to enrolment, uniform, canteen and transportation are just some elements that can create obstacles to learning for children.

Spanish School News . . .

Volunteers and Interns . . .

During the past two months both Spanish schools have been fairly busy with students of all ages, particularly Cuenca. They came from many countries – US, Australia, Germany, France, Thailand, China, Canada, UK, Holland, Belgium, to name a few. It seems that Ecuador is particularly popular with German travelers at the moment.



Students visit a local market to buy fruit

In November we were happy to welcome back a group of 20 students from **Bømlo Folkehøgskule** in Norway. The group spent a week in Quito learning Spanish and exploring Quito and its surroundings as part of their study program in Ecuador.

Additional activities that we have been engaged in over the past two months have been the development of new materials to teach Spanish online, particularly to children. We had expected to advance quite considerably with this, but with more students than anticipated in Quito this meant that we did not achieve all that we had hoped. However this is a project that will continue until the end of the year, while in January we expect to be too busy again to devote much time to the development of new materials.



¿Olvidando su español?

Forgetting your Spanish already?!? Why not take online Spanish classes with Yanapuma? We have a dozen or so teachers from various Latin American countries in addition to Ecuador who specialize in working online with students from all parts of the world.

Converse with a native speaker and professional teacher once every week or so to maintain or build on your current Spanish level. Online classes are great for kids too!

You can sign up for a free trial class with no obligation here: <https://timelybooking.com/yanapumaspanish.org>

During October and the first part of November our two volunteer groups from the Leap UK continued their programs in Ecuador and Peru. The Ecuador group spent 2 weeks helping the cultural group in the Tsa'chila comuna Bua, working on construction and maintenance. After that they went to the Galapagos island of San Cristóbal to work on a conservation project at a hacienda, helping to root out invasive species as well as working with local children with learning and motor skills difficulties.

On their return, after a day or two in Quito to get organized and cleaned up again, they headed off on a week's adventure through the Andes on the "Ruta de los Volcanes" program. Finally they went off to the Amazon rain forest for a few days R&R at the Gaia Amazon Lodge to finish off their program in Ecuador.

Meanwhile, the group in Peru, after volunteering on the shores of Lake Titicaca, traveled to Cusco for a couple of days before heading off to the Peruvian Amazon region to volunteer in a conservation project there, reforesting and clearing around young saplings. After that they returned to Cusco in the Andes Mountains and prepared to travel to a small mountain community to help with local agriculture and infrastructure projects.

At the end of this volunteer stint they returned to Cusco to get cleaned up and organized.

Finally, for the highlight of their stay in Peru they headed off to the renowned ancient Inca site of Machu Picchu – some going the regular route while others got there on the spectacular 4-day hike on the Salkantay Trail, which is regarded as one of the "Top 10" hikes in the world.



Project News . . .

Our scholarship program is well under way since schools got back in session at the end of August or start of September. Our German volunteers on the Weltarts program, sponsored by the German government, are helping in several small community schools in Quito and around the country, along with other volunteers who are here for shorter periods.

It is a considerable challenge for any volunteer to adapt to living in a very different social and cultural situation as well as to contribute to an educational system that is often sorely under-supplied with appropriate materials and resources. We are always grateful for the efforts that our volunteers make as they set about their task.

In our offices, our new volunteer coordinator Gabriela Padilla has been busy getting up to speed with the programs and sites that we collaborate with to send volunteers and groups, and updating all the relevant information for next year.

In addition we are collaborating with a number of international organizations to develop programs for next year that dovetail with the mission of the foundation, to help these marginalized communities to develop sustainably. Volunteers are always welcome to participate in education, conservation, reforestation and infrastructure development projects.

We are particularly keen to maintain momentum with the “edible forest” program in the Tsa’chila comunas. As the nearly 20 hectares that we have already established continue to grow and we introduce new and recovered species that will have value for humans—for food, medicinal and other uses.



Staff and Intern News . . .

In November we said goodbye to Belgian intern **Lisa Meysman** who had been with us for 3 months. Lisa began her internship at the school in Cuenca where she helped out with the Spanish students and volunteers there, organizing activities and excursions and other admin task. She also helped us out by leading a volunteer group when group leader **Renata Villafuerte** had to leave unexpectedly for a family emergency. We are grateful for all her help during her stay here in Ecuador.

With Lisa’s departure we are finished with interns for this year. We have several lined up for 2019, starting in February and going all the way through to November.

We are currently seeking an intern to begin working with us from the office in Quito from January next year to help us with our social media presence and development and on our website, database, and other systems. There is always so much to be done in these areas that we need an extra brain to help us advance in all these areas sufficiently. This internship will be for an initial period of 6 months and maybe extended.



Our 2 Tsa’chila scholarship students of last year

Donation News . . .

Once again it is time for our annual Christmas Scholarship Fundraiser!

If you would like to donate any amount towards the \$350 that it costs for each scholarship for the academic year, you can do that by following this link: <https://www.yanapuma.org/en/EdePScholarships.php>

In the USA Yanapuma is registered with the American Fund for Charities to receive tax-exempt donation. This organization deducts a fee for their service, but it is less than the amount of tax that can be written off.

In the UK Yanapuma is a registered Scottish charity—reg No. SC040519.

Email us if you have any questions at all about donating to our work: admin@yanapuma.org

True Ecuador Travel News . . .

As 2018 draws to a close we are looking forward to next year, with an eye towards how we are going to continue the process of promoting our educational travel programs in 2019 and beyond.

Aside from working on our online presence and search engine optimization we will be initiating a campaign of outreach to universities and other organizations to present our services as providers of unique educational opportunities in Ecuador. These can include any combination of Spanish classes, service learning and volunteer projects, research and study programs, regular tourist excursions and trips to the Amazon rain forest, through the Andes Mountains or to the Galapagos Islands.

Our contacts with many indigenous communities and grass-roots projects means we are well placed to offer exciting and inspirational service projects as these communities develop and adapt to living in a more globalized world.

We also updated our own land-based Galapagos programs for 2019. These proved very popular this year, and we have taken note of any comments received to adapt the programs and make them even better for next year.

In early November we visited the World Travel Market fair and conference in London to analyse how business is done there with a view to becoming exhibitors at next year's event. Exhibition stands are costly, and with the additional costs of publicity and marketing materials, we want to make sure that we are 100% prepared to take advantage of being there.



"Los Tuneles" tour—Galapagos Islands

True Ecuador Travel

The mission of True Ecuador Travel is to develop educational travel in Ecuador for individuals, families and university and other groups.

We create itineraries to include any combination of Spanish classes, service and volunteering, research, and regular tourist activities in the Amazon rain forest, the Andes Mountains, the Pacific coast region and on the Galapagos Islands.

You can learn more about our programs on our website here: <https://true-ecuador-travel.org>