



Annual Report

2012



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Introduction from the Executive Director

Looking back over the course of 2012 it is fair to say that it has probably been one of the most challenging years that we have faced in our 6-year history. Of course, the first two or three years were understandably hard as we struggled month to month to survive. But in our 4th and 5th years we managed to begin consolidating our structure and organization into an entity with greater stability, administratively and economically.

This year we have continued that process with significant success in a not-altogether favourable economic climate. This has been achieved through a process of adaptation to circumstances and tight fiscal control. However, a couple of unforeseen events during the year undid some of our good work and caused us a degree of concern for the future of the organization. But as 2012 drew to a close we realized that we had survived, and in the process had learned valuable lessons that will stand us in good stead for the

future.

Chief among the changes was the legal separation of the Spanish school from the foundation, a move that was considered necessary in light of changes in government regulations concerning foundations. As with many areas of Ecuadorian regulations, there has long existed a grey area regarding what is and is not allowable with foundations, and a succession of lawyers gave us contradictory information and advice. Finally, for additional reasons that will be detailed in the main part of this report, we created a limited company to represent the Spanish school, with 4 of our 5 remaining founding members as the directors. The company is called ELMAVIAN Servicios Compañía Limitada, the name Yanapuma already having been used by a currently inactive construction company in the Sucumbios region. ELMAVIAN represents the first two letters of the first name of the 4 founders – Elizabeth, Maria, Vinicio and Andy!

The Spanish school demonstrated a modest level of growth in student numbers during 2012, with greater seasonal variation than in previous years. The online classes also grew steadily over the course of the year, demonstrating considerable room for growth in the future. Our focus on adopting a methodology that reflects the best in modern learning methods made some progress, although it was a somewhat frustrating exercise working with teachers used to their own way of doing things.

The volunteer department went through some changes in staff during 2012 and at the end of the year we were happy to have a great team in place to achieve significant growth in 2013. Overall the numbers of volunteers, both individual and in groups, was up



on the previous year, and we hope to continue this growth in 2013.

The work of the foundation was given a huge boost with the approval of a grant application from the Inter American Foundation for 3 years of work with the Tsa'chila culture. Although there is still a roughly 35% contribution to the project by Yanapuma, the extra funding allows us to expand considerably the scope of our work with sustainable cacao production, vegetable gardens and nutrition/cooking classes with the Tsa'chila.

We also received funding from other sources in 2012 as well as continuing our scholarship program on the Pacific coast. You can read more about these in the relevant section of this report.

To sum up, we have often noted that six years ago we started Yanapuma with a great deal of enthusiasm and little experience of the difficulties involved in carrying out sustainable development work. Over these six years we have developed not only a successful Spanish school and a flourishing volunteer department, both of which contribute significantly to the ongoing work of the foundation, but we have also managed to create a foundation which is achieving significant results at a grass-roots level.

This year, as never before, the toll of those years of dedication with little economic reward began to show on the morale of the founders who at times felt overwhelmed with the quantity of seemingly never-ending tasks and legal and logistical challenges that result from keeping these three entities functioning well. However, by the end of the year it was clear that the future is looking bright for Yanapuma, and with many lessons learned we continue forward with undiminished enthusiasm and a whole lot more experience and knowledge.

Andrew Kirby, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Yanapuma Spanish School

Introduction

The Spanish school underwent a process of consolidation in 2012 with a modest level of growth under reasonably difficult economic conditions in general. Quito has a great many Spanish schools, both legal and illegal, and the competition is stiff. Pricing is a critical issue in light of the competition, and we observed that this year that fewer people were booking their classes before arriving in Quito preferring instead to visit several schools once here to see which looks best and which has the best offers.

Overall we seemed to do very well in this respect with the great majority of students either booking up on the spot in the school or returning later on to reserve classes with us. Of course, this causes scheduling headaches as students request to start classes the very next day, if not the same day. This is a factor that became of even greater significance later in the year for reasons that will be explained.

We experienced significant growth in the number of students taking classes online, with the number of students rising up to over 100 towards the end of the year, although the great majority of these only took one or two hours per week. We continued giving classes to the students of Sotogrande International School in Spain until the end of the academic year in July. Our plans to expand the online classes were put on hold for next year in favour of continuing

development of the school in Quito. We simply did not have the staff to undertake both at the same time. But as there appears to be significant growth potential in the online classes, and as the numbers do not vary in the same way as they do in the school, this will be a definite area of focus for the following year.



By the end of the year we had registered a total number of 473 students. Of these, 370 were Spanish students in Quito, and 103 online. Both of these figures represent an increase on the previous year.

During the course of the year we invested considerable resources in the development of our teaching methods, our academic director Edison Rendón working with teachers to encourage them to expand their methodological horizons. This was a somewhat frustrating activity and not entirely successful. Teachers come to us already steeped in a very traditional methodology, and the Ecuadorian education system has not encouraged initiative and research from its students, so the feeling very often was that the teachers would have preferred everything pre-digested and fed to them in easy bites rather than having to investigate for themselves. But we did make some progress with the methodology, and will continue to implement new techniques into our teaching system.

Towards the end of the year we were approached by an association of Spanish schools – AECEE (Ecuadorian Association of Spanish Language Centers) with an invitation to become members ourselves. There are two



associations of Spanish schools in Ecuador and the AECEE represents the most professional schools. We had hesitated in previous years to become involved with a local association, preferring instead to invest in associations and publicity outside Ecuador. But in light of challenges of various kinds to the ways that Spanish schools operate in Ecuador we thought that it was now time to join and have our mutual interests promoted.



Spanish schools fall supposedly under the Ministry of Education in Ecuador, although, as our recent dealings with them has illustrated very vividly, for many years they have had no idea of what we actually do. According to their rules for example, a school has to have set courses that start on set days and have a set number of hours for which a certificate can be issued upon termination of the course. Currently the Ministry of Education is under a complete reformation, for which reason we have now fallen under their spotlight and at least one or two people inside the Ministry are trying to understand what we do so that they can begin to effectively regulate Spanish schools in Ecuador. We hope that through the association we will be able to provide effective representation to guide the development of policies that cover Spanish schools.

In tandem with the concerns of the Ministry of Education are changes in the rules of the Ministerio de Trabajo which are further complicating the operation of a Spanish school. It used to be that teachers could charge by the hour for their work, but this has now been





made illegal. The Ministerio de Trabajo has gone to the other extreme and only allows contracts of either 20 or 40 hours per week. With the majority of our teachers working between 26-32 hours per week, filling in with odd hours of online classes and occasional students in the

afternoons, we were faced with the choice of either restricting them to 20 hours per week, which seemed unfair to them, or paying them for 40 hours per week, which is very prejudicial to us.

The government is pushing to get all Ecuadorians affiliated to their social security system (IESS) which we are in favor of. But the restriction of the Ministerio de Trabajo to only 20 or 40 hour contracts has been very difficult to react to. We made several frustrating visits to talk with lawyers at the Ministerio in the last 3 months of 2012, without producing any definite solution, but we continue to seek a suitable format that will neither prejudice us as a business or the teachers themselves.

Towards the end of the year we began to examine our “Study and Travel” programs. These have proven very popular, and we are keen to continue developing them. Ecuador has so much to offer the visitor that these programs provide the perfect way to combine learning Spanish with exploring different parts of the country – the Amazon rain forest, the cloud forests, the Andean sierra, and the Pacific region and the Galapagos Islands.

During 2012 we offered the following Study and Travel



options:

- Yachana Lodge (Amazon)
- Suchipacari Lodge (Amazon)
- Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve (Mindó cloud forest)
- Mindó Cloud Forest (Mindó)
- Ruta de los Volcanes (Andes)
- Andes del Norte (Andes)
- Chilcapamba community (Andes)
- Cuenca Cultural (Cuenca)
- Ruta del Sol (Pacific coast)
- Esmeraldas Province (Pacific Coast)
- Estero de Plátano community (Pacific Coast)
- Tsa’chila communities (Pacific región)

For 2013 we will make some changes to these programs. For example we will combine visiting the indigenous communities of Estero de Plátano and the Tsa’chila communities due to the fact that there is not always a lot for students to do in the Tsa’chila communities which makes staying a whole week sometimes a little boring. For next year students will go first to Estero de Plátano for two or three days, spending only one or two days in the Tsa’chila communities.



With the separation of the school from the foundation it will be easier in the following years to separate the finances more accurately and report on the work and financing of the foundation with greater accuracy. With the accounting all combined under the foundation it has always been hard for us to provide a really accurate account of how the actual work of the foundation was



funded. As it was not necessary as part of the accounting requirements in Ecuador we never invested in extra accounting that would allow us to differentiate spending between the Spanish school, volunteering activities and the foundation.

From 2013 onwards however, the accounts will be separate, with the Spanish school and volunteer activities apart from the work of the foundation. What the foundation receives will be 100% donations from all sources and its spending will be uniquely on the projects

of the foundation.

Conclusion

Overall we were pleased with the performance of the Spanish school under the circumstances, and content that we have made significant advances in the development and implementation of our methodology and teaching methods.

We have survived the challenges of 2012, which have been greater than in previous years, although it has been somewhat exhausting for the founders in terms of the stress and uncertainty at times over how to react to changes in government policies and other factors. They say that what doesn't kill us makes us stronger, and we certainly hope that this is true!

Our aim is always excellence, and to provide the best experience for our students, investing as



necessary in all the areas that will help us to excel. We envisage continuing on the same course in 2013 and beyond, seeking ways to advance as a Spanish language school, and continuing to generate financial resources that will be used to realize the mission of Fundación Yanapuma.



Volunteer Ecuador, Groups and Interns

Introduction

The year 2012 was a reasonably good year for the volunteer side of the foundation. In total we hosted 97 individual volunteers under our Volunteer Ecuador program. Of these, 53 volunteered in projects in Quito, and 44 volunteered in projects around the rest of Ecuador.

The projects that we supported were as follows:

- Niñez y Vida (Quito)
- Camp Hope (Quito)
- Abuelitos y Abuelitas de la Calle (Quito)
- INEPE schools (Quito)
- Clinica San Martín (Quito)
- CEMOPLAF (Quito)
- Clinica Jerusalén (Quito)
- Fundación Gorritas Azules (Quito)
- CENIT (Quito)
- Escuela Amable Arauz (Quito)
- Tena Public Schools (Amazon)

- Sinchi Aqua Center (Amazon)
- Yanacocha Center (Amazon)
- Runa Foundation (Amazon)
- Proyecto Ecologico Selvavida (Amazon)
- Clinica Amupakin (Amazon)
- Paushiyacu health center (Amazon)
- Fundación ADIN – Guayabillas (Andes)
- Fundación Ugshapamba (Andes)
- Jambi Huasi Health Center (Andes)
- Maquipucuna Cloud Forest Reserve (Andes)
- Brethren y Unida Foundation (Andes)
- Fundación Jovenes Para El Futuro (Andes)
- Finca Sarita (Pacific coast)
- Rio Muchacho Organic Farm (Pacific coast)
- Cerro Seco Biological Reserve (Pacific coast)
- Pacific Whale Foundation (Pacific coast)
- Planet Drum Foundation (Pacific coast)
- Hacienda Tranquila (Galapagos)
- Pajaro Brujo Reserve (Galapagos)



We also hosted a number of interns to work both with the Spanish school and volunteer department and with the foundation itself. These numbered 7 in all, and their length of internship varied from 5 weeks up 38 weeks.

Three interns came from Union College in New York in July. They replaced two who had been with us until April. These Minerva fellows come each year to work in Estero de Plátano. Their focus is social entrepreneurship, and

during their 9 month stay in the community they are involved in various ways, including working with the high-school scholarship recipients, the elementary school, the women's group, community bank, and other social groups, to promote community development.



With reference to groups of volunteers, during 2012 we hosted groups from a variety of organizations and universities for periods of just a few days up to 10 weeks. In total there were 257 volunteers in all these groups.

The organizations and universities were:

- The Leap – 4 groups (UK)
- Thinking Beyond Borders – 1 group (USA)
- Outlook Expeditions – 11 groups (UK)
- Leiden University - 1 group
- Colége Edouard Montpetit – 1 group (Canada)
- Aruba University – 1 group (Aruba)
- Vanderbilt University – 1 group (USA)

The projects that these groups were involved with range from purely volunteer work to more academically oriented programs that include service learning objectives. Yanapuma's role is to connect these groups to the communities and projects that we are working with so that both the community benefit through positive growth and infrastructure development, and the groups benefit in terms of learning and experience.





It is particularly gratifying for us when a group, such as the groups from Colége Edouard Montpetit arrive each year to continue with the same project, in this case working with the cacao growers of the comuna Bua de los Tsa'chila.

Other groups, such as the Leap groups, allow us to regularly commit a sizeable number of volunteers to a particular project objective that requires considerable person-power. During 2012 this involved working with the Tsa'chila to create up to 82 vegetable plots and sow up to 26,000 cacao saplings, for which the numbers of volunteers and their commitment was invaluable.

In a similar manner, the group from Thinking Beyond Borders each year is committed to planting trees to protect the water courses in and around the Tsa'chila communities, this year sowing over 6000 local species of trees.



In August of 2012 volunteer coordinator Kelly Schussler left us to continue with her studies in the US. She had been ably abetted by Dutch intern Laura Zuiderma who was here to assure a relatively smooth handover to the new coordinators. Kelly was replaced by

Angela Winston from the USA and Victoria Allende from Argentina. Victoria subsequently transferred to the foundation's work for a short while before returning to Argentina to work on a project that she had prepared and written sometime before coming to Ecuador.

She was replaced by Emily Branan, also from the USA, who had returned to live in Ecuador and just happened to pass by our door at the right moment!

We had been aware for a while in mid-2012 that one volunteer was not enough to handle all the work of the individual and groups of volunteers, even with adequate help from an intern or two. For that reason we decided to hire two coordinators so that we could make some positive changes in the department



So towards the end of 2012 we began a process of re-vamping the volunteer department, reviewing our successes and failures, reviewing the projects that we are working with, and setting a course for growth in 2013. We are happy to have both Angela and Emily as the volunteer coordinator team and expect great things of them for next year!

Conclusion

The process of updating all the information and reviewing all the processes of the volunteer department is one which will last through the first quarter of 2013. But it is necessary work if we are to move ahead and continue to develop the volunteer activities. These are seen to complement both the Spanish school, with some volunteers taking Spanish classes while or before they volunteer, and the mission of the foundation to provide help to those sectors of Ecuadorian society that require resources, via our collaboration with local grass-roots organizations.



Working with the coordinators we have decided that we would like to continue to build relationships with international academic institutions to promote service-learning and study abroad programs as well as research opportunities that will benefit through sustainable development the growth of the poorest and most marginalized sectors of Ecuadorian society.



We are also hoping that new relationships forged with international agencies and organizations for combinations of volunteering and Spanish classes will begin to yield significant results in 2013 and beyond.

Yanapuma Foundation

Introduction

During 2012 we were fortunate in the foundation to receive funding from several sources that allowed us to continue our involvement with the Tsa'chila culture of the province of Santo Domingo de los Tsa'chila. We are proud to continue working to help



this iconic culture to adapt to a new globalized environment in which they must learn new skills and abilities if they are to survive as a culture.

We also continued working on the Pacific coast in the

province of Esmeraldas, primarily in the community of Estero de Plátano, helping the community to organize itself, improve its educational level and forge a plan for the future development of this idyllic spot.

Other work primarily involved working with volunteer groups in communities in the Andes and in the Amazon region.

Tsa'chila communities

During 2012 Yanapuma's field staff consisted of:

- Ingeniero Giovanni Toapanta (agriculture)
- Licenciada Guadalupe Peralta (community/social work)
- Sylvia Perugachi MA. (project coordinator)
- Janeth Llanos (nutritionist and horticulturalist)

They were supported in the office by Elizabeth Garofalo (budget and project development) and Andy Kirby (project oversight).

In addition we counted on the support of two cacao farmers from the community of Bua who have been learning from Giovanni all about improved cacao production, Rafael Machin and Wilson Calazacón.

At the end of 2011 and the start of the 2012 we were essentially without external funding for the foundation, relying on funding provided solely by Yanapuma Spanish School to maintain the salaries and expenses of field staff involved in our projects.





We were fortunate then to receive funds from the Onaway Trust of the UK for £5000 (\$7800 approx), in response to a funding application made to them to work with a group of Tsa'chila women to improve their cacao production and help them with organizational skills

and self-esteem in the village of Los Naranjos.

The project was scheduled to start at the beginning of March 2012 and run until December. A group of 12 women farmers were recruited to take part in the project, each making available a plot of land on which to plant an improved variety of cacao. In all, over 3000 plants were transplanted on 7.6 hectares of land.

At the time this project was well under way, we also received word that another project with the Tsa'chila had been approved, this time by the "United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Trust Fund for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples." The funds, totaling \$9,510, were destined to provide training in crafts production along with organizational skills and self-esteem workshops to a group of women and youth.

This project was initiated in June. We were forced to adapt



the project to the circumstances of the moment due to the fact that the proposal was written and presented in 2010 for execution in 2011. In fact, we had submitted a fresh proposal in 2011 and at first naturally believed



that it was this later proposal that had been approved. It was only when we compared the award amount that we realized that it was the first proposal that had been approved nearly 2 years later!

This proposal involved working with the community bank in the community of Bua, but unfortunately it had folded in the intervening period and so we looked for a fresh group of beneficiaries to work with.

Throughout 2012 we continued with our mapping of the Tsa'chila communities, adding roads, rivers and other markers, as well as identifying the plots where we were going to plant out new cacao trees. Measuring these plots with the GPS unit meant that we could accurately identify the area to be sown to better calculate the number of plants needed. In addition it gave the farmers themselves a better idea of the area they had. Some were dismayed to find out that what they had assumed to be a hectare was sometimes considerably smaller.

In July of 2012 we received news that a funding proposal to the Inter American Foundation for a 3-year project with the Tsa'chila had been approved. This would allow us to work in a concerted fashion over an extended period with 4 communities, to improve

their cacao production, and improve their nutrition through the creation of vegetable gardens and nutritional education. We would also include a component to work



towards commercialization of their products.

Although the total funding from the IAF was in the order of \$211,000 for the 3-4 years of the project, Yanapuma was also committed to providing \$82,000 in supplementary funding along



with funding from other sources such as volunteer groups and other organizations. Each of the funding sources identified above requires a counterpart from Yanapuma, for which it is always necessary to continue

developing the Spanish school and the volunteer activities in order to be able to meet our obligations to the projects. The more funding we seek, the bigger our funding obligation becomes!

However, we were delighted to receive the funding from the IAF, and planned to start the project as soon as possible. One hindrance for the launch of the project was the need to get an accord signed with the governor of the Tsa'chila to be able to work



in each of the 4 communities, along with signed accords from each of the 4 communities themselves. Politics with the Tsa'chila is always a tricky and convoluted business, and in the end it took us nearly 2 months to get the majority of the letters signed, with one not signed until 8 months later!



The bargaining chip was a study that we commissioned from a local anthropologist to investigate the traditional crafts of the Tsa'chila, to create a complete portfolio that would stand as a starting point for the UN project to develop crafts initiatives. Unfortunately, the anthropologist did such a sloppy job of the report, not producing anything of real value, and with a lot of cut and paste off the internet and other easily available sources that it was an embarrassment to us to present this to the governor. However, eventually realizing that the report was just a pawn in the political game of chess, we submitted it and got the signature we needed and the report was promptly shelved and forgotten about!

For the rest of 2012 we began a process of enlisting beneficiaries to take part in the project, with the aim of sowing 52 hectares with an improved variety of national cacao with fine aroma, in accordance with the aim of the current government of Ecuador to improve the overall quality of the



cacao produced in Ecuador to create an international reputation.



By the end of the year we had advanced considerably with this project sowing almost 20,000 cacao plants on new plots with the aid of volunteer groups. In addition we had created around 60 of the 83 vegetable plots, taught the families how to sow

the first round of seeds, and many of the plots had begun to produce their first harvests. At the same time we had begun with classes in cooking and nutrition, at first buying the necessary ingredients to create delicious and nutritious lunches. But once production of the vegetable plots was under way there was much less need to purchase vegetables from outside.



At the start of the project the cacao side of things was managed by our agricultural expert, Giovanni Toapanta. But in October he received an offer of a post that represented a step up for him, and he left in November. This

presented us with the opportunity to encourage the local Tsa'chila promoters that Giovanni had been training for the past three years to take more responsibility in the project. Both Wilson Calazacón and Rafael Machin were happy to step up to the task, although they were a little nervous about the extent of their capacities. But with our backing they began to take on the responsibility of planning and executing the cacao part of the project.

One of the things that was a little hard for them at first was

that the Tsa'chila are more used to receiving "expert" help from outside their culture, so some farmers expressed doubts about their abilities. But they were aware of this and carried on regardless, managing to convince their beneficiaries that they were up to the task.



We were also delighted to start working with Cristina Aguavil, a local Tsa'chila from Bua who had taken a course in nutrition. She proved to be the perfect person to go farm to farm each day cooking meals for the families and teaching them about nutrition and diet. She was nervous at the start, but through practice became much more confident and able to manage the task of showing the wives how to incorporate vegetables easily into their diet and teaching them about nutrition. The fact that she could switch between Spanish and Tsa'fiki was a great help, especially for the older women whose Spanish is quite rudimentary.

For the construction of the vegetable plots and teaching beneficiaries how to grow vegetables we were fortunate to continue

with the help of Janeth Llanos. She lives in Santo Domingo and had previously worked with us, cooking and teaching about nutrition. But for this project she moved into horticulture in which she is also expert.





The hardest part of the project in horticulture is the first 9 months, during which we have to construct 70 new vegetable plots and renovate 18 more that we set up last year in a project funded by the Ferguson Charitable

Trust. The area for growing vegetables needs to be protected from pigs and chickens and from the torrential rains that fall between October and April. So they are constructed from bamboo poles supplied by the families with plastic netting around the sides and a plastic sheet covering the top. Each plot measures more or less 5 meters by 4 meters.

At times Janeth had the help of volunteers as well as the families themselves, and at other times we were able to supply extra person-power through hired hands for a few weeks at a time.

The vegetable plots begin to yield a result quite rapidly with radishes and spinach ready to eat in a few weeks. Thus it has been quite easy to keep the momentum going in this part of the project. With cacao however it is much harder, as the results do not begin to appear until around 4 years later. So one of the ongoing challenges for us will be to continue to inspire the farmers to regularly clear around their cacao trees, prune them, fertilize them, fumigate and pollinate them, in order to maximize their growth and



yield.

All this is completely new to them, as a culture that was until so recently based on being hunter-gatherers, with small plots of yucca and maize in the forest. They are used to scratching a hole with a stick and dropping the seed in to let nature do the rest. It has always been a life of relative ease for the Tsa'chila. So it is an ongoing challenge to teach them to what extent they can improve their yield through a concerted effort. Their mestizo neighbors typically harvest 4 or 5 times more off the same land, but through indiscriminate use of chemicals continue to damage the environment and their own health.



At the end of 2012, for the first time as a foundation, we have funding to carry us through an extended phase of our work with the Tsa'chila courtesy of the funding from the Inter American Foundation. By March or April the hardest part of the project will be behind us with all the vegetable gardens constructed and all the hectares of new cacao established. From that point on we will concentrate on teaching and training the Tsa'chila in these new skills. We will also continue to encourage the 3 Tsa'chila who are now working as part of the Yanapuma team to continue developing their skills as part of our overall aim of making the Tsa'chila self-sufficient in these areas.

Estero de Plátano

Estero de Plátano is an idyllically located village on the Pacific coast in the province of Esmeraldas. It is one of several villages dotted along the coast that until recently were relatively isolated due to the absence of a paved road. For this reason it used to take several hours to get from the nearest large towns of Atacames and Esmeraldas to Estero, and was at times impassible during the wet season.



In 2011 and 2012 a hard road gradually made its way to Estero de Plátano and part-way along the coast beyond. This significantly cut transport times and the village began to receive a larger number of tourists

with their own cars, especially at weekends and holidays. Additionally, people from outside increasingly began to look to buy plots of land to build their own houses or hotels and others came to open up small businesses such as restaurants on the sea front.

The risk for Estero de Plátano has always been that they will be over-run by incomers who have more capital, more education, more contacts, and are generally more savvy when it comes to taking advantage of the opportunities that the village offers for tourism development.

In general Yanapuma has sought to help residents to develop the necessary skills and organizational abilities to begin to take development into their own hands. But our efforts have been

hampered both by lack of resources to extend ourselves to working there, and by the lack of education and “social capital” that precludes residents from organizing themselves efficiently.

Until relatively recently, life in Estero de Plátano was easy, with a constant supply of fish in the ocean and the year-round harvests available from the jungle and their small plots of farmed land. So the culture that developed there was relatively individualistic with little need for organization at a community level for there were few threats from outside. But all that has changed drastically within the past few decades. The coming of electricity meant that they could keep the fish cold and sell it all, rather than having to divide up the extra catch among those less fortunate in the village. And the coming of the road has meant that tourists will arrive in increasing numbers in the coming years.

Our work during 2012 in Estero de Plátano centered upon supporting young persons to study at secondary school. We had 11 children studying at high-school in Tonchigwe and Atacames, with two more from the nearby village of Quingue. This program has been running for 5 years now, and has been combined with education in sexual and reproductive health and rights to help combat the high incidence of pregnancy in girls of 13 and upwards, which severely reduces their ability to continue their education and make the best choices for their futures.

In past years we had been fortunate in having long term interns and volunteers stationed in the community during the first months of the school semester which are May, June, and July. This year we were not so



lucky, although we did have sporadic volunteers there who were able to a certain extent help the scholarship students, especially the new ones, with their homework and adaptation to studying outside the community.



In July, 3 new interns arrived from Union College in New York. These Minerva Fellows arrive each year, although usually only two of them, to spend up to 9 months stationed in the community helping to foment social

entrepreneurship. A core activity for them is to help the scholarship recipients stay on track with their education. In addition they involve themselves in different aspects of the community, with various social groups, and carrying out small projects for the general benefit of the community.

These interns were instrumental in setting up and getting running a computer center in the village. The funding to buy the used PCs was supplied by UK organization La Vida. Yanapuma supplied additional funds to buy extra PCs, and these were shipped out to the village in August. Through discussion with the community it was decided not to put the PCs in the school library, but to look for a place in the village. The community pulled together to provide a room to site the PCs and help to paint and make some tables and benches. Inauguration of the center took place in



September.

The interns set up a schedule of classes for the scholarship recipients, for the children of the elementary school in the village, and for adults to learn computer skills.

One problem we experienced early on is that the voltage is so inconsistent there that several of the computers got damaged early on and had to be returned to Quito to be fixed. To resolve this Yanapuma bought some surge protectors with battery back-up which seemed to help to reduce damage to the computers.



Yanapuma also bought a used projector from a couple that had stayed there for a while so that the interns could have movie nights in the village, something completely new for all. These proved quite popular, and the interns tried to steer the pictures more towards meaningful and thoughtful movies rather than the stock shoot-em-ups and horror movies that people tend to watch.

Additional activities in Estero de Plátano included working with each of the social groups – the community council, the women’s group, the community bank, and the artisans group – to try to help them organize themselves better, be more efficient, and set and achieve objectives. Both the artisans group and the women’s group have received considerable funding from other agencies in



the past year or two, and in each case there has been insufficient oversight and gross wastage of the funds, which tends to make our work doubly difficult as people come to expect that that is how things work.



A good example is the artisans group that reportedly received over \$20,000. The group has not become productive, to the point of when being invited to a crafts fair in Riobamba members went out and bought crafts in

nearby Atacames to take down there and show as their own! And when local authorities came to review the accounts they merely helped the group cover up the misspent funds, presumably not wanting to be seen in a bad light themselves for having allowed the funds to be mismanaged in the first place.

Unfortunately these kinds of stories are still all too common in the development world. At the end of the year the women's group has a building with a roof and columns and half a cement floor that was supposed to have been completely built with funding they received. As a previous Yanapuma intern who was keen to help the group learn how to manage their finances, quickly learned, digging too deep in these affairs is a quick way to become unwelcome in the community.

We have often observed to volunteers and interns who visit Estero de Plátano, it is one of the greatest spots on earth just to hang out, with a beautiful beach and a balmy climate, surrounded by rainforest with trails and waterfalls, and people always ready to stop and chat. But trying to work there to promote sustainable developments is one of the hardest tasks anyone can undertake.

Another good example of this has been the potable water

system that Yanapuma installed in the community. The donation was received through a former intern who spent time in the community and heard of the system being installed in



similar communities up and down the coast. Yanapuma then spent a year just trying to find a suitable site in the village where we could be sure there would be no disputes or problems at a later date. With ownership often being established by tenancy and without papers to reliably demonstrate who really owns a piece of land, things can get tense and we wanted to avoid any possible complications. In the end we sited the plant in the grounds of the local school after speaking with authorities.

The plant got off to a bad start because of a faultily installed filter which gave the water a bad taste. So lots of people in the village refused to drink it after that, even though the problem was 100% resolved. Efficient functioning of the plant became the responsibility of the interns and volunteers, despite having set up a single mother to be the manager of the plant, earning income from the sale of the water.

The current interns decided that it was not going to be a priority of theirs to actually make the plant function by transporting the water



themselves and dealing with all the logistics day to day. Thus, at the end of the year the water plant is idle, despite the frustration of the interns who see a perfectly good business opportunity for somebody in the village. There is also word that a potable supply will come to the village in the next year, which would make the plant redundant. But there has already been one such plant installed and now abandoned and which produces contaminated water as per tests we carried out last year.

So it remains for us to decide how to proceed in 2013 with the water purification plant in Estero de Plátano, whether to take it out and find somewhere else it can be used, or to see if we can set up a small locally-run business selling the water. We are sure that if we can get the water transported to other communities it will sell really well, and will eventually sell well in Estero too. But all of that takes time and resources that we currently do not have.

The question of resources is the major obstacle to our continued work in Estero de Plátano. It is often tempting to get involved in things that we cannot support fully because we see the need and because people request our help. This can be especially true for the interns who want to make the maximum effect of their time in the village. But like the potable water project, the technical part is often the easiest. It is the dealing with the social and cultural restraints that takes the most thought and effort.



Other Projects

Aside from our work in the 4 Tsa'chila communities and in Estero de Plátano, the foundation was active in a small way in several other communities. Chief amongst these was the village of Chilcapamba in the Andean sierra close to the town of Otavalo.

During the year we sent several volunteer groups to the village to help in construction work and infrastructure development. These projects included roofing an area for selling local crafts in the

village, reconstructing the house of an old lady after the walls of her old house collapsed, building infrastructure for working with cattle, building a new septic tank for the school, and expanding the water channeling system for irrigating local crops.

In addition we also sent a number of individual volunteers to teach in the local school, and Chilcapamba was a destination for our "Study in an Indigenous Community" program for the Spanish school. Several students throughout the year spent a week studying Spanish there with their teacher and taking part in community activities in the afternoons.

We also began a relationship with a project in the Napo region of the Amazon. The center, Sinchi Aqua, is run by a Kichwa women's group called Sinchi Warmi. They have constructed a lodge and visitor reception area, fishponds and vegetable gardens, and receive visitors for the day and also overnight. We were able to send



Tamye Ayura is a village in the same area where we sent a volunteer group to help the community begin to develop community based tourism. In the end though we decided that they are not quite ready yet for us to get more involved with, although we remain open to that possibility in the future.

several volunteer groups there to help with the ongoing maintenance and construction of new buildings.



Conclusion

Although we started the year without any significant funding for the work of the foundation, in the end the funding came and we were kept increasingly and extremely busy as the year came to a close.

We continue to ask ourselves the difficult questions about what we do, always concerned to be as efficient and as effective as we can with the resources at our disposal. There are important philosophical questions that we wrestle with all the time, and we are always glad of the input of our interns and other staff in the struggle to understand the impact of what we are trying to achieve.

We have always fallen back to the position that globalization is happening to these communities and cultures, whether we or

they like it or not, and that their previous way of life is no longer sustainable in these new circumstances. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the Tsa'chila. The foundation of their culture is their life as hunter-gatherers in an endless forest. After many hundreds of years of living this way this all came abruptly to an end over the past 50 years as mestizos moved in around them and felled the forests, reducing the flow of the rivers and causing the game and fish upon which they depended to disappear. So what does it mean to be working to help them preserve their culture?

With no history of agriculture, the Tsa'chila have adopted the worst practices of their mestizo neighbors, using chemicals as their local suppliers prescribe them without understanding of the long-term effects. At the same time, in order to live in a more globalized context they are forced to adopt new patterns of thought and action in order to compete in the market place. All these changes are contrary to their traditional culture. So the question of what we are hoping to help them preserve, beyond their iconic traditional appearance and a few cultural traits, is an important one for us to understand in order to be able to work coherently with them.

Although the residents of Estero de Plátano do not share the unique cultural identity of the Tsa'chila, being a mix of Chachis, Afro-Ecuadorians and mestizos, they have inherited a particular lifestyle and relationship to their environment which is now threatened by the arrival of the road, with land prices rising accordingly and the temptation to sell becoming stronger all the time.

A cynical observer may give the opinion that we are merely helping the



process of globalization itself, putting the feet of these cultures firmly on the very bottom rung of the economic ladder. But preserving their current way of life is ultimately impossible, change is inevitable, and so they must either adapt or disappear.

Globalization itself presents a unique opportunity for any person to understand that their little piece of the world is of equal value to any other. Traditionally there has always been, in any country, a drift of the more educated persons to the cities and towns where there are greater opportunities for self-development. But with the increasing ubiquity of the internet, everyone can learn and explore the rest of the world from wherever they are. One of the positive effects we have observed in the visits of volunteers to these communities is how it inspires local people to realize that the volunteers have come so far just to see where and how they live, therefore there must be something relevant and useful in what they already have.



And for the volunteers, spending time in a world so very different from their own, with so few of the comforts they are used to having, yet finding people perfectly happy, is inspiring to them too in providing an antidote to the materialism and consumerism that drives globalization. Sometimes we have the feeling that the positive things that we achieve are actually almost accidents of the work that we are trying to do. Carrying on with our quest to understand just how we can best serve the populations that we work with will be an ongoing challenge for 2013 and beyond.

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A draft financial statement for 2011 will be added soon.

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