**Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma and True Ecuador Travel!**

**A bimonthly newsletter**

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## Intro & News

### True Ecuador Travel News

**Introduction**

April and May are generally quieter months for the Spanish Schools after the first three months of the year and before the summer gets going around mid-June.

But this year the school in Cuenca has been kept busier than usual, while Quito has been quieter. In April we formed a partnership with Quino Spanish – producers of an app for learning Spanish.

For True Ecuador Travel sales of our Galapagos programs have been very healthy and we continue to refine and develop them as new opportunities and services become available.

One focus has been on developing educational materials for our younger visitors, a project we are still working on.

For Yanapuma Foundation our main focus has been on developing the scholarship program for deserving and underprivileged children and youth to continue their studies through high school and beyond.

In addition we offer some support to younger children with special needs who attend elementary schools that can cater to their requirements.

Our volunteer department has been very quiet for the past two months, so much so that we had to let our coordinator go as the income from individual volunteers and groups is not enough this year to cover the cost of maintaining the post.

We will continue to work with both individuals and groups of volunteers for existing projects.

Overall we are looking forward to a busy summer in the school and the travel agency as students and visitors begin to arrive around mid-June.

### Spanish/Volunteer News

Yanapuma Foundation and True Ecuador Travel?

Yanapuma was founded in 2006 as an Ecuadorian NGO promoting sustainable development in indigenous and marginalized communities. We founded a Spanish school in Quito at the same time to provide us some base funding on which to build with additional external project funding. We also began to work with individual volunteers and groups of international students.

Subsequently we opened a second Spanish school in Cuenca, followed by the travel agency True Ecuador Travel. These for-profit activities provide us with the means to sustain ourselves while seeking additional project financing. We continue to adapt to changing international conditions as social enterprises dedicated to our stated mission in Ecuador.

**¡La Fundación de Cuenca!**

La ciudad de Cuenca fue fundada en 1557 y el día del 12 de abril de 2019 celebró 462 de existencia.

El evento fue marcado por muchos eventos en la ciudad, incluso un desfile grande con representantes de muchas de las organizaciones y grupos que existen en Cuenca.

Con elegantes trajes, carros alegóricos y danzas bien sincronizadas todos gritaban ¡Viva Cuenca!

El espectáculo fue disfrutado por los miles de habitantes de la ciudad quienes llenaron las veredas del centro histórico.

**Remember!**

You don’t have to be in Ecuador to take Spanish classes with us.

You can take them online from the comfort of your own home at any time that suits your busy schedule.

Online Spanish classes are ideal for children too who adapt quickly to the online learning platform.

Check it out here: [https://yanapumaspanish.org/onlinespanish.html](https://yanapumaspanish.org/onlinespanish.html)

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We have been fortunate during April and May to count on the support of several talented interns from Holland, Belgium and Germany. With their help we have been able to continue developing the website, gathering information on tourism resources around Ecuador for publication, and developing new initiatives.

One new activity has been to develop educational materials for our Galapagos visitors, especially the younger ones. We are putting together a pack of resources that will include drawings of the various species in the Galapagos for coloring in for the youngest visitors, a checklist of animals, birds and marine life to check off as they are seen, and information about the formation and evolution of the islands themselves over time.

We also came across the UK NGO the Galapagos Conservation Trust - https://galapagosconservation.org.uk/ - who host a website boasting a wealth of good quality educational materials for schools and pupils – http://www.discoveringgalapagos.org.uk

Other advances include uploading more information on haciendas, Amazon lodges, and adventure activities in Ecuador, along with a recommended packing list for visitors to the Galapagos – something we have often been asked about!

Our interns have been vital in helping to gather all the information to create the new web pages and continue expanding the True Ecuador Travel website.

Lastly, we also began a new section of the website dedicated to the impressions and observations of our interns during their internship period with us here in Ecuador. Often their impressions from their experiences are unique and inspiring: https://true-ecuador-travel.org/blog/intern-blog-ecuador.html

Travel Itineraries for Ecuador!

We are always happy to help create the perfect travel itinerary for individuals, families and groups visiting Ecuador and beyond. Our extensive local knowledge allows us to suggest ways to optimize your travels in the country and get the most out of the limited time you may have.

Check it out here: https://true-ecuador-travel.org
Our school in Cuenca has stayed pretty busy over the last two months when in past years it has been fairly quiet in April and May.

Quito was quieter though as we expected, a situation we have heard repeated from all the other Spanish schools we are in contact with here in the capital city.

After reviewing all the materials and learning options for the Spanish language we developed a partnership with Ouino Spanish who produce an attractive and engaging app for learning the language.

The app works for beginners and intermediate to low advanced students and contains grammar tips, exercises, readings, and interactive resources to encourage learning through additional modalities.

Our teachers have begun to use it in the classroom for both adults and children, and we can offer it to our students as an extra tool that they can use outside the classroom to continue developing their language skills.

As it is an app that downloads onto a smart phone, tablet or laptop, students can carry it with them as they continue their travels.

Our teachers use the same Ouino materials online as well as an extra tool in their toolbox of materials and resources to keep classes engaging and productive.

It was unfortunate for us in late May to have to part ways with our volunteer coordinator Gabriela.

The numbers of individual volunteers has declined significantly and the organizations that planned to bring groups to Ecuador have either reduced the number of groups they had planned, cancelled outright the project, or have seen the numbers decline from what was anticipated. So we have been forced to adapt to the changes and seek ways to maintain ourselves through this relatively lean period.

During these two months our volunteer group in Peru worked on conservation in the Peruvian Amazon before going on to volunteer in the Sacred Valley with a local community. In Ecuador our current group worked on conservation in the Galapagos before heading off to volunteer with the Tsa’chila at the cultural center Shinopi Bolon.

We have appreciated being able to count on some dedicated interns working with us over these two months. Sebastian has been doing research for the adventure activities for the website as well as leading a volunteer group. Romy and Hanne have been working in the offices and schools in Quito and Cuenca as well as doing online research and marketing.

Finally, in mid-May we were joined by tourism student Joel Gijs who will be with us until November and will be involved in a number of activities.
The work of the foundation has taken a back seat over recent months to the tasks of generating income to maintain our activities as an NGO. With the reduction in the number of Spanish students, especially in Quito, and the reduction in the number of volunteers and groups this year, we are working hard to develop other income streams to maintain ourselves.

We continue to develop our scholarship program for deserving youth to continue their studies and are gearing up for a new batch of students to join the current students in August in the Sierra. At the coast, the academic year begins again in April, so we are already funding youth there who have begun another year of study.

In addition, we continue to support the volunteers from Germany under the “Weltwarts” program. Sponsored by the German government and arranged through the German organization KulturLife, students spend an entire year working in a school or community program, which is a considerable contribution to each of their projects.

We have been frustrated in our efforts to help the members of our team who worked on the co-funded project with the Inter American Foundation. In order to apply for funding for a new project they need to form a legal entity that can then open a bank account to receive funding.

Our aim is to be continually stepping back to let them take over running and managing a project and this is the next step. However, internal relations with the Tsa’chila are always extremely problematic and we continue to wait patiently for them to be able to get set up so that we can make an application for new funding for them.

Over the course of the summer and for the rest of the year we will have a few volunteer groups that will take part in projects that have specific aims. Currently we are growing 2500 saplings in the Tsa’chila comuna Bua that will be planted out by a group from Sotogrande International School in July.

Donation News . . .

We were pleased to receive a donation of £300 Stuart Kirby—one of the trustees of Yanapuma UK. This will go to our general small donation fund for use in specific mini projects that arise.

We welcome small donations from individuals and organizations, pledging 100% of such donations to direct project costs, providing our own admin and overhead costs.