

## Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

Issue No. 39 Mar-Apr 2014

### Introduction

March and April have been busy months all around – in the Spanish schools in Quito and Cuenca, as well as in the volunteer department and Yanapuma Foundation. These are three distinctive but inter-related spheres of activity for us, and like the “malabaristas,” the jugglers that juggle for change at the traffic lights all over Quito, we are constantly working to keep all three of our balls in the air at the same time.

This year, the objective for the Spanish school is to move more towards offering classes in groups, both in Quito and in Cuenca. While the student make-up is different in each of these cities, with more retired students in Cuenca, we are aiming to market the Cuenca school as the perfect place for young students to learn Spanish and carry out Study Abroad and Service Learning projects, volunteering with local organizations.

In part the impetus for these changes will come from the volunteer department itself, and the recent addition of **Rachel Worthington** as volunteer/

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intern coordinator alongside **Cristina López**, will allow us to develop combined programs of Spanish study and cultural studies with volunteering and internship options.

Meanwhile, Fundación Yanapuma has just passed the half-way point of our 3-year project with the Inter American Foundation, promoting sustainable and improved cacao production with the Tsa'chila culture, in addition to setting up vegetable gardens and offering nutrition and diet training for local families.

We were also delighted in March to welcome the students from Estero de Plátano who are receiving scholarships from Yanapuma to study at high-school. As a reward for their year of hard work we invited them to Quito. You can read more about their visit on the following pages.



*The Easter procession in Quito!*



Students studying Spanish with us over the Holy Week got the chance to witness the annual Easter procession in Quito, the Procesión de Jesus del Gran Poder. It is made up of penitents who carry crosses, put chains on their feet and even put barbed wire around their heads and bodies. The hooded “cucuruchos” add to the spectacle that is watched by thousands as they proceed through Quito’s historic center.



*A meeting of the foundation's Santo Domingo field team at our offices in Quito on 24 April to plan the next 6 months of the project.*

### Día del Libro y Turismo Idiomático en Quito!

On Wednesday 23rd of April an event was held in Quito to promote reading, and the learning of languages as a touristic activity. Yanapuma Spanish School, as a member of the AECEE (Asociación Ecuatoriana de Centros de Enseñanza de Español), participated in the event along with other member schools.

There is still little understanding of the impact of Spanish teaching in Ecuador as an activity that generates tourism and benefits all sectors of the economy. This event marks the beginning of a new initiative to support Spanish and other language schools for the service they provide in attracting visitors to Ecuador.



This is especially important in view of the fact that Quito has arguably the clearest and most easily understood Spanish of any Spanish-speaking country

## Spanish School News . . .

For Yanapuma Spanish School, 2014 is a year of consolidation of our methodology and teaching methods prior to a major push later in the year and in 2015 to reach a wider international audience through agencies and other organizations. We know that the reputation of Spanish schools in Latin America in general is not that high, which is why the majority of serious American students go to Spain to learn Spanish. At Yanapuma we are determined to compete with the best schools in Spain. We have adopted the methodology and standards of the Cervantes Institute, and are working with our teachers to ensure the very highest standards in Spanish language tuition.

On Saturday 05 April we held a workshop for teachers to prepare them for offering the DELE exam at level B2. The workshop was given by **Javier Mendoza** of Academia Columbus Spanish School here at our school in the historic center of Quito.

Quite unexpectedly on a recent visit to the school in Cuenca, we happened across a building for rent that would provide a perfect location for our Spanish school there. After viewing the property, which is actually literally around the corner from the present school (*see photo below*), we arranged to sign the lease and move in at the very end of April. For the last two weeks of April the builders and electrician have been busy getting everything ready. The new space is twice the size of the previous school and does not share the entrance or building with other businesses, so it will be quieter and more convenient.



Yanapuma Spanish School is a member of the AECEE (Asociación Ecuatoriana de Centros de Enseñanza de Español). As part of our drive to promote excellence in Spanish language tuition we have been working with Javier to develop a set of standards to apply to all the schools that form part of the association. Based on the Instituto Cervantes system for evaluating their member schools, the standards will set a minimum level of compliance and ensure that all the member schools are offering a high level of quality across the areas of academics, administration, infrastructure and publicity. Needless to say, at Yanapuma we are already surpassing those minimum standards!

## Volunteer and Intern News . . .

At the start of April we welcomed French intern **Marion Cholieu** to our school in Cuenca where she will carry out a 5-month internship working to develop our volunteer programs there as well as to carry out the first phases of the development of our own project there.



Two groups from the **Leap UK** arrived at the start of April. While one group went to start a project with the Tsa'chila in Bua, the other group traveled to Chilcapamba to begin working there, painting the local school and helping with the local harvest.

Following these projects, one group flew off to the Galapagos to work at Hacienda Tranquila on a conservation project while the other group enjoyed a week of adventure traveling down the Andes before going on to Bua to continue where the previous group left off.

Our three leaders for the groups are **Maria José Arellano**, who has already led a previous group, and **Michel Sluijmans** from Holland and **Julie Rausenberger** from Belgium (*right*)



At the end of March, group leader Fenner Hoell left us to return to the US after working with us for 7 months. We are grateful for his hard work and dedication to leading the groups, and wish him all the best in the future!

### Donations!

Yanapuma is always pleased to receive donations from individuals and organizations that will allow us to continue our work. Small donations for specific purposes can make a big difference.—We commit 100% of any small donations directly to the project costs. As a “social enterprise” we cover all our own overheads, and can thus use small donations for direct project costs only.

### A new volunteer coordinator! . . .

We were delighted to welcome **Rachel Worthington** to the team as a volunteer and intern coordinator. Rachel has a BA in Human Rights with a concentration in Latin American and Iberian Studies.

She will be working alongside Cristina López in the volunteer department, and helping to develop the Study Abroad, Service Learning and Global Citizenship programs.





## Foundation News . . .

### Tsa'chila News . . .

At the start of March we were involved in our 6-monthly evaluation of our project funded with the Inter American Foundation, visiting the Tsa'chila comunas to meet with beneficiaries and evaluate progress over the previous period. The project has seen a shift towards employing the Tsa'chila directly to handle the great majority of the processes, which is directly in line with Yanapuma's objective of empowering the Tsa'chila to manage their own affairs.

French sociologist, Richard Couedel, continues his work with Alfonso, leader of the cultural group Shinopi Bolón, recording his life history and knowledge of the Tsa'chila culture. In addition Richard, after a couple of months of involvement, has seen many areas in which the Tsa'chila need help developing their organizational and other abilities and he is keen to get involved. One example is the local radio station Somba Pamin. The frequency was given to the Tsa'chila, as one of the indigenous groups of Ecuador, to enable them to promote and preserve their culture and traditions via this medium. However, they are in danger of losing the frequency if they do not comply with the mission that is laid out for them. Lack of training and experience means that it is difficult for the Tsa'chila to know how to develop the radio station, so Richard is helping them to plan and carry out the necessary work to be able to avoid losing the station.

After the recent elections, a new governor will soon take possession and Yanapuma is waiting for the right moment to arrange a meeting at which we can present our work and progress to date. Hopefully we will be able to maintain a successful relationship with the new governor. Politics is always very complicated with the Tsa'chila as their traditional values are more oriented towards the family rather than any wider social system.

On Friday and Saturday, 18 and 19 of April the traditional annual event "Kasama" was held in the comuna Bua. Tsa'chila from the 7 comunas attended this lively event which is now more of a "fair" than the traditional Tsa'chila meeting. It is an opportunity to present their culture and to sell crafts and other services such as the traditional "limpias" of the Tsa'chila shamen.

Yanapuma presented a stall showing the work that we have

been doing in cacao, vegetable plots, diet and nutrition,



staffed by our local field staff (see photos).

### Estero de Plátano

On 24 and 25 March we welcomed the "becados," the youth from Estero de Plátano receiving a scholarship from Yanapuma to study at high school (photo below). Their visit coincided with a university fair held in Quito which they were able to attend and talk with counselors and representatives of different universities. A second student graduated this year, and others will follow next year, so we are now working on helping them to attend university. Several becados would like to study tourism as a way of developing small businesses in their community in the future.



In addition the group visited the Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial (UTE) in Quito to look around the facilities and learn about life at university. But they also had time to do some more touristy things like visit the museum on the equator, the Mitad del Mundo and go to the cinema.

At the end of April Andrew Viñales and Jacqui Smith, interns from Union College, finished their 9-month sojourn in Estero de Plátano. We are extremely grateful to them for their hard work and dedication to helping the community during their time there, and we wish them every success in the future. You can read about their experiences on their blogs here:

<http://avestero.tumblr.com/>  
<http://jacqui-en-estero.tumblr.com/>





# Yanapuma Foundation Newsletter

## March and April Photo Gallery

