



YANAPUMA Foundation & Spanish School

A cooperatively 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. 46 Jul-Aug 2015

Introduction

Towards the end of August the big event for Quito was the eruption of the nearby Volcán Cotopaxi. After a good few years of being dormant it sprung into life in August, spewing a great cloud of ash over a wide area.

Fortunately the wind carried the ash mostly away from the city of Quito. Of course, the park was closed for visitors wishing to climb up to the refuge and snowline and those wishing to reach the summit. But by the end of August it seems that the worst is over.

Our school and offices also witnessed a series of protest marches both in favor and against the current government. Our location in Quito on Calle Guayaquil guarantees a good view from our balconies of the passing marchers.

Meanwhile, the city of Cuenca carried on in its usual tranquil and reserved way, although cold as it is known to be in the summer months with daily temperatures only around 20-22 degrees. The school there was pretty much full for the whole two months with students from all over the world and of all ages, including the retired and semi-retired Americans who have made Cuenca their home.

We have continued with the work of

The Pope in Ecuador . . .

On 5 of July the Papa Francisco arrived in Ecuador for a papal visit. Great preparations were made for the millions of Catholics in Ecuador who took advantage of this unique opportunity to catch a glimpse of Pope Frances. As our school is located



right on the path that the "popemobile" took as it went through Quito staff and students were able to get a first hand view of the Pope as he passed by.

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launching our new travel agency **True Ecuador Travel**, providing travel services for our students and volunteers, both individually and in groups.

Our new website for the agency is slowly growing as we add more details of all the amazing things there are to see and do in Ecuador. We estimate it will take until the end of the year to really get it to where we want it to be – <https://true-ecuador-travel.org>

Our foundation completed its 6th semester of the project co-sponsored by the Inter American Foundation. We are now in the last semester with the project due to wind up at the end of January 2016. Yanapuma's contribution over the life of this project will exceed \$75,000.

July and August have also been busy with volunteers, both individuals and in groups.

You can learn more about all these activities and events on the following pages.



Students in Quito tasting some of the exotic fruits of Ecuador in class.



Students from 7 to 70 enjoy classes in Quito!



Cotopaxi Volcano just south of Quito began spewing ash and smoke in August! Fortunately for Quiteños the prevailing winds take the ash away from the city. But the poor indigenous farmers of the surrounding countryside are experiencing grave consequences as the ash falls, destroying crops and killing livestock.

Did You Know . . . ?

You can take online Spanish classes with Yanapuma from the comfort of your own home or office!

Simply go to this page to sign up for a FREE TRIAL CLASS with no obligation: <http://www.yanapumaspanish.org/onlinespanish.html>

Spanish School News . . .

As previously mentioned the school in Cuenca was practically full over the summer months with students of all ages, from children and families up to retired couples. The summer months can be a little cold in Cuenca and July was especially so, although to put it in context the lows were down to around 12 degrees.

By contrast the weather was much warmer in Quito, despite it being at a higher altitude (2860 meters, 9500 feet). There, the school was a little quieter than it usually is in the summer months. We have noticed that the student demographic is changing. There seem to be fewer backpackers traveling through South America these days as many have opted to travel in Asia instead. Now, their parents are coming, attracted by the accounts of their children. Many of these choose one or more of our "Study and Travel" programs, traveling the country accompanied by a teacher. The Ruta de los Volcanes remains our most popular program – extra exciting right now with the activity at Volcán Cotopaxi!



Students at the school in Cuenca

AECEE—(Asociación Ecuatoriano de Centros de Enseñanza de Español)

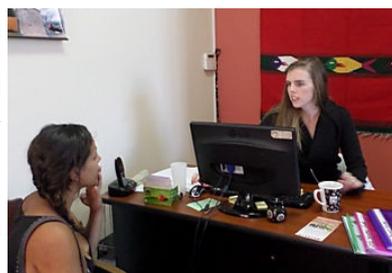
Yanapuma continues to take an active role in the development of the association which is dedicated to improving the quality of Spanish tuition in Ecuador. Currently the association is working with the Ministerio de Turismo and with ProEcuador to promote Ecuador as the premier destination for language study travel.

In addition to the reasonable costs for Spanish tuition in Ecuador and the very clear accent, especially in Quito, the country offers a wealth of potential for the visitor—from visits to the Amazon rainforest and cloud forests of the slopes of the Andes Mountains, to the high Andes and on to the unique Galapagos Islands.



Staff and Intern News . . .

In July we welcomed Delia McDonald (right) as a new student and volunteer coordinator in Quito. Delia is married to an Ecuadorian and lives in Quito, and focuses mainly on the Spanish School for her duties.



We were delighted to welcome **Alexander Heinrich** as an intern in August. Alexander is from Germany and has a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies as well as undergraduate qualifications in Psychology and Political Science. He is working on our social media presence, bringing together all the diverse accounts that we have set up over the years (without much planning!) so that we can put together a coherent social media image.



Julieta, our student and volunteer in Cuenca (left) celebrated her birthday on 15 July.

Aside from working for Yanapuma, Julieta is very involved in the Cuenca arts scene, with her own workshop and she performs at different venues around the city.

True Ecuador Travel . . .

Yanapuma launched **True Ecuador Travel** this year to be able to make all the travel arrangements for the increasing number of groups that we receive to carry out **Study Abroad, Service Learning, Global Citizenship** and other programs, as well as our own individual students and volunteers.

Groups often combine volunteering with Spanish classes, travel around Ecuador, visits to the Galapagos Islands and the Amazon. We felt that we should become a registered travel agency to be able to handle all these arrangements with the correct legal foundation to be able to offer the best guarantees to our clients.

While we have begun to seek new organizations, universities, and high schools interested in carrying out programs in Ecuador, we have also begun to promote the website to attract international clients interested in responsible and ecological travel.

For more information on the programs and services we offer please visit the travel agency website:

<https://true-ecuador-travel.org>

Project News . . .

Tsa'chila

Yanapuma Foundation completed the 6th semester of the program co-funded by the Inter American Foundation on the 11th of July and submitted a written and financial report on progress. The project involves improving cacao production, creating vegetable gardens and teaching nutrition and health to families of the Tsa'chila culture.

Our 4 full-time field staff have continued to manage the project very efficiently. Over the lifetime of this project we have been able to make a radical change, from having two technical experts from outside managing the project to having our 4 field-staff taking on more responsibilities and proving that they are now worth of the title of experts in their own fields. Three of these are themselves Tsa'chila, and after some initial resistance from their fellow Tsa'chila they have developed a reputation for providing good leadership and helpful advice and training in the 4 comunas that we are working in.

Although this was not part of our original plan, we are delighted to support them in their growth, and recognize that their efforts make the project sustainable in the long run as the Tsa'chila can become less dependent on outside experts unfamiliar with their own language and customs.

Looking ahead to the winding down of this project in January of 2016 we are beginning to think about seeking funding for them to be able to continue their work. Yanapuma would like to take a mostly hands-off role in any new projects, lending help and advice when necessary and auditing progress, but leaving the majority of the work to the team themselves to organize, carry out and report.

Estero de Plátano

We were delighted to welcome in July two new interns from Union College in New York. These Minerva Scholarship recipients, Lacey Reimer and Gerardo Reyes, will spend nearly 9 months living in the coastal community of Estero de Plátano where Yanapuma this year has 8 disadvantaged youth receiving scholarships to study at high school. The interns will work with these youth, keeping them on track with their studies and also working in the local school and with the various groups of the community such as the women's entrepreneur group, the community bank and the artisans group.



Volunteer News . . .

July and August are usually very busy months for volunteers and this year was no different. Our 4 student and volunteer coordinators (3 in Quito and 1 in Cuenca) were kept extremely busy receiving and orienting groups as well as accompanying individual volunteers to their projects around the country.

In July a group of 13 volunteers from the **Leap UK** arrived to carry out two volunteer projects – one with the Tsa'chila and the other doing conservation work on the Galapagos. They also had time to travel a little in the Galapagos to experience the incredible nature on offer there as well as spending a few days at the end relaxing in the seaside town of Montañita on the Pacific coast.



In July we also welcomed a group from **Pacific Discovery**. The 10 volunteers worked in a Kichwa community in the Andes called Agato.

In addition, we received 7 groups from **Outlook Expeditions**. The groups spent a week volunteering in various parts of the country doing various work. Three groups worked with the Tsa'chila, planting trees, working in the nursery and doing general maintenance at the cultural center where they stayed. The other four groups volunteered at Selvavida community project in the Amazon region, working on various community construction projects.



Donation News . . .

We are always happy to receive small donations from former students and volunteers, and pledge to commit 100% of these funds directly to a specific small project or to use as part of a general fund for small projects.

July-August Photo Gallery

