

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

A bimonthly newsletter

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### Introduction

“Abril – aguas mil” goes the refrain in Quito, as April is normally a wet month with heavy rains in the late afternoon. This April has been no different, with bright and sunny mornings and periods of heavy rain in the late afternoon.

In the foundation, we have been busy primarily with the project funded by the Inter American Foundation, improving cacao production, creating family vegetable plots, and teaching nutrition and diet to Tsa’chila families. Working with the Tsa’chila is always complicated, due to the great differences between our culture and theirs and on both sides at times we struggle to understand each other and keep communication clear. You can read more about this project on the following pages.

In the volunteer department we have been especially busy, both with individual volunteers and with volunteer groups. We offer opportunities to volunteer with over 25 organizations in

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Quito and all around Ecuador – well-run and worthwhile projects in which volunteers can make a positive contribution. We also received our largest volunteer group yet from the Leap UK – 32 enthusiastic volunteers who have been volunteering in the Andes, in the Pacific rainforest, and on the Galapagos Islands.

In the Spanish school things have been a little quiet, which is normal for this time of year. After a full first 3 months of the year, the numbers dwindled down by the end of April, but with a rising number of bookings for May and beyond we are looking forward to a busy summer. Our new school in Cuenca is now open for business, but we expect that it will take a few months before it begins to really take off. You can read more on the following pages.



The traditional Easter parade in Quito was watched by Spanish school students and teachers

### Semana Santa in Quito

Holy week in Quito is an internationally recognized event that brings together traditional Catholic ritual with indigenous elements to form a unique religious celebration.

Yanapuma Spanish students witnessed this unique spectacle, accompanied by their teachers on Good Friday. Students and teachers left after morning break to head towards the historic center of Quito where thousands of people lined the streets to witness the passing parade.

The religious celebration is accompanied by a gastronomic celebration as Quiteños prepare a traditional fish-based dish called “Fanesca.” This is a thick soup containing dried fish, beans and pulses, egg, avocado, and sweet plantain. It makes a delicious and filling meal on its own!



### Con Pegaso comienza el programa espacial en Ecuador!

Ecuador dio un salto hacia la tecnología aeroespacial, con el lanzamiento desde territorio chino, de su satélite bautizado Pegaso.

Este monosatélite fue concebido por la recién conocida Agencia Espacial Civil Ecuatoriana EXA, que separó del cohete propulsor al satélite, a 650 kilómetros de altura. Este artefacto espacial servirá para transmitir una serie de datos desde su órbita, lo cual será aprovechado no solamente por el país sino por otros en el mundo en el monitoreo del clima, tormentas solares, georeferenciación, etc.

Cabe sentir orgullo por este lanzamiento que unos años antes habría sido sencillamente impensable y que coloca a Ecuador en la vanguardia de la tecnología aeroespacial en la región sudamericana, un reto que se espera replicar con un satélite gemelo a lanzarse desde Rusia en agosto de este año.



“Hemos empezado, pero esto nos indica que debemos ir más rápido, para alcanzar a los países más desarrollados”, dijo el Primer Mandatario. Solo treinta países a nivel mundial, alrededor de los 200 que hay, dijo Correa, tienen aparatos en órbitas. Pero hay que ser muy responsables en eso, añadió. “Hay que hacer las cosas bien, con objetivos claros, con eficiencia, analizando costos beneficios. En función de aquello vamos a construir el programa espacial del Ecuador”.

## Spanish School

Each year is different in the Spanish school, and it was a surprise to see that March was a fairly busy month. In April the numbers went down, but bookings for May and beyond were fairly robust. We also got our school in Cuenca up and running and began to offer classes to our first students there. *See photos on back page!*

Cuenca has experienced a huge influx of retirees from the US and other countries, and has been judged to be one of the top retirement spots in the world. To cater to that population we are defining appropriate class and course options as well as for our regular younger student population. We will also be offering a “Cuenca Cultural” program and a “Volunteer Cuenca” program.

We also have established links with host families to receive our students, and we are reviewing the various hotel, hostel and apartment options so that we can offer suitable options to our students.

In our offices in Quito we took advantage of the exit of one of the other renters to move our offices around a bit. Now the foundation and volunteer offices are on the same level as the rest of the Spanish school which makes communication between the different departments much easier. *See photos below!*



*Fabricio Guerra (center), our faithful “mensajero” for the past 3 years left us at the end of April to take another post more related to his studies. We wish him well in the future!*

### Social and Cultural Activities . . .

At Yanapuma we make a special effort to offer a rich social and cultural experience to students while they study Spanish. We offer a regular calendar of activities that explore the rich culture and history of this South American capital city. Some of the regular activities that we offer are:

- Free introductory salsa classes
- Traditional Ecuadorian cooking classes
- Latin movie nights
- Concert and theater outings
- Evening trips to the historic center
- Excursions to museums and special events
- Weekend trips to the Amazon, cloud forests, volcanos, indigenous communities, etc

### Online classes with Yanapuma

Yanapuma has been offering Spanish classes online since 2009. We have a number of teachers who specialize in offering classes online in addition to teaching at the school.

Our online students have ranged in age from 8 to late 60s, from absolute beginner to advanced students. Some study to prepare for professional posts or exams such as the DELE, while others just study for pleasure. Students have studied online from most parts of the world, from the US and Canada to Australia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, and many countries in Europe.

Quite a few students have continued to study online with Yanapuma once their studies in Quito have finished and they have returned home. One or two hours per week of conversation and Spanish practice helps to maintain and improve ones Spanish abilities.

We offer a free trial class to students interested in taking classes online. Our website has more details: <http://www.yanapumaspanish.org/onlinespanish.html>

## Volunteers and Interns . . .

### Volunteers

March and April have been busy months for Angela and Emily, our two volunteer coordinators. Apart from a steady stream of individual volunteers and the largest volunteer group we have ever received, they have been setting up a number of volunteer group programs for the summer with various organizations and universities.

The volunteer group from the Leap UK has been split into two groups, and will visit 3 projects each during their 10 weeks in Ecuador. While one group went straight to the Galapagos to work at Hacienda Tranquila on San Cristobal island clearing invasive species, the other group went to Chilcapamba community in the Andean sierra near Otavalo.

The other project that they will work on is with the Tsa'chila in Bua, where they are staying at the Centro Cultural Shinopi Bolón and working on planting up to 7000 seeds of local tree species in bags to be planted out in the autumn. They are also helping the cacao growers of Bua by cleaning and fertilizing their demonstration plot.

The volunteer department has shifted its offices upstairs as part of our re-organization, so that now Angela and Emily



have their desks in the Spanish school administration area, where they can have more direct contact with would-be volunteers and students.

### Interns

During the past two months we have been fortunate to continue with the help of 2 interns in the volunteer department. **Robin Stienaers** and **Sabine Biermann** have been helping our volunteer coordinators with various projects. Meanwhile, **Zack Slouka**, **Marieke Evertsen** and **Max Moutschen** have been leading our volunteer group on their various placements and activities.



Our 3 interns from Union College— **Aaron Glosser**, **Sarah Gagnon** and **Alagra Bass**—finished their 9 month internships with Yanapuma at the end of April. We are very grateful for all their efforts during this period in working with the scholarship children of Estero de Plátano, working with the local school, creating and manning a computer center, working with the various social groups of the community, and working on other small projects in the community. They got to experience at first hand something of the frustration and rewards of working in community development, and we hope they take away some important learning from the experiences that they had in Estero de Plátano.

## Project News . . .

The focus of the foundation's work over the past two months has continued to be on the Project funded by the Inter American Foundation, working with 4 Tsa'chila communities on improving cacao production, creating vegetable gardens and teaching nutrition and diet. The project has now been running for 10 months. Most of the work has been concentrated in these first months – planting 26,000 cacao trees and creating 84 vegetable plots and sowing the first batch of seeds.

From now on the project will concentrate on maintaining the cacao trees fertilized and free of weeds, training the farmers in how to manage them, and sowing successive of seeds with the families who have the vegetable plots as well as continuing with the cooking and nutrition classes.

Working with the Tsa'chila is always a challenge, due to the cultural differences that exist between our way of understanding the world and theirs. Probably at least twice a year we shake our heads and wonder to ourselves why we are working with the Tsa'chila when obstacles are put in the way of continuing the work or or other person or small group try to derail the work we are doing.

But we always come around to acknowledging that it is precisely for these reasons that we need to persevere, as no other organization has succeeded in maintaining a relationship over time with the Tsa'chila. Their individualism and natural suspicion of outsiders weighs against projects intended to benefit the community in general and ends up undermining the work of any organization that sets out to help them.

A good recent example is the situation with two Tsa'chila promoters of cacao that Yanapuma has trained over the past 4 years—Rafael and Wilson. They are now knowledgeable and capable of training other Tsa'chila in techniques of improved cacao production.

But for some Tsa'chila farmers it is hard to accept that other Tsa'chila can be experts and they refuse to allow them the space to demonstrate their knowledge, asking us instead to provide an outside expert, and threatening to withdraw from the project for what they see as a failure to provide suitable training. In the end this would only serve to promote further dependence and paternalism, and we have to work to persuade them that their fellow Tsa'chila are indeed capable and well-trained.

Fortunately, we are well used to this kind of impediment to our work, and with patience we continue to seek ways of continuing to promote sustainable development among the Tsa'chila.

In addition to our work with the Tsa'chila we have been preparing our scholarship receivers from Estero de Plátano for the new school year that starts at the end of April. We welcome two new students this year who will receive a scholarship of \$340 for the school year to continue studying at high school in an effort to raise the educational level of the village. In all we have 12 students studying at all levels for the coming school year.

March and April Photo Gallery

