

Stay up to date with all the news at Yanapuma!

A bimonthly newsletter

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Introduction

The event that overshadows everything here in Ecuador is the earthquake that struck on Saturday 16th of April. Measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale and striking off the Pacific coast, the prolonged tremor caused immense damage to several coastal towns and resulted in over 500 deaths and thousands of injuries.

In Quito and Cuenca the 40-second tremor shook buildings and caused great alarm, but fortunately there was little to no damage done.

There has been a huge outpouring of support both from within Ecuador and from the international community. But it is going to take a long time and a great effort to help the worst affected communities to recover. These towns that relied heavily on tourism have seen their infrastructure totally destroyed with little hope for generating income for the near future.

The village of **Estero de Plátano**, where we support youth with scholarships to study at high school, among other projects, was also close to the epicenter, but fortunately experienced very little in the way of damage. Two of the homes that receive our students and volunteers

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suffered partial collapses of a wall, but these can be easily repaired. The lack of cell phone or other communication with the village meant that it was a couple of days before we heard anything. Interns Lacey Reimer and Gerardo Reyes from Union College, New York, were spending their last weekend there after 9 months in Estero and were able to give us the news.

Yanapuma and True Ecuador Travel have been collecting funds for the relief effort and if you have not contribute yet but would like to, you can visit this page to see how you can help: www.yanapuma.org/en/relief.php

So far we have collected around \$3,500, our staff have donated 1 day of salary, and Yanapuma has pledged \$500 in addition. We will use the funds to purchase essential items, waiting a week or two as the rescue efforts progress to see what is most needed. Then we will work to ensure that the supplies reach their destination.



Semana Santa in Ecuador!

Easter in Quito!

Easter was celebrated in Ecuador on Friday 15th of April with a traditional procession through the historic center called "Jesus de Gran Poder," witnessed by students and volunteers in Quito. Up to a quarter of a million persons line the streets for the 3-hour procession that terminates in the Plaza San Francisco.



Stained glass window of the Basilica in Quito

Yanapuma Spanish School's Methodology

At Yanapuma we have worked hard over the past nearly 10 years to put in practice the theories of "communication methodology" as promoted by the Instituto Cervantes of Spain. Briefly stated, the students' goal is to learn to communicate in their new language, rather than being tied to a course where the focus is on learning grammar.

Students should be developing their communication skills from lesson one, with grammar supplied as a support to the primary activity of learning to speak, listen, read and write in the Spanish language.



Spanish School News . . .

In March and April we generally see the number of students declining after the January and February rush and before the summer gets under way. And this year is no exception, although the school in Cuenca has kept very busy over the past two months.

Our student population remains very mixed in age with a few younger backpackers joining single travelers and couples in their late 20s and 30s, along with parents with their children and retired students exploring Ecuador and South America.

Over the past year or two we have begun to receive more families, with parents keen to explore different cultures with their children and introduce them to a different reality to broaden their horizons and offer them new perspectives on life. Other families study Spanish with their children in Cuenca as they consider moving there, joining the thousands of Americans and other nationalities who already live there.

Meanwhile, our online Spanish classes continue to be very popular with students from all over the world taking one or two or more hours per week. Some are former students who enjoy practicing what they have learned while they were in Ecuador, while others found us through our website or take classes through one of the agencies that we collaborate with.

An interesting project for the online classes has been a collaboration with the Shortridge International Baccalaureate High School in the US via former student and high school teacher **Shalimar Manwane**, providing Spanish communication classes for her students during their regular Spanish classes. Offering the opportunity for them to actually speak the language via contact with a teacher over the internet provides a valuable adjunct to their regular Spanish courses in which it is all too often the case that there are few opportunities to practice their communication skills.

True Ecuador Travel News . . .

Our travel agency, **True Ecuador Travel**, continues to be developed, providing bookings for students, volunteers and other clients for tours to the Galapagos Islands, the Amazon rain forest and some of the other amazing tourist destinations around Ecuador.

We host many groups from universities, high schools, and other organizations whose programs combine volunteering, Spanish classes, accommodation, and regular tourism, in bespoke programs that cater to their particular interests and aims.



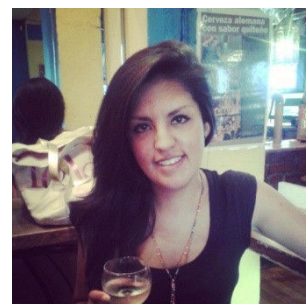
If you are looking for ideas of where to visit in Ecuador be sure to check out our web pages: <http://true-ecuador-travel.org>

Staff News . . .

At the end of March volunteer coordinator **Janneke Robbe** finished her time with Yanapuma. We are grateful to her for all her efforts in keeping the various groups organized and for dealing with the daily details and minor emergencies that crop up on a regular basis.

In April, volunteer group leader **Alonso Alvarez** left us to travel to Cambodia to begin working as a volunteer coordinator there. His departure was rather sudden as he was requested to start earlier than originally planned there, but we were delighted to be able to welcome **Maria José Arrelano** to work with us in the volunteer department as volunteer coordinator in charge of groups.

Maria José recently graduated from the Universidad Central del Ecuador in Quito with a degree in anthropology and is already well known to us as a leader of various volunteer groups over the past couple of years.



Donation News . . .

As noted in the introduction, we have been raising funds for the relief effort after the terrible earthquake which devastated the coast of Ecuador. So far we have received around \$3,500.

Please consider contributing by following this link: www.yanapuma.org/en/relief.php

Yanapuma will donate \$500 in addition to the funds we receive from our supporters.

All our staff have also agreed to donate one day of their salary to the relief efforts.

We are grateful to the following individuals for their contributions:

Jennifer Coico, Faye Delaney, Susan Potter, Mary Ann Lee, Kenneth Nerada, Cherry Stovall, John Plock, Anne-Marie Chevalier, Jeanne Kearsley, FG Patterson, David Barr, David Addink, Ann Dowdy, Tim Lombard, Spanish Planet, Maria Marone, Patricia Harding, Christopher Bomba, William Collins, Carol Martin, Lucinda Shellito, Robert Pogue, Mayanna Bean, Markus Briesemeister, Benjamin Carrington, Stella Richardson, Michael Pickard, Aventure Linguistique, Elvira Amblat, David Barnum, Megan Bomba, Emilien Amblat, Jack Lewis, Judith Fronhauer, Inga Gorzolla, Gerard Denny, Sarah and John Turosak, Stuart Smits,

If you have contributed but don't find your name above please email us so we can trace the donation.

Foundation and Project News . . .

Through March and April we have continued with our project co-funded by the Inter American Foundation. Our 4 field workers, Janeth and Cristina working on vegetable gardens, nutrition and diet education and the “edible forest” project, and Rafael and Wilson working on improving cacao production, continue to take a leading role in the development of the project.

When Yanapuma first began the project we hired external experts to lead the project, but over the course of the past 4 years we have handed more and more responsibility to these 4, 3 of whom themselves are Tsa'chila. Our eventual aim is to put the tools of development directly in the hands of the Tsa'chila themselves to make the project truly sustainable.

The current project was initially intended to finish in July of this year, but we are hoping to be able to extend until the end of the year. As part of the project we will be making a video of the experiences of the team as well as of the Tsa'chila beneficiaries over the past 4 years as the project has developed and taken hold. The idea is to explore and explain the processes of development as these have affected the Tsa'chila, producing a video that can continue to inspire the Tsa'chila to believe that positive change can be achieved and that they can learn new skills to improve their quality of life.

Another development is the continuation and extension of the scholarship program in the Tsa'chila community of Bua. This year we are continuing with the 2 scholarships provided by the **Colège Edouard Montpetit** of Canada and introducing one new scholarship funded by **Sotogrande International School of Spain**. Helping youth to get through high school will provide the Tsa'chila with increased opportunities to integrate into modern Ecuadorian society and take advantage of their unique cultural identity to generate income.



In **Estero de Plátano**, one of the last tasks for Lacey and Gerardo before finishing their internships there was to choose two new scholarship recipients. In 2015 there were 8 students, with one graduating at the end of the academic year. We will have two new scholarships for 2016 bringing the total to 9 for this year.

Volunteer and Intern News . . .

At the start of April we were pleased to receive a group of 25 volunteers from the **Leap UK**. Split into two groups, one group went to work with the Tsa'chila in the comuna El Poste, planting out saplings as part of the “edible forest” project, while the other group went to the Andean Kichwa community of Chilcapamba to take part in community development projects.

Following this, one group went off to the Galapagos Islands where they will be working on conservation, rooting out invasive species while the other group swapped over to the Tsa'chila community.

Meanwhile, our 3 **Weltwärts** volunteers from Germany continued their volunteer placements, **Miriam Heinzl** in INEPE schools in Quito, and **Daniel Pinger** and **Luis Heyers** in Selva Vida in the Amazon region.

After 9 months living and working in the community of Estero de Plátano, **Lacey Reimer** and **Gerardo Reyes** left to return home to the US. We are extremely grateful for all their efforts in keeping the scholarship recipients on track there as well as their work with other groups in the community.



The earthquake struck on their last weekend there!

Intern and tourism student **Arno Rosmane** from Belgium began his internship at our school in Cuenca where he was reviewing and updating our volunteer projects there. Following this he took on the task of leading one of our groups as they volunteer and travel around Ecuador.

In addition we have a number of individual volunteers working in a variety of the 35 different projects around Ecuador that we collaborate with.

Caballo Sendero Volunteer Project

This is a relatively new project supported by Yanapuma. Based in the town of Macas in the Amazon region of Ecuador. The project offers families with children with learning disabilities and other problems therapeutic activities and learning possibilities based on working with horses.

Volunteers can carry out the following tasks:

- Assisting with horse therapy two to four times a week
- -Taking care of the horses, cleaning and maintenance of the stables
- Organizing workshops and other activities for the mothers of the disabled children
- Visit the children and their families at their homes, play with them, talk to the families, offer therapy

Volunteers with particular therapeutic skills are welcome to apply to carry out career-related internships. Contact our volunteer coordinators at: volunteer@yanapuma.org

March-April Photo Gallery



To donate to the relief efforts for victims of the recent earthquake: <http://yanapuma.org/en/relief.php>

