

MUSUQ CHASKI - El Mensajero Nuevo



ProjectsAbroad



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What's Inside...

Letter from the editor	2	Feliz Cumpleaños	10
Peru: Inside Out	3	Cocina Peruana	10
Project Updates	4	Recent News	11
Volunteer Socials & Stories	5	Introducing....	12
Getting to know... & Insight Into	7	Monthly Diary	12
Hot Spots	9	Announcements	12

January 2010

Hello and a happy new year to you all,

Welcome to the first newsletter of the year from the Sacred Valley.

After a quiet end to 2009, January has exploded with new arrivals to take part on our Teacher-Training programme in Cusco, our Care Summer Schools in Calca, Chinchero and Saclo as well as our Inca, Sports and Medicine projects. It's so great to see so many volunteers here getting stuck into their work and learning about Peruvian culture and society.

This newsletter aims to bring Projects Abroad volunteers, both past, present and future, a round-up of what staff and volunteers are getting up to on our various projects and some information about Peru to give you a sense of the wider picture you are working within.

As many of you know, the Sacred Valley was hit by floods and landslides after heavy rain and declared in a state of emergency on 25th January. Projects Abroad staff and volunteers are working to help those families and communities affected. Read more on page 11.

If you feel you would like to make a contribution or have any suggestions for articles you would like to see in the newsletter throughout 2010, please let us know and feel free to email me any stories or photos you would like including.

We hope this year brings you all you deserve and we look forward to meeting all new arrivals in the near future!

All the best,

Tess

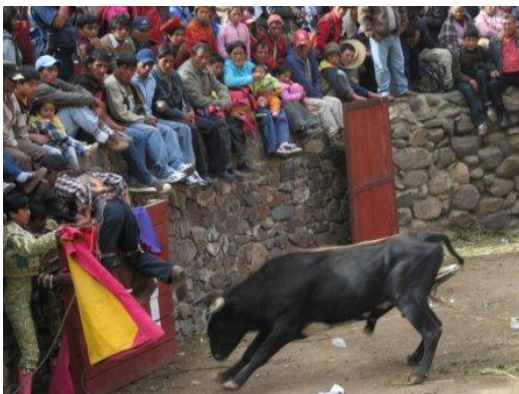
Bajada de Reyes, Ollantaytambo

For many Peruvians the first week of the year represents holidays and many choose Cusco as the perfect destination to spend this festive period. Those that are in the area on the 6th January should be sure to visit Ollantaytambo for the festival of Bajada de Reyes, one of the best festivals in the Sacred Valley.



Bajada de Reyes, which represents the arrival of the kings at the birth of Jesus, is a festival which mixes both Catholic and Incan traditions. Three communities from the mountains each bring down a figure of the young Jesus to be presented in church and then paraded through the town with many different types of local dances. The dances or processions are enjoyed by Ollantinos (people from Ollantaytambo), other locals from surrounding areas and national and international tourists.

The locals make offerings and prayers to Pachamama (Mother Earth) and the sacred rain which comes to fertilize the earth in order for their crops to grow. They also pray to three images of the child Jesus coming from surrounding areas, together with locals who bring their sacred images singing and dancing as a sign of respect and happiness.



In the afternoon of the 6th January is a traditional 'bullfight' show called Toro Pukllay, in an arena built in the neighbourhood of San Isidro. The red ponchos take the place of the torero's cape and the Spanish bullfighters' hats are replaced by the peasant hats of the local farmers but still there remains a clear connection to this Spanish traditional. This type of bullfight differs in other ways from the Spanish version that we all have heard so much about. The bullfights of Ollantaytambo are more like games where the bull is ridden

by the bullfighter and teased with his poncho. The bulls in this game are not hurt in any way - if a bullfighter tries to hurt the bull, he is removed from the arena.

Project Updates

December has been a busy month for our **INCA** Project volunteers. Work has included clearing ruins in Cochapata, Inkatamba and continuing restoring the walls at Capillayok. Volunteers also visited Huamanmarka and Archaeologist John gave a lesson on Moche culture.

Other work has included clearing the yard of Huyro Primary School to make way for a new classroom, preparing and selling ceviche (see recipe on page 10 in Cocina Peruna) in town for the 'Trout Fest' and cementing the floor of the new oven area in Establo. Volunteers have been busy in the house cleaning, aerating the compost, degrading corn for the chickens and cutting the grass on the football pitch. Football matches have been organised between volunteers and local teachers and engineers.



In **CARE**, volunteers have made great use of their time on our Community projects by painting Coya Kindergarten and building an animal run for Girasoles Orphanage in Huycho. The run is now ready to be used by rabbits and guinea pigs that the children of the orphanage will look after.



Our Summer Schools started on 18th February in Chinchero, San Roman in Calca and Saclo after a two day workshop in Urubamba. Volunteers have made a great start to the summer for local children and will continue for the next month teaching art, sports, games, handicrafts and more...



Our **TEACHING** volunteers have been making a great impression on the students that attend our Teacher-Training programme in Cusco which started on 11th January. Between the 6 volunteers who work on this project, three classes – beginner, intermediate and advanced – are put through their paces to improve both their English and teaching methods. See our Insight into Teacher Training article on page 7 for more information.

Volunteer Social Activities

Tessa Okell

On 23rd December volunteers enjoyed a traditional panetón and hot chocolate snack in the office for the Christmas Social. Some festive games were played – including 'the chocolate game' which saw Emma and Lauren eating the majority of the huge bar! A Secret Santa was also organised, with volunteers buying presents for each other. Some very generous gifts were bought for the serious present and some seriously silly presents were brought for the joke present.



The next day volunteers visited the famous Santurantikuy market in Cusco which traditionally sells figures for nativity scenes. Afterwards, volunteers stopped by the market to distribute toys to local children and for some freshly squeezed juice (Mirjam winning the prize for most adventurous with cucumber and cactus).



On Wednesday 6th January, volunteers attended Bajada de Reyes in Ollantaytambo and witnessed the processions in the morning and the Toro Pukllay in the afternoon. See *Inside Out* for more details about this festival.



The Pub Quiz restarted in Urubamba with Adria and Mirjam as quizmasters. Both teams really battled it out to become winners of the first 2010 quiz but after all their hard work and knowledge the quizmasters for the 2nd quiz of the year are to be Henry and Ashley.

A birthday brunch was had for Silvana in Cusco on Sunday 17th January in The Real McCoy. Volunteers enjoyed 'a taste of home' in the form of a fry-up or French toast and then for those who still had room, a slice of birthday cake.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR STAFF

Introducing our new Desk Officer: Guillermina Sánchez

Hi everyone!

I'm Guillermina Sánchez and I am the new Desk Officer for Projects Abroad in the Sacred Valley.

I am an Argentinean kindergarten teacher and I've been living in Peru for 5 years. I worked in a school in Cusco and for the past two years I've been in charge of a small kindergarten situated in Ollantaytambo.



I love Peru, the people and food – I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!

Guille

Insight into Teacher Training

Irene Bucelli & Laerke Blom Madsen

Hello Everybody!

For the last week we've been busy in the Teachers Training Project. We had been warned about the work load of this project but we were still caught by surprise. However, the enthusiasm of our "students", as well as our great team-work makes it all very enjoyable.



We started the course with an entry exam in order to divide our students into three different levels. We work in pairs and in each one of our groups there are between 15-20 students, depending on the South American work ethic ;) The level of English differs greatly: we have about 50 students, whose skills vary from having difficulties with the verb "to be" to learning idioms and advanced grammar. We were pleased to find out that most of the people, thanks to years of attending this programme, could be placed in the advanced group.



Despite delays and difficulties, our students are very keen on learning, not only English, but also new teaching strategies. Therefore we try our best (sometimes with limited ability) to prepare the most inspiring and creative lessons.

We look forward to the next five weeks of work and hopefully we will see a massive improvement!!

Irene & Laerke

Volunteer Stories

Becoming part of the family.

Emma Hershey



I'll admit it: before coming to Peru, I was nervous about who I would be living with. I'd heard plenty of horror stories from exchange students about their host families. And, to be honest, Luzmila, Alfredo, and Fransisco did not look like the most welcoming people in the online photo I was sent, since they tend not to smile in pictures. Upon arriving in Urubamba though, I quickly learned that I had no need to worry. My host family turned out to be the reason that my experience in Peru was so incredible.

Luzmila, my host mom, is truly the most wonderful woman. She was so kind and caring towards me and really was willing to do anything to make me feel at home. Whether it be giving me great advice or listening patiently to stories about my day at placement, she always had time for the adopted sons and daughters that volunteers became to her. And even though I must have told the same joke a dozen times, she always managed to laugh (it was quite funny, I must say).



My host dad Alfredo is amazing in a completely different way. You would never guess in talking to him that his diabetes is so extreme that he is almost completely blind and is perpetually sick with one ailment or another. He is so animated and was a great source of entertainment during meals, always cracking jokes or telling great stories. Whenever the time came for a volunteer to leave, he would make the most heartfelt speech, with each one being unique to that volunteer and full of very touching observations about how the family had seen us grow and change throughout our time with them in Peru. He even got me to cry on my last day, and I practically don't have tear ducts.



And lastly there's Fransisco, or as we call him, Paco, my twelve-year-old host brother. Since he's been living with volunteers for most of his life, he is very used to sharing his house with others, and is outgoing with new people right from the start. I had so much fun playing with him, although after five months of the "mira" game, my arm did start to hurt a bit. Paco always was willing to show us around or come do stuff with us; he accompanied some other volunteers and I to the top of a mountain, and even came to play basketball at a Projects Abroad social.

Time spent with my host family was some of the most memorable parts of my experience in Peru. Of course I will remember the important events, like Paco and my combined birthday party, the Christmas Eve mass where I was Paco`s *madrina* for his first communion and the interview I did on Alfredo`s radio show. But I will always remember the less significant everyday stuff, like listening to the Beatles or Michael Jackson at lunch, or watching a game of American football together, as I tried to explain and they pretended that they were interested. They really adopted me and every other volunteer who lived with me into their family, referring to us as "hija" or "hermana" from the first moment we arrived. In turn, I feel as though they have become my family.



Min opdagelsesrejse til Peru, som frivillig engelsklærer i Calca

Camilla Hammer Zawadzki

Hvor skal jeg begynde?

Jeg har altid været lidt af en stille pige, så at begive mig ud i verden og endda til et land, hvor jeg ikke kunne sproget, var en udfordring for mig. Grunden til, at jeg valgte at hive mig selv tværs over Atlanten, var egentlig mine veninder Sidsel og Marianne, to dejlige piger. De spurgte, om jeg ville med dem til Sydamerika efter gymnasiet og se livet med egne øjne - ikke bare fra gamle støvede bøger og en historielærer med briller og kridt i hånden.



Vi kom endelig hertil, som nyudklækkede studenter med tasker på ryggen og uvidende om, hvad denne tre måneders lange rejse egentlig ville bringe os. Vi fulgte hvor vejen tog os hen, og med Projects Abroad endte vi i Calca, en enorm smuk by i den Hellige dal, det perfekte sted for mig, jeg blev forelsket med det samme. Det gav mig en følelse af at høre til.

Jeg begyndte i min skole, og her var ingen kære mor, men tænk, jeg behøvede ingen - jeg blev selv mor for mine elever, der aldrig ville lade mig alene. Dette er jeg dem evigt taknemmelig for, jeg ved ikke, om det ville have været det samme, hvis jeg underviste et helt andet sted... Sandsynligvis ikke.

Jeg er blevet et nyt og forbedret menneske, og jeg har ingen problemer med at snakke og nu endda på spansk, engelsk og dansk. Jeg har fundet mig selv, og tænk jeg skulle bare rejse over på den anden side af Jorden for at opdage det.

Så jeg vil helt klart anbefale denne her tur til andre ude i Verden!

Piura is one of the most enchanting and beautiful destinations in all of Peru because of its paradisiacal beaches, lovely medicinal lagoons and impressive mountains, in addition to a large number of restaurants and entertainment venues.



In this attractive corner of Peru, you can enjoy a huge variety of attractions. For example, just seven miles from the city is the picturesque village of Catacaos, famous for its delightful handicrafts of straw and cotton as well as gold and silver filigree. Chuluncanas is a beautiful small town famous for its ceramics and Las Huaringas ("sacred lakes" in Quechua) is the place to visit shamans and witch doctors, and attracts tourists from around the world.

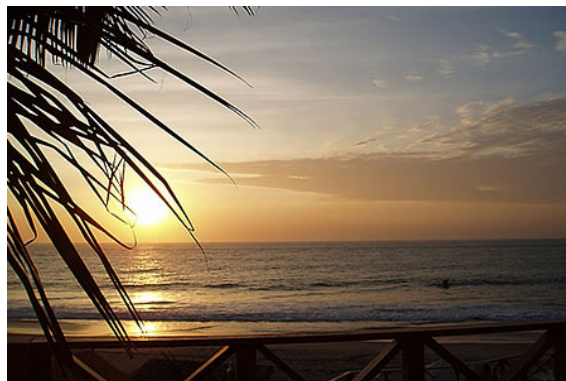
Of course, the greatest of all attractions is doubtless the area's beaches. They possess an unsurpassed beauty in their turquoise waters, white sand and radiant sun.

Among its loveliest beaches is Mancora, highly favoured by youthful adventurers who enjoy aquatic sports such as surfing, snorkelling, light sailing and sport fishing, among others. Further south is the Cabo Blanco beach, famous because of the famous personalities, such as Ernest Hemingway, whose visits left them captivated.



Another very popular area is Colán with its marvellous views, restaurants and clubs and friendly locals. Its cuisine is truly exquisite, permitting one to enjoy the delicious fish and seafood dishes. Piura is an unmissable destination because of its spectacular beaches and picturesque villages.

Piura is in the north of Peru, a good 16 hour bus journey or short flight from Lima – a great option for any travel time you may have planned after your placement.



Feliz Cumpleaños !!



Birthdays have filled the past month, so we HUGE Happy Birthday to the following staff and volunteers who celebrated their birthdays in Peru...

- We would like to wish a happy birthday to Laerke Blom Madsen who celebrated her birthday on 9th January.
- Happy birthday to Medicine volunteer Silvana Esposito who celebrated her birthday with other volunteers in Cusco on Sunday 17th January.
- Many happy returns to Inca volunteer Lauren Hicks who turned 19 on Sunday 17th January.



Cocina Peruana - Ceviche

A cool, spicy dish, eaten on the Peruvian coast for at the least the past thousand years. No trip to Peru's coast is complete without tasting this dish...

How to make CEVICHE...

INGREDIENTS:

- ❖ 1kg soft white fish (lemon sole and halibut are fine or you can mix fish and seafood)
- ❖ 2 large onions, sliced
- ❖ 1 or 2 chillis, chopped
- ❖ 6 limes
- ❖ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 tbsp fresh coriander
- ❖ Salt and pepper



PREPARATION:

- Wash and cut the fish into bite-sized pieces. Place in a dish with the sliced onions, chilli and coriander.
- Make a marinade using the lime juice, olive oil, salt and pepper.
- Pour over the fish and place in a cool spot until the fish is "soft cooked" (from 10 to 60 mins).
- Serve with boiled potatoes (preferably sweet) and corn on the cob.

Recent news - Southern Peru in a state of emergency

Foreign press has been focusing on the evacuation of tourists from Machu Picchu due to the severe damage caused by floods and landslides in the Cusco region. However, the experience of these tourists being air-lifted out has no comparison with the atrocities locals in the Sacred Valley and southern Cusco valley have had to endure. Over 13,000 houses were swept away and more than 60,000 people have been directly affected by the flooding.



In the normal rainy season the Vilcanota river has a volume of between 600 and 800 m³ but now 1100 m³ a second was measured. Thirteen bridges over the river have been destroyed which makes logistics very difficult. Hundreds of hectares of corn crops have been ruined and this will cause serious economical setbacks for hundreds of families in the coming year. Many of our partner organisations, host families and even colleagues were directly affected by this force of nature. Local communities organised themselves with group kitchens and received basic food supplies and started cleaning the rubble of their houses, but these efforts lack co-ordination and there is no sign of any major reconstruction or rebuilding effort by national or regional authorities. The lack of leadership and organisation in most districts is obvious and disheartening. Projects Abroad has co-ordinated with some emergency committees in helping out in the following ways:



1. Complementing the basic food stock with fresh produce like tomatoes, onions, eggs, oranges etc. in the most remote affected communities.

2. Offering temporary work in the cleaning and sanitation efforts.

3. Psychological and social support for the affected families.



The many different realities in the communities require a wide range of strategies and obviously more help is needed. We already received some financial support and Projects Abroad has kindly sent a \$5000 donation. More about this emergency in the February newsletter.