



Final Report **2009 Brought Growth & Change To CONAPAC**

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL 2009 (AAS)

Since its inception in 1990, CONAPAC has continually evolved to meet new challenges, from the purchase and protection of primary rainforest to the implementation of mini water treatment plants for clean drinking water to Amazon and Napo river communities. Since 1993, CONAPAC's primary focus and commitment has been the Adopt-A-School program (AAS), conceived and implemented by Pam Bucur of Explorama Lodges. The program, which started with 10 schools, provides books and school supplies to rural student populations. This year the program served 130 schools in 79 communities, providing materials to almost 5,000 students and teachers. Over the years, many friends have been made and thousands of young people have been provided with the opportunity to learn more about the world around them.

Once again, volunteers recruited through our donor partner, The Detroit Zoological Society, joined us to help deliver books and school supplies. During the third and fourth weeks of April, CONAPAC and Explorama Lodges hosted 21 volunteers, including Ron Kagan, Executive Director of the Detroit Zoo. During the first week, these volunteers helped sort and deliver all the school supplies over a six day period. During the second week, a smaller group of volunteers helped build a mini water treatment plant and a bakery in the community of Irlanda. In May and June, we hosted four, 3-day teacher and community leader training workshops. CONAPAC provided food and educational materials covering a variety of diverse and practical topics for both teachers and community leaders.

In order to facilitate these deliveries and provide accommodations for the volunteers, drivers, and guides, Explorama Lodges again provided logistical support and donated room and board for all participants. In 2009, Explorama donated over 380 bed nights to CONAPAC, a \$40,000 value. Without this support, the Adopt-A-School program would not be possible. Thank you, Explorama Lodges, and especially Peter Jenson, for the insight and commitment to helping improve the lives of rainforest inhabitants.

The small staff at CONAPAC continues to accomplish big things. Each member plays a pivotal role, which allows CONAPAC to do more with less. This following describes our staff.

Amner Ismodes is from the Napo river community of Tamanco. He has been with CONAPAC since the beginning and is our greatest promoter of the importance of improving rural education and environmental consciousness in the villages. He attends and participates in all workshops, school evaluations, and deliveries of books and school supplies.

Marcos Oversluijs, is a native of Iquitos, Peru, and a biologist who graduated from the University in Iquitos. Marcos organizes our service projects, oversees construction of our water plants and community improvement projects, and participates in all our rural workshops.

Alberto Vela, our education specialist, was born in Nauta where the Ucayali and Marañon Rivers join to form the Amazon River on its way to Iquitos. Alberto has worked as a teacher in rural schools, as a teacher educator, as a member of the Board of Education in Iquitos, and as the administrator of the Ministry of Education's Office for Rural Education in Iquitos. As our education program coordinator, Alberto is responsible for CONAPAC's teacher and community leader workshops and our yearly community evaluations. This year he created our new water workshop outline and facilitated all seven village workshops on the importance of clean water.

Sintia (or Cindy) Smith has now been with CONAPAC for over a year. A previous Adopt-A-School volunteer, Sintia is from the United States. She coordinates the AAS program as well as special projects with the CONAPAC staff. She also maintains close contact with our world-wide donor base and makes regular visits to community projects.

Pamela Bucur is our fearless leader and all around expert! She started the AAS program 18 years ago, and has nurtured and watched it grow ever since. Her background as a science teacher and experience living in Iquitos for almost 25 years has proven invaluable to CONAPAC on all levels!

Jaime Acevedo is the president of CONAPAC and a principal at Explorama Lodges. This year Jaime took on the oversight of our latest project, the environmental teaching garden at Las Malvinas School in the City of Iquitos. His construction and project management background is his strength and asset to CONAPAC—along with his invaluable translation services to Sintia!

TEACHER & COMMUNITY LEADER WORKSHOPS

One of the areas of improvement we are most proud of is our ongoing teacher and community leader workshops. The ability to bring teachers and community leaders together for an opportunity to learn new techniques and teaching strategies focusing on environmental education is an invaluable tool to advance our broader goal of environmental awareness. This year four 3-day workshops were held in the following communities: Tigrillo, Ramon Castilla, Santa Rosa, and Yurac Yacu.

In December, members of the CONAPAC staff along with educators and representatives of INIA, spent two weeks visiting each school in the AAS program to complete year end evaluations. They checked on how the year's projects had been implemented and how teachers were using the information given to them at the workshops. The evaluations included teachers, students, and community members. The evaluation process also includes a review of community improvements. This year a house-by-house census, using mapping, was conducted for a more accurate population count. While visiting these communities, the winners of the 2009 AAS drawing contest were given their Christmas party treats of hot chocolate and special Christmas bread. This year 10 schools were awarded these special treats: Tamanco, Santa Lucia, Yarina Isla, Centro Unido, Ramon Castilla, Palmeras II, Pucallpa, Timicuro Grande, Iquique, Timicurillo. Congratulations to all our winners!!

SERVICE PROJECTS

This year CONAPAC and Explorama Lodges hosted travel guest groups who performed community service projects in river communities. Projects ranged from building playgrounds, painting schools, planting trees and digging pisciposas (fish farms). Visitors provided funding for supplies and worked hand-in-hand with community members to make these environmentally friendly projects possible. The objective of the service projects is to help improve river communities and provide a cross-cultural experience for the volunteers and residents alike. Working together helps build interest in rural populations and allows for social/cultural exchanges as a unique guest experience--one that builds cooperation between communities, individuals, families, and tourist enterprises. Prior planning and

assessments take place together with CONAPAC, the local authorities, the teachers, and the community in general in order to agree on activities and projects to accomplish with the help of the visiting guests. In 2009 CONAPAC facilitated 14 service projects with a variety of school groups and individual guest groups. Guest participation and hard work brought many smiles to the children of the rainforest—most visitors thought it was the best part of their trip! The groups and communities involved were:

Canal Pinto / The Diones Family
San Pedro de Manqua / North Carolina State University
San Luis / University of Maryland
Sucusari / Sacred Heart Academy
Yarina Isla / Odyssey Charter School
Canada / Hermantown High School with Tony Dobinson
Pucallpa / Global Explorers-Girl Scouts
Yanamono II / EarthKids
Canada / Global Explorers-Thornton Creek
Yurac Yacu / World Challenge
200 Millas / Cole Williston Group
Palmeras II / Roosevelt School-Lima
Manati Primera Zona / Roosevelt School-Lima
Auca Cocha / Nido de Aguilas-Chile

MINI WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

Over the years, CONAPAC has initiated a number of pilot programs in an effort to improve the lives of the river community residents. We have accomplished this through the help of our international donor base for everything from the AAS program, to workshops, to salaries, to gasoline for our boats. This year our donor base really stepped forward to fund a number of worthy projects. Our biggest accomplishment was the construction of six mini water treatment plants. With a grant from the SAGA Foundation, International Expeditions, and individuals, we were able to complete and inaugurate these six new water plants, plus host seven 2-day water workshops for each community. Each of these water plants, which use no electricity, can purify up to 10,000 liters of water per day, enough to meet the needs of about 350-400 people. The water workshops have provided the education necessary for changing hearts and minds about the value of drinking clean water and its importance to good health. Before each water plant is inaugurated, the workshop is held and all members of the community are included. Each child receives his or her own drinking cup with a health message printed on the side, and each family receives a new 16-liter water bucket with spigot for daily refill at the water plant. At the end of the year, our volunteer Ph.D. candidates from the University of Colorado and two local university students visited the water plants for year-end testing and community evaluations. They found the water plants to be in good working order. The demand was quite high, with usage rates around 85%, and the residents generally were pleased with the management and oversight of the water plants in their communities. With enough funding and personnel, CONAPAC can continue to support and oversee testing of the water plants as the communities take over the long-term responsibility of their care and maintenance.

LAS MALVINAS TEACHING GARDEN

In the fall of 2008, International Expeditions, a nature expedition company with long time ties to Explorama Lodges, decided to make an investment in the education of the children of Iquitos. They had the vision to see that children living in the middle of the greatest rainforest in the world are not necessarily aware of the importance of this great natural resource, its beauty, or its fragility. By initiating a pilot program of environmental

education with hands-on practical learning, International Expeditions is committed to making a difference for urban students.

Las Malvinas is a public school that runs in two shifts of students due to demand and limitations of space. There are over 1,000 students, with just over 500 students at the high school level. These students have been the primary users and benefactors of the garden along with their teachers. The garden boasts a medicinal plant garden, a vegetable garden, and an ornamental plant garden. There are also examples of tropical rainforest trees and plants, a plant nursery, a composting area, a turtle pond, a fish farm, and a large maloka (gazebo) that serves as an outdoor classroom. This year a number of crops were grown and sold at market including: yuca, peanuts, hot peppers, corn, cucumbers, sweet peppers, lettuce, parsley, and cilantro. Recent plantings of papaya and passion fruit will bear marketable fruit within the year. Regular visits by international travel guests are planned for 2010, with tours conducted by the students of Las Malvinas School.

The teachers of the school have incorporated many ideas from the garden work into the school curriculum. With the many teaching opportunities available, it only takes creativity and imagination to easily find new and interesting ways to bring the natural world to the classroom. International Expeditions has made another strong financial commitment to the garden in 2010 as the pilot project continues to expand and thrive. Many thanks for taking us in this new direction!

BAKERIES

In 2009 our second mini bakery was constructed in the community of Irlanda. (The first is in Timicuro Grande.) It was initially run by the youth of the community but has recently been taken over by several adults, and improvements are being made. Fresh bread is a rare treat in the jungle. Irlanda plans to produce bread for its own consumption, as well as for sales to surrounding communities. Our donor base continues to support our bakeries with needed improvements and CONAPAC follows up with technical support and oversight.

FISH FARMS

Our fish farm program continues to expand. This year a group of young people from the "World Challenge" program in the United Kingdom stayed in the village of Yurac Yacu for four days to help in the construction of small family fish farms called "pisciposas." Other communities with fish farms continue to use them for their personal family use and for sales to outlying communities.

MARKETING

One of our biggest accomplishments this year was the complete redesign of the CONAPAC website. Our previous website was in desperate need of improvement. Nancy Cowal, a longtime friend of CONAPAC, worked tirelessly for months to bring the new website to fruition and she continues in her role as "webmistress," making continuous changes and updates. We are so pleased to now have all the information about our programs in one central location, along with staff bios and ways in which volunteers and donors can help us continue our work. It has been an invaluable tool and we are extremely proud of the results.

Along with the new website came a new color tri-fold donor brochure which more thoroughly explains the Adopt-A-School program. For 2010, we plan to add a more general CONAPAC brochure for those donors interested in other projects. Along with the brochure, we added beautiful postcards and posters for sale, with photography provided by another longtime friend of CONAPAC, Bonnie Gornie. These posters, along with new

banners and other general information sheets, have been added to all the Explorama Lodges and the gift shop at the Detroit Zoo.

Our final exciting addition for this year was the first CONAPAC / Adopt-A-School e-newsletter. Starting in June, we wrote and submitted a quarterly newsletter in order to keep our donor base more regularly informed. Articles with photos about the Adopt-A-School program and other CONAPAC projects have been a great way to keep friends of CONAPAC in the information loop.

VISION STATEMENT

At the beginning of the year, it became clear that CONAPAC was involved in a wide variety of projects. Although each was worthy in its own right, not all met the goals of CONAPAC, nor was it feasible for the staff to implement all of them in an effective manner. It became clear that CONAPAC needed to refocus on its true mission—environmental education. At mid-year, a meeting of all CONAPAC staff members was convened and many good ideas were shared and worthy projects discussed. After five hours of debate and discussion, a consensus was reached for the future goals of CONAPAC, and the team was able to summarize our mission and narrow the focus. For 2009 we created a new vision statement, which reads as follows:

CONAPAC is a Peruvian non-profit organization whose mission is to promote conservation of the rainforest through education of its stewards, the people who live along the Amazon and Napo Rivers. Our centerpiece project is the Adopt-A-School program, which is strengthened by education workshops and complemented by service and sustainable projects in river communities.

Finally, many thanks to all donors, volunteers, owners and staff at Explorama, and our many friends around the world. We could not do this work without your support and encouragement, which strengthens us for each new challenge.