

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Peru



*June's Photo Competition Winner
Matthew Claring-Bould, Australia
Girl with bubbles, Calca*

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EDITORIAL

Ups and downs - what it's like to experience a new culture

Your trip to Peru is going to be amazing; there is little doubt that it will be inspiring and life-changing. However, for most volunteers, there is always a moment of culture shock. This amazing country has a lot to offer but small things often make people reflect on the differences between their home country and Peru.

Some volunteers jump head first into their new life and accept whatever is thrown at them. This is a particularly good survival tactic. Peru is a nation where change happens very slowly, so trying to get things moving can sometimes end in frustration. Some banks, shops and offices oper-



ate at a speed that would be considered unacceptable in most countries. Even at your placement, you will notice differences. Our project partners are wonderful but facilities can be very basic and the available teaching materials are often limited. If you are keen on giving interactive whiteboard presentations then you may have to revise your lesson plans.

The trick to volunteering in a country like Peru is to assess the tools available and get creative. Spending time with people is often more important than an impressive PowerPoint. Interaction is the key and our most memorable volunteers have always embraced any cultural differences and made them work to their advantage.

People get homesick, they feel they could do more, they dream of having better equipment. However, what really matters is that they are here; smiling, motivating and supporting our projects. Small, incremental steps can lead to something amazing and all volunteers are part of that incredible process. Every volunteer that works at a kindergarten or high school can have a positive effect on the lives of the people they meet. If you reach out to one child or teach one important principle during your time in Peru, you have done something amazing.

PROJECT UPDATES

Inca Project

This year's first excavation at Q'ochapata is almost finished and our archaeologists are now planning further investigations in the valley. The majority of the items uncovered have been Inca pot shards. Some important maintenance of the drainage ditches has been completed with the help of our fabulous Two Week Special volunteers, and the land is being cleared around the grounds for fresh planting. All of the community work has continued in spite of a busy coffee picking season. Library visits, stimulation centre visits, PRONOEI's and kindergartens are all getting regular volunteer support. Last month was the 157th anniversary of Huyro town and everyone from 'El Establo' participated; one of our teams even won the singing competition! John and Zenobio, our resident archaeologists, continue to give their weekly talks on subjects ranging from Choquequirao to the Lucumayu Valley. Sporting events against the local police force are also taking place and no one wants to miss an opportunity to kick a law enforcer.

Care Project

Claudine Balsiger, our volunteer from Switzerland, left us this July after two great months supporting the children at the 'Huququi' nursery. Claudine brought a lot of great ideas and energy to this project, and we would like to thank her for her time. You can read more about her experience in our volunteer feature story on page 4. Recently, at a kindergarten teacher meeting, Yony Graciela Ferro Vasquez, the education specialist from the Ministry of Education, gave an informative talk about current teaching practice. This visit highlighted our strong links with the regional government and was an important opportunity for local staff to speak directly with a Ministry representative to help strengthen their teaching skills.



Teaching Project

The teaching volunteers have been getting involved in the numerous festivities that July brings. Teacher's Day was especially enjoyable and celebrated with a lovely meal following a workshop. All our volunteers have been thinking outside of the box to motivate their students. Harry Liu from China brought them some chocolate bars while Harry Jones from England said that his students really enjoyed the boys versus girls activities in his lessons. Kathryn Cox from the USA had a group of students who love music so much that she recently sang "Hello, Goodbye" by the Beatles for them while Elissa Olivera, also from the USA, has been working on sentence scrambling tasks and some verb games.

Medical & Nutrition Projects

Lucy Mower and Ruth Grene from the USA and Lisa Martin from France are our lovely volunteers on the nutrition project in Cusco who have been working hard to ensure funding continues for this vital work. They have now started site visits and have also given a demonstration of healthy meals to a group of local people. Medical volunteers, Bethany Hanscom and Priya Desai, both from the USA, have been made to feel welcome at the Clinica Peruano Suiza, and Amélie Jobin from Canada recently started at the Lorena Hospital. Astrid Torres from the USA said that, despite the ongoing medical strike, she has learned a lot from working with her colleagues. Everyone from the Cusco medical and nutrition teams recently had a meal together and big thanks go to Ruth Grene for bringing the wine.

Sports Project

The weather may be freezing cold in the mornings and evenings but our plucky sports volunteers can be seen out in their shorts working as it is business as usual. The Apu Pitusiray football academy has a new Italian volunteer, Gherardo de Nardis di Prata, who we welcome to the team. Louis-Philippe Boret from Belgium, Justin Monty from the USA, Aaron Brockley from Australia, Emma Maclean from the USA and Mathilde Myard from France, make up the rest of our fabulous sports team who have developed great relationships with their students and project partners. Huge thanks for their hard work this month.

VOLUNTEER STORY

Claudine Balsiger, Switzerland: Care Project



Claudine Balsiger arrived in Peru and it has been a whirlwind of activity from day one. Her care project placement is in a remote part of Calca, and they are currently in temporary buildings with no water or electricity while repairs are being made to the main facilities a few hundred yards away. This hasn't stopped Claudine from being one of our most pro-active volunteers in recent memory.

"I immediately felt that I was going to be very happy in this place, with these children and with this teacher. The fact that I spoke the language also definitely made things easier."



Bringing the music; Claudine helps the visiting dancers with their kit.

A remote, yet beautiful location

The working conditions were difficult. Every day, the first task on the agenda was an early morning walk to fetch buckets of water from a neighbour so that the children could wash their hands. Having no electricity limited the range of activities that could be enjoyed; it was impossible to play songs or watch films or clips from the internet, for example. She was quick to notice that

"a huge amount of adaptability and creativity is required from the teacher."

However, the beautiful grassy patio and stunning scenery made an impression on Claudine, and if there had been electricity and water she felt it would have been almost perfect. Claudine also managed to travel a little and, during a visit to the island of Taquile near Puno, she made contact with some local dancers and struck up a friendship. Several weeks later, she had arranged for the group, who were visiting the Sacred Valley, to give a demonstration of their culture, clothing and dancing to the children at her placement. She arranged and paid for the whole thing and the children were transfixed by the bright colours, lively music and beautiful dancing.

"This came at just the right moment as we were teaching them about a part of Peruvian folk history that talked specifically about Lake Titicaca, where our visitors came from."

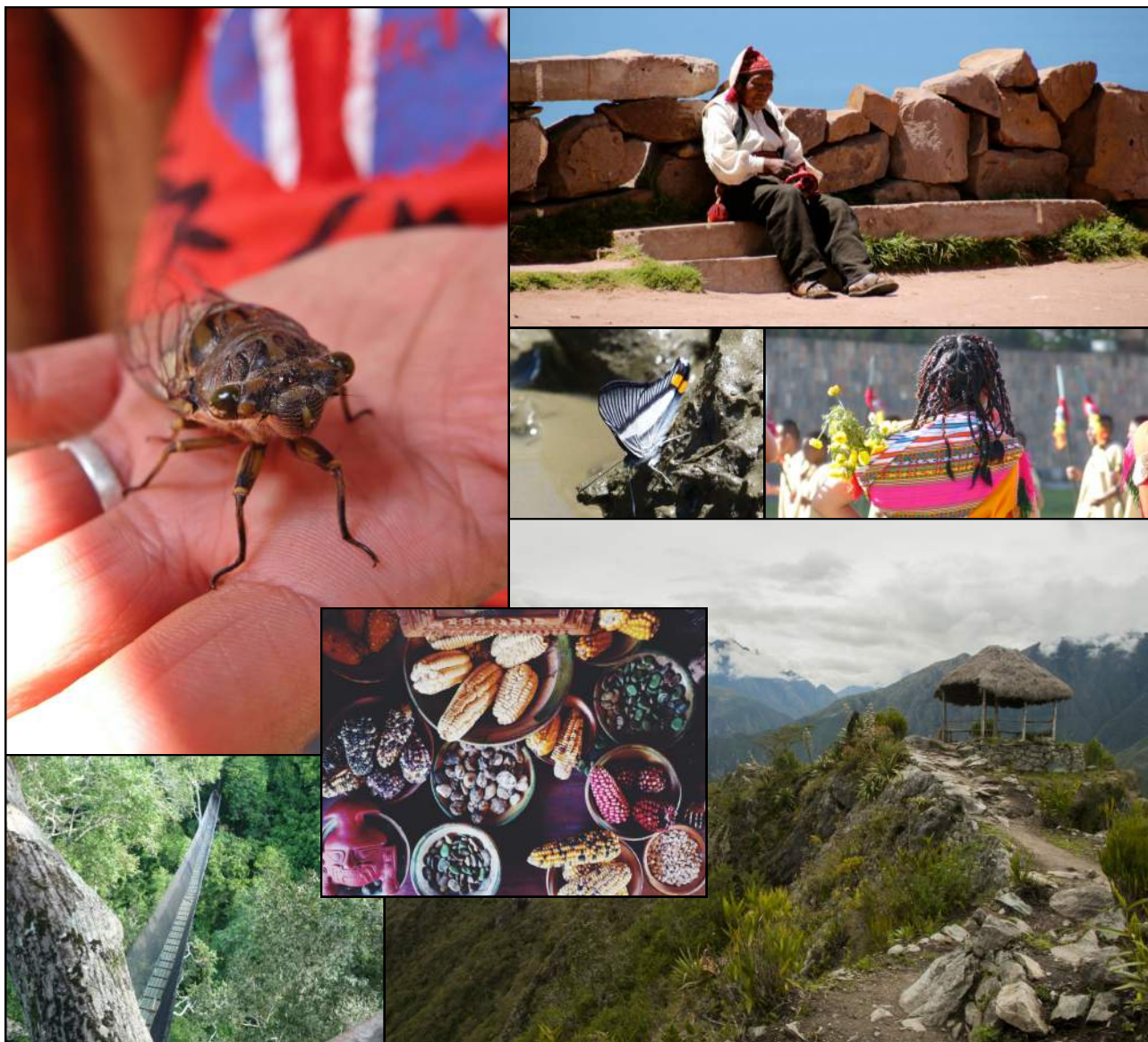
Claudine has been extremely dedicated to her placement and was constantly looking for ways to improve the quality of education that the children were receiving. There were so many moments that Claudine will remember when she returns home. The children and parents organized a small goodbye party for her with local food made in typical adobe ovens called 'huatias'. The words of thanks from the parents were a lovely end to a great experience in this tiny community. Claudine has spoken Spanish from the start despite French being her mother tongue; this sort of immersion is extremely positive and has been a good example to other volunteers who sometimes struggle or feel nervous about using their Spanish when they arrive.



PERU IN PICTURES

The beauty of this amazing country

The photos below are a mixture of volunteer contributions for our monthly photo competition and snaps taken on visits to placements. Peru is a photographer's paradise and if you're interested in this field you will find inspiration around every corner.



Top left: Cicada, Quellomayo
 Top right: Man resting, Puno
 Bottom left: walkway to observation post, Taricaya
 Bottom right: Inka trail
 Bottom middle: corn and beans
 Middle right: butterfly, Quellomayo & Dancer Inti Raymi

To see our monthly photo competition winners check out the album on our facebook page:



Don't forget to check out our Instagram account where you will find beautiful imagery from our other destinations. Follow our global account and get to know more about the way we see this wonderful world.

SCENE / SEEN

Goings on around Peru with Projects Abroad



Care projects often provide the most colour and smiles. Activities are fun, vibrant and it is always touching to see volunteers with tears in their eyes on the last day of their placements. On the left is Rebecca Bucci from Canada taking a picture with her class and teaching partner; the next two photos are of Annick Miossec's class during an art activity. On her last day, Annick received gifts, including a beautiful woven rug, from her class.



Inti Raymi 2014 was amazing, we waited for over two hours on the street to get a decent view of the opening ceremony. Afterwards, we made our way to the Plaza de Armas, where a few of us had reserved a balcony to observe the dances and processions. This important celebration may now be a mix of traditions, but at its heart is the worship of the rising sun and the marking of a change in seasons.



Here are a couple of extra photos of the fabulous dancers from Taquile Island in the Puno region who visited the Huquqi jardin recently thanks to volunteer Claudine Balsiger from Switzerland (see volunteer story on page 4). The children had the opportunity to join in the dancing and talk to the visitors and admire their costumes up close and personal.