

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Peru



Farmer in Urubamba preparing his land for flowers using traditional techniques.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 02 Editorial
- 03 Project Updates
- 04 Volunteer Story
- 05 Peru in Pictures
- 06 Scene/Seen

Follow us on



www.projects-abroad.net

ProjectsAbroad

EDITORIAL

Rainy Season

Peru has 28 of the 32 official types of microclimate known on our planet, making it a wonderful place to visit for those seeking almost any climate conditions imaginable. At any time of year the weather can be completely different in several parts of the country, with temperatures ranging from below zero to the mid-forties Celsius.

In our region of Cusco, there are variations within very short distances due to the incredible differences in altitude. We are currently in rainy season, which began in December and which will stop towards the end of March or mid-April. This season is characterized, naturally, by heavier rainfall, but the days can be hot and sunny with sudden thunderstorms which turn the streets into rivers within the region's capital. These months require a lot of careful wardrobe planning to deal with extreme heat and sudden downpours. There is never a dull moment.

Between Cusco and Machu Picchu the difference is also one in temperature, despite being under a hundred kilometres away as the crow flies. In the cloud forest, in districts such as Santa Teresa, the daytime temperature can still hit the mid-twenties with the rain bringing the temperature down at night. This season is crucial for crops in the agricultural heartland of the Andes, which still doesn't have a region-wide irrigation system. It is ironic that this region, heartland of the Inca Empire, experts in irrigation, should now be falling behind areas such as Ica and the Lima coastline. The arid Peruvian coastline is a modern marvel with vast vineyards and many other crops thriving due to massive government investment. Here in our region we still rely on seasonal pre-



cipitation to help things along.

Nature is overwhelming at times and brings with it devastation as was the case in 2010 in Aguas Calientes and the Vilcanota valley. Heavy rains caused the river to swell tremendously, bringing chaos to the communities in its path. Tourists were airlifted to safety from the famous ruins and the lack of economic movement hit locals very hard as the national guard, the army and locals fought to get back on their feet. Thankfully, this doesn't happen very often. This year, rain has been falling steadily and temperatures have been low. Cusco is bitterly cold in the evenings and early mornings but still manages to warm up during the day. Our new batch of Teacher Training volunteers is already getting used to going out with optional extra clothing for shifts in the weather. If you are planning to come and volunteer during rainy season make sure you pack clothes for all occasions and remember to take care near puddles on the road as the taxis sometimes give you a soaking as they pass. It's an adventure !

PROJECT UPDATES

Inca Project

Rainy Season in Huyro and the Inca Project means it is usually impossible to venture out into the field to map or explore, but, volunteers are always busy around the farm and still attend workshops given by our resident archaeologists. The classification of pottery fragments is also a good job for a rainy afternoon and most years there is a lot to get through. Maintenance work is carried out on the drainage system for El Establo and generally around the installations to make sure the weather doesn't do too much damage. Rainy days never dampen the spirits in Huyro and our current volunteers are braving the conditions and lending a hand in any way they can.



A site visit in dry season, not possible during the wettest months

Care Project

Later this month, we will be receiving new Care volunteers in the Sacred Valley, who will be working closely with our supervisor Yessika Espinoza. 2014 was a great year for the care program with fantastic participation from all of our dedicated volunteers. We know 2015 is going to be even more spectacular and can't wait to meet those of you who have already applied to join us over the coming months. Right now, in Calca and Yucay, our small group of volunteers is helping to run summer school programmes for children in the area. They are playing a lot of games and doing craft activities to teach the students about the countries they come from. Everyone is having a wonderful time and it is a crucial programme for local families who need to be able to entertain their children while they are at work.

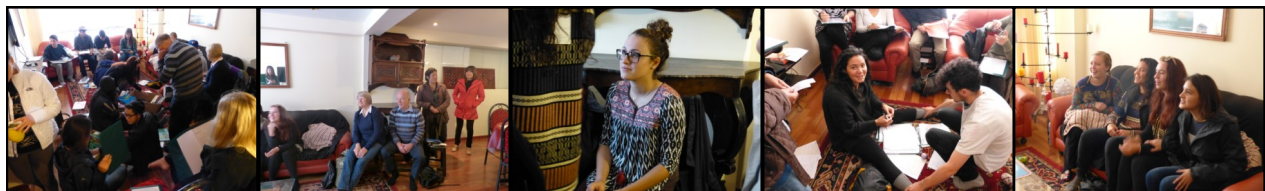
Teaching Project

Each year, January means Teacher Training. Projects Abroad has been working in conjunction with the Regional Ministry of Education for over ten years, offering high school teachers of English a free course to improve their English and classroom skills. The uptake for this course has grown tremendously over the years and 2015 has seen over twice the usual number of students applying to participate. We have welcomed our new cohort of eager volunteers and have already begun the process of training them to be classroom teachers. This year we are very lucky to have a husband and wife team John and Jill Hughes from the UK. Both John and Jill are former language teachers and bring with them a wealth of classroom experience that our younger volunteers will no doubt be calling upon to help plan their lessons. Our Cusco office has a daily stream of activity as materials are used to prepare for upcoming lessons and tips are exchanged between volunteers on how to get the best out of their students. It is incredible how quickly our new group has settled into their new routine and we're delighted with their positive energy and believe they will do great things with their classes.

Their first two weeks of classes have gone brilliantly; every classroom we have visited has a lot of participation and our volunteers are coming up with fantastic games to practice language points with their students. This year, for the first time, we have extended the scope of the Teaching Project and are offering classes to students at the Tupac Amaru Technical Institute. Four of our volunteers, Abi Guthrie, Kathryn Higdon, Sophie Elvig and Jacqueline Cashman are conducting classes to students their own age or older and the atmosphere is fantastic. There is a lot of motivation to learn and it is great to note that our volunteers are spending a lot of time planning their lessons and care a great deal about their students' learning. Despite the cold classrooms, everyone is happy and enjoying the course and I'm sure this will be an unforgettable experience for everyone involved.

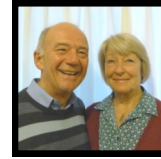
Students or teachers?

I don't get it yet – you train the volunteers to be class room teachers, so they can help the Peruvian English teachers to improve their English? Is that how it's done?



VOLUNTEER STORY

John and Jill Hughes, Seaford, UK



Former teachers, John and Jill Hughes have swapped the British winter for Peru's rainy season to play an instrumental role in the important work Projects Abroad does to improve the standards of English teaching in regional schools. The Teacher Training initiative that was pioneered almost eleven years ago here in Cusco is still as popular as ever, and 2015 has seen record numbers applying for this valuable training. On test day, when students are graded to sort them into ability ranges, John and Jill were fantastic at organizing the process and monitoring the students.

Both former modern foreign language teachers from the South of England, John and Jill wanted to share their knowledge and help local teachers deliver better lessons so they applied for the programme and we are delighted that they are here. Although it has been eight years since their retirement from teaching in secondary schools in the UK, both have brought so much experience to our group of inexperienced volunteer teachers. John was a deputy head before he retired, but has always been a language teacher and is enjoying the process of rediscovering his 'teaching legs' in the classroom with the Peruvian students. The benefit of having professional teachers teaching other teachers is tremendous. Not only are students improving their language skills, they are also absorbing and discovering a range of classroom skills and delivery methods that they will be able to apply in their own classrooms when school begins again in March. Language teaching in Peru is still not considered a top priority, so high schools often don't have highly trained language professionals working in the classroom. Teachers of other subjects are asked to take English classes, often with very weak English language skills themselves. This situation leads to poor teaching and makes it almost impossible for students to learn.

Jill's main teaching language has always been French but she taught Italian for ten years and also some Spanish. A confirmed polyglot, she has been enjoying the chance to use her Spanish during weekend trips to the Sacred Valley. PISAQ is currently their favourite place and they are planning to revisit the pretty market town again on an extended journey along the valley to Ollantaytambo. Both have done their research on the sightseeing opportunities available and they have already discovered most of the best cafes and restaurants that Cusco has to offer, including places that locals sometimes don't know about. "Peru is spectacular, but we've also discovered the best place for proper tea and cake at 4 o'clock, as well as a drink and a little savoury once the sun's over the yardarm"



The couple are so at ease in the classroom that they have prepared their lessons a week in advance and are always on hand to answer questions from the younger volunteers during afternoon planning sessions. Their classes are for the top two groups, teaching our more advanced students; this is a perfect match as conversations are detailed and topics range from the economy to women's rights which stretches the students and allows John and Jill to demonstrate a variety of tasks and techniques. Jill has been surprised by subtle differences between Peru and the UK:

"The world here in Peru is still heavily male-dominated and in group work it is virtually always the men who end up as spokesperson, and this is both fascinating and slightly surprising. I've made sure to mention how things are back home to let the women know my own perspective on equality"

With three children, all professionals in their own right, you may wonder why a retired couple would want to travel thousands of miles to begin teaching again. I asked them both what it was that had motivated them to volunteer.

"The alternative is to lurch from cruise to cruise (yuck) or make a contribution with travel possibilities thrown in"

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: Coffee being roasted
Top middle: Butterfly timeout
Top right: Ornamental plant, Cloud Forest
Middle: Coffee grinder
Bottom left: view of Vilcanota River during dry season
Bottom middle: oranges
Bottom right: Palm leaf

**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



Social events are always a fantastic way for volunteers from different projects and towns around Cusco to meet and exchange stories. Some of our events are cultural, some are physical and some are simply just a chance to hang out and grab a coffee together. So far this month we have had a coffee and some delicious food at the amazing Jacks Café in the centre of Cusco, we danced Salsa in a club off the main square and met up to watch a film together in Cusco's brand new multiplex cinema in the shiny shopping mall that was completed last year. Later this month we will be doing a pottery workshop in Huayocari, a tiny village outside Urubamba, while looking into February we will be visiting the chocolate museum in Ollantaytambo and doing some lovely walks around the region. This year's group of volunteers has a fantastic attitude and everyone is working hard and making the most of their free time. It has been a lot of fun getting to know everyone.



The summer school programme that is being delivered by our volunteers in Calca and Yucay is fantastic fun for the children who participate. The summer vacation in Peru is long (from mid-December until early March) so parents are desperate to find activities for their children. There are a lot of expensive institutions cropping up in the region which charge to teach anything from dance to languages, but our projects mixes a range of activities including art and games to offer a fantastic alternative for those families who can't afford to send their children to a private activity. On my recent visit to Calca we saw the children learning about the flags of the European countries, which sparked an art lesson on the same subject. Afterwards, everyone went outside onto the schoolyard where they practiced English commands like 'jump, around, hop' to navigate an obstacle course. There were laughs and screams and a lot of competition between the two teams. Our lovely volunteers are being incredibly innovative and coming up with fun activities for each day and it is clear the children find it difficult to go home at the end of the day. Care supervisor Yessika Espinoza is on hand to give support when it is needed and it looks like this is one of the best summer school's we've ever had .