

# Caminos del Páramo

December 2002

*Working together*

*Caminos del Páramo is a monthly bulletin networking El Páramo across the world to those with commitment and involvement with Foundation Human Nature. The aim is to brief all with current issues before the monthly internet meeting, normally held the first Tuesday of each month at 13.30 Ecuadorian time. You are invited to send relevant information and reports on further work you would like posted. This should reach us no later than a week before the monthly meeting. Our goal, unless we are in the field, is to send the bulletin the Friday before the meeting. The phrase "working together" means that we are a team connected across the world. We are "growing together"!!!*



Cutting the ribbon and officially inaugurating the Health Center

## Editorial

**W**elcome to our third Caminos del Páramo. This month has been really hectic and concentrated on planning for the inauguration and the signing of the Agreement with the Ministry of Health – The Convenio. But you will all be glad to know the inauguration went really well, the highlight being the signing of the Convenio! On top of all this, we have an Ecuadorian rural doctor residing in the health center, and wait for it.....we have solar energy!!! So it has been a busy month, but a month which has bought amazing things for the people of El Páramo, and has moved things forward for the foundation. So we hope you all enjoy reading about it!

*Gaby, Judy and Lucia.*

## HEALTH

- **Inauguration:** The cause of many sleepless nights for Gaby and Lucia, for example the night before the inauguration when at 11.00pm, with the help of the designers, they changed the sign at the turning off the main road to La Y. All their hard work paid off and they did us all proud, the inauguration was a really special day for everyone. The health center looked amazing, and there was a great atmosphere, those who attended included representatives from the Japanese Embassy, the Province Director of Health, the Alcalde, Carlos Aulestia from Bilsa, the Concejales, etc. The inauguration featured a welcome by Jessica Zambrano (Reina del Centro de Salud), a formal introduction by Máximo Rodríguez, Don Ramón told the history of the health center, Gaby and Lucia represented Martín by reading a letter from him, afterwards the alcalde gave a short speech followed by a representative from the Japanese Embassy. The convenio was then signed (see below). Afterwards there was a symbolic unveiling of the new plaque where different persons representing all those involved that have worked towards the creation of the health center held part of a ribbon and helped unveil the plaque **¡juntos!** After all this a theater group from Esmeraldas held two performances with the theme of educating about health, they were really good and it lightened the atmosphere. There was also food for everybody thanks to Lasteña, Lilia and Margarita. We killed a "chancho" and fed more than a hundred people. We got to be in the newspaper. For those of you, who haven't read it, go to: <http://www.elcomercio.com/noticias.asp?noid=44810>
- **Convenio:** Its done and dusted! The convenio was signed on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November by the Province Director of Health, The Director of the Hospital of Quinindé, The Health Committee and the Foundation. We will benefit of the public health services. We are very close to obtain the legal papers testifying that the Health Committee is the owner of the land of the Health Center. The Health committee now has legal status! This past month they have been really great, hardworking and cooperative. Margarita came to the last meeting with the Director of Health in Esmeraldas. They also organized a fiesta after the inauguration (see special events).
- **Vaccination Campaign:** Another thing done and dusted! Almost 1000 children were vaccinated. We evaluated the campaign with the health promoters. Their feedback was positive and they provided good suggestions for the future. Judy helped Isabelle by facing the mud and going to La Yecita, Dógola and Mono, to be an extra pair of hands. Isabelle walked about 300 km in order to get to all the communities (she visited all the communities twice in three months). Don Ramón and Hugo, say that she knows the region even better than them. The vaccination campaign would have not been possible without her. Thank you again. We miss you lots!
- **Rural Doctor:** We have a new doctor: his name is Wilmer Sánchez. He is originally from Manabí, therefore has a lot in common with the people of El Páramo. Eva has introduced him to the work at the Health Center in an excellent way. She is the right person, at the right time, with the right information and stamina. Thank you Eva for all your work. You have put the Health Center right on track. Wilmer is brand new with the rural life, but he has done a great job so far. Our two doctors helped a lot with the training of the Health Promoters and in a workshop with the women of the Banco Comunitario, about sexual and reproductive health.
- **Laboratory Technician:** Marjorie is back! She has completed her training. The Health Center now offers malaria exams. Just in one week, this has brought, many, many patients. Between 70% and 80% have been found positive.
- **Mingas:** We had 2 on the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup>. We painted the front wall, dug holes (Ed we know you would have loved to be there to help with the digging!), planted plants, cleaned, finished the ecological latrine and basically got to task on beautification of the health center. José Cedeño from Dógola (carpenter) built 2 bulletins boards in order to improve communication. Guess, what?. He used the wood that packed the odontological chair Marco Antonio sent as a donation.

### HEALTH (continuation):

- **Solar energy:** We now have electricity!!! Thanks to the solar power system installed by Francisco Beckmann. We still lack water, but positive news, is that the Alcalde is willing to help with the cisterna.
- **Medicinal Plants:** We have a new volunteer. Adrián who will be working on the medicinal garden for the next few months. He is Ecuadorian and has had a good start.. saw a rainbow on the Laguna!..
- **Health Promoters:** The fifth meeting was held on the 22nd of November. It was short and was focused on evaluating the status of their knowledge. The sixth meeting was held between the 29<sup>th</sup> of November and the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. It went GREAT!. We counted on César Díaz, the Director of the Malaria office in Esmeraldas. His team trained the promoters on cheap and easy techniques in order to prevent the reproduction of insects on water pots. César Díaz also taught the promoters how to take samples of blood. The idea is that the promoters could send the samples to the Health Center, where Marjorie will examine them, and also they could administrate the correct dosis of the malaria pills. Karin thank you for the books you sent, they were very useful.

### Conservación - Ecoturismo:

Proyecto de Judy: Estoy casi por terminar mi proyecto. He tenido experiencias increíbles y me he sentido muy afortunada de trabajar en otras cosas. Pero, sobre Ecoturismo: desearía haber conseguido más para El Kaimán, pero no se dónde se fue el tiempo! Por un momento yo tuve mucha confianza en el turismo en el área. Hubo grupos de Bilsa casi cada mes en La Laguna, y El Kaimán estaba trabajando muy duro en mejorar la Casa de la Laguna y la infraestructura. Después de mi investigación, yo escribí una carta para El Kaimán en la que recomiendo enfocarse al turismo de aventura. En este momento la competencia en Eco turismo es dura y es mejor que El Kaimán venda un producto para turistas de aventura y no solamente dependiente del paisaje. Que ofrezcan oportunidades de visitar otras comunidades como Dógola, porque eso es una experiencia diferente y única, que otros proyectos de Ecoturismo no pueden ofrecer. Después de más tiempo, con más dinero y más conocimientos sobre el servicio, El Kaimán podrá mejorar las cosas para Ecoturistas. Todavía hay mucho trabajo pero poco a poco. Yo escribí un libro de información de actividades en al área para la casa de Ecoturismo, y también haremos un libro de fotos.

*Judy*

### Género

**Workshop 20<sup>th</sup> of November:** The topic was "Sexual and reproductive Health". Lucia, Eva, Wilmer, Julia y Adrián held the workshop as the facilitator who was meant to be doing it, cancelled the same day. Eva, and Wilmer were excellent health promoters. Some husbands participated, topics that we discussed included condoms and machismo in the region. It was as you can imagine quite interesting!

**Welcome!** Julia a volunteer from the States that will work in the Gender program. She has helped us a lot with her flexibility and positive attitude. Welcome to Jessica. She arrived last night 3<sup>rd</sup> of December and will coordinate the Gender Project in the next 6 months. ¡Chévere!

### Educación

- **Welcome to Jason:** He arrived with Jessica yesterday and he will coordinate the education program. Bienvenido y mucha suerte en el Páramo.

## Special events

Well the end of October and all of November has all been about the inauguration and the convenio, but we all did manage to enjoy ourselves at a fiesta after the inauguration. Lucia and Isabelle took charge of making "bastante Chuchuhuazo para todos". It was a really nice fiesta situated in the school with a really good atmosphere. Of course Don Ramon was the life and soul as usual! Things got slightly emotional (maybe due to the chuchuhuazo) but it was Isabelle's last night and it goes without saying that the people from El Paramo will miss her lots!

### Actividades y eventos futuros

#### Diciembre

- 12-14 Segundo taller intensivo con los Promotores de Salud.  
12 Judy's departure ☺  
13 Cumpleaños de Lucia  
17 Viaje de Lucia a Italia... finalmente se va a practicar el italiano. Regresa e mediados de enero de 2003.  
20 Cumpleaños de Marco Antonio  
26 Cumpleaños de Heather

#### January

- 3 Cumpleaños de Lorena.  
22 y 23 Taller sobre "Contabilidad para pequeños negocios y relaciones humanas" para el grupo de mujeres.  
24 Reunión mensual con el Comité de Salud.

### For more information please contact: FOUNDATION HUMAN NATURE

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