

FES NEWSLETTER

Friends of
Ecuador Schools.com



[Back to FES Homepage](#)

Update from Ecuador

By Nancy Wesorick

It is hard to believe that the 3rd FES “working” year has come to a close. In total this year we have spent 4 months in the rainforest distributing school materials to 24 schools and have opened a library. We have made many new friends and have developed a working relationship with an organization called Red Sindy.

New Work with Red Sindy

Red Sindy is an organization of 17 bilingual (Quichua/Spanish) schools. This year we did not give supplies to all the schools in this organization but next year FES plans to give to all 17 schools. The Manuel Jesus de Calle School in Sindy was the first school we gave school supplies to in 2004.

The dispersal of materials to 24 different locations is very difficult. Some of the schools are only reached by canoe and others are 2 hours by truck deep into the rainforest and Waorani Territorial lands. At times it can be frustrating to get a few boxes just a few miles down the road. Transportation is limited by the necessity of depending on others who have vehicles or relying on the local bus which has few buses and are not always timely nor do they travel to all communities. Jim and I are well known to many of the bus drivers and servicios (the money collectors on the bus) as we move back and forth along the same road. At times we have taken the bus to Tena (one hour) then had to hire a taxi. We now know a taxi driver, Milton Perez, who gladly totes Jim and I and all our boxes down remote roads to find the schools. He even asked us to be

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Update from Ecuador	1
New Work with Red Sindy	1
Inserting Your Own Art	2
Drawing Readers to Other Articles	2

DONATE

NOW

*Secure donation
through Network
for Good*

“padrinos” (godparents) to his son, but we respectfully decline since in reality we are padrinos to many more children and cannot take on more at this time! Next year, with the help of the Red Sindy

organization we hope to become more efficient in getting the materials in the hands of the children in a timely manner.

“Jim and I had to teach not only the “librarians”, Alphonzo and Joneth, but the children just what all these books are for”



First FES Library Opened

Our special project this year was the opening of a library at Chichico Rumi. This has been a learning experience for us and the peoples in the community. Libraries are not something that the indigenous peoples of Ecuador know about. The people in the community have not had an exposure to books and reading. This is understandable when you realize that their first language, Quichua, in the past was not a written language. For centuries they passed down their cultural stories and folklore by verbal stories.



New Library Building



Students visit the new library for the first time

Today that is still in practice. Most community members have seen a few books and a newspaper but do not read them. The cost of reading materials makes it prohibitive for them to have access. With that all said, Jim and I had to teach not only the “librarians”, Alphonzo and Joneth, but the children just what all these books are for, how to handle the books, not to write in the books or tear the pages out and how to put the books back in the shelves (they want to put the spine of the book toward the inside of the shelf!).

The first day of training with the students of the 9 de Octubre School at Chichico Rumi was really fun. The children had been watching for a few weeks as we set up the books and bookshelves in the Telecentro (the location of the library). They were excited to finally get to see what was going on! We bought small groups over at a time for their library lessons and then we let them start looking at the books. Wow! They were so excited to see pictures of other places, look at maps and do some reading. Every child

looked at many books and they loved to show their classmates the pictures in the book they were looking at. In general, the children of the area read at a much lower level than children in the US in the same grade. We hope that the library will help in some small way to remedy this.

The bookshelves at the library were made to order by the high school students at Nuevo Paraiso with the help of their instructor/supervisor. Their work was of good quality and made exactly to specifications. There remains a sign “Biblioteca” to be delivered for the future.

Library cards for each student were printed in the US and are filled out by local students and then laminated. Students are given a cord/necklace to keep their cards where they can find them. The students really liked their cards and proudly wore them around their neck.

Volunteers from Jatun Sacha who are teaching children English at 9 de Octubre School will be bringing students to the library weekly so the students get more practice in using books. When we return in the Fall we will see how things are going and hope that we will need to add more books to the library.



An Article for Everyone

As usual I must share with you some learning facts. We have discovered in the developing world that there is often a lack of systems. Things just happen one way and looking for an alternative, even if it might be better, it is just shrugged off. Case in point is at the bus terminal in Tena. When one is going to Chichico Rumi, for example, one must purchase a ticket for an assigned seat. Seems normal to me. But the problem lies when people want to go to a location that is closer to Tena along the route, such as Sindy, Atahualpa (communities that are only a few miles down the road). These people do not have tickets. So all these people (as many as fifty or more!) jam into the bus as it first pulls up to the terminal. (The bus driver or servicios do not regulate who gets on the bus.) So you say what is the problem? Well, when there is an event in Tena and not enough buses this causes CHAOS. Those of us who have a ticket then must literally climb over all the people in the aisle to get to your seat, then “kick” a person or persons out of your seat. Now all of this is happening in a non moving bus with a temperature of at least 90° and 80+% humidity! Yuck! On top of all this there are vendors pushing through the crowd selling anything from frozen popsicles to peas to bread! Ecuadorians have a very close personal space (those of you that do not like people up front and personal...be prepared if coming to Ecuador!) they expect you to push, shove, climb, step on them to get to your seat. Now way will they move! It is crazy. I thought Jim and I were calm, caring people and respectful of others space. No more when riding the bus, it is every man, women and child to themselves and

for just **Friends Of Ecuador Schools (FES)** is a non-profit humanitarian organization established to partner with schools in remote communities in Ecuador.

Our Mission is to improve primary school education in remote communities so that the young people are better able to cope with a changing world.



People shoving to get on the bus at Tena

Now I tried to make a suggestion to a bus owner about this problem. My idea was to only let those with tickets on the bus first and then let others on later. Not rocket science! However during the discussion it was very clear that that would take a change and change is not easily accepted. It was like, “Ok, gringo I hear you but this idea is not how we do things”. So needless to say we continue to have our battle gear on when we see the crowd at

Find out more on
the FES website at
www.friendsofecuadorschools.com

the terminal. Possibly in the future someone better that I will be more persuasive. Until then we just move it on down the aisle and push with the best of them!

Another fact that is true to a greater degree than in the US. Each school is different and we have learned that some of the teachers/principals can get student action or ceasing of action with a hand signal or “the look” and have complete control. Others imitate a Swiss yodeler and the children run around like indigenous warriors.

