

London 15th May 2005

Latest Visits to Peru

Welcome to a new edition of our bulletin. We are pleased to inform you of our latest activities. This edition is dedicated to our last trip to Peru in January, and also to the occasion of the presentation of our project to the public on the 15th May about the work we have done so far; an occasion which is at the same time a get together with our friends who continue to support us. We would like also to take this opportunity to say thankyou to all the people who help us to raise funds to help needy groups and communities in Peru.



Visit to Trujillo

In January we travelled to Trujillo in the northern coastal area of Peru to meet Mrs Maribel Cancino, headmistress of Santo Toribio School for Disabled children. Maribel is an enthusiastic head, leading a staff dedicated to the education and improving the lives of these children, many of whom come from disadvantaged homes. As it was the school summer holidays in Peru in January, and these children live in various parts of the city, we were not able to meet any of them, but the photos around the school tell of happy children thriving in an environment appropriate to their needs. The disabilities are varied. There are deaf children who have no access to hearing aids due to lack of money to purchase them. They are taught lip and sign reading at the school and also a trade so that they can earn money despite their disability, not always easy in Peru. The school teaches woodwork, shoe making and bakery work, and as most of these children can learn to use machinery, they are often taught woodwork. In the woodwork room we saw school tables and chairs awaiting repairs as well as examples of work done by the youngsters, and were able to purchase a coat rack. Funds from sales of things made by the children are used to buy more materials. We saw the nursery area. The school has purchased some push chairs as a lot of parents can't afford to buy them and carry their growing children around if they are unable to walk, increasingly hard on the parents. The classrooms are well designed to let in Trujillo's sunshine, they are bright and well decorated – perfect for children with visual problems and for those who need visual stimulation. We met 2 of the teachers who work with Maribel, and in the school that day was an ex pupil, a young man who can carry out basic work with the school caretaker. The school felt that a large TV for educational and recreational purposes was what was needed – a large screen for children with visual impairment, and that could provide subtitles for children with hearing impairment. Also a large screen would be useful if they were showing something for the whole school to watch. The Apurimac Project provided a 29" Panasonic TV which we bought during our visit.



Visit to educational project near Huanchaco, Trujillo

Whilst we were in Trujillo to give the donation to Santo Toribio school, we were introduced to a priest, Father Victor Hugo. He had seen the need for a school offering free education to children from a shanty town in the area. Ironically nearby was a private school for children of military personnel, but there was nowhere to educate these poor children. Father Victor Hugo had obtained some land on the edge of the main road from Trujillo to Huanchaco where this shanty town is situated. It is a reasonably large walled area,

stony but with work could be improved, with a well in one corner. His immediate needs were to cover the well for safety reasons, although it would also be useful as the source of water for the school, build some basic classrooms to shelter the children from the hot Trujillo sun, build some tables and chairs and provide a toilet and handwashing facilities. He had some volunteers doing carpentry work for the prospective school, and we also met some volunteer teachers who are from the “CEP”, the Popular Education Corporation, a national group who encourage retired teachers to join schools such as this one for teaching purposes. They were looking forward to starting work as they were offering some tuition during the holidays and would be starting work full time in March when term time began. We were invited to the inaugural morning and met some of the future pupils and their mothers, and a group of mums were dishing out drinks that had been provided for the occasion. There were lots of smiles from the women and children and the teachers as they posed for photos. These were primary and infant school age children, at present there are no facilities there for educating older children. We are fired by the enthusiasm of Father Victor Hugo for this project and are keen for the Apurimac Project to help him to achieve his aim of educating these poor children.



District of Muqui in Jauja

We received a request for help from retired teachers Luis Contreras and his wife Susana who live in Huancayo to buy building materials to put a wall round the infants school for safety reasons in the district of Muqui in Jauja, set in the beautiful Mantaro Valley region of Huancayo in the central Andes.

Mr Hugo Munguia is Mayor of Muqui, a smallish village of which he appears to be an effective mayor. We were shown the primary school, part of which is a dilapidated abandoned-looking building with broken windows, but which the Mayor is gradually obtaining funds for from the government, and there is a newer looking bright school building at the side which he has had built, and the infants school a short distance away looks newish. Due to the small size of the village a group of infant and primary school children with their parents came to the school to meet us, and entertained us with a song. We had a formal reception by the Mayor and his councillors at the Town Hall and they explained how they run the district in 4 zones called “cuarteles”. We were told that despite the small size of Muqui the 4 cuarteles have their own traditions and independent organisation, although they collaborate with one another and with the whole community. We were able to buy construction materials in the nearby town of Jauja and the Mayor obtained a lorry and driver to accompany us to pick up the materials and transport them back to Muqui.

Vitarte in Lima

We were invited to Vitarte in the eastern area of Lima to a “Pachamanca”, a traditional Andean meal where the food is cooked underground in a hole made for the purpose. It was held in a sports stadium owned by the Association of people of Chiara living in Lima, and the land was bought in the late 1970’s by the Huamani brothers Felipe and Stanislao, considered the “Pioneers” with other Elders who came to Lima from Chiara, together with Claudio Chipana Rojas, father of Claudio Chipana Gutierrez. They raise money from hiring out the field for sports events but now they need to improve it. We were shown a partly built shower and toilet area for men and women. Apurimac Project made a donation towards the completion of this structure.



Santa Maria Children's Home, Lima

In December 2003 we visited the boys' home, situated in San Juan de Miraflores, with a donation which the director said he would use to buy Christmas things for the children. In January 2005 we visited the home again, this time with a donation of a good quality guitar and some volleyballs and nets. As we were introduced to the home in 2003 by a volunteer who gives music lessons to the boys, their request for a musical instrument seemed appropriate. When we arrived we were met by the director with some of the younger boys who were chatty, playful and inquisitive, fascinated by the video and digital cameras, and clamouring to have their photos taken. The assistant showed us round the home. We saw the laundry room where the clothes and bedding is laundered, a never ending process as the home is situated in sandy, dusty grounds which flies around in the breeze. We saw a dormitory with its row of beds, some of which due to bed wetting by some of the children, were stripped with their rubber covers on the mattresses. We saw the kitchen and dining room, the boys take it in turns to cook. There is a large St. Bernard dog living in the home who growls at women as she is thought to see the boys as her pups who need to be protected. During term time the boys can only go to school part time as the local schools have no room for all of them to go full time. When they are not at school they and the staff from the home work in the recycling which raises money to support the home, although it does not provide enough money for all the needs of the children. We saw no older boys on this second visit and wondered if they were working, it being the school summer holidays. We were given a little concert by the boys who were present, some of the youngest boys played tunes on the pan-pipes and the recorders, and a group of slightly older boys did a dance from the Puno area of Peru, which looked hard work but was very well done. We donated the guitar which the music teacher pronounced a good one and he tuned it and played us a tune on it, and the volleyballs were leapt on by the boys.

When we left, promising to come back again the boys grouped for a final photo, and were keen for a goodbye cuddle. They were so irresistible we nearly left with about 30 little boys in tow!



Loayza Hospital, Lima

Last year we were shown round the neonatal and paediatric units of the Archbishop Loayza Hospital, a poor public hospital in Lima. This was of great interest to Judith as she works in a modern neonatal intensive care unit in a London NHS hospital and wanted to see its Peruvian equivalent. Despite being very busy on the neonatal unit the doctor also showed us part of the adult hospital, very very busy with long wards with beds very close together (bad for infection control and privacy) and no curtains between beds. After the visit Judith was very keen to give a donation to the neonatal unit which is run by an enthusiastic team of doctors and nurses with few facilities, and was keen to donate money for a drug which is used in babies with respiratory distress to shorten the illness and reduce future problems. We had been told that it is rarely given in the Loayza neonatal unit as the parents would have to pay \$50 per dose, and the parents whose babies were born in that hospital would not normally be able to afford that much money. In the UK babies with respiratory distress are given one and frequently 2 doses of this drug as part of their treatment, and it seemed so sad that a drug which has revolutionised the treatment of infants should be denied to these babies. The Kings College neonatal unit staff raised some money which was given to the Apurimac Project with a view to buying some surfactant for the Loayza hospital NNU. However once in contact with the director of the unit, she said that there were other drugs which were more desperately needed than that one, so we went along to the unit and were

given a “shopping list” of the most needed medicines and directed to the pharmacy to buy them. It was very humbling to see the very basic drugs plus syringes that the unit needed, things that are used every day in neonatal units in the UK without any thought being given to not being able to afford them. The pharmacy didn’t have the breathing tubes that the unit were extremely short of so we gave a small donation which covered buying them, and they knew of a pharmacy in another hospital where they could obtain them. We hope to help them again in the future.



ACFIE educational group, Callao

We were invited to a meeting of “Acfie” who are working hard to promote reproductive health education in schools in poor areas of Callao, to try to reduce the high teenage pregnancy rates which ruin the girls’ future prospects and frequently have them dismissed from school and therefore any chance of continuing education, and sometimes have them thrown out of their homes. Due to lack of social security benefits, another mouth to feed in a poor home and no prospects of the girl finding work to bring in money, is a family disaster.

The group is comprised of teachers, social workers, psychologists, nurses and others led by Miguel Chipana Sotomayor, who work in their various ways to educate and support the teenagers. Among their group they have teenage parents to tell the children in the schools how hard life is with a baby to support and bring up.

The Apurimac Project has given 2 small donations to Acfie to help with teaching aids.



Pachacutec shanty town, Ventanilla, Callao

We visited the shanty town of Pachacutec in Ventanilla, Callao in January in the company of Mr Jorge Bardales, a teacher at the school in Pachacutec. Mr Bardales, who also helps with the “Acfie” reproductive health project mentioned before, has a plan to try to grow plants in this desert area of Ventanilla which appears to be miles and miles of sand and dust with the sea in the distance. He has used this project as a teaching aid, and his pupils are growing plants and small trees as part of their environmental studies courses, saving their washing and washing up water for watering the plants as water in this area is in short supply. We met several of the pupils he teaches as we wandered round the shanty town and it seemed that a lot of the people living there had moved from the jungle areas of Peru to this barren looking brown coastal area with nothing green to see for miles. They were supportive of Mr Bardales’ idea of trying to make this desert area green, and posed with him in front of baby trees and plants for photos. Mr Bardales would like to purchase a water tank for the watering of the plants, which are round the fencing outside of his school, and has a space ready for a tank. The Apurimac Project would like to help him to make his purchase.

Meeting “Latinos de Richmond”, April 2005

In April we met some of the members of “Latinos de Richmond”, a group whose members include Peruvians, and who were interested in the work of the Apurimac Project and wanted to know more. They have arranged previous fund raising events for other projects and charities. We were warmly welcomed by them at the house of Dunia Ball and spent a very nice evening meeting new friends. We showed photos of where we had made past donations and told them about our fund raising events and the donations the Apurimac Project had made in Peru, and told them about the requests that we have recently received. They feel strongly about education and are interested in holding a fund raising event in aid of the school in the shanty town that Father Victor Hugo is setting up in Trujillo near Huanchaco.

Apurimac Project Presentation and social event

The Project is organising an event with a photographic exhibition and talk at Tito's Restaurant on 15th May. This is with the intention of letting the public know of the work done so far. We will be using materials such as video and projected images to explain the visits we have made to Peru and to inform people about the donations we have made to date. Our sincerest thanks to Tito's Restaurant for allowing us to use the venue and for their help and support. Also thanks to Sofia Buchuck, Jose Navarro, Jessica Luong and Baile Peru and Santiago Carhuancho and other people who are helping this event.

About us

Apurimac Project is a voluntary group which started in 2001 after a visit to the Apurimac region. It is based in London and its main purpose is to promote awareness in the UK about poverty in Peru, and also to organize fundraising events in order to help community projects, mostly small projects in Peru. Special emphasis is put in helping educational projects in various areas in the Andes and other areas of Peru.

Acknowledgements

The Apurimac Project would like to thank all the people in Lima and other places we visited in January 2005 for their support and welcome to us during our visits. We remain in contact with the groups mentioned above, and are looking forward to continuing to help them. We would also like to extend our thanks to our supporters in London and other parts of Britain who attend and/or support our events, who help us to raise money to help the poor people of Peru. We will keep you informed of future activities, and we are hoping to set up a website as soon as possible. Our special thanks to the Richmond group (Latinos de Richmond) who are organising a fund raising event for one of our projects.

Contacting Apurimac Project

We appreciate any comments or suggestions to enable us to improve our work. We also will be grateful to anyone who volunteers to support us with our events, or just to be part of our mailing list. To those who would like to visit these places please contact us. For further information ring us on 0208 699 8731, Claudio Chipana, or e mail us: apurimacpro@yahoo.com

Thankyou.