

MUSUQ CHASKI

“THE NEW MESSENGER”

ProjectsAbroad



Volunteers working on the Teacher's Training program posing for the camera on their way to lunch.

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“Quinotto” Think risotto but made with Quinoa.



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Editorial

Why we do what we do

At Projects Abroad Peru, we like to think that we do things differently from other organisations. Our methods of working contrast greatly from the hundreds of other volunteer organisations and NGOs in the Cusco area, who choose to run private orphanages, hand out food to children, teach English in schools and generally do whatever they feel is best to help Peruvians.

We are different because we don't work where we think Peruvians need help, but where our support is asked for. Every one of our projects is a partnership with local authorities, be it in education, health or cultural patrimony. This means that we work on the same level as Cusqueniens; we do not tell them what they need, but work with them to achieve their own goals. We do not pretend to know what is best for their country, but listen to their complaints, fears and dreams and work with them to form a brighter future for all Peruvians.

This approach is not without problems; ask any one of our supervisors and they will tell you stories of teachers on strike, of region-wide projects re-shuffled at short notice, and most commonly of "la hora Peruana"! It would be much easier for us to start our own private orphanage, or school, or to simply hand out food to children, but where would that leave Peru in 20 years? It would result in a country and a people reliant on others, unable to develop themselves because they have never been allowed the chance to do so.



In short, it would leave a country without hope of success.

Instead, through our official agreements and thanks to the perseverance and hard work of supervisors and volunteers alike, Projects Abroad Peru volunteers have the chance to make a real impact on the future of Peru. Thus, for over nearly a decade, volunteers have trained thousands of teachers who have chosen our English program over others because they trust our goals and methods. Every year our host families welcome hundreds of Projects Abroad Peru volunteers because they believe in us and believe in what our volunteers do. Authorities approach us on a monthly basis wanting to collaborate with us and our volunteers because they know us by our reputation and results. As a direct result of this and thanks to the commitment of volunteers, we had the opportunity to support the province of Espinar for the first time in 2012. Volunteers were involved in leading culturally relevant Maths, Early Stimulation and Nutrition workshops in a province that directly asked for our assistance.

This commitment to the long-term future of Peru is why we do what we do. We hope that is also why you chose to volunteer with us - without you and your hard work it simply would not be possible!



Koricancha

By a Native Peruvian.

The Incas, like most ancient cultures, found in the skies their deities; but it was the sun that received most veneration. Around 1438, after defeating the Chancas, Pachacutec earned the right of becoming the ninth Inca and he was the one responsible for the construction of the temple of the sun, decorating it with silver and gold receiving for this reason the name of "Koricancha" which in Quechua means "courtyard of gold". Its walls were made of stone to a certain height with adobe on top and the ceiling made with wood and straw. The first Europeans to arrive in this temple were impressed by the wealth they found inside, the stone part of the walls were covered with gold, there were life size gold figures and a huge golden disc representing the sun.

The walls have trapezoidal niches where the idols of conquered tribes were placed, it was said that the Inca ordered to bring these idols together with their priests who were kept prisoners at the temple, so if any tribe became rebellious they were threatened with the destruction of their idol "huaca" and the killing of their priest, that is how Pachacutec managed to control his empire.

At the temple there is a special room where the highest priest performed sacrifices, killing a black llama

asking for the sun's protection of the Inca and the royal family. This room was also used by the priest to communicate with the sky's divinities by drinking hallucinogens, during his trance the sun would speak through his mouth becoming "The Willac Puma" -the talking head- and his commands were sacred for the authorities throughout the kingdom.

Another room was used to worship the stars which were considered the daughters of the sun and the moon. In the center of this room, a window was built and its frame covered with precious stones. The window was oriented towards Venus, considered the guardian of the sun, and it was used to observe the stars, discovering many constellations and establishing the difference between stars and planets.

The gold and silver of Koricancha was removed to pay ransom for the captive Inca Atahualpa at the time of the Spanish conquest. The temple was later in the hands of Juan Pizarro who then donated it to the Dominicans who used the beautiful polished stones as foundation for the "Santo Domingo" church standing on top of Koricancha to this day.

Florbela Blenkinsop

54, Portugal, two months Care project.

When I decided to volunteer in Peru with Projects Abroad I knew I did not have the average profile. People in my circle of friends thought that volunteering is for teenagers, people on gap years and definitely not for the over 30's, but with my daughters grown and gone (one to work abroad, another away from home at University), I grew more and more restless. I wanted to feel useful and help people.

I never had a doubt about where I wanted to go – Peru was my choice right from the beginning. I was at the time reading the Conquest of the Incas by John Hemming and was totally fascinated by the country's History and the Inca culture. I also wanted a challenge and being terrified by mountains since I nearly died in an accident at the age of ten, this high altitude country definitely represented a huge challenge for me!

I was really pleased that Projects Abroad could propose four different placement choices. I picked the PRONOEI (Programa No Escolarizado Inicial) because it was the most interesting but also because I thought that maybe not so many volunteers spoke fluent Spanish, so I might be more useful there.

I arrived in Cusco on a Sunday afternoon. Waiting for me at the airport with a friendly smile was a member of Projects Abroad. He showed me the town and took me to Urubamba to meet my Peruvian family for the first time. I could not have picked a better one if I had chosen myself. Jesus, Lupe, Yurmo and Carlos received me with open arms and were so warm and welcoming; they immediately became a real family to me. The cherry on top of the cake was the volunteer I shared my family with, a Danish girl barely older than my eldest daughter and the sweetest, most wonderful house mate anyone could wish for.



Next day I went with my supervisor Yessica, to the PRONOEI to see my workplace and meet Elsa and Roosevelt, the two people in charge, and the children. Over the next eight weeks I came to know well and developed a good relationship with everyone, including most of the parents. I helped in any way I could, from doing photocopies to bringing much needed materials provided by Projects Abroad, which they could not afford. I also had to replace Elsa a few times, as she was heavily pregnant and needed to take the odd day off to go for check-ups. When she had the baby the parents asked me to take over for a few days until she came back. I was incredibly touched when Elsa gave my name to her baby and told me she would have liked me to be her daughter's godmother.

I was lucky enough to be invited to join Yessica and another two volunteers to go to the province of Espinar to do a workshop for teachers. It was an amazing experience and I found it very interesting to see how other PRONOEIs worked.

Nearly three months after leaving home I came back. Peru was everything I hoped for and more. It was a life changing experience. I realised I can still be useful and help people who need me; who thank me not with empty, meaningless words but with lovely toothless smiles in their little faces, with hugs and kisses, while calling me "Florcita". In Peru I left my safety zone, survived and actually lived! I now know that I am capable of much more than I thought, both physically and emotionally. And I loved that time which was all mine but which I gladly shared with strangers; I loved the work I did, the people I met, the country and the culture so different from mine but at the same time, with lots of common points. I came back fitter and richer in what really counts: confidence, experience, knowledge and understanding and I cannot wait to volunteer again.

So there is only one thing left to say: thank you Peru and thank you Projects Abroad!



Signe Sorensen

25, Denmark, Three months, care project

So here I am again, back in Denmark and back to the old routines after three months of volunteering in Peru. There is no doubt that I have had the best experience in my life - and let me tell you why...

I arrived in Cusco August 16th – a few hours later than expected. Tatiana from Projects Abroad was waiting for me in the airport and she gave me a very nice welcome. On our way to Urubamba, Tatiana received a phone call. Even though my Spanish was a little rusty at that time, I figured out that she was talking to someone in my host family. Tatiana told me that it was my host mom who wanted to hear if I was okay since I didn't show up at the time she was told. Already at that time, I got a clearer picture of who my new Peruvian mom was. A caring mom which turned up to be very true!

When I arrived at my host family, my host mom opened the door. You could tell from her eyes that she was very excited – and so was I! The first thing she did was give me a warm hug, a "Bienvenida" and a big smile. Tatiana followed me into the house and didn't leave before she knew that I was okay with the situation. I couldn't have had a better beginning. My Peruvian family consisted of my mom, my dad and my two brothers (around my age). They were so loving and caring, all of them, and they made me feel a part of the family. I loved my host family – and I still do! Now I have a second family and they will always be a part of my life.

I started volunteering at a school close to my town, Urubamba. And it was not what I expected. The children were four and five years of age and were treated like children in the older grades with short breaks between their lesson, 24 of them and only one teacher. It did not help the fact that she was not qualified to teach children their age and that she was also not nice to them. Children were afraid of her. She was very strict, she humiliated some of the weakest children instead of giving them the support they needed – and she hit those children that didn't do what she ordered them to do. Needless to say, it was hard to watch what went on, but I became the children's friend and earned their trust helping them the best I could. I informed these irregularities to my



supervisor who talked to her on many occasions to no avail; I was then changed to a different school. Projects Abroad is making sure this teacher gets removed from that school.

My new placement was a whole different experience and I started looking forward to go to work every morning. The class consisted of 24 four and five-year-old children. The teacher was nothing less than wonderful and the children loved her. Every morning she gave the children a hug, a kiss on the cheek with the biggest smile. The lessons were short but still very educational and the teacher had so many good ideas and different ways of teaching. And the children were allowed to be children, so they also had a lot of playtime outside. My job was to support the teacher with anything practical in the classroom and then I spent a lot of my time taking care of a boy who had brain damage. That boy was so sweet but he just didn't know how to get in contact with his classmates in a proper way, so he tended to hit them from time to time – sometimes very soft but other times quite hard. And because of that, I had to keep an eye on him all the time. Another thing I really loved about my job was that the teacher really appreciated my help and thanked me every day when I was about to go home. It was so hard to say goodbye to the children when my time as a volunteer was over. I really loved them, so I actually visited them three times after my official last day at work because I was staying in Urubamba the following two weeks. At the last visit, one of the girls came to me with tears in her eyes and asked: "Signe, did you come to stay?" I was very, very touched and I promised her to come back. I know for sure that I will come back to my second home, Urubamba!

*Laurine van Gijn,
18, Holland, two months Medical project.*



I have been in Peru now for one month and two weeks. Time is really flying by, because I am around halfway through my time here.

In my first month I have had Spanish classes in the morning, because I did not know any Spanish when I came here. It is so nice to notice how fast you pick up the language if it is spoken around you all the time. What especially helps is living with a host family. I live with my host parents: Nimia and Ayul, and their two kids: Luciena (8) and Derek (6). From the beginning the family has been so nice and welcoming. I really felt at home in Cusco from the start and feeling like a part of the family helps a lot!

On my first week I went to the weekly social on Wednesday, which was a hike in Urubamba. I met some volunteers there and the hike was a lot of fun. It took around 40 minutes to get to "La Cruz" (the cross) on top of a mountain. The view from there over the Sacred Valley was beautiful and it was a nice opportunity to get to know the other volunteers better. I always enjoy the socials that Projects Abroad organizes and because of the cooking class a few weeks ago, Lomo Saltado is now one of my favorite Peruvian meals. If you haven't tasted it yet you should give it a try!

Also a great experience was celebrating Christmas and New Year here in Peru and learning about the Peruvian traditions. Christmas here is more about family and New Year is more often spent with friends. The Christmas market on Plaza de Armas in Cusco was also amazing, they sell so many different things; loads of plants, Christmas barns, small statues of Maria, Josef, Jesus, the three kings and of course lots of animals all of them used in their elaborated "Nacimientos"

Around New Year they sell a lot of yellow things at the markets, most common are the yellow flowers, underwear and hats. I spent New Year's eve with other volunteers at Plaza de Armas in Cusco. It was wonderful to be able to see the crowds of people and the huge amounts of fireworks! After midnight we went to dance salsa all night with a live band playing music. I wouldn't mind spending New Year's eve like that more often.

In my last two months in Cusco I am doing the Medical Project at Centro de Salud de Ttio, which is a health center. Every week I rotate to another section. Last year I finished high school and this is my gap year, so I don't have a lot of knowledge about health care yet. But I have already learned a lot here. I started the first week in "Triage" which is where the majority of the patients have to go first and get their height, weight, temperature and blood pressure measured. I measured everything but the blood pressure, because I still have to learn how to do it. The second week I worked in "Tópico" where people get a lot of antibiotic injections (or injections with other medicines) and where the nurse cleans wounds. After a few days I cleaned some wounds by myself, which was really fun and interesting. I liked it that the nurse gave me the responsibility to do her work for a while. At the moment I am in the pediatric section. There I write down the results of the weight and height of the babies that come for regular controls, to check if they grow well and if they are healthy.

My time in Peru has been amazing so far, with a lot of new, interesting and great experiences. When I am back at home, I am sure I will miss Peru and the friendly people here a lot. I am definitely going to return to Peru in the future!



Inca project

At the end of December the volunteers went exploring at Lauramarca with our archaeologist Zenobio. They also hiked to one of the local attractions, *Catarata del Oso*, in Sicre.

Clearing of the ruins in sector III of Q'ochapata continued with our archaeologist Jhon.

Some volunteers stayed on the project for Christmas. Things were obviously more relaxed and the oven was put to good use.

For New Year's Day, the volunteers helped prepare a meal of chicken, duck and guinea pig. All produced from our project in Huyro. It was a very special and memorable meal.

Finally the volunteers got the chance to visit Quillabamba and check out the town of eternal summer.

Parts of El Establo are being renovated at the moment to increase volunteer capacity on the project in 2013.

Volunteers have been busy moving hundreds of concrete blocks and also painting wood preservative on the roof joists. Around the grounds the guys have been clearing the land at the new banana field.

We also went to help our friend Franklin clear his coffee plantation in Aputiña and he came back to Establo with his wife and we prepared a super fruit salad made with local produce.

Because of the inclement weather, the volunteers have been concentrating on cleaning and classifying the ceramics excavated at Q'ochapata and Inkatambo in 2012. This involves separating the ceramics into different groups like handles, bases, bodies, edges etc. whilst also categorizing the type of clay or 'paste' used to form the artifacts.

It also entails photographing and drawing the pot shreds.

The rain has been pretty prevalent, so much so that Hiddo, Brian and Iollan decided to take a shower in it on the patio....soap and shampoo included!

Our archaeologists and staff also had a meeting with a biologist located in the valley and with members of the Asociación Pro Desarrollo Turístico En El Distrito De Huayopata to start coordinating our exploration expeditions later in 2013.

Activities with the local children have started up again the library.

Finally, on Tuesday January 15th we held our first Inca Social of 2013. Volunteers had the opportunity to visit the old hacienda in Chinche, we had a short guided tour around the coffee factory in Maranura and then we went further down the valley to see the waterfalls at Yanay where we all took a pretty cold shower!

Teaching project

This month we started working at our Teaching Training program with 14 volunteers in seven different groups from beginners to advanced teachers four days a week for six weeks. This year, not only English teachers were invited, and we are having a record number of participants. This course gives the teachers not only the chance to improve their pronunciation and general knowledge of the English language, but also the opportunity to have an intercultural experience. Our volunteers were placed with families in Cusco making things a bit easier compared with past years when they had to travel from the valley every day; in addition they get the support of two supervisors who have experience teaching a foreign language giving them feedbacks and help with the lesson plan preparations. We are happy with the ability of our volunteers to rapidly adapt to the circumstances and their great efforts to provide teachers with thoughtful interactive fun lessons.

At the end of the course, each teacher will receive a certificate of participation which will allow them to find better jobs with an increment in their incomes.



Care project

The second week in January was a significant one for all us who love doing community work, we worked at a nursing home in Cusco, our day started at 8:15 am which meant that our volunteers had to get up at around 5:30 am to get ready and travel one hour and a half to work; they did it for three days with no complains. The first day we worked with the ladies helping them with their breakfast and lunch, our volunteers were wonderful because they put a lot of effort to treat each one of these women as if they were family members. After feeding them we clean and wash dishes, taking them later for a walk, talking and giving them the affection they needed. Every day was an amazing experience, the last day we worked at the gentlemen area doing some cleaning topping it with a game of BINGO something they just love doing. We gave some gifts to all participants.

On Thursday and Friday we were painting a day care centre; our volunteers chose the craziest colors to give children a clean and fun area that will help them learn in a proper environment.

On the third week of January, we started with workshops followed by the start of our summer school in Yucay and Calca. We will work with kids seven to 12 years of age separated in groups each of them with their own activities including: painting, drawing, crafts, sports, etc.

We thank all volunteers for spending this wonderful time in the Sacred Valley with our children.

Nutrition program

With the New Year come new opportunities and challenges for the Nutrition Program. Having signed a "convenio" or agreement of partnership for the Nutrition Program with the Municipality of Urubamba, it was great to see them win "Municipalidad Saludable" or healthiest Municipality for the entire Cusco region in 2012.

The project is now moving forward and Projects Abroad Peru is taking a leading role in the re-structuring of the work that the program does. This has meant that "normal" work is currently suspended, and our volunteers Cara and Livia have been doing great work in a variety of other roles. These have included undertaking house to house visits in Ccotohuincho with partner staff, as well as holding workshops for local mothers in Yucay and developing their own materials and games for nutrition workshops with schoolchildren in Yucay and Calca. We look forward to the prospect of developing the program even further in 2013, with the ultimate goal of reducing the malnutrition rates in the children of Urubamba to zero.

Medicine

We cannot say that there is a lack of doctors in Peru, as a result of the growing economy in the country, education has become one of the most lucrative businesses. We have many new universities offering medicine and as a result we have every year many thousands of young doctors who have no experience. Talking to our volunteers we found that in deed, in our biggest hospitals, there are doctors but not enough nurses, making this situation suitable for young volunteers who want to experience the medical field working side by side with nurses who really do need a hand.

Quinotto

With mushrooms and thyme (2 servings)

By: chef Demo

Ingredients:

200 ml/ 0.85 cup quinoa
1/2 small onion
A handful of dried mushrooms
Fresh thyme (if possible)
Vegetable or chicken stock
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt
Extra-virgin olive oil



Preparation:

- First of all put the mushrooms to soak in some tepid water for at least 30 minutes. Keep the water.
- Rinse the quinoa well and leave to drain.
- Chop or slice the onion and start braising it in some olive together with the thyme, after about 3 minutes, squeeze the mushrooms and add them to the onion.
- Braise for a couple of more minutes and then add the quinoa. Go on cooking for a minute or two, stirring all the time.
- Now start adding the stock, a ladle at a time and stirring all the time. Add the mushroom water as well. Go on until the quinoa is ready, around 20 minutes.
- Add the Parmesan cheese, mix it with the quinotto and serve.