



Newsletter May 2021

Piñán's students took their first step toward becoming local guides!

Last week, along with a couple of other Ecuador-based organizations, we facilitated a special workshop for teachers and students in Piñán, and it was a smash!

A Workshop on Alternative Education and Conservation

The workshop was for the teachers. The goal was to strengthen their training in alternative methods of education for teaching students about the environment.

It covered the subject of conservation for the local Paramo, forests, rivers and riparian areas which surround Piñán.

Now, the idea is to bring these subjects to the students in every grade, so they can learn about their local geography, flora and fauna, social issues and management solutions for their own local ecosystems.

But that's not all.. the teachers came out of this workshop with a whole new set of skills on how to teach these subjects, for all ages through alternative participatory learning including workshops, puppet shows and hands-on excursions.

I'll let the pictures taken that weekend show you all of the creative ways that the students will be getting introduced to environmental education.

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The workshop ran from the 19th to the 23rd of April and was put on by the organization Fundacion Ecocultural, along with some members of a Quito-based group of community educators.

All of the teachers at the Abelardo Moran school in Piñán attended and came out extremely motivated to share what they had learned with their students! In-fact, it was such a hit that a second workshop, directed more specifically for the kids and their parents, may be soon to follow

So how is this workshop the first step toward those students becoming guides, and why does this mark a such a major milestone in our project?

Having a hands-on and multi-faceted understanding of the local environment is seen as one of the most foundational parts of local guiding. Having exposure and education, not just to the plants and animals in their surroundings, but also to the more complex social dynamics that exist within this environment will be an important process for the next generation of students as they take on the challenges and solutions in their community's future.

Tourism and guiding is one of these solutions, as the community sees it. Its their best way to develop a sustainable industry that incorporates local livelihood and embodies conservation.

That is why the next phase of our project will be to set up a certified guiding education school in Piñán for their graduating students! But there will be more to say on that exciting topic in a future newsletter.

Thank you so much for reading, and for all of your support. Thanks to the network of people and organizations becoming involved and following the project we're looking forward to a momentous summer of activities in Ecuador. So, stay close by!

And thank you so much to the incredible organizations who put this workshop on, and a special thanks to Mery Juina of Fundacion Ecocultural for your hard work in spearheading the event. Can't wait for the next one!

Simon Cretien

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