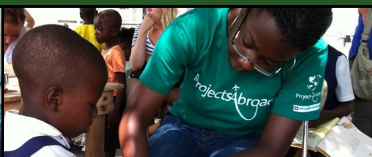




We meet lots of great people on our social events, here volunteers made pots with fantastic local craftsmen in Huayocari near Urubamba.



## Happy Valentines Day!

In Peru (and many countries) Valentines Day is also known as 'Friends Day' when people celebrate not only their true love but also their important friendships; gifting various items such as teddy bears and flowers. It has become hugely commercial here with big companies cashing in. Men tend to buy more presents than women in Peru and the price of flowers always rises in the central markets around the 14th. The age range most likely to celebrate this day is 18-24 year olds. Who will you be thinking of?

## THIS MONTH

Editorial	2
Update - INCA	3
Update - CARE/NUTRITION	4
Update - TEACHING/SPORT	5
Volunteer Story	6
Article - Inca Trail closed	7
Photo Competition	8
Culture & Food	9



## 2014 Council Elections



There are a lot of political parties in Peru, making a decision on election day extremely difficult.

The current mayors of the districts of Peru, along with their regional and provincial counterparts, are coming to the end of their reign. The elections in 2011 brought new faces to some districts and as with any elections, back then, there was great hope for positive change.

Politics in Peru is a complicated animal. Districts elect a mayor every three to four years and each mayor runs under the supervision of a political party. There are numerous parties and it is quite difficult to distinguish between many of them as in rural areas their policies are poorly explained. Candidates do not come from clearly defined political standpoints and there is a great bias towards local candidates with an established network of friends and associates. District-level politics are dominated by popularity contests with local favourites drumming up support from within their social circles. In the most remote areas of Peru the voting public is often made up of a large proportion of illiterate or poorly educated farmers, who are easily swayed by fancy campaigns with incredible promises made by familiar faces.

Living in a rural community myself, I witnessed the hysteria surrounding the 2011 Peruvian Presidential elections and noted with interest that 95% of our neighbours all voted for the same candidate. When I pressed them about their reasons for choosing this person almost all of them gave me the same standard answer, listing the same few key reasons for their choice. People were voting a certain way because their friends and neighbours were doing so and they all rolled out the same rehearsed speech to explain their choice. It was a huge shock to me and immensely frustrating not to be able to have a debate about the issues. Everyone had their mind made up

and the local support for the candidate was sealed and set months before the elections.

The local council elections, which will take place on October 5th this year, will see a huge number of candidates fighting for the chance to represent their districts; local voters have already started aligning themselves with their favourites. Whilst opinions are slowly evolving in my own district, I can still see that certain candidates have the same followers and are making the same tired old promises. The voting public seems unaware to some extent of the power they hold and the opportunities they have to spark debate between the front-runners. People generally vote for the person most likely to directly help their family, rather than for a candidate who will bring development for the district. The short-term gains from offers of employment seem to hold greater interest than a campaign that hopes to deliver long-term stability. The hand-to-mouth existence of many farmers and rural Peruvians doesn't make pitching district-wide growth easy for modern candidates wishing to break the cycle of re-election and inertia. Districts in our region enjoy huge budgets because of taxes imposed on mining companies and it is a huge responsibility to manage these funds. Sadly, corruption and poor management of this money has seen several mayors imprisoned in recent years and there is growing mistrust of local officials which can only be reversed by honest and hardworking candidates. Change is definitely coming; the working classes are definitely becoming more aware of their rights, but I still feel we have a long way to go. Here at Projects Abroad we hope that our new regional and district officials continue to support our important projects and deliver on the promises they make to their voters.





**Nice weather for ducks.**

The seasonal rains always make for hard work at the Inca Project. February and March are the worst months, with rain sometimes lasting days at a time. As we mentioned last month, maintenance is an ongoing concern for our volunteers during this period as weeds grow quickly. No site visits are happening right now, but there's never a dull day at the Inca Project.

Volunteers spend some of their time preparing educational materials for the delivery of mathematics using their own carpentry tools at 'El Establo' but there is also the opportunity to look in more detail at the ceramic fragments unearthed on the various digs and excavations in previous months. Classification and cleaning of these fragments takes time and a lot of patience so it's a perfect activity for a rainy day in the project's dedicated ceramics room.

With less traffic on the tracks leading to 'el Establo' there's also a need to clear the driveway which quickly grows over. However, with the Inca Trail closed during February (for its own annual make-over) there's a lot of movement along the main road through Huyro with tourists taking the back roads to Hidroelectrica to get to Aguas Calientes without using the train. Volunteers staying at the

Inca Project are a stone's throw from a host of interesting ruins and sites which they are lucky enough to visit and work on. Being so close to Machu Picchu is also a huge advantage as reaching the ruins from this side of the valley is so much quicker and cheaper than the traditional train or trail options.

Leaving Huyro you can be in Santa Maria in 15 minutes and from there it's a 50 minute cab ride to Santa Teresa. Leaving Santa Teresa in a 'colectivo' minivan you find yourself in Hidroelectrica in 20 minutes and then you have two options. By far the prettiest option is to walk along the rail tracks to Aguas Calientes. This is a two or three hour walk by the river which offers stunning views and a host of bird life to observe. The trail is well-worn and the trains always announce their presence so there's no danger you'll get squished. This route is favoured by the thrifty but it is becoming increasingly popular with travelers who like to engage a little more with their surroundings on holiday. The walk is flat, it's impossible to lose your way and, best of all, it's free.

The other option from Hidroelectrica is to take the train. There are a couple of daily services charging foreigners \$18 for the 35-minute journey.

It's pleasant enough and you still get to see the scenery but unless you're injured in some way or sick to your stomach I'd recommend doing the walk.

February is still low season for international tourists but there are a lot of Latinos in Peru during these months. Argentineans and Chileans make up the vast majority so you'll definitely hear some variants on the Spanish accent if you're walking.

Our fabulous volunteers manage to deal with rainy season brilliantly every year and we're constantly amazed at their resolve. Cabin fever never seems to set in on this project, there's always something going on and the atmosphere is that of a tiny community pulling together.

If you're interested in volunteering at the prestigious Inca Project then please contact your local Projects Abroad office or speak to our desk officer Rosella by emailing her at [peru@projects-abroad.org](mailto:peru@projects-abroad.org).





**Nutrition volunteer Björn Andrews giving a talk on healthy eating habits to mothers in Ccotahuincho**

With the Summer School in full swing in Yucay and Calca, we took time to visit our nutrition volunteers recently in nearby Ccotahuincho.

Malnutrition is an issue in many areas of rural Peru. It may seem nonsensical that, in a country which produces; quinoa, beans, lentils, a whole range of vegetables, meat and dairy products; there should be problems with nutrition. Sadly, as products such as quinoa rise in popularity and are exported, prices here rise astronomically. One example is quinoa, a super food which is a complete protein. A complete protein (or whole protein) is a source of protein that contains an adequate proportion of all nine of the essential amino acids necessary for the dietary needs of humans or other animals. Some incomplete protein sources may contain all essential amino acids, but a complete protein contains them in correct proportions for supporting biological functions in the human body. Peruvians used to pay as little as 4 soles a kilo for quinoa some years ago and the

price in some markets is now 17 soles, over four times the price.

If you're living on a tiny income, with several children, then cheap options like rice, pasta and bread become a tempting alternative to nutritious foods that will satisfy their children's hunger. The time and effort it takes to cook meals for women, who often work as they simultaneously raise their kids, is phenomenal. Often, the struggle to cook healthy meals becomes a secondary concern to meeting the bills and keeping the home running.

However, there is also a group of mothers (as women are predominantly the ones who feed their families) who simply don't know how to make healthy eating choices. Peruvians are bombarded by the same colourful marketing of convenience foods as in the west and the prices are low. Re-educating these women about the dietary needs of their children is the first step in promoting a healthy lifestyle.

These problems are precisely what Projects Abroad are

trying to address. Our volunteers visit local women's centres and community centres to give talks and demonstrations that teach the right choices. Activities are in the form of games and there are prizes (toothpaste, soap, shampoo etc.) for people giving correct answers. Mothers come with their children and there is supervision and games for the little ones while the mothers concentrate on the activities prepared especially for them.

These meetings are tremendously positive and the food bingo always provides some comedy as winning participants shoot up from their chairs and storm the prize table waving their cards excitedly. The point of it all is to show that with a small budget you can easily provide healthy meals. We have an excellent local partner, Miriam Cuba, coordinating these efforts and she interprets our volunteers and translates into Quechua for those who don't speak much Spanish. This year we are hoping to find projects in other, remote areas of our region to continue with this important work.

### Teacher Training

Now fully settled into their placement, the Teacher Training volunteers continued to deliver their lessons in February to their eager students. We sadly had to say goodbye to veteran teacher Gabriele Blell after only a few days on the project due to some complications with the altitude that caused her to return home. Gabriele spent two days on the project and we were very excited to have her experience. She hit the ground running and we would like to wish her all the best and hope that she is feeling better.

February 20th was the date for the closing ceremony, with participating students receiving their certificate signed by Projects Abroad and the Ministry of Education. The day was a huge success with a lot of emotion for all concerned. Our volunteers were clearly moved by the thanks they received from their students and it was particularly pleasing to witness the confidence with which they handled their groups over the last few days of the

programme. Thinking back to those first few meetings when they were full of questions about how to plan lessons and what to expect; it is remarkable how much has changed in such a short space of time. 2014 was a fabulous year for this initiative; we received a visit from the Regional Director of Education and classes were full of lively discussion and active learning. It is a credit to the hard work of our volunteers that this programme has been such a success. A huge thank you to everyone involved this year.



Graduation Day

### Sport

In January we welcomed Sport Volunteer Jeong Tae Lee from South Korea who has been working hard with our partners Jaime and Roger at the 'Apu Pitusiray' training centre in Calca. Recently, Jeong had the opportunity to see the young boys in action and he told us just how impressed he had been by their level of skill. Jeong's time with us passed all too quickly but he left a fantastic impression with the coaches on the programme who were very grateful for his input. Volunteers with true passion for sport make the difference on this project, which allows the local boys to meet sports enthusiasts from other countries. February sees Bas Gort from Holland and Jonas Rindom

from Denmark taking up the reins of our sporting programme and working with these talented young footballers. The two volunteers will be living in Písac and working both in

Calca and Cusco for the next few weeks. We would like to wish them all the best and welcome them to the Projects Abroad family for their time with us.



The hailstones in Calca can be extremely dangerous





The Taricaya Conservation Project near Puerto Maldonado is a biodiverse haven.

Ron Picard got involved with Projects Abroad in 2011. His younger son, Renn, had turned 16 and as the Christmas break approached, they were keen to get away from the routine of work and high school and spend some time doing something together. Renn was keen on the idea of doing something meaningful, such as volunteering, and so his mother discovered Projects Abroad online and they decided to take a giant leap and travel to Peru to work as volunteers at the Taricaya Ecological Reserve, helping to look after endangered/injured/abandoned animals, and participating in indigenous species release programs to help re-populate the local jungle. They arranged the trip with the Projects Abroad staff members, and soon were ready to go.



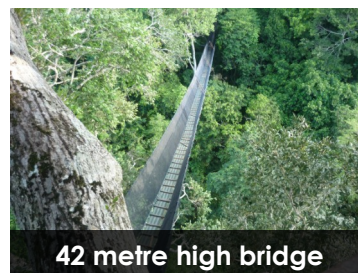
Father and son left Albury (on the New South Wales/Victorian border in Australia) on the morning of the 11th December 2011, flying to Sydney, Los Angeles, Lima, Cusco and finally arrived at the Puerto Maldonado airport. There they were met by Rachel and Fernando

(Taricaya/Projects Abroad staff) and after a quick lunch, during which they were introduced to 'Inca Cola', it was off to the port for the final river trip to Taricaya! Once there, they met the other staff members as well as volunteers, all of whom made them feel very welcome. Rachel then showed them to their bungalow (which they had to themselves) and soon it was time for dinner in the communal dining room. This is only a glimpse of their first day at Taricaya (they say it would take pages and pages to describe the friendliness of the staff).

The welcoming and inclusive attitude of the other volunteers (who were from all over the world, including Australia); the satisfaction of the work, whether it was building/repairing the animal enclosures, feeding the animals, gathering food for the animals, tracking recently released spider monkeys through the Amazonian jungle via GPS, mist netting for bird species during the day and for bat species during the night, bird spotting from one of the three elevated platforms, butterfly and moth catching and identification, trail clearing, helping to nurse sick and injured animals; the impromptu soccer games; weekend breaks in Puerto Maldonado; and just the overall experience of living and working in the Peruvian jungle, 1000's of kilometres from home, and doing something worthwhile for the environment and our planet. One regret; due to Ron's work commitments back home, they could only be at Taricaya for just over two weeks. "I would one day love to repeat the experience for an extended period of time".

Following their time at Taricaya,

the pair spent a few days doing the tourist thing, staying in Cusco and seeing the sights before travelling to a hostel in beautiful Ollantaytambo for a couple of nights. From there they travelled on the train service to Aguas Calientes from where they got the bus up the mountain to Machu Picchu. "And believe me - nothing can prepare you for the first time you look out over this incredible site. It is just amazing, and something I will never forget".

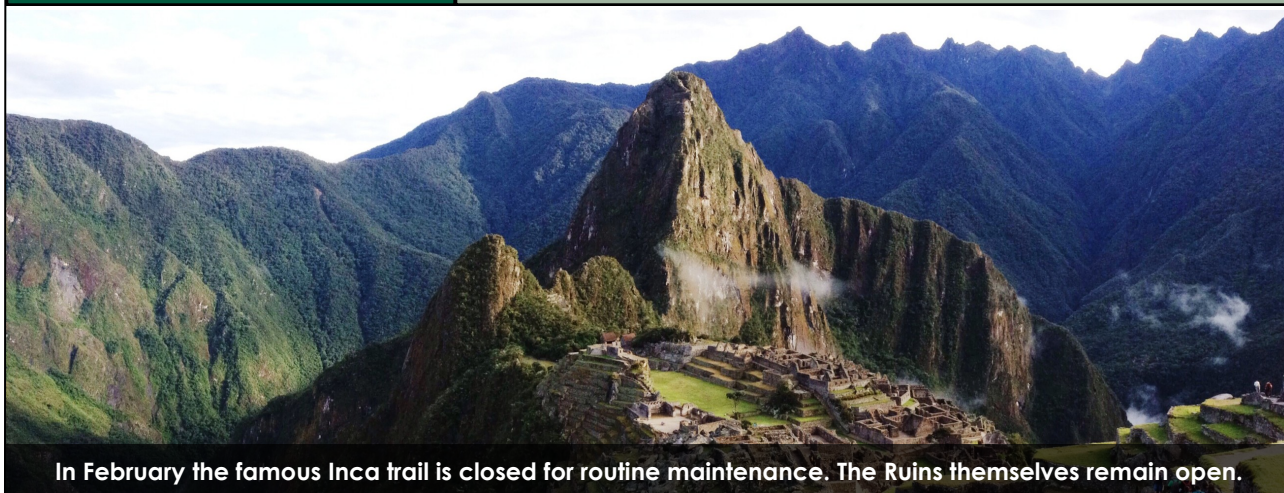


We'd like to thank Ron for his thoughts on his Projects Abroad experience in Peru.

"The staff, and the organisation generally were excellent, and the experience is one I will truly value for all of my life - all the more so because I got to share it with my youngest son. Two years later we still talk about it all the time".

"To anyone seeking a personally challenging, unique, and truly meaningful experience my advice would be - what are you waiting for?"





**In February the famous Inca trail is closed for routine maintenance. The Ruins themselves remain open.**

Every February, since 2002, the Ministry of Culture closes the world famous Inca Trail to the Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu.

The reason for this annual closure is to preserve the trail, carry out routine maintenance on the various archaeological sites along its length and have a general spring clean. Machu Picchu was recently voted one of the new seven wonders of the modern world and its popularity has always been huge. The iconic image of the mountains is one that is as identifiable as the pyramids in Egypt and it is precisely for this reason that it is important to keep it well preserved.

Particular attention is paid to the campsites which get a lot of use, as well as terrace repairs and the care of the physical trail itself, which takes a pounding from the hundreds of thousands of annual visitors it leads towards the Inca city.

The 40km trail passes by a number of important sites and each one gets a thorough check. With the trail closed, tour agencies have to find alternative ways to get their groups to the famous ruins and the trains are usually packed this month. With the recent improvements made to the alternative road route to Machu Picchu (via Santa Maria) it is no longer such an arduous trek to go it alone and arrive at Machu Picchu by foot along the railway tracks from Hidroelectrica. This route is popular with backpackers and those not wishing to pay for a guide. In 2013, Cuzco was voted the 5th destination worldwide for travelers, which clearly has an impact on the number of people coming to the region. Peru itself is undergoing a huge transformation with international marketing campaigns and a clear branded image that hopes to attract even more tourism in the coming years.

In a country with such incredible diversity it's important to give a good impression. Peru has other exquisite sites to visit such as Choquequirao and of course the Amazon Rainforest, but few visitors leave without visiting Machu Picchu.

As Peru's environmental sensibilities improve and its popularity on the world stage increases, it is clear that these routine closures will continue to ensure our reputation as a first-class holiday destination. For those of you here to volunteer don't fret, you will still be able to visit Machu Picchu and if you are a keen hiker there's always the 1800 steps to climb from Aguas Calientes to the ruins and the impressive hike to the 'Machu Picchu Mountain' to enjoy. March 1st should be the date the trail once again opens for 2014.

## Mario Testino. A famous Peruvian.

Mario Testino (OBE) was born on October 30, 1954 and is a Peruvian fashion photographer. That slightly undersells his true impact as he is now considered one of the best photographers in the world and has shot everyone from Princess Diana to Gisele Bündchen during his incredible career. His work has been featured in magazines such as Vogue and Vanity Fair and has regularly been employed by the British Royal Family since his iconic Vanity Fair shoot with Diana in 1997. Testino was born and grew up in Lima, the eldest son of an Italian father and an Irish

mother. He had five brothers and sisters and originally wanted to become a priest before finally studying economics at the Universidad del Pacifico. In 1976 he travelled to London to study photography, finally moving there to live in 1982. Madonna, Kylie Minogue, Britney Spears, Lady Gaga and a host of other celebrities have all been clients of Testino's and his successes have brought him worldwide recognition. In 2002, The National Portrait Gallery in London staged the landmark exhibition "Portraits" by Mario Testino, that to date remains its

second most successful exhibit. For ten years it had the highest attendance of any exhibition ever to be held there. Over the next four years the exhibition went on tour to Milan, Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Tokyo, Mexico City, and Boston.

For more information about this Peruvian success story visit Mario Testino's website: [www.mariotestino.com](http://www.mariotestino.com)

## February's Winner! PERU



This month our fantastic photo competition winner is Roxane Sandoz from Switzerland. It seems the standards are continuing to rise and we're delighted to see more entries coming in all the time. Be creative, look for pictures that capture what Peru means to you! We're looking forward to even more entries next month. See the winning photo [online](#)



## Fish Wars

Last month the United Nations' highest court ruled on an acrimonious dispute between Peru and Chile over their maritime border.

At stake were 38,000 square kilometres (14,670 square miles) of ocean and extremely lucrative fishing grounds. Peru asked the International Court of Justice in The Hague to rule on the matter in 2008, saying there was no legally defined sea border. Chile insists the border is on a line horizontal to the earth's axis, citing treaties agreed in 1952 and 1954, which it says settled the maritime border on that basis.

Peru's fishing industry estimates that the disputed zone has an annual catch of 565m Peruvian Nuevo Sol (\$200m; £121m), particularly of anchovies. Chileans demonstrated ahead of the ruling, but there was no violence reported.

Those with most to lose are the Chilean fishermen who could be excluded from some of the world's most lucrative waters. The media interest in the case has been huge in Peru; there is considerable national pride at stake for both countries. With patriotic fervor rising over the case, Peruvian politicians have urged their countrymen to remain calm, while their Chilean counterparts have promised their fisherman

financial help in the event of a ruling that affects them adversely. The leaders of both countries have also promised to abide by the decision.

This is just the latest development in a history of disputes between the two, dating back to the 19th Century. Such disagreements are common in the region, including a long-running spat between Chile and Bolivia. The disputes mainly date back to the 1879-1883 War of the Pacific, in which Chile took mineral-rich land from both and, in the case of Bolivia, its only outlet to the sea, which it is determined to regain.

## Aguadito de Pollo

This is a Peruvian favourite available in most restaurants, but it always tastes best cooked at home. A must for chicken lovers.

### Ingredients

- 1 large chicken or 8 portions
- Half cup veg oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 cup chopped onions
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped coriander
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup peas
- Peruvian Yellow Pepper (blended)
- 1 Tbsp red pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dark beer



### Preparation

Clean the chicken and cut into portions.

The stock: Boil on a low heat for 75 minutes the following: 10 cups of water, 2 tsp salt, the head, feet and other bones, leek and celery stalks and leaves.

Cover the meat with salt and pepper and fry them until golden. Remove.

In the same oil, fry the garlic, chopped onion and chili. Cook for a few minutes, add the coriander and season. Add the stock and the dark beer. Leave to boil and add the peas and pepper.

Add the rice and chicken pieces 15 minutes before serving. Add the potatoes 10 minutes before the end and cover. The soup is thick when done well.