

Name Intern: Hanne De Kinder

Internship Company: Yanapuma Spanish School/True Ecuador Travel

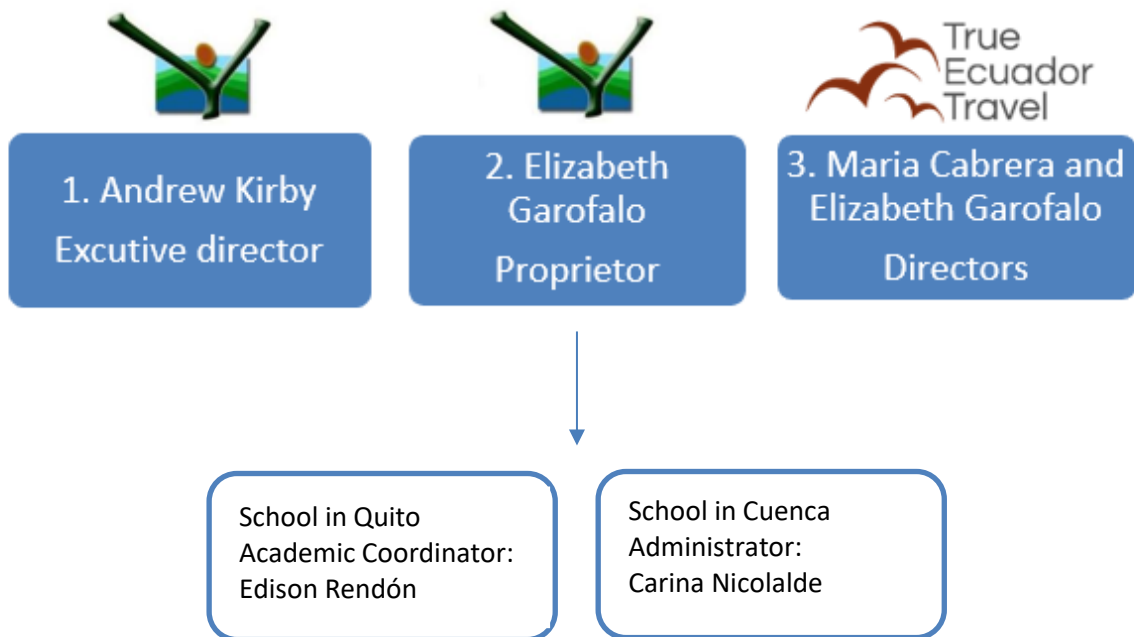
Internship Period: 25/03 – 16/06

PART 1 = The Company/The Organization

Organization/Company Chart

The office I work for is divided in three actual companies:

1. Yanapuma Foundation
2. Yanapuma Spanish School with offices in Quito and Cuenca
3. True Ecuador Travel



Short description of the Company/Organization

Yanapuma Foundation is an Ecuadorian and UK registered non-governmental organization working together with local and international partners to bring about lasting change for the marginalized and indigenous people of Ecuador. The foundation was created in August of 2006 to be an independent, and partly self-funding NGO, motivated by a collective sense of social and environmental responsibility. The foundation is dedicated to improving the social and ecological conditions of marginalized sectors of the Ecuadorian population.

This foundation is the stepstone to the two other companies the Spanish school and the travel agency. The Spanish school rose directly from this foundation since some of the founders were Spanish teachers. When students stay more than one week or follow more than 20h of class, they pay a registration fee. This fee goes entirely to the foundation to support scholarships for Ecuadorian students. True Ecuador Travel is a 'newer' company and acts as the travel arm of the other companies, organizing all travel and accommodation details related to receiving individual students and volunteers as well as volunteer and other groups.

So, the three organizations are different companies standing on their own but still they are all connected to each other.

Market situation of the Company/Organization

As my internship's tasks were mainly focused on the Spanish school and the travel agency, I will also focus more on these two companies (and focus even more on True Ecuador Travel since most of the time I work for this company).

As you can see in the company chart the Spanish school Yanapuma has offices in Cuenca and Quito with both a responsible person for each school and is thus regulated on regional level. But the main office and proprietor of the school is situated in Quito.

The travel agency has international, national and regional contacts. It aims at an international public with partners around the world. It has partnerships with some American Universities and hopes to establish more. Since they don't organize tours themselves, they need to have a lot of regional and national contacts. But right now they also try to expand their offers and are doing research to organize trips in Peru and Bolivia.

What's the position of the internship within the Company/Organization

There are different interns working at the different companies so you can always adjust the internship to your preferences. As I mentioned before I mainly work for the Spanish school and the travel agency but another tourism student Sebastian for example works mainly for the foundation and the agency.

The headquarters are in Quito but there is another office in Quito. If someone wants to book a trip in Cuenca this must go through Quito. So, there is more activity in Quito but the school in Cuenca generally has more students than in Quito because there is less competition.

I worked 6 weeks in Quito and afterwards 6 weeks in Cuenca. I think this is a nice change since your tasks differ a little bit and you get to see another part of Ecuador. They are an 8-hour bus trip away from each other.

Tasks to be carried out as an intern

- ✓ Finding new potential partners for the travel agency
- ✓ Desk research (for instance looking up different cruises in the Galapagos)
- ✓ Updating the database
- ✓ Writing a blog about my experiences as intern
- ✓ Analyzing data
- ✓ Answering the phone
- ✓ Maintaining contact with the students (asking if they want to book any trips and make them feel at home)
- ✓ Registration of new incoming students
- ✓ Guiding new students around the school
- ✓ Handling payments of the students
- ✓ Creating a map of Cuenca with all kind of recommendations (restaurants, cafes, medical centers, sport centers...)
- ✓ Promoting Yanapuma by distributing folders in touristic restaurants and hotels
- ✓ Making brochures for new tours
- ✓ Helping teachers with preparations for their class for instance making copies
- ✓ Evaluating website and social media pages
- ✓ Making sure the school has enough supplies (tea, coffee) and provide delicacies of Ecuador for the tasting on Wednesday.

PART 2 = SWOT-analysis of the internship

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">- You get to learn/practice more languages (main languages of the internship are Spanish and English). But you can also practice other languages with international students- Meeting people from all over the world while they learn Spanish- Understanding and supportive team of colleagues- You get to learn how a travel agency works behind the scenes- Typical and really pretty Ecuadorian offices (both Cuenca and Quito)- In Cuenca you get a lot of responsibilities in the afternoon the director of the school mostly gives classes, so you are alone in the office. Which means that you have to answer the telephone, handle payments and help walk-ins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- During the internship you have to do a lot of desk research and administrative things. So, it can be very 'monotonous' sometimes.- Connected to the previous point, the internet at both schools is very bad. At Cuenca they even have two Wi-Fi networks to try to divide the people and make it work better. But sometimes it can be out for 30min and since you need to do a lot of desk research you can't work.- The offices are really pretty but also really old. Mostly the office is really cold. It can be 30° outside but you could still be cold wearing warm clothing. I always had a blanket close to me so warm me up.- When I was working in Cuenca, I still had to do some tasks for the travel agency in Quito. This was sometimes a bit harder since you have to communicate via mail and harder to ask a quick question about a task.- Airplane tickets to Latin America are quite expensive- Internships is during the low season so there is less work to do

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- During the internship you have the possibility to meet a lot of people from different cultures
- In Quito every Thursday and in Cuenca every Wednesday there is tasting session of the delicacies of Ecuador. As an intern you have to go and buy those delicacies. This gives you the opportunity to learn about the culture of Ecuador.
- Since they have two offices in Ecuador you get to see different places within the country.
- Especially in Cuenca, you are surrounded by Spanish teacher who speak really clearly. If you have any question about the languages, they are always there to help you. So, you have to opportunity to get some 'free' Spanish classes.
- Acquiring new skills
- Getting to know the world behind travel agencies

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- As I mentioned before the travel agency doesn't organise tours themselves but always work with a tour operator. This makes them very depending on external factors. Sometimes they have to cancel the tour (because the TO does) or the tour doesn't operate on the day the students wants,... This can cause that a lot of people choose another travel agency or operator.
- Tourism is growing in Ecuador and the country is getting depended on it. In Quito the Spanish school and the travel agency already have a lot of competition but with the growing tourism this can get even worse. Yanapuma promotes quality but their prices are a little higher than other school and since a lot of our students our backpackers this can be dangerous for the company.
- Ecuador's climate changes all the time and is very unreliable. Local people always say that it can have the 4 seasons on 1 day. During our internship period the 'wet' seasons starts especially in the middle part of Ecuador where to two office are situated. This rainy period combined with the cold in the office, can be a little depressing. Happily, the atmosphere between the students and teachers kept us warm.
- Travelling advice to Ecuador for people from Belgium: always be cautious. Especially in Quito pick-pockets and attempts to 'trick' tourists are very common. Personally, in Cuenca I feel much safer, but you still have to be careful.

PART 3 = SWOT-analysis of the education programme in relation to the internship

<p>S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since I am studying the international program and all the classes are in English, I really feel that my English as improved. It is an advanced while doing an internship abroad that you are fluent in English. - Being fluent in English is a strength but we also had some additional languages. My elective was French, this was also useful for French speaking students so I could help them in their own language. - Digital Toolkit was very helpful during this internship since I had to work a lot with the office programmes. - The experience we all had on Erasmus was a good preparation for another international adventure. 	<p>W</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We didn't have a course to learn about other countries and how they work. This would have been nice to have some preparation (ex: per continent) - As I mentioned before I only took one class of Spanish, but I think it would have been nicer to have some more language electives since this is really important in tourism. - Little to no support from home institution
<p>O</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the internship you have the opportunity to practice your language skills even more. Especially constantly switching between English, Spanish, Dutch or French is very useful. - Let the students be prepared by making a paper, organise a fair or presentation about their country and company. 	<p>T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We didn't have a preparation about this internship. I think this can be very helpful. It can be either content related (travel agency, events...) or country related. For example some safety instructions about Ecuador for instance. People that are not prepared or don't know how the country works could be very surprised and make their internship result in a negative experience and they are prepared for a potential cultural shock.