

# MUSUQ CHASKI - El Mensajero Nuevo



ProjectsAbroad



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*Photo: The Inca at Inti Raymi Festival, Cusco*

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When I visited Choquequirao in 1994, the Cradle of Gold was still very much a jungle. Little did I know that 15 years later - by invitation of COPESCO - Dan, our Inca projects supervisor, and myself were going to be attempting this hike again, over the course of an exhausting 3 days. The complex is still only partly excavated (roughly 40%) but it looks so much more impressive then it did back then. The similarities in structure and architecture, with the ruins built by the Chachapoyas in the northern cloudforest of Peru, are amazing and

even to the amateur's eye it is clear that "our ruins" in Huyro are built by the same masters of stone.

Choquequirao receives far fewer tourists and there is a good reason for that: the Apurimac valley is not one of the easiest to traverse. When tourist agencies describe it as a scenic hike, they cannot but feel frustrated for not being able to find the right words to describe it. We agreed it was more like a "being hit with a Wednesday carnival bucket right on the smacker" hike, but that can also relate to the wonderful assistance we received from Zenobio Valencia, the head archaeologist at the site, who made our visit as comfortable as possible despite the time disadvantages.



Projects Abroad has a formal agreement with the INC and COPESCO so we can send professional volunteers in related fields out there to work on the site with their Peruvian colleagues.

Like all big Inca ruins there are religious and living quarters, but the new theory that it was a metallurgical center made sense to us; aesthetics were important for the Incas and they combined it with the most daunting topography, but it always had to have a specific purpose. Next time though, when we take volunteers up, we will hire a mule!



### What's New?

**Teaching** this month had a Network meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July with all Teaching volunteers and partner teachers. Visiting US Director Will Harper accompanied the volunteers in the meeting. During this meeting Tim, our Director, announced that each teacher who attends all this school year's network meetings will receive a certificate signed by the regional authorities of the Ministry of Education. All our partner teachers will soon be receiving passwords and usernames to enter the new Projects Abroad Resources website which will be set up very soon.

This month on the **Care** programme we donated boxes of materials to each of our partner kindergartens for the second time this school year. Materials included paper, paints and glue, amongst other supplies. Coming up soon is our next Care network meeting with partners and volunteers, which will take place in Urubamba.

The **Inca Project** over the past month was filled with festivals, cleaning ruins and important visits. The Clearing of the Inca Trail in Sicre continued, as well as the clearing of the ruins on Q´ochapata. The avocado project has been set up with volunteers preparing the holes for the project, followed by a visit from the local mayor and engineers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, when 100 avacados were planted. The afternoon saw sports organised in Establo with the engineers. 16<sup>th</sup> June saw the start of the Huyro anniversary festivities; here volunteers saw the Miss Huayopata contest, prepared and cooked food to sell for the anniversary and also took part in the parade in the plaza.

Archaeology lessons have continued with Jhon, on the subjects of the Moche culture and on Machu Picchu. The volunteers have also been clearing the stream for a reforestation programme in Establo. Degraining of corn and various sports activities have continued in the afternoons. Construction of new rooms in Establo has also been taking place. Inca volunteers joined the rest of the volunteers in Cusco for the Inti Raymi festival.

The 2 week Special group joined the staff and volunteers in Huyro on the 1<sup>st</sup> July and had the chance to visit ruins at Alfamayo, Inkatambo and Huaymanmarka. They then visited Machu Picchu at the weekend with US Director Will and Assistant Manager Jorge. On their return they also visited Colcamayo springs. Finally, Inca Supervisor Dan and Director Tim had the chance to visit Choquequirao with COPESCO in mid-July.

In the **Medicine** programme volunteers had the chance to accompany Medicine Supervisor Patricia Davila and Director Tim to present the donation from Projects Abroad to the *compaña contra el fríage* on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July. In co-ordination with the Centro de Salud in Cusco, Projects Abroad have supported this campaign which aims to provide warm clothing for the communities high in the Andes against the cold winter that arrives here during June, July and August. Projects Abroad staff and families have donated clothing while Projects Abroad have also donated 60 blankets.

## Volunteer News & Events:

### Inti Raymi Social

Despite the threat of strikes in the week of the Inti Raymi festivals, the June social went ahead and volunteers met up in Cusco with Social Manager Sarah to see the famous Sun Festival which is re-enacted in Cusco. They followed the procession from Ccoricancha to the Plaza de Armas and then up to the finale in Sacsayhuaman.



### Community Work in Piscacucho

Volunteers took part in Community work on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June in the local school at Piscacucho, past the town of Ollantaytambo, to help clean the school for refurbishment. Care, Teaching and Sports volunteers affected by the teachers' course that took place that week, helped to clean in the local school.



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## Projects Abroad Peru Volunteer & Family Fiesta

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In Urubamba on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Projects Abroad held a lunch for all our volunteers and host families in order to encourage more interaction between families and volunteers. Volunteers arrived with their host families from 2pm and gathered together at a local restaurant in Urubamba for a delicious lunch. It gave everyone a chance to meet our office staff and find out more about them and our projects. We were also joined by visiting U.S Director, Will Harper. After lunch, volunteers and host brothers got together to entertain everyone musically, with volunteers showing off their musical talents, before the musical troubadour, Jorge Millones, entertained us into the evening. It was a pleasant afternoon enjoyed by all.



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## Volunteer Activities Update...

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Our Social Manager, Sarah, has been continuing with organising afternoon activities for our volunteers. Last month volunteers continue to go to the fortnightly tea and torta meetings which take place in Písaq and Calca. Due to the Día de Maestro holidays, a Sports afternoon was organized on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July, which increased enthusiasm for our weekly sports afternoons in Charcahuaylla Park. Our next social will be organized for the 31<sup>st</sup> July, so keep an eye on your email for further news on this and other forthcoming activities.



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### Mid Year Holidays brought forward

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Due to the AH1N1 flu affecting many children under 18 years old, the Peruvian government decided to bring forward the mid-year school holidays to Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July until Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, after the Fiestas Patrias celebrations, in order to prevent the flu from spreading amongst this group of the population. The school parade, which takes place annually in Lima, was also cancelled. Due to the government's last minute decision, volunteers ended up taking part in Community work much earlier than expected this year. This included the painting of a women's centre in San Sebastian, Cusco and the renovation of the local school in Piscacucho. We also organised Salsa classes for volunteers in Cusco on Fridays until the end of July from 3pm.



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### Virgen del Carmen Festival

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July was the month of the celebration of the Virgen de Carmen festival. This is celebrated in various parts throughout Cusco, including Paucartambo and Písaq, where Carmen is considered as the local patron saint. This year the festival is to take place from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July. Frequent sights and sounds for Písaq volunteers will change to include the marching bands, locals in traditional costumes dancing through the streets and lots of food and drinks, which always accompany any Peruvian party. Volunteers in Písaq may find that schools and kindergartens are closed a couple of days so that students and teachers can take part in the festivities. Dance and band practices may also disrupt lessons, as students practice for their individual school performances for teachers and parents.

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### Daniel Keil - Teaching

#### *IEMx Ollantay, Ollantaytambo*

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My name is Dan Keil and I have been doing a Teaching placement in Ollantaytambo school for the past two months.

Ollantaytambo is a small village situated just outside Urubamba, the place of my home and host family.

My two month teaching placement has been truly unforgettable. It is fair to say that Projects Abroad have provided me with a truly unique and very special experience. I have never done any type of teaching work before, therefore at first teaching the children English was a slight struggle and my non-existent Spanish did not work to my advantage. However, by the end of my first week I seemed to have learnt the basic vocabulary, although large physical actions and gestures still seemed to be an essential part of the class. Nevertheless, I found the teaching work extremely rewarding and satisfying. It is very memorable moment when a student really grasps something.



During my stay I have also been fortunate enough to participate in many other extra activities, from school renovations and painting sessions, to salsa lessons and clothes campaigns, all of which have been fun and interesting. These additional activities have been as a result of the vast amount of protests and transport strikes that seem to exist in Peru. However, I felt the organisation of other activities was extremely productive and beneficial not only for the cause but for the volunteers involved as well.

Being a gap year student and having travelled for four months already, along with the start of university commencing in September, I had originally anticipated to only teach for one month. However, with my first month flying by, along with the positive impact on the students and English *profesora* having an individual in the school who could teach English and actually speak it too (along with the huge social side that comes with the whole volunteer experience) it is easy to see why I decided to extend my teaching placement for a further month.

Teaching in Peru has provided me with new challenges, tasks and experiences every day. I have met some incredibly strong and gifted children, and have experienced a new kind of generosity and kindness. For me, my teaching placement here has been a life-changing experience, I have been extremely fortunate to participate in such an amazingly unique experience. A huge thank-you to Projects Abroad for making my time in the Sacred Valley so special!



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### **Sitah Parnell - Teaching**

#### ***IEMx Inka Tupaq Yupanki, Chinchero***

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In our western world we have advanced gadgets and tools designed for everything. Whether it be an electric vacuum, a blender or an oven, these tools make our lives easier and more comfortable. In Peru when these materials are not available or one cannot afford them, they have to use their creativity to make an alternative, from the most raw, basic materials. These materials include dog hair, plastic bags, tree branches, blankets, rocks and bottles.

In school one day, when there was not a sufficient amount of paintbrushes, the children ran outside and chased one of the many wild dogs roaming around in our school. They then cut the dog's shaggy long hair and taped it onto a paddle pop stick! Their creation; a brand new paintbrush! My friend Chloe and I were in hysterics at the same time amazed by their creativity and intelligence.

Another time, Ines tried to order a takeaway chocolate milkshake from the bakery. "To go" she said in Spanish, and out came this plastic bag wobbling with the brown substance inside. "No, that's not mine, I ordered a takeaway milkshake." Ines said confused by the plastic bag being handed towards her. "Si, esto es su milkshake" the lady replied, whilst she got a straw and poked it into the edge of the plastic bag. Ines walked away completely puzzled by her takeaway milkshake!

Kids in the street use tree branches as brooms. The ladies in the market use plastic bags as rope to tie together their flowers and bundles of wheat. The whole town seems to cook their meals and cakes in a communal oven, whilst the children use bottles and plastic bags to create a volleyball net or a set of goals.

I am sure there have been plenty of other incidents where other volunteers have been stunned by situations they have found themselves in. If you come to Peru or are already here, you may learn that you can live without half of the countless tools and gadgets we have. Or when we have lost a broom or do not have any rope, there is always a chance to make an alternative. All we need to do is tap into our creativity.



The place to visit in August is definitely Arequipa due to its anniversary, which takes place mid month. Garcí Manuel de Carbajal, the Spaniard conqueror, was the founder of this city on August 15th, 1540, giving it the name "**Villa Hermosa de Arequipa**". The site was chosen for its proximity to the coast, enabling settlers to trade the products of Cusco and the mines of Potosí (Bolivia) with Lima. The local cultivation of wheat, corn and grapes all contributed to the region's economic growth. Known as Ciudad Blanca or "White city", Arequipa has numerous temples, convents, large houses and palaces built of sillar (a white volcanic rock), all finely sculpted in the Spanish colonial style. It is surrounded by beautiful countryside and towered over by three volcanoes, Misti (still active at 5822m), Chachani (6075m), and Pichu Pichu (5571m). One good place to visit is Colca Canyon, where you can view the condor, an important animal in Inca beliefs. Arequipa has many sights for volunteers to visit, here are just a few:

### ❖ Plaza de Armas & Cathedral

Arequipa's Plaza de Armas is considered to be one of the most beautiful in Peru. On the north side of the Plaza is the impressive, twin-towered Cathedral, founded in 1612 and largely rebuilt in the 19th Century, having been damaged by earthquakes and fire. Inside is a fine Belgian organ and elaborately-carved wooden pulpit. The Plaza is surrounded on its other 3 sides by colonial arcaded buildings, with many cafes and restaurants. Behind the Cathedral is a pretty back street with many handicraft shops.



### ❖ Santa Catalina Convent

Open daily from 9am to 5pm, the Monasterio de Santa Catalina was opened to the public in 1970, after 400 years as a cloister. The convent has been beautifully refurbished with period furniture and paintings. Behind the closed doors the nuns - daughters of aristocrats - paid little heed to their vows of poverty and silence. Each had her own servant and dined with porcelain plates, fine tablecloths and silver cutlery. The convent is a complete miniature walled colonial town in the middle of the city. There are flower-filled gardens, spacious patios and granite fountains, as well as arches and narrow streets. The tile-roofed buildings are painted in traditional white, brown and blue. About 20 nuns still live in a section of the convent, which once housed up to 500. [www.santacatalina.org.pe](http://www.santacatalina.org.pe)



### ❖ Museo Santuarios Andinos

This museum contains the famous mummy "Juanita - the Ice Princess" who was discovered in 1995 just below the peak of the Ampato mountain. Juanita had been well preserved in ice for more than 500 years before volcanic activity melted the surrounding snow. This Inca girl, tightly wrapped in textiles, must have been ritually sacrificed and buried on the mountain peak. [www.ucsm.edu.pe/santury/](http://www.ucsm.edu.pe/santury/)

### ❖ Colca Canyon

If you have time, try to take a tour out to the Cañon de Colca, one of the world's deepest canyons formed by an enormous seismic fault between the Coropuna (6425m) and Ampato (6325m) volcanoes. Various tour agencies offer trips to the Canyon.

## Spotlight on a Volunteer...



**Name:** Oliver Rowntree  
**Age:** 18  
**Hometown:** Brighton, England  
**Arrival date:** 17<sup>th</sup> May  
**Town:** Urubamba  
**Placement:** IEMx General Ollanta

### **Describe your placement...**

Challenging, yet very rewarding – something that would to a lesser or greater extent would describe many people's placement. It was very sad saying goodbye to my students.

### **What has been your favourite meal in Peru?**

Probably something from a small vegetarian restaurant in San Blas in Cusco – S/ 5 for soup, main, drink and a salad bar – it doesn't get much better than that!

### **What is your favourite memory in Peru?**

One would certainly be my host father's birthday; he had a big fiesta in the house and it was great experiencing Peruvian celebrations as well as learning Peruvian drinking traditions.

### **What has been your favourite trip in Peru?**

Going to see the Nazca lines, which were incredible, then going sand-boarding in Huacachina – driving over the sand dunes in a buggy was one of the most fun things I have ever done.

### **What is the strangest thing you have seen in Peru?**

Playing Frisbee with a mamasita (traditionally dressed Peruvian woman complete with top hat) - a particular highlight being said hat flying off after a particularly vigorous throw.

### **Describe your overall experience in Peru.**

Absolutely fantastic – living with a family gives a unique insight into Peruvian culture, the placement has been incredibly rewarding and I have truly learnt a lot – I have really fallen in love with Peru.

### **What advice do you have for other volunteers coming out to Peru?**

Come with an open mind and a relaxed attitude. Things will rarely go exactly according to plan here, but if you go with the flow and just get involved you'll find it an incredibly rewarding experience.

This month's specialty is a typical everyday dish...



### SECO DE CORDERO/ Lamb in Cilantro Sauce

*Seco de cordero is a typical everyday dish which you will no doubt eat with your host family for lunch while you are here in Peru...*

#### Ingredients:

- 2 kg lamb, cut into medium sized pieces
- ½ cup of vegetable oil
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of garlic, blended
- Fresh yellow aji (chilli)
- ½ teaspoon of cumin
- Salt & pepper
- 1 ½ cup of cilantro, blended
- 1 cup of beer
- 1 kg of potato, peeled and cooked
- 1 cup of cooked fresh peas

#### Preparation:

- Heat oil in a large saucepan and sauté lamb meat until golden. Remove from saucepan and save.
- Sauté onion and garlic in the same fat until tender. Add chili, cumin and the cooked meat. Stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper.
- Add beer and blended cilantro. Cover saucepan and cook over low heat until meat is tender. Add the green peas and potatoes. Continue cooking until liquid almost evaporates and thickens.
- Serve with white rice.

## Introducing...

## ...New Volunteers

In August we are welcoming 28 new volunteers to the Sacred Valley, Cusco and Huyro...

Volunteer Name	Arrival	Programme	Town / Placement	
Arjun Chaudhuri	02	Teaching	Urubamba	Ramirez
Benjamin Smith	02	Inca	Huyro	
Tessa Spicer	02	Inca 2 week Special	Huyro	
Isobel Street	02	Inca 2 week Special	Huyro	
Julia Crawley	02	Inca 2 week Special	Huyro	
Kristin Blackhall	02	Inca 2 week Special	Huyro	
Emma Hershey	02	Care	Urubamba	Huayocari
Alexis Blanchard	03	Inca	Huyro	
Daein Kim	03	Inca 2 week Special	Huyro	
Trisha Degel	04	Dentistry	Cusco	Ttio
Edmund Jones	04	Medicine	Cusco	San Jeronimo
Judith Wenckstern	05	Inca	Huyro	
Darren Ostridge	05	Inca	Huyro	
Takuro Ochiai	07	Inca	Huyro	
Lillian Colley	08	Care	Urubamba	Integrado Yucay
Julien Landais	09	Inca	Huyro	
Babette Ophof	12	Dentistry	Cusco	San Sebastian
Hanna Schulz	16	Inca	Huyro	
Mireira San Martin Beuk	17	Care	Calca	241
Sofia Kennedy	19	Medicine	Cusco	Santa Rosa
Nao Ikegaya	19	Inca	Huyro	
Katy Wagner	21	Medicine	Cusco	Santa Rosa
Wiebke Bode	23	Spanish	Pisac	CCHP
Courtney Kerckhoff	25	Medicine	Cusco	Antonio Lorena
Stephany Verstrepen	25	Care	Urubamba	Sillacancha
Lino Mahiro	25	Care	Urubamba	Palccaraqui
Ofira Honing	25	Teaching	Urubamba	Valle Sagrado
Geraldine Herweijer	28	Care	Calca	Piste
Marianne Clement	31	Teaching	Calca	Agropecuario-Calca

## What's happening in August?

Festival	Description	Place	Date
La día de la Pachamama	An Andean ancestral ritual in which the earth plays an important role. Offerings are presented and tribute is paid to "the Mother Earth". The ceremony commences on the eve of the 1st of August, with the preparation and burning of offerings. The ritual carries the idea of reciprocity - while the people give thanks to the earth, the earth in turn provides the population with longevity and success.	Cusco	August 1 <sup>st</sup>
Corpus de San Cristóbal	A religious festivity celebrated in the chapel of <i>San Cristobal</i> . They have dances accompanied by "caperos" (musicians) one day before and the same on the main day during the procession. San Cristobal is the Patron Saint of those who work in transportation.	Cusco	August 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Anniversary of Arequipa	Festivals and Parades occur during the celebrations of the Anniversary of Arequipa.	Arequipa	August 15 <sup>th</sup>
Santa Rosa de Lima	Santa Rosa de Lima was the name appointed to a 17th century woman from Lima, Isabel Flores de Oliva, who devoted herself to meditation and developed a life dedicating her services to the sick. The fame of her resistance to sin, as well as her kindness, was known even throughout the saint's life. She is worshiped not only in Peru, but in other parts of the world, but her sanctuary is situated in the centre of Lima. Religious followers go in the hope of miracles, especially in relation to health. During the 30th of August, it is customary to throw "best wishes" letters into the fountain where Santa Rosa let the key to her belt fall. Santa Rosa is also patron of the Peruvian national police force.	Public holiday in all Peru	August 30 <sup>th</sup>

## Announcements

- There are new visa regulations that have been passed by the Peruvian government. If your tourist visa is to expire it is no longer possible to extend this in Cusco. You will need to make arrangements to travel to Bolivia or Chile, for example, and re-enter the country, where the immigration official will give you another stamp for further days.
- Please can all new arrivals be aware that you need to pick up your luggage in Lima when arriving from an international flight as it is not forwarded directly onto Cusco. Lima is the first point of entry into the country and you need to pass customs with your luggage.
- Please be aware that you need to **always** carry your passport or a legalised photocopy of your passport (which has been signed by a notary) with you if you are traveling within Peru, whether to your placement, Cusco or a long weekend in Puno. You may be asked by a police officer for proof of identification and you should be able to present this to them. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask in the office.
- Thank you to everyone who has helped bring about this month's issue of *Musuq Chaski*. If you would like to contribute your experiences, stories, photos or anything else to the next edition then please send them to: [hannahpartis@projects-abroad.org](mailto:hannahpartis@projects-abroad.org)