

INSIGHT

South America

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Vol. 4



OUR HEART,
OUR WORK.

OUR PROJECTS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Our Projects

In the movie *The Two Towers*, Theoden laments, "So much death... What can man do against such reckless hate?" In a world like ours today, we may ask ourselves that same question. Is there hope? Is there any real warmth? I'm glad to report that, where I stand at least, amidst war and natural calamities, the likes of which this generation has never seen before, at the ground level, where one heart meets another, there is a great deal of warmth indeed. Here we find members of Generation ACTS helping the less fortunate to improve their lives. Here, in the countries of Peru, Chile and Ecuador, we work hard in our projects to that end.

We have the project *La Vida Maxima*. With *La Vida Maxima*, we aim to give the less fortunate a chance to succeed, when society has neglected them. We do this through education, mainly professional English course to those who really need it but cannot pay for it. We also have *I@Work*, an ambitious internship program that has started to see powerful results. *I@Work* sends South American interns to Singapore for a three to six month attachment at a Singapore company. With this project we give students of South America a chance to look at the way a modern city is run, and we hope that they would use this experience to change their own country. We have *ImpACTS*, where we do our bit for the poor in these countries, volunteering our time, and energy to orphanages, and shantytowns, expecting nothing in return. In these projects, we impart good moral values to the children and provide free and quality English Education to the children in the school.



So there. Our projects in broad strokes. The rest of this newsletter describes in detail our efforts in each country. Our effort to make the world a better place, one orphanage at a time, one home at a time, one heart at a time. What can man do against such reckless hate? I honestly don't know. But I do know what we can do in spite of it.

CHILE

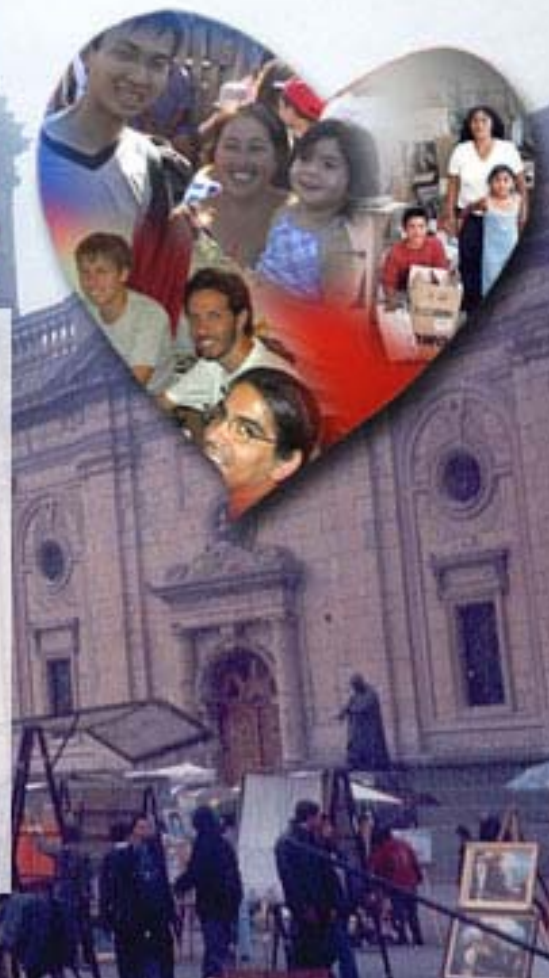
Our Work in Chile

I@Work

We did some marketing promotion for *I@Work* during 2003 at the top three universities: Pontificia Universidad Catolica, Universidad de Chile and Universidad Adolfo Ibañez.

We received numerous applications from these universities. The number dwindled after the first round of selection. This was followed by a round of interviews of which we finally decided upon a graduate from Adolfo Ibañez: Juan Jorge Herrera.

Juan was accepted to do his internship at Qianhu for 2 months. He left Chile at the end of December 2003 and started his internship about a week later. According to him, his objectives for applying *I@Work* were:



- **Get a different vision and experience**
- **Make new friends and contacts**
- **Learn in Work and try to give my best.**
- **Achieve new ideas for business and get contacts**

This is what he has to say at the end of internship:

“I learnt how a traditional Chinese company works, I don’t have contact with office work, but I understand that this is also a family business, it was a great experience and I also learnt different skills. However it supposed that in the internship I need to work in something more related with my studies, but I did not. In spite of that I do not regret working in Qianhu, ... it taught me more about values and personal growth”

Of course, he also has a few thoughts on Singapore:

“It was fantastic to have the chance of travel around Singapore, the distance wasn’t long and the **MRT** helped a lot. The places were interesting and beautiful.”

“One of the main reasons to go overseas is to find what inspires life and love in the way of friendship is something that is undervalued. In Singapore I found incredible persons with a big heart and I am sure that we will be friends forever. The hospitality in Singapore is something that I will never forget.”

impACTS

We first visited the “Centro Abierto” (Open Center) of Hogar De Cristo in Renca (about 45 minutes from downtown Santiago) on the 3rd of Jan 2004. It was to be the place where we’d teach English to school students under the impACTS program on Saturdays. Hogar de Cristo is a well-known NGO with branches throughout all the 13 regions in Chile.

The objective of impACTS program is to provide and equip these students with free and quality English lessons. Often, in Chile, poor and less fortunate students in rural schools do not have good grounding in English. So, we were excited and thrilled at the prospect of teaching 2 groups of children: ages 9-11 and 12-14 (with a class size of 10-15 students).

We started our program, officially, on the 12 June 2005. We divided ourselves in to 2 groups and would swap classes from time to time.

Apart from that, we also participated in the children’s birthday celebrations (held in the months of June and December) organized Hogar de Cristo.

We ended our program just before the Christmas celebrations. It was unforgettable moment s when we went to distribute gifts and Yuletide tidings to the less fortunate people living around Renca.

2005

On the 3rd of Jan 2005, we held a special workshop for the employees of the Child Care Center of Hogar De Cristo in Lo Espejo (which is about one hour away from downtown Santiago). The workshop is based upon the highly successful “7 habits of highly effective People” by Stephen Covey. 6 participants including the Center Director, Paulina Sepúlveda, came for the 1.5 hour session. The purpose of this workshop was to impart knowledge and skills that they could be better manage both their personal and professional lives.

Paulina later acknowledged in her letter of commendation that the workshop “.....was of great usefulness to the participantsand that they valued very positively what they had learned.....”





Through the recommendation of the Chilean Ministry of Education (MOE), we went to Colegio La Merced in Til Til (which is about 85 minutes away from Santiago) to explore the possibility of implementing impACTS. Colegio La Merced is one of the few schools selected by MOE pilot program to have English teaching since Year 1 (most schools only start to teach when they are in Year 5).

So, off we went there on the 2nd April. We did not expect such an overwhelming response from both the parents and students who came for the briefing.

After doing the diagnostic tests to determine their proficiencies, we finally settle with 2 classes for the parents and three for the students. Some of the parents even requested whether they could bring with them their children who were ex-students of the school so that they could learn English together!

As of now, we have about 40 parents and 60 students for the classes during Saturday mornings.

La Vida Maxima

In January, we worked with the Municipal of Santiago under the summer School Project 2004. The response for the Basic English course was overwhelming. In the end, we had to trim down the number to 15 to ensure an effective class size. The short but intensive course lasted for 10 days during the 12-26 January. Students were taught the basic conversational English language skills. It was an interesting yet challenging assignment as our students came from all walks of life, i.e. students, parents and even grandfathers!!

The graduation came just a day after the last day of the course. It was indeed very satisfying to see the fruits of our labor although summer courses tend to be “crash-course” in nature.

Planning for our LVM courses started in earnest beginning June 2004. At the same time, we had a series of meetings with different organizations so that we could offer these courses to their volunteers or members.

All in all, we had 6 LVM classes, the first of which kicked off on the 26th October. The classes range from Introduction to Intermediate Level. The classes ended officially by the first week of Jan 2005. However, there wasn't time to rest as we went straight into our final preparations for the Summer School LVM 2005.

2005

On the 17th Jan, we kicked off our own Summer School project. We had a participation of 8 enthusiastic students who were grouped into 2 classes. Indeed, it was an enjoying experience for all of us as the lessons were a departure from the existing materials that we had and were very much communicative in nature.

The new cycle of LVM was launched by the commencement of the Intro Level class on the 26 April 2005. More classes are scheduled to start in the very near future. We look forward to teaching the students again as our aim to get better each time and to offer them quality English lessons.

Request for Support

The team in Chile has just suffered a setback. Their apartment was broken into and their computers stolen. We would appreciate any kind of help that you can give to help the situation. We prefer not to receive cash; we prefer equipment support.

Please contact Caleb Ng (caleb@gen-acts.org) or Tang Pui See (puisee@gen-acts.org) if you wish to help.

A big Thank You from the bottom of our hearts!

TOUCHING HEARTS, CHANGING LIVES



A street-wise 8-year old orphan raises her voice above the din in the bus, asking the passengers for donations.

A bunch of rambunctious kids in the dusty courtyard of a children's home offer to perform a "magic" show and proceed gleefully to make things "disappear". One of the "things" unfortunately turns out to be a helpless toddler unmercifully bundled into a blanket by the older children.

A single mum barely in her early twenties juggles between taking care of her toddler daughter, working and trying to attend language classes, often travelling for hours just to get from her home in the city outskirts to the town centre.

An earnest university student from a poor family does not even have money for proper medical treatment when he is ill, but still thinks of others and regularly volunteers for community work.

What do these people have in common? There is a name behind each face and they are all direct beneficiaries of projects run by Generation ACTS Club Ecuador.

Our two main projects, **La Vida Máxima** and **impACTS Ecuador**, started around June 2004 and have been on-going since.

La Vida Máxima (LVM):

For LVM, we presently work with 2 categories of people: First, personnel and volunteers of organizations working directly or indirectly with youths (LVM 1). Second, the general public, including university students (LVM 2).

Our objective for LVM 1 is to better equip the employees and volunteers for their jobs and enable them to use their new-found English ability to help the youth they work with. Two organizations participating in our LVM 1 program are Esquel Group Foundation-Ecuador (Esquel) and Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes del Ecuador (YMCA, Ecuador). Both are established, well-known international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ecuador. The Esquel Group network contributes to the development of the neediest sectors of the Ecuadorian population and has entities throughout South America. YMCA, Ecuador works with the poor and excluded in the Ecuadorian society, especially youth, and is part of the worldwide YMCA movement.

Since LVM 1 started, we have conducted English training with 2 separate batches of YMCA volunteers. Each group attended classes a few times a week at the YMCA headquarters in Quito and both groups have successfully completed 2 rounds of English classes, with a 100% pass rate in the requisite exam at the end of each round. We are also conducting English classes with a group of Esquel personnel. Students in this class range from junior workers to high-level executives. 3 rounds of English classes have been completed and the Esquel students have currently progressed to round 4 of their classes, also with a 100% pass rate amongst those who took the exams.

Our objective for LVM 2 is to give the poorer sector of the population an opportunity to learn English, so that those who benefit from our program can positively impact society with their new language ability. The primary participants in our LVM 2 program so far have been university students. To date, we have completed 2 rounds of English classes with students from Central University, one of Ecuador's top public universities. We

encourage the students to be involved in community work through our imACTS Ecuador project and a number of them have in fact come forth to participate in our regular volunteer work at a children's home.

impACTS Ecuador:

The beneficiaries of our impACTS project are underprivileged children and youth. Our objective is to give these young members of society who cannot help themselves an opportunity to receive quality education and to learn good values, so that they will grow up to be people who contribute positively towards society.

Our main impACTS partner is Fundación Remar (REMAR), an international NGO with hundreds of homes worldwide, caring for thousands of needy or orphaned children.

Since impACTS Ecuador started, we have been conducting weekly English classes for the children from the REMAR "Hogar Para Niñas" (Girls' Home) in Quito. We follow a lively, child-centered English language teaching program, where

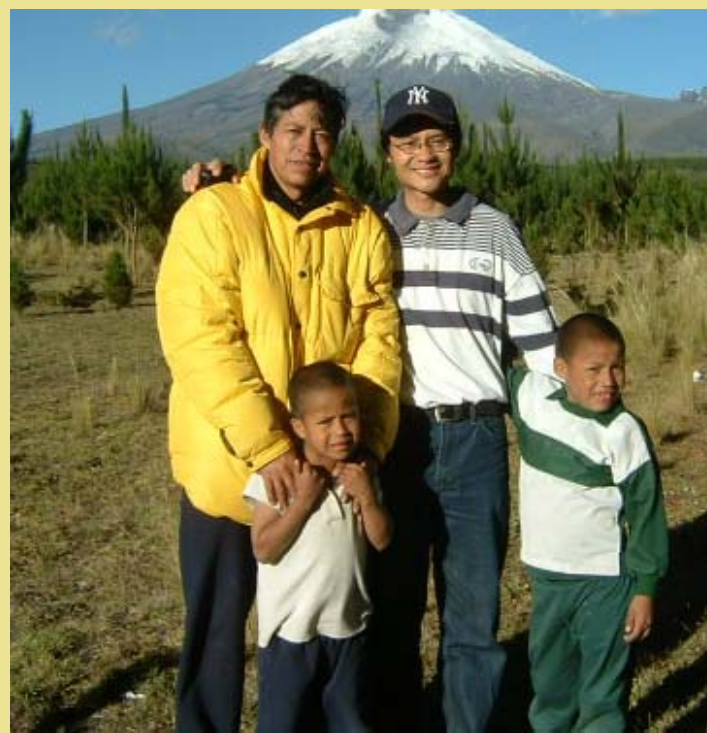


lessons are organized in thematic units and taught through the use of visual aids, games and role-plays. We have managed to hold the attention of these extremely active kids over 24 lessons and have successfully completed 3 units so far. Other than lessons, there is also play-time and (the children's favorite!) the giving out of sweets, juice and even gift packs on special occasions such as Christmas. Throughout the months, it's been rewarding to see a marked change in the behavior of the children after spending regular, quality time with them.

In August 2004, we were also invited to assist in the "Vacation Camp of Children and Adolescents", organised for the children and adolescents of REMAR and of the Communities of Caspi and San Agustin. At the picturesque

campsite at the foot of Cotopaxi Mountain, our volunteers assisted and participated in the purposeful recreational activities conducted for the children.

An adapted quote: *"It has often been said that children and youth are the future...This is a true statement, but only if children and youth are the "present" as well. If they are not taught to serve today, there will be no future."* Generation ACTS Club Ecuador believes in living, sharing and investing our present in the young people of Ecuador, so that they will be equipped to make a difference, in a breathtakingly beautiful country whose people are crying out for a future to look forward to.



Our Labour in Peru

In the beginning of the year, motivated by the belief that this was going to be a year of expansion, we moved our clubhouse in Peru into a bigger three-storey house in Miraflores. Set against this backdrop, the first four months of the year have flown by in the blink of an eye, and it is now time to take a reflective walk back the passage of events that have purposefully decorated the corridor along the first moments of this year.



First, there is LVM 1, where we work with the volunteers of local non-governmental organizations (NGO) to develop their skills, including the acquisition and mastery of the English language. We are currently still working with the local coordinators at one of the largest local NGO here in Peru, Redes de Trabajadores, which works with domestic helpers in the country. Based on the cooperation agreement that we have executed with the NGO, we teach English once a week to their coordinators at their principal office that is more affectionately known as “La Casa de Panchita”. Our work has been appreciated by them and we are mentioned favorably in their Annual Report.

Second, there is LVM 2 (Adults). We have completed one cycle of classes, held every Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Altogether, there are three conversational classes that have been completed, 2 Basic 0 Classes and 1 Basic 1A Class. With a focus on improving our professionalism, we introduced our newly revamped materials for the first time in this course, including supplementary listening materials. We also launched a new set of administrative forms that teachers had to fill up, in a bid to improve the administration and management of the projects. This has been our most successful batch of LVM2 classes since the LVM 2 program was started one and a half years ago. The dropout rate was less than 20%, and even lower when we consider that some of the students were re-channeled to other classes that were more appropriate for their levels of English. The pass rate of the students who took the exams was 100%, with most of the students passing with flying colors. Most importantly, all the students participated in contributing stationary for the children in our ImpACTS project.

Third, there is our Youth Alive program. We started a project to develop youths who are holistically equipped and have altruistic values in Peru. In trying to achieve this goal, we have started various classes and seminars on Saturday afternoons to help the youths to broaden their perspective and develop an international mindset, to engage them in the exercise and deepening of their intellectual capacity, and to cultivate good inter-personal values among them. There is a corner in our house that we have decorated to become a cozy gathering place for the youths. Youths who join as members with us are able to make use of our library, listen to music at the youth corner and even use the Internet for free. They also get a discount for the courses and seminars that we offer. We have started various English conversational classes, including 1 Basic 0 Class, 1 Basic 1A Class, 1 Basic 2A Class, and 1 Functional 1A Class for the youths on Saturday afternoons. After the classes, the students are invited to stay back to attend a developmental activity. So far, the developmental activities that we have run include a seminar on the value of money, a role-play simula-

Continued on page 8...



tion game about trading on the stock exchange, and an experiential learning exercise. In the near future, we plan to introduce new classes such as guitar classes, Chinese classes and perhaps even dancing classes.

Fourth, there is our ImpACTS program. We are currently in the midst of negotiations with a big multinational in the energy sector, ETEVENSA, to work together with them in providing English education to a group of abandoned children at a home in Ventanilla called Sagrada Familia. We both share the same vision that the abandoned children in the shanty towns need to be given a second chance in life, and education is the first doorway to that second opportunity that they can have towards a better future. Our NGO is providing the English textbooks, the stationary and the teachers for the English education for these chil-



dren. As one of the goals of our program is also to integrate the families, we want to be able to provide English education at the same time to the mothers and caretakers of these children, with the hope that it could bring the families back together once again.

Finally, we take a look at our Actspeditions program. We are eagerly waiting to host two Singaporeans who will be coming to participate in our Actspeditions program in June this year. When they arrive, they will get the chance to experience the gripping realities of a new culture, as they join us in our projects and meet up with the participants in our projects. They will of course also get to enjoy the fascinating gastronomic delicacies of Peru, which have the reputation of being the best culinary baits in South America.



Support Us!

Financial Resource Support

The youths and children who participate in our programs come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. They are usually unable to afford the materials and resources used in quality education. You may consider making a financial contribution, either as a one time donation or on a regular basis, to sponsor resources used in the various projects. The material and stationary costs per student is about USD 50. A typical ad-hoc project requires funds ranging from USD 100-2500 or contributions in kind depending on the nature of the project.

Networking Resource Support

You can help us market our programs to your friends. We are constantly looking for partners who may be able to offer their professional experiences and know hows towards developing our projects. While our projects are largely educational in nature, some of our projects require professional contributions from various fields.

Logistical Support

We are constantly working towards improving the quality of our training methods and materials. You may contribute in this aspect by providing logistical resources such as computers, teaching and training tools, materials for training and the like.

Human Resource Support

Finally, but certainly not least, you can sign up for our ACTSpeditions programs and volunteer with us!



Generation ACTS Club
International

Sharing Life | Living Life | Investing Life
www.gen-acts.org

our *Vision*:

To **impact** our communities and beyond by developing the **altruistic** and **entrepreneurial** potential of our youths.

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