



Dirty days. Getting your sleeves rolled-up and getting stuck-in, that's Projects Abroad at its best.

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## Old Habits & New Beginnings

December 31st, you've got every intention of making the coming year a stunning success, the like of which has never been seen before; your bad habits will become old habits, your finances will be perfect and for a few hours everything seems entirely possible.

By about January 5th, the Christmas tree in the corner is looking like a creepy prop from a Tim Burton movie, you've spent four straight days in your pyjamas and you're tucking in to your fourth bag of crisps that day, bought on your already over-stretched credit card. Well, this might be a slight exaggeration, but it's true that the hopes and dreams that we all have for our lives are often brought sharply into focus at this time of year. It also shows how the excesses of this time of year are now accepted in many countries as perfectly normal. Transitions are important, we do our best to aim for something better, to correct our mistakes and to analyse what really matters to us. Not all of us are able to fulfill the promises we make ourselves, but often the most important thing is the process of self-inspection itself. New Year's Eve is an opportunity to wipe the slate clean and in Peru it is no different. Here in Peru, many people celebrate New Year's Eve by observing superstitions and rituals designed to bestow good fortune and prosperity upon their families. My wife's family for example swears that by wearing something yellow on New Year's Eve you will have good luck the following year. Many carry cash on them to bring good fortune or lentils to ensure food for the coming year. My personal favourite is seeing people carrying suitcases around town in the middle of the night, hoping to have a year of travel ahead. That's dedication to a dream.

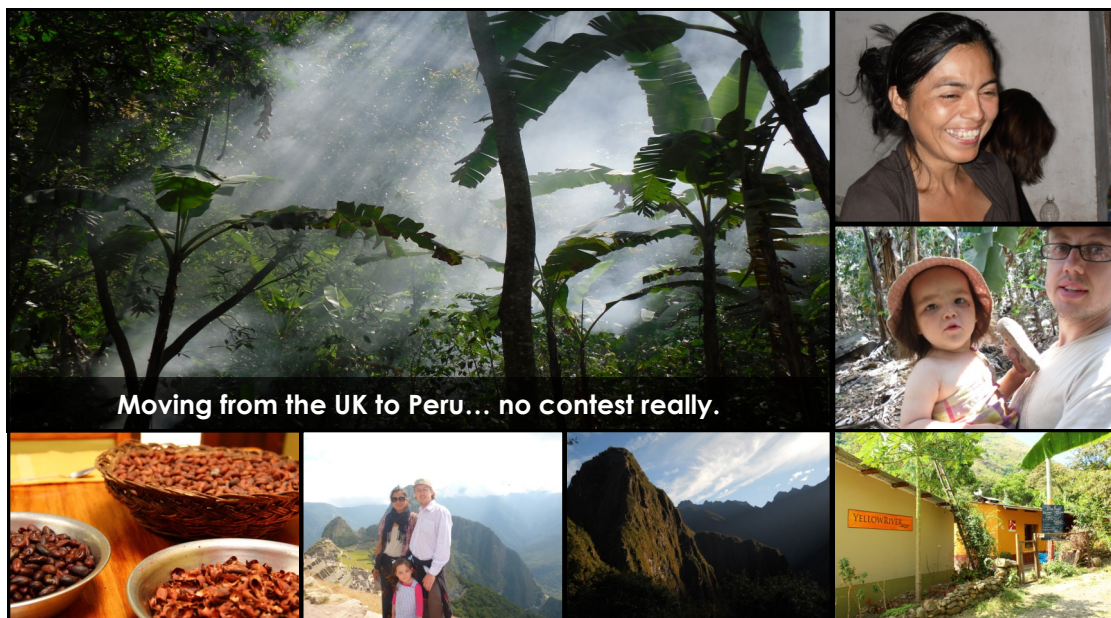
But, for many families (not just in Peru but especially here) the passing of one year to another is not much to celebrate. There are people whose lives are plagued by economic, health and other problems and no amount of superstition is sufficient to animate them. Projects Abroad is involved with a lot of communities and the priorities for many of the families we work with is far removed from our own petty issues and desires. It's not often we stop to think about others around Christmas, which is somehow contrary to the roots of this Christian festival.

The festive season around the world has become commercial; we know this to be true. Here in Peru they have embraced

Santa Claus, the tree, the decorations and they even sell Christmas cards with pictures of snowy European villages on them. However, there are communities far from Lima and the larger cities that do things far more simply and this is something we should definitely celebrate. For example, in the community where my wife's family has lived for generations they started celebrating Christmas together around 2001. The idea was to bring together the children and adults from surrounding villages that had nothing and give them some hot chocolate, a few toys and perhaps some clothes. The region had been devastated by terrible floods in 1998 and entire villages and towns had been wiped off the map causing people to resettle on their farmland higher up the mountains. A sense of community had been lost through this dispersion of families, so it was the perfect way to bring everyone together. The first couple of years around 50 people attended and by the time the final gathering took place in 2011 there were over 400 men, women and children at my wife's house. This was the only day of the year that everyone came together and it was a chance for many of the older members of the community to catch up with friends and get out of their houses. They were truly memorable celebrations. The family uncle who had started it all, decided to stop finally in 2012 because he could see that things had changed for the better in the valley. People had more money, the kids had good clothes and the new roads and services that had taken their time to arrive after the disaster were bringing new opportunities for everyone. My own experiences of Christmas growing up in the UK were incredible. Here in Peru I was able to rekindle that sensation of excitement through these massive community gatherings. Christmas and New Year should be a time of hope and sharing and it has been a privilege to witness that here in Peru.

So, here we are with a clean sheet before us. By coming to volunteer with Projects Abroad you're already making a huge contribution to the welfare of the people we work with. It really doesn't matter when you come; the impact of your time and efforts is worth far more than a Christmas tree. So why not reach out to someone who doesn't have as much as you this Christmas? It may be the simple act of helping them with their shopping bags; it doesn't have to be big. Have a great festive season.





My name is Andrew, I'm somehow 37 years old all of a sudden despite this seeming impossible, and I'm delighted to be Projects Abroad's new Information Manager for Peru. I have been in the office for nearly a month now and have enjoyed getting to know everyone and learning about our various projects in the region. I've had a couple of chances to get out and about to meet some of our current volunteers but there may be some of you that I still haven't caught up with.

I first came to Peru in 2001 and was walking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu when the twin towers were hit. Arriving back in Cusco it was all over the news and it was an odd start to my South American adventure, but certainly a memorable one. I arrived here, as many of you, as a volunteer. I was set to do four months of support in a local Special Needs school and I had a fantastic time helping out with my fellow volunteers from the UK. We were a group of eight, working together on the initial stages of a very new charity startup and it really did feel like we were doing something worthwhile. Our daily commute from Cusco to Urubamba was an adventure, chickens, pigs and far too many people crowded the aisles and made every morning and afternoon an opportunity to work on our people skills. We gorged ourselves on the 'choclo con queso' and other offerings the bus regularly stopped for and there was never a dull moment.

When my placement ended in December, I had already fallen in love with my now wife, Tatiana, and had decided to stay in Peru rather than continue my travels around the continent. I got myself a job on a tourist newspaper as their International News Editor and settled in to life in Cusco, renting my own two-bedroom apartment for \$200

a month and buying up domestic appliances like there was no tomorrow. Tatiana and I both ended up working for the paper, which sadly had to stop printing after a year because our advertisers hadn't quite caught on to the fact that without their payment for our services we would cease to trade. A slight hiccup you might say, that ended a great year with some fantastic people. So, returning to the UK, we got married, got jobs, endured six excruciatingly cold winters, had our daughter Maya and finally returned to Peru in 2009. We started living in Tatiana's birthplace, a small town called Quellomayo (Yellow River in Quechua) near Machu Picchu. There we began to improve the family's coffee harvest and took volunteers of our own from around the world through the WWOOF programme. We still run the farm, but our daughter turned five and we found a great school here in Urubamba, so this is where we now spend our week. Weekends are still on the farm in Quellomayo and December is mango season so we're getting very excited at the moment.

Projects Abroad is a lovely place to be, because it brings me full-circle from my volunteering roots, back to a town where it all started for me. As Information Manager I will be out and about filming placements and interviewing our volunteers about their work here. Additionally, I will be organizing our weekly socials, so I hope to meet a lot of you in the coming weeks. If you're on your way to us, happy travels, you're going to have a fabulous time here.





Recipe for success. Volunteer Olivia Coyte gets a lesson in Peruvian cuisine after a hard day's work at her Care placement in Media Luna kindergarten.

## Olivia Coyte - Care Volunteer, Urubamba, Sacred Valley

Coming to Peru from Australia, that's quite a trip. Olivia, 19, did just that, leaving behind her twin sister (and two older sisters) to spend six weeks volunteering at our fantastic Care programme at the Media Luna Kindergarten in Urubamba in Peru's Sacred Valley. Olivia has only just finished high school and yet she decided that doing voluntary work abroad was what would give her the right perspective to return home and continue her studies in 2014.

On arrival Olivia was exhausted and went straight to bed, but found that she couldn't sleep. She had been very nervous in the weeks leading up to the journey but the thing she remembers about her first day was the incredible welcome she was given by her host family.

"I absolutely adore them [...] I came down about 7pm for dinner and I met Piero, my seven year-old host brother...he just ran up and hugged me, he didn't know who I was, but it's been pretty much like that ever since, he's like my best friend here."

Her walk to work is spent admiring the flowers and chatting to the kids on their way to the local schools. Everyone is friendly and as she hops into her mototaxi to the bus terminal, the town is just waking

up. A short minivan ride later and she arrives at Media Luna Kindergarten with amazing views of the surrounding mountains. The early-morning mist and a group of early-rising children greet her and they spend some time outside running around the huge playing field and using the swings until the teacher calls them in.

Her placement is a fantastic example of Projects Abroad working in harmony with local partners. The classroom walls are covered with previous volunteers' work. For her part, Olivia has created a wonderful world map to teach the children about where she's from and to show them where Peru is in relation to other parts of the world.

Early morning, before the teacher starts her lessons is Olivia's favourite time. She uses the twenty minutes or so to play word games and do basic mathematics, and it has proven to be popular with the children who all flock to her table to get involved. She describes the experience as evolving during her placement with the first couple of weeks being spent in observation to work out where she could best contribute to the learning of the children. The partnership between teacher and volunteer is extremely important and it is clear that Olivia

has been extremely beneficial to the learning of her class. Olivia spends quite a bit of her time helping out one or two students who tend to fall behind and this is liberating for the class teacher, who can extend tasks for the more able students. The wide range of abilities means that individual learning strategies have to be applied to the children and this requires volunteer help.

She admits to having some favourites amongst the children, but generally she has adored her time with them all and says it has flown by.

Olivia has been able to satisfy her wanderlust by taking weekend trips to important sites such as Machu Picchu and has been grateful for the opportunity to spend time with her host family and discover more about local culture through her time with them.

Advice for future volunteers she feels is as simple as keeping an open mind and making the most of every opportunity.

"It's not easy when you first get here.... but you need to throw yourself into it!"

Volunteers like Olivia make delivering quality support to our education partners a real success.





This month we had our ever popular annual drawing and painting competition in all of the kindergartens in the Sacred Valley. The competition has a different theme each year and this year it was "Christmas". With a tough jury, we had to select a winner from each location which was made difficult by the superb pictures the children had produced. We visited each and every placement and handed over the prizes which contained a ball, jigsaws, dominos, coloured pens and crayons. This competition aims to help develop the imagination of all of the participants and it gives them all a chance to express what the chosen theme means to them. Our volunteers were moved by the pictures and explanations given by the children for their work. One of the winners drew their family saying that this is what was most important to them.

Also this month we have been involved with a lot of activities outside the classroom, be-

cause it's the end of the school year and many of the children find it hard to concentrate on lessons. One volunteer, Olivia Coyte, made a beautiful map of the world to teach the children in her class where she came from



and also to show where Peru was in relation to other countries. It was a lovely contribution to the classroom and a lot of the children didn't know where Peru was, so it really was useful. Another excellent job was done by Frederikka, in the Special Needs School in Cusco, where she produced pictures of the human body for each student. Now all there is to do is wait with anticipation for the end of year

parties that volunteers will be helping to organize in each of our placements. We hope that all of our volunteers have enjoyed their time in the Care programme.

Nutrition has been amazing; we'd like to thank our three hard-working volunteers who gave their all to this project. Thanks go to Birte, Angela and Allison, who showed that changing even the mind of one person is extremely valuable in this important field. The three volunteers helped out in our women's centres with advice not only on healthy eating but also lifestyle, their experience helping to better support the work we do there.

*Our Care project helps children all over the Cusco area. Volunteers work with local teachers and often have the chance to direct activities themselves. Care and Nutrition are two essential projects and require volunteers with a great degree of flair and enthusiasm, as well as patience and determination. Yessika Espinoza is the project coordinator.*

## Teaching

This month schools finished the 2013 academic year and started a long break for almost three months. On December 5th volunteers and teachers joined to celebrate our last network meeting. The teachers gave us feedback about the work during the year and talked about plans for the coming academic year. We all enjoyed a lovely dinner at a local restaurant and it was



Volunteers Holly Lamden, Serafina Kosinskaia and Xavier Lagrede

great to be able to sit down together and enjoy the opportunity to chat. Volunteers

also participated in the event by teaching the carol "Jingle Bells" to all the teachers.

All of the teaching staff were extremely grateful to our volunteers that came to Peru this year. They recognise the great job volunteers do in the English classrooms and made a point of telling us.

Teachers are now eagerly anticipating the Teacher Training Course that starts in January.



Christmas Paneton for everyone!

## Teaching Standards

Recently, a report was published that ranked countries on their performance in delivering education. The study looked at core subjects and the results for many countries were as expected. Finland, top of the educational pecking order remained in first place, a shining beacon of

good practice to use as a model perhaps? But Peru suffered a huge blow when it was revealed that it was ranked 135th out of 142 countries tested worldwide.

The result is devastating when you consider that in many respects Peru has been developing positively with life expectancy and relative levels of poverty improving.

The education standards in the Cusco region were particularly poor with mathematics being the worst subject as a whopping

78.6% of pupils in rural schools failed to achieve even the minimum level of attainment in the subject. The report focused on the second grade of Primary school and over 390 classes failed to report even one student who achieved the minimum level.

Peru now has to react quickly to turn this terrible situation around and invest in its future.

See more of the report [HERE](#)





(Top left) Volunteers in Huyro at the important Inca Project. Enjoying breakfast with staff before work.  
(Surrounding) Christmas party for children from local kindergartens. Games and Christmas Paneton.

### ARCHAEOLOGY:

So far this month the volunteers have hiked up Lauramarka (a truly epic uphill monster of a hike) and registered some structures. They also had the chance to do a small amount of mapping at Inkatambo Bajo. Lead Archaeologist, Zenobio visited Huyro primary school with the volunteers for heritage education and the volunteers continue to find new structures in Q'ochapata. Jhon, another of our archaeologists recently graduated and gave the volunteers a talk on the Lucumayo valley and also his thesis. There were also talks on the palace at Vitcos & the white rock (Yurak-rumi).

The government is currently working in the valley registering the new sections of Inca trail. Fortunately our project has recorded many different sections of the trail in the valley and we are now working together trying to register as much of the trail as possible before the end of December.

A hike to the top ridge at Pistipata uncovered another old trail that ran along it. Though this is not an Inca trail, we found a suitable location for a future base camp for explorations in this part of the valley.

### MAINTENANCE:

The volunteers have been busy digging a new refuse pit, as well as making sure the compost is being turned regularly.

### COMMUNITY WORK:

As always, our activities with the library and PRONOEI continue. This month we have started to help out at the new "centro de estimulacion" in Huyro for local children 3 years old and under. The centre has been set up to help educate the parents on subjects such as child care and nutrition. In the past 2 weeks there has been a steady increase in the number of children attending the centre, which is great to see.

Volunteers attended the baptism of Jason Chura Suca on the 13th of November. Jason was lucky to survive the flood in Huyro in February after being pulled from the river and we celebrated the occasion at his grandmother's house. Needless to say there was plenty of good food and dancing.

On Sunday 17th, we helped out at the local health centre in Huyro. As part of a local health campaign, volunteers distributed

new shoes to children aged up to 3 years old from nineteen different communities in the valley. This also gave the local doctors the opportunity to weigh & measure the children and also check that the children had all their vaccinations.

### SPORTS:

The first & second rounds of matches in November finished even, probably because the teachers are starting to bring players from outside the teaching environment to accentuate their team after team Establo kept getting the better of them...we've also had to mix the teams up a little now because of the volume of volunteers on the project. Now the teachers and team Establo play together with some of our friends from Huyro, Pistipata, Huayopata, Amaybamba, the Ministry of Culture and the Qhapaq Ñan project.

*For more information on the Christmas party shown in the photos above go to [MyTripBlog.org](http://MyTripBlog.org) by clicking on the following link:*

**Christmas Party Article**

## An interview with Centre Director **Tim Dewinter**

### Investing in the future of our projects

In the middle of 2013, Projects Abroad started a new chapter with the launch of the Research & Training Center which will be headed by Peru Country Director, Tim DeWinter.

The idea behind the center is to develop good practice within the organization and share successful experiences between the member countries to achieve a level of global parity in our work with local partners. For some time, Tim has

been interested in bringing together his years of experience in this field to train others in important management techniques that have proven successful in Peru. He has a background in training and education and holds a Masters degree in Intercultural Communication and Management, which enables him to facilitate this important development for Projects Abroad.

The Center, based in the Projects Abroad offices in Urubamba in the Cusco region, currently offers training modules based on a range of topics from three main courses: Communication, Management and Project Development. Each course offers five modules which will develop participants' knowledge on a wide range of subjects relevant to their daily work. As the Center grows, hub training sessions, stand-alone modules and further courses will be added.

There has already been a lot of interest in the modules with over 220 subscribers and counting from more than 41 different global offices in the Projects Abroad family. The desire to improve processes and develop as professionals is high, and here in Urubamba there has been a tremendous amount of pre-



Our visiting staff from the UK, Bolivia, South Africa and Jamaica spent a week doing activities and getting to know staff here in the Peru office.

paratory work done to ensure that the training offered is relevant to our work as an organization in the field.

Projects Abroad is the leading volunteer organisation, with a globally connected network of expertise in delivering volunteer help to local partners. The people working in our destination countries, and also our recruitment offices around the

relevant to our work. They will also importantly allow us to help shape careers for everyone in Projects Abroad.

Modules are completed by subscribers in their destinations and sent to Peru for assessment and feedback. The RTC team are available to help participants during the process by email, Skype and through social networking tools. Sub-forums have been set up on the Projects Abroad Internal Discussion Forum, along with a Training Center Group on Facebook, which allow participants to ask questions, share ideas and experience and give their feedback. With so many signing up there is a lot of work to be done.



Last day farewells

world, have a lot to share and through the completion of the modules, we are in effect pooling this knowledge to allow best practice to flow from office to office. Now Projects Abroad is also becoming a leading organisation with regards to supporting the professional development of its staff. Creating our own courses allows us to tailor them to the needs of Projects Abroad staff and make them fully



## As Peruvian as Pisco

The European Commission has decided that Peru has a special claim to the name “pisco” as applied to its national liquor. They have granted “protection and commercialization in the [European] community market,” for Peru and its market-

ing of pisco.

“With this important recognition, Pisco will enjoy immediate protection inside the European Union, safeguarding the solid rights of Peru about its denomination origin at an international level,” a spokesperson told press today. However, this recognition does not mean that Chile will be prohibited from using the name “Pisco” to market their similar grape liquor. As El Comercio reports, what the registration of

Pisco as a proprietary name to Peru does, is mark a formal recognition on the part of the European Commission that Peru has a special geographical connection to the name Pisco. So Peru will be able to reference Pisco as the geographical origin of the drink pisco in its marketing of said beverage. Chile will also be able to call their liquor pisco, but will not be able to claim a geographical connection to that name.

## Causa Limeña

This classic dish’s roots date back to the era of Peru’s independence and is both simple to prepare and absolutely delicious. There are different varieties of ‘causa’ but this is perhaps the most famous so why not give it a try. It’s more common as a starter these days but with the right accompaniments it could also be a main dish.

### Ingredients

1kg Yellow Potatoes (good for mashing)  
Oil  
Lemon  
Ground yellow pepper (Peruvian aji amarillo)  
Salt  
(all quantities according to your taste)



### Preparation

Cook and then peel the potatoes. Once peeled mash them.  
Add some oil (not olive oil), lemon, salt and the ground ‘aji amarillo’  
Make a dough-like mass with the ingredients.  
Prepare a mold, covering one end with clingfilm.  
Introduce a layer of the potato mixture into the base, then a layer of sliced, salted avocado.  
Finally add another layer of potato. Turn the mold over and serve directly.  
Decorate with salad leaves and finish with slices of black olive.  
You may want to experiment with the fillings... tell us your favourites.