



# Annual Report 2020



## Our Mission

CONAPAC is a Peruvian non-profit organization whose mission is to promote conservation of the rainforest through education of its stewards, the people who live along the Amazon and Napo Rivers. Our centerpiece project is the Adopt-A-School program, which is strengthened by workshops and complemented by service and sustainable projects in river communities.

## Our Board of Directors

Pam Bucur  
Cynthia Smith  
Nancy Cowal  
Claire Lannoye-Hall  
Amner Ismodes

## Our 2020 Staff

Shea Bronson-Doherty  
Alberto Vela Muñoz  
James Pasmíño  
Michel Paolo Briceño

## Detroit Zoo Staff

Claire Lannoye-Hall

## Contents

2	From the Board
3	From the President
4	Enhancing Education
7	Supplementing Nutrition
8	Providing Clean Water
10	Sustaining Communities
13	Funding Partners

© CONAPAC 2020



## From CONAPAC's Board of Directors:

Just like you, CONAPAC started the year 2020 with a heap of goals and aspirations. Ours included the hiring of a new director, Shea Bronson-Doherty. However, like yours, the year didn't turn out quite as planned. Sadly, in April we lost Ricardo Rengifo to COVID. An outstanding naturalist and experienced Explorama guide, he assisted in the Adopt-A-School program for years. By the end of the year we had to say goodbye to Shea, as he returned to the US. He was a great fit for CONAPAC and everyone quickly knew he would provide quality leadership. In Shea's words: "CONAPAC will continue building upon its successes in 2021, staying true to its mission in rural communities in the Peruvian Amazon. Thank you once again for affording me the privilege of leading such an amazing team and contributing to such a noble cause." None of us anticipated the impact that this year would have on CONAPAC, Shea, our volunteers, donors, and our staff. But despite closures, restrictions, and limitations to our movements in Iquitos and downriver, CONAPAC was still able to accomplish a great deal under these very trying circumstances.

Saving the rainforest, one child at a time



A message from Pam Bucur de Arevalo, President CONAPAC Board of Directors

It's hard to believe that CONAPAC celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. It seems like such a short time ago that a group of leaders from Explorama Lodges met with others in Iquitos to begin a journey dedicated to finding a way to be a part of the conservation and study of the incredible rainforest where we live and work. We originally planned on supporting scientists with logistics to reach the rainforest, thinking that this was the best way to help build a better understanding of this incredibly intricate and complex world.

We soon realized that, although the science was important, it would be even better if we could bring the science of the forest to the people who would protect it day by day and who would decide its future. The combination of supporting local education through workshops for teachers led by experts in their fields and providing educational supplies, which were just about nonexistent in river villages in 1990, was the right combination. Since then, we've expanded our community programs, included clean water projects, and most recently, sustainable development projects to introduce agricultural methods that will allow both local residents and the forest to thrive.

It's been a great 30 years, with many twists and turns, ideas that worked and ideas that didn't always meet our expectations, but that's what science is all about, learning with every adventure but maintaining your vision, staying on course. I'm proud to say that the CONAPAC sapling we planted 30 years ago has grown into a tremendous rainforest tree with solid roots in the community, strong limbs supported by many friends and institutions, and branches that reach out and grow to integrate and unite children and adults in rural communities so that all will prosper.

Even a pandemic won't stop us. We're ready to start our next 30 years!

## Saving the rainforest, one child at a time

# ENHANCING EDUCATION

For the first time in Adopt-A-School's 28-year history, the delivery of school supplies was delayed and then cancelled. Peru postponed the opening of schools many times over the year and in the end, the entire 2020 school year, which ended in December, was cancelled. However, the books, individual school supplies, and other important classroom materials had been purchased and packaged and were ready for delivery at a moment's notice, so we were ready for 2021.

We had begun the year 2020 excited and motivated to reinstate our activities, programs, and projects after seeing the encouraging results of the successes achieved by our projects: Celebrate the Birds of the Peruvian Amazon, the Children's Forest, our clean water initiative, and economic development, which are described in detail in the 2019 Annual Report. Our enthusiasm remains intact.

We once again renewed our agreement of interagency cooperation between the Regional Board of Education (DREL) and CONAPAC, which was finalized in February. Through this agreement, we were able to assist in the selection process for teachers and principals in our partner communities to maintain the best teachers in the schools and cover all vacant positions.



# ENHANCING EDUCATION

Before teachers headed to their respective communities in early March to get ready for the start of the school year, CONAPAC met with all the educators in Iquitos to get to know new faces, resume friendships and to give recognition for the work that they do in their communities and schools. There also was a thorough review of the materials to be distributed by CONAPAC so that each one of the schools in their respective communities could carry out the necessary preparations for the Adopt-a-School deliveries in March.

Everything should have been moving along as planned, CONAPAC readjusting its plans and programs and carrying out preliminary activities for upcoming events. But then bad news began to arrive about COVID-19 threatening to expand to the entire world, becoming a global pandemic. The Peruvian government postponed the start of school. The CONAPAC Board of Directors and the technical team decided to postpone the delivery of school supplies and our volunteers from other countries cancelled their trips. Teachers returned to Iquitos, safeguarding the health of the schools under their care. Virtual school was put in place in Iquitos but Internet access is unavailable to our partner communities downriver. Ultimately in-person school was cancelled for the year. We helped teachers brainstorm ways they could continue their educational program in the communities. As restrictions waxed and waned, teachers were able to make short visits to their schools and sent student work back and forth by boat to the communities.



# ENHANCING EDUCATION

In November CONAPAC participated in the launch of a new program aimed at bridging the digital gap (Cierre la Brecha Digital) in rural areas of Peru. Alberto Vela, our education specialist, joined the Minister of Education and others at the initial delivery ceremony for the new program. Jorge Chavez, one of CONAPAC's longest-standing partner communities, was chosen as the first school to receive the new technology. This community was selected for having met the requirement of developing an Environmental Education plan in accordance with the agreement between the Regional Directorate of Education of Loreto and CONAPAC.

Eleven solar-powered digital tablets were delivered to the primary school. There is currently no Internet service in the area, but the DREL (the Ministry of Education in the state of Loreto) is committed to bringing in satellite Internet--a good first step toward having up-to-date technology in place for whenever students are back in school.

As the school year ended in Peru, we looked forward to rebuilding for the 2021 Adopt-A-School program through the generosity of our donors. With their assistance we were able to stay afloat and keep our paid staff all year through what were very challenging circumstances in Iquitos and in our partner communities.



# SUPPLEMENTING NUTRITION

CONAPAC constructed its first school kitchen in 2017. These kitchens are strictly for the children in the communities, where they can eat two meals per school day. The government program Qali Warma provides the food and cooking equipment and the kitchens provide areas for safe storage of supplies, preparation areas and most important, filtered running water for cooking and washing. The parents prepare the meals and maintain the kitchens. This program offsets insufficient food supplies in many of the communities in terms of quantity and quality. By increasing access to food sources and nutrients, the children are getting a more balanced diet.

In July, the construction of a school kitchen in the community of Isla Tamanco that was initiated in February was completed. CONAPAC coordinated with community leaders so that the construction crew would be able to enter, work and leave the community without coming into contact with residents, to reduce risk of spreading COVID-19. We have built eleven kitchens so far, including this one.



# PROVIDING CLEAN WATER

CONAPAC began its eleventh year providing clean drinking water options to our partner communities along the Amazon, Napo, Marañón, and Sucusari Rivers. Adopt-A-Drop, our water monitoring initiative, is in its fifth year of testing, training, and oversight for community water systems. Adopt-A-Drop provides operator training, structural inspections, and water quality testing.

In our Partner Communities, the demand for clean water has increased over time as attitudes towards treated water have become largely positive, with even higher demand during the past months due to the necessity of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Our partner communities understand the importance of consuming clean water: less illness, less medical expense, more agricultural production, and better school attendance.

We have implemented 36 community water filtration systems, as well as installing in-home filter systems in the smaller communities, all accompanied by ongoing evaluation and work conducted by the leaders of each community. This implementation has considerably reduced the incidence of stomach illnesses and parasitic infection, according to the local private clinic and regional health posts run by the Ministry of Health. Our vision is to provide clean water to people, improve lives, and guarantee the sustainability of our water treatment systems.





# PROVIDING CLEAN WATER

Earlier in the year, American inventor and entrepreneur Roger Cabbage--along with a team of CONAPAC staff and volunteers--delivered new in-home water filtration systems to several communities. Roger's nonprofit organization, GlobalAccess2030, provides filters worldwide. Valuable monitoring trips were completed to ensure the appropriate functioning of CONAPAC water treatment plants and in-home filtration systems. New in-home filtration systems were installed in seven communities, providing access to clean drinking water for hundreds of individuals.

At the moment, 14 CONAPAC partner communities use these systems, while the remaining 36 have community water filtration systems. Over the year, two of these large systems were upgraded, and they were all inspected by CONAPAC staff. We are proud of our continued commitment to clean water through partnerships and individual donors. We are particularly proud of our association with Global Access--GA2030.org--a great CONAPAC partner!



# SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

In July 2020 CONAPAC returned to the communities when some restrictions were lifted. After these first visits to the communities, we were able to observe the negative impact that COVID had on the lives of the many families with which we have worked for many years. This helped us to further strengthen our relationships, and above all, develop and implement tools to help families solve problems with agricultural activities and use of local materials without affecting the environment. Currently, there are 13 communities and 60 beneficiary families that are in the economic development program. In September the plots were once again evaluated for growth and health of the fruit trees.

In October, training workshops for our partner program with the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation were held on the topic of controlling pests and diseases in their fruit trees and other crops. They were held in the Napo River community of Llachapa, where 18 program participants attended from 7 communities (San Antonio de Miraño, Urco Miraño, Santa Lucia, Llachapa, Sucusari, San Pedro de Mangua, and San Alejandro) and in the community of Pucallpa on the Amazon, with 15 program participants from 6 communities (Timicurillo, San Luis, Pucallpa, Jorge Chávez, Yanamono II and Ramón Castilla).



# SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

During the workshop, our program partners learned how to identify pests and how to control them by making ecological insecticides with natural ingredients. This pest control product, non-toxic to plants and humans, is made from ingredients that are readily obtained by planting and harvesting or foraging. All the participants learned the importance of avoiding harsh petro-chemicals that damage the environment and why natural approaches are safer for plants and humans. All workshop attendees received a large liquid sprayer for mixing and applying the natural pesticide.

Conapac is working hard on the involvement and empowerment of rural women in all the projects we execute, and in the economic development program we are seeing active participation of women who work toward the well-being of their families.

The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation collaborated with CONAPAC to deliver 4.000 new fruit tree saplings to four CONAPAC partner communities in the next year.



# EMBRACING CHANGE

Over the year, our partners, EKOAmazon, made changes in the conceptual structure of the Amazon Library and **Sustainability and Education Center**:

“We are branching out and placing the fruits of the SEC squarely in the hands of those best positioned to maximize their impact - the creative, resourceful, resilient people of the region! SEC Director Fernando Saavedra is working closely with CONAPAC leadership to “seed” 4 new community branches...Much of the resources will move into a new structure within the village of Palmeras II and continue to serve them through the direction of their strong school and community leaders. The ‘Yagua Library and Museum’ will be built by the community, using the materials from the current Center building. Another significant portion of resources will go to the nearby village of Manati to help expand an existing school library under the direction of a principal held in high regard by the CONAPAC community. Another portion will go to the nearby town of Indiana to support their current project of establishing a library with a dedicated librarian. All music and chess resources will contribute to an emerging youth program/center under Fernando’s competent and passionate direction.”



# FUNDING PARTNERS

Thank you to:

Explorama Lodges

The Detroit Zoological Society

Adopt-A-Village International

Amazon Amigos

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

GlobalAccess2030

EKOAmazon

Fruit Tree Planting Foundation

International Fund for Economic Development

JBQ Charitable Foundation

The Morpho Institute

Overseas Adventure Travel

And the many groups and individual donors who support our work



Saving the rainforest, one child at a time