

# About

## the Achuar...

The Achuar are an indigenous people living in Ecuador and Peru. In Ecuador group of 7,000 people mainly living across 72 communities in the Ecuadorian rainforest. Today many also reside in towns and cities across Ecuador.



Once an isolated and semi-nomadic Amazonian group, Achuar remain proud patrons of their ancestral customs and their land, despite strong missionary influence from the 1970s onwards (setting up communities, schools, churches and transliterating the Achuar language).



**Since, the Achuar territory has experienced the repeated threat of incursion by oil companies and other external agents**

- That said, many Achuar living in the Kapawi reserve strongly maintain that engaging in eco-tourism is one way they can work towards celebrating their heritage, as well as asserting authority over their land.
- In the 1990s, following a period of formative indigenous uprisings, Ecotourism began to flourish in Ecuador when NGOs collaborated with indigenous groups.
- Today the government is now promoting communitarian-tourism as a key industry in the National Development Plan, El Buen Vivir.
- However, in order to be able to control the rules of this engagement with tourists, corporations, investors, the tourism industry as a whole, and the outside world more generally, communities recognize that it is essential that the Achuar are trained to manage their own ecotourism projects themselves.



# About

## *Colegio TUNA...*

**In 1999, Kapawi Community petitioned for access to high school education within the Achuar territory itself.**

- Kapawi community also proposed that the high school diploma in Ecotourism (Bachillerato en Ecoturismo) become available to their students.
- To this end the Ministry of Education and Culture built Colegio Fiscomisional Técnico Intercultural Bilingüe “TUNA”.
- Ines Nuñez has been the director of both the Primary and the High School over the past 10 years. Ines is from the town of Puyo (provincial capital of Pastaza), posted by the Ministry of Education, and has been overseeing the teacher training of local Achuar teachers. (After 15 years at Kapawi, in 2018 she was relocated to a school in Puyo and still supports the project from a logistical support perspective.)
- The government has now arranged for very basic education facilities in all of the Achuar communities.
- However, in the Achuar territory material resources are limited and pupils of all ages are often taught by a single Achuar community teacher.

# “Wikia Achuar”

## “I am Achuar”...

One of the issues that is of great interest across is improving access to English language education for secondary schools. In order for students to attend and succeed in universities in Ecuador they must possess strong language skills.

- The directors of the school, leaders of the community, and a small network of trusted ex-volunteers are working collaboratively to co-create a grassroots English Programme.
- We are not an NGO project, charity or private enterprise, rather this website serves as a means of connecting experienced and committed volunteer teachers to the school and the community.

That said, for various reasons including the lack of funding, the Ministry of Education has not been able to provide English language education to the students of Colegio TUNA.

- So, Achuar leaders, teachers and students have hence been determined to incorporate English language education into the school’s Ecotourism curriculum.
- Prospective volunteers will be put in touch with the current teacher in residence and a local representative of the school who will organize logistics.
- Teachers will also be put in touch with ex-volunteers via a moderated online community. Here teachers can share their experiences, lesson plans and goals that they had established together with the teachers at Colegio TUNA. They will also be able to provide a pre-arrival orientation, and answer any questions.



# Volunteer

## Commitments...

The Achuar often voice how important it is that their projects be realized on their own terms. The name of the English programme, 'I am Achuar' emphasizes the importance of a collaborative nature in this project.

Despite ongoing interaction with worlds outside the rainforest, the Achuar are proud of their ancestral cultural heritage and proud to be able to say "Wikia Achuar" or "I am Achuar". Colegio TUNA and Kapawi community see language education as a tool for Achuar empowerment.



The school will host one or two volunteer English teachers in the school teacher's house over 3 - 6 months at a time. These teachers contribute by giving daily classes at the school and work towards developing a curriculum designed specifically for the Achuar's needs.

Non-Achuar collaborators of the project cherish the level of respect and trust we have gained amongst Achuar people either through working or living with them for extended periods of time.

The aim is not to impose but to listen to suggestions as to how we can contribute to the achievement of their goals in the face of an uncertain future.