



# Peru Trip 2013

For the fourth straight year a small group Alma Foundation followers flew down to Cusco and joined me on my annual trek to visit our projects and meet with our communities.



Chris, a long time supporter was down for the second time! He brought his boy Sammy, who raised money and brought gifts from his friends and classmates. Rebecca our part-time Executive Director was seeing Peru and the Alma projects for the first time. Trevor and his son Jason, also supporters, brought along a hockey bag full of school supplies and clothes.



After a night flight to Lima, a connection to Cusco and a 2 hour bus ride we visited Ada's kids at the Mosoq Runa project. Ada is a force of nature. Her kids are thriving and she will, with our help, expand the home work club in her home to all kids in the local school next year.



We went to Patacancha to visit our school lunch/nutrition project. After three years of hard work the fish farm is close to being self-sustaining! We have 17,000 fish (we need 10,000/year to provide 3 school lunches/week) and have installed all necessary capital equipment and provided all necessary training and capacitation. The community is now hatching their own fish and making their own fish food. We ate lunch with 120 very enthusiastic kids then watched them perform a "potato" dance for us.



Next day we drove to Socma then climbed for over 2 hours straight up a mountain (and this at 11,000 feet of altitude) to reach Markuray. We just launched our guinea pig micro-loan program here so we were able to visit people's homes and see the guinea pigs and also visited the school.



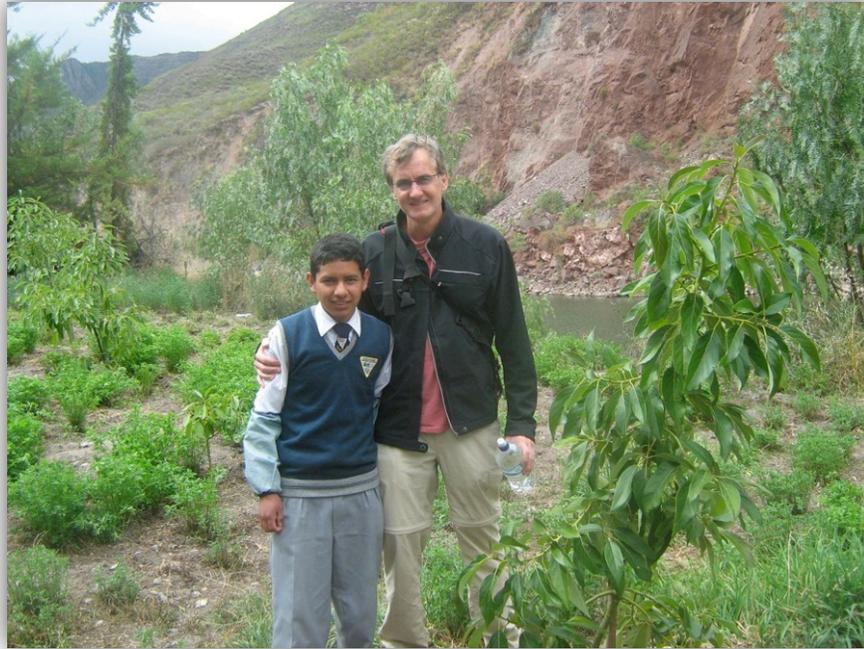
After Markuray we climbed even higher to Rayan and visited more homes. As we left, a group of mothers came shouting after us. They had made us a variety of potatoes so we had a wonderful impromptu picnic with them.



The following day, some of the group went to Sihua and Patabamba. Both projects are doing very well. At Patabamba we have 50 children of all levels of secondary school preparing for university entrance exams at this after-school exam prep course. Some of these kids will not be writing the exam for another 4 years! We had 1 student write the exam (and pass) last year, this year we are hoping for 5 or 6.



We drove for 3 hours on a very dangerous road to reach Colcha and visit our school program there. We heard the children tell us about their projects and visited Ronald's avocado grove project.



After the community projects we visited the partner projects. First, Kiya Survivors where we are supporting the outreach program and where we were able to visit the home of one of their families. It was single Mom raising 6 children, one who has suffered from terrible seizures and now cannot speak, in a 2 room mud adobe structure out in a pasture. They own nothing. I found their situation very desperate and very moving.

We visited Manos Unidas in Cusco, where we are supporting a facility for children with disabilities and in particular the program to integrate them into the school system. We went to the Biblioteca Kallpanchis where I was moved to tears by the attendance (50 students in 1 small room), the enthusiasm, and of course the poverty of the kids.



Our last visit (of 10 in 6 days) was to the “Carmen” project. Carmen is helping girls from 2 orphanages and a “lock-down center” (underage girls, usually the victims of human trafficking who were picked up for prostitution) learn computer and hairdressing skills. One girl sang us a song of thanks that described her journey in life. Hers has been a journey that none of us can really comprehend. I think we were all incredibly grateful to Victoria for sharing her story and it gave us a lot to think about as we left this beautiful country, these awesome projects, these inspiring people, and began our journey home.

