

Cabeceras Aid Project ~ 2002 Fieldwork Plan

From May to August of this year, Cabeceras Aid Project will return to Peru with an expanded fieldwork team to continue important ongoing projects with several indigenous communities, and also to launch two exciting new ones. This year we will widen the scope of our work both by serving a larger number of communities and by starting new kinds of projects. As always, our projects are designed to be collaborative endeavors in which we work with communities to achieve the goals that they define. Please read on to learn more about our field activities for 2002. We hope that we can count on your support!

Urubamba River Valley Medical Aid Project

Last summer, while in the Urubamba River Valley of the southeastern Peruvian Amazon, Cabeceras' fieldworkers Lev Michael and Chris Beier were approached with an urgent request from two Peruvian Ministry of Health doctors, Dr. Torres and Dr. Ramos, stationed at healthposts in that region.

These doctors explained that responsibility for this remote region's healthcare system had recently passed from PISAP, the medical branch of the Dominican Order of the Catholic Church, to MINSA, the Peruvian Ministry of Health. This new and unexpected responsibility has presented a significant challenge to MINSA's limited local resources, as the government struggles to organize a medical infrastructure in this distant jungle region. Dr. Torres and Dr. Ramos were especially concerned about their ability to serve the most remote indigenous communities in the large region of the jungle under their new jurisdiction.

Having heard of Cabeceras' healthcare initiatives in several Nanti and Matsigenka communities in the same region, Dr. Torres and Dr. Ramos approached us to ask that we incorporate as many other remote indigenous communities in the region into our organization's activities as possible. Both expressed their concern that as the situation presently stands, there simply are not sufficient



Cabeceras fieldworker Lev discussing treatment regimens with Bisarota, Montetoni's Nanti healthcare worker.

resources – neither medical supplies nor personnel – to serve all the communities in their jurisdiction. We talked at length with the doctors about which communities in the region were most difficult for them to reach and were therefore most in need of outside assistance from our organization.

On behalf of Cabeceras Aid Project, we agreed to provide as many basic medical kits as we are able for the remotest indigenous communities which have government-trained local healthcare workers. We promised to raise funds for these kits in the United States during the spring of 2002, purchase necessary medical supplies in Lima, and bring complete kits to the region in June of 2002.

In consultation with these doctors, we have calculated that about \$200 will provide a medical kit of the most essential life-saving supplies that will suffice for an *entire year* for each small community. Each kit will be provided to the community healthcare worker either when he or she visits the MINSA healthpost or when MINSA staff journeys to the village to administer vaccinations.

This larger project is an outgrowth of our work in previous years to address problems of introduced illnesses in remote Matsigenka

Cabeceras Aid Project ~ 2002 Fieldwork Plan

communities in the Paquiria River region by providing essential resources to the healthpost in Nueva Luz. In turn, we have incorporated our fundraising efforts for Nueva Luz and the Paquiria communities into this larger project.

- *Fundraising goals:*
\$800 for medical kits for four small communities
\$400 for Nueva Luz and the Paquiria region

The Camisea Project

This year, we will work with the two Nanti communities on the Camisea River to carry out an urgent mapping project that will enable the Nantis to gain full legal recognition of their ownership of their lands. The goal of this mapping work is to develop detailed documentation of the communities' land and resource use patterns, which can be used as the basis for obtaining legal titles to their land. Our research will provide the solid documentary basis for land claims that the Peruvian government requires.

This mapping project has an unexpected urgency. The two Nanti communities, Montetoni and Maranjejari, are located within a communal reserve that is home to three different indigenous groups – Nantis, Yoras, and Matsigenkas. This reserve was established by the Peruvian government to protect 'nomadic populations' within its borders. Recently, Cabeceras learned of Yora efforts to gain full legal title for their now-permanent community inside the reserve. Titling their community is a crucial step for the Yoras to protect themselves from the destructive activities of illegal loggers who have invaded their part of the reserve. At the same time, however, the Yoras' titling of their lands will alter the legal status of the entire reserve, quite possibly depriving the Nanti of all legal protections. The Yoras' decision to title their lands forces the more recently formed Nanti communities to take steps to title their lands as well.

During the mapping project we will work in close collaboration with community members to map the areas that the two communities use for



The Nanti communities of Montetoni and Maranjejari rely on the Camisea River, pictured here, for their water and for fishing.

farming, hunting, fishing, and natural resource extraction. This work will combine the Nantis' detailed and sophisticated knowledge of the land, plants, and animals on which they depend, with our knowledge of technical mapping techniques, and will yield detailed maps of Nanti land and resource use. Using satellite-based topographic maps of the area in which the Nanti live combined with GPS technology, we can produce materials that fulfill the requirements of the Peruvian government's land titling process.

An exciting aspect of this project is that the fieldwork team will be expanded by the participation of two British anthropologists and indigenous rights workers – Conrad Feather and Gregor MacLennan – who have been colleagues of ours since 1999, when they first contacted us about working in the area. They have worked tirelessly with the Yora to protect the Yoras' rights to their lands and to self-determination. Their experience and skills will help assure that this mapping project will be successful. In addition, Conrad and Gregor will be accompanied by Yora representatives who will (with our translation assistance!) dialogue with the Nanti about their common needs and problems, and how they can work together to solve them.

And finally, Cabeceras' fieldworkers will continue our medical training program with Nanti healthcare workers in these two communities to reinforce and develop their skills in providing basic and essential healthcare to their villages.

Cabeceras Aid Project ~ 2002 Fieldwork Plan

- *Fundraising goals:*
\$1,000 for material aid for Nanti communities
\$800 for medical training and medical supplies



The Nanti village of Montetoni

Iquito Language Documentation Project

This year Cabeceras will launch a three-year project to document and revitalize Iquito, a highly endangered language spoken in northeastern Peru. The project will yield a dictionary and grammar of the language, pedagogical materials for the bilingual school in the community, and a set of texts in Iquito about Iquito history and knowledge. One particularly innovative aspect of this project is that we will train members of the community to do linguistic documentation, so that they can carry on the work of the project between the summers when our field team is in the community, and then continue to work independently after our direct involvement is no longer necessary.

To achieve the high goals that we and the community have set for the project, we are expanding the fieldwork team. This year, Lev Michael and Chris Beier will be joined by Mark Brown and Lynda de Jong, both linguistics graduate students from the University of Texas. In addition, the project is benefiting from the experience and advice of the linguists of UT's Center for the Indigenous Languages of Latin America and the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America (www.ailla.org).

Cabeceras Aid Project became involved in this project through investigations into the Iquito language revitalization movement carried out by Chris and Lev in 2001. We first learned about the Iquito situation in 2000, through contacts in Peru, who told us that the Iquito community was seeking assistance in their efforts to revitalize

their heritage language. We were intrigued to learn of a community seeking help on a language-oriented project, so in 2001 we traveled to San Antonio, the last thriving Iquito community in the Amazon Basin, to investigate the Iquito language revitalization effort, and to offer our organization's assistance in developing a long-term language revitalization project.

The outcome of our visit was very positive. It quickly became clear to us that the community is united behind the goal of language revitalization, and has already taken several major steps towards revitalizing their language. The community was very enthusiastic about our offer for assistance, because although they have made significant strides in many areas, they now feel the need for specific Iquito language resources such as a dictionary, grammar, and teaching materials. Without proper linguistic training, the creation of these resources is prohibitively difficult, and so the community recognized that our expertise could be of much use to them.

In order to bring together the community's interests and the resources Cabeceras Aid Project has to offer, we worked with community members to design an intensive revitalization project. A guiding principle that emerged was that members of the community should be centrally involved at all stages of the project. In order for the community to be directly involved in the substantial linguistic research component of the project, we agreed to train several individuals as community linguists. In this way, we can be sure that the linguistics work is responsive to the needs of the community *and* is in a very real sense the community's own accomplishment. Our discussions also led to the approval of an official agreement between the Iquito community directorship, the municipal government, local Peruvian NGOs specializing in indigenous bilingual education, and Cabeceras Aid Project, to collaborate intensively between 2002 and 2004 toward revitalizing Iquito. All agreed that after the term of the agreement, Cabeceras Aid Project would take an advisory role to the local linguists we train. Cabeceras Aid Project will provide salaries for the community

Cabeceras Aid Project ~ 2002 Fieldwork Plan

linguists and consultants for the duration of the project.

A profound change in perspective has taken place in San Antonio in the last five years that has made this exciting project possible. San Antonio, located about 120 kilometers from the city of Iquitos, currently has a population of approximately 400 individuals, most of whom are ethnically Iquito. At the time of their initial contacts with Europeans in the 17th century, some 10,000 Iquitos are thought to have lived in the region; now there are fewer than 500. Four centuries of contact with outsiders has nearly erased Iquito language and culture. At present, only about 26 fluent Iquito speakers remain – 15 live in San Antonio and 11 live in the surrounding area. The youngest fluent Iquito speaker is about 53 years old.

And yet, after four centuries of tremendous pressure – both explicit pressure from powerful local mestizos and implicit pressure from the Spanish-only and anti-indigenous attitudes long held by representatives of the Peruvian government – and the near-extinction of their language, the residents of San Antonio recently have begun to express their opinions that the Iquito language *is* valuable and important, and should be kept alive. Many older people commented to us last summer that ‘one must no longer be ashamed to speak’ Iquito. Clearly, the social stigma associated with indigenous identity is disappearing in San Antonio.

In addition to the immediate and tangible results that this project will have for the Iquitos themselves, Cabeceras hopes that the results of our research will provide a body of data, analyses, and insights that can be used by others engaged in indigenous language revitalization work. While in the Iquitos region in 2001, Cabeceras established relationships with representatives of the municipal government and with members of the regional bilingual education community. We believe that by developing these regional connections, our three years of work with Iquito will allow us to collaborate with other indigenous language revitalization projects in the region.



Agucha and Ema, both fluent speakers of Iquito, will work with our team in San Antonio over the next three years.

• Fundraising goals :

\$8,400 to build and furnish Language Center

\$2,000 for solar power and computers for Center

\$2,750 for salaries for community collaborators

~ PC laptop computer donations are welcome – please contact lev@cabeceras.org ~

Broadening our network of supporters

With each year since its founding in 1996, Cabeceras has broadened its scope of activities as we meet new people and establish relationships with new communities in the Amazon Basin. At present, Cabeceras has the opportunity to do far more work than our organization can support at its current size. Therefore, we are actively seeking ways to expand our organization in order to be able to expand our community projects in coming years.

In addition to asking for your financial support, we ask you to think of five or ten people you know who might also wish to make a contribution to Cabeceras to fund our community-based projects. Please either share their names and addresses with Chris (chris@cabeceras.org) or share this information directly with them.

Remember. . .

Arranging a matching gift through your employer is a great way to make your contribution to Cabeceras Aid Project go much further.

Thank you for your continuing support!