

## NEW APPROACHES TO EDUCATION IN PUERTO PORVENIR

By Alejandra Bussalleu

Puerto Porvenir, a small remote Shawi community of 500 inhabitants situated off the Armanayacu stream, held a large meeting with 12 other Shawi communities, teachers, IHACC researchers and government representatives to discuss the creation of a local high school.

### ***What are opportunities for higher education in Puerto Porvenir and its surrounding communities?***

A few Shawi communities have a secondary school, although for youth from Puerto Porvenir and 11 surrounding communities, the only option for those who wish to continue their studies, is to travel to a regional center, such as in Yurimaguas, which is located 5-7 hours away by a combination of foot, boat and motorcar, depending on the season and weather conditions.



Community meeting on November 28<sup>th</sup> 2013, Puerto Porvenir

### ***What are some of the main concerns about access and quality of education in these communities?***

Many communities report similar problems: high levels of absenteeism, lack of teaching material, poor infrastructures, excessively late start of the school year, lack of student motivation, lack of a multicultural teaching lens and deficient bilingual education. Also, few women access school, and illiteracy is more prevalent in Shawi women than in men. Finally a common problem to all the Shawi communities is the underlying chronic malnutrition many children are facing which makes learning more challenging, and the poor quality and cultural acceptability of the national breakfast program which is offered in these communities.



Small focus groups to discuss some of the main issues around access to education

### ***A new model for a Shawi High School: Combining Traditional Knowledge and Technology***

The importance of teaching about Shawi traditional knowledge in the classroom setting alongside with new technology was unanimously considered as the foundation of the projected new high school. Community members considered that the high school should be a bilingual school focused on environmental stewardship, active learning, learning through projects and technical knowledge. IHACC Peru discussed the importance of learning through projects, and its involvement in the creation of a medicinal plant garden in Puerto Porvenir which could be used as a teaching tool in the future high school.



Teachers and community members work together to brainstorm on the projected new high school