

Interview with Anwar Choudhury

After a successful period in Peru, British Ambassador Anwar Choudhury leaves the country and gives his last interview to BRITÁNICO.

How do you feel after more than three years in Peru?

I'm extremely sad to be leaving. It's been a wonderful three and a half years. It's not just me who feels sad; my family feels the same, my wife and two children. It's been a busy three and a half years. We've done lots, but it's the friendship and the embrace that we've enjoyed from the Peruvian people that I'm going to miss the most.



What are the best memories that you take with you?

Oh! That's too hard, because there are so many...

The work we have done with BRITÁNICO has been fabulous. All these lovely students that I've met, at certificate ceremonies - I think up to a thousand. That was very good.

I think also working for Peruvian children, doing blood donation campaigns, giving solar energy to people in the mountains – those are highlights.

Just simply having so much fun with my staff here at the Embassy! All the interactions that we've had with Peruvian people and the government, the visits to Machu Picchu, Arequipa, Iquitos, all that is wonderful.

At the Queen's Birthday Party - now the biggest party in Lima - everybody comes together, all our friends, businesses, everybody. I really enjoy that.

I think I'll take away with me many, many memories. It's totally impossible and unfair to pick one, it would not do justice.

Do you feel more Peruvian now?

I think I am a Peruvian now. I think by heart I'll always be a Peruvian. I think that I came here as a British Ambassador and I'm going away as a Peruvian Ambassador.

What do you think about the role of Británico as a member of the British community in Peru?

You have a huge role in this country. BRITÁNICO is a great organisation. You have taught thousands and thousands of students English, you taught the country this language that gives it power. I have been saying, as everybody at BRITÁNICO knows, that English is a century power, a power for you to do more with life. You should make English your servant, so it serves you and it serves the people of Peru to do more things and to go to places that have not been possible before. English opens up the whole world, and BRITÁNICO is the power house. That's the phrase I remember saying to our children. I also think you do tremendously good work promoting British Culture. I see BRITÁNICO as the custodian of British Culture here in Peru. It's a very important job that you have and I think you are doing brilliantly.



I saw recently your British taxi, going around, and that's fabulous. I am aware that the campaign had an important impact. This is what I want BRITÁNICO to be: imaginative, always thinking outside the box, taking our relationship with this country to new levels.

All the British Community is very sad because you are leaving, you have been seen as a different leader, why do you think is that?

I think I've been very lucky to connect with the Peruvian people, to be able to have conversations, to be able to share with them honestly how I feel about Peru, how I see Peru and how they see the UK and life in general. I think that when we have that intimacy, when people can see in your eyes and in your body language that you like them, you love them, then it is returned. Perhaps I'm more outwardly emotional than other diplomats - I tend to say what I think and I'm not afraid of engaging. I'm also very optimistic about Peru. I always say it's a rising country, and I then explain why I think it's going to be an even greater country. You have the resources, you have the people, you are catching up on education and infrastructure, you are one of the leading countries in South America. So we can bring it all together and share cultures, vision and hopes. I think maybe that's what they saw in me, that desire to connect, to engage and share, that maybe wasn't as prominent in other people.

Under your leadership we have seen many achievements of the British Embassy in different fields. What advice can you give to our students who want to make real changes in our society?

The best advice I think I can give is be good leaders: no matter what you do, be good leaders. Whether you are becoming a teacher, a politician, a businessman, try



and lead your sector. Whatever job that you do, do it to the best of your ability. That means certain competences. Be great at communication; have courage when things go wrong; have the curiosity to carry on learning; have humility. Take all of that, to a job that you do, and make the best contribution you can. You can't change the world but you can change at least a little bit of the world, and if you do your best that little bit will inspire other people. That's leadership.

The UK is one of the best destinations to study. What opportunities do you think BRITANICO students have in the UK?



Well, you are all welcome to study in the UK. I hope you will do that. The UK not only has the best high-quality degrees, universally recognised across the world, it is also cheaper than many destinations, so you get a world-class degree and you spend less. Also the whole world comes to the UK, so you get to meet the world, not just the British, but the world. So please do go to the UK!

We also have scholarships, like Chevening. We used to have only two masters scholarships in

Peru – this year we will award twenty! We will take it further, so apply for those as well. Individual universities also offer scholarships. I know many more people that are now going to the UK anyway, which is great, but before you decide, go there for a summer school for few weeks. Many students from Peru are doing that, to see what university they would want to go to, and take a programme. Education is important, quality education is even more important. It's going to be a competitive world and you need to make sure you have a degree that is recognised by everybody, anywhere. If you can do it in the English language, that will give you an extra advantage. So, take the advantage.

FAVORITE PLACE IN LIMA

Barranco

FAVORITE PROVINCE

Arequipa

PERUVIAN DISH

Arroz con Pato

FOOTBALL OR CRICKET

Cricket

FAVOURITE BOOK

A suitable boy by Vikram Seth

A SONG YOU CAN SING

A Bengali song. Why increase your love if you have to leave

FAVORITE PLACE IN LONDON

The Shard

A WOMAN YOU ADMIRE

Malala

SCORE FOR SCOTLAND vs PERU

2 -1 to Peru

HOBBIES

Bridge, Cricket, reading, time with friends.

