

## Project Update: March 2018

This project has as its main mission to implement six lead-by-local conservation campaigns at six coastal communities of the Guatemalan Caribbean, nurturing community members with the skills and abilities to plan and execute their own campaigns towards nature during this project and in the future. During the project, different training workshops and actions towards nature will be motivated within participants. Besides the workshops sponsored by The Rufford Foundation, a specific programme about plastic pollution will be held with the help of the European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA), through another project that aims to reduce single-use plastic pollution in the same communities.

During March 2018, the six coastal communities of the protected area of Punta de Manabique that are participating in the project, were trained about the seed bombs methodology and how use it as a reforestation method. Furthermore, students and teachers learnt about natural forests vs. human-made forest, their differences and benefits.



Children of San Francisco del Mar at the seed-bombs-method workshop

The workshop had a special focus on endemic species of trees that have been cut and threatened due to community use and or the advance of agriculture and livestock fields. Some of the benefits that were taught are: medicinal properties, cultural and religious benefits, associated plants and animals that depend on them, soil improvement, and water cycle support.

A special guest was invited. She taught children about composting and how to create compost with their organic waste. Compost can create great soil, which is also used as one of the main materials for the seed bombs mix (clay and seeds are the other two).



Children at El Quetzalito creating their compost box.

A practice of the seed bomb creation was made with children, where they learnt how to create the mix of clay, soil and seeds, as well as all the precautions they must have in order to guarantee that seeds are going to be viable during reforestation. This seed bombs will be used at the tree planting campaign that will be held later this year, where 1,000 trees are going to be planted for each community we're training.

One of the main problems this area is facing, is the fact that agriculture and livestock fields have been increasing their land extension. Now, people don't have any lands where trees can be planted. This is the reason why we have decided to do the plant at the neighbouring protected area of Serro San Gil, where there are people who patrol the area and take care of the trees. Furthermore, this is the water supply area for these communities, and it will be beneficial for all of them to have a controlled forest there.



Children of Punta de Manabique learn how to do seed bombs.

### **Advances on the plastic reduction community campaign**

The campaign #24000ecobricks that was presented to the communities that are participating, have been growing very fast. We have created different alliances that are helping the communities to collect their 24,000 ecobricks. Until now, the campaign has collected more than 13000 thousand ecobricks (this is more than 2 million plastic bags that are not going to get in the oceans or on the beaches).

Ecobricks will be used to build six classroom-like conservation centers for youth and children to plan their campaigns towards nature, as well as monuments that demonstrate that plastic debris can be used again while reducing its impact on the environment.

The project has caught the attention of other institutions such as the Municipality of Puerto Barrios, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Environment and other private institutions that are willing to help throughout the process, either with advertisement for more people to create be aware of the work we do, to create ecobricks, as donors for raw materials for the centers, or logistics facilitators.

Children are also learning about plastic pollution and marine debris, this with the help of other project that we are also implementing in the area. The project has as its aim to reduce 30% of plastic emissions at schools, which is attached with the ecobrick campaign.



Children playing the "Degradation rate game" (EOCA, project)