

Project Update: May 2018

This project has as its main mission to implement six led-by-local conservation campaigns at coastal communities of the Guatemalan Caribbean, nurturing community members with the skills and abilities to plan and execute their own campaigns towards nature. This programme has different training workshops which lead to actions that motivate participants to take care of the environment.

Besides the workshops sponsored by The Rufford Foundation, a specific programme about plastic pollution is being held with the financial support of the European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA), which aims at reducing 30% of the single-use plastic emissions in the same communities we are working this project at.

This month concluded with a great achievement!



Figure 1. 24 thousand ecobricks were made and collected through the community service campaign led by teachers and students.

As part of the plastic reduction campaigns, the initiative #24MiiEcoladrillos (24 thousand ecobricks) reached its goal. It was created at the beginning of the programme in February 2018 with the help of the environmental educators who were trained last year. Because this project aims at empowering teachers and students, they were the main stakeholders and actors of this initiative.

After launching the event, they planned their actions and visited other schools in Izabal. They taught other schools about plastic pollution and its impacts to the environment, especially the oceans. Afterwards, they presented the campaign and asked the students to do ecobricks for the buildings: classroom-like conservation centers that are going to be built in the communities where we are working at. Despite the fact that 24 thousand seemed impossible, a community service campaign worked perfect.



Figure 2. The eco-brick campaign was also published in Prensa Libre, the most popular newspaper in Guatemala.

First, some of the teachers created posts and graphic designs for social media. These materials reached more than 10,000 people and attracted the attention of 13 social media accounts (conservationists in Guatemala) who constantly shared posts about the initiative. That caught the attention of the media, and it was published in two local news at Puerto Barrios (Izabal) and two nationally distributed newspapers.



Figure 3. Wearing white: Jaqueline Morales and Feve Cabnal (both from last year's program) receiving ecobricks from students at Universidad Rural in Livingston, Izabal.

Moreover, 20 communities in different parts of Guatemala and more than 30 schools with an average of 300 hundred students actively participated creating the bricks.



Figure 4. Students from high school checking the ecobricks in Puerto Barrios, Izabal.

Once the ecobricks were collected, students checked them in order to verify if the bricks were correctly made or if there were some that needed to be refilled or thrown away (p.s. there were some ecobricks that contained degraded waste such as food, mud and even littler alive insects inside. To protect the students' integrity, we decided not to fix those ones).

Next steps

In June 2018, the team will start the construction of the buildings. Children, parents and other locals are going to be invited to participate during this process. Furthermore, the Community Council for Development will be participating with us in each community.

Also, due to a national protest teachers didn't work for one month. Because of this, they are still planning their conservation campaigns for next month or July 2018.

Once the buildings are finished and campaigns are done, we will start with the reforestation campaign, where 6,000 trees will be planted in the protected area Cerro San Gil, which is an important underwater storage critical spot.