

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details

Your name	Ilena Zanella
Project title	Shark Route: learning about sharks and ours oceans.
RSG reference	29.05.09
Reporting period	July 2009-August 2010
Amount of grant	£5945
Your email address	ilena.zanella@gmail.com ; izanella@misiontiburon.org
Date of this report	September 16 th 2010

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Make students aware about the vulnerability of sharks and also give them basic knowledge on marine ecosystems and improve conscience and respect to every form of life			X	During the activities we informed more than 500 students of different elementary schools of fishing communities among the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica. We worked with small schools where students are children of fishermen that use to catch sharks during their daily work.
Visit 10 educational centres located in small fishing communities of the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, where the principal economic activity is the fishery.			X	We visited 11 elementary schools of the following fishing communities: Playa Blanca de Paquera, Puntarenas Bajos Negros, Puntarenas Playa Cuajiniquil, Guanacaste Playa Hermosa, Guanacaste Playa del Coco, Guanacaste Playa Panamá, Guanacaste Cabuya, Guanacaste Puntarenas, Puntarenas Sándalo, Puntarenas Punta Banco, Puntarenas Damas, Quepos, Puntarenas

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The main difficulty we have encountered along the project was the schools coordination. When we planned the project we had not considered the school holidays (period of vacations); in fact during the months of December, January, February and July we delayed a little the project. For future activities we definitely should consider these holidays, particularly December, January and February, and during these months we should plan only the preparation of educational materials such as brochures, posters, stickers, etc.

Also, in an occasion we found a bit of skepticism from the teachers, because they were concerned about the type of message we conveyed to children. Teachers believed that the initiative was to show students the negative impact caused by the fishing on marine resources, showing fishermen (parents of the students) as marine life murderers. In order to clarify any doubts, we show teachers the material (posters, videos) that we would expose to the children. In this way we teach them that our goal was to raise awareness of the vulnerability of sharks and rather inform students how humans (including fishermen) can help these species highly threatened not only by overfishing but also by the pollution and habitat loss.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

1. We teach to students and teachers that sharks are very special fish: in fact cartilaginous fish have biological characteristics that turn them more vulnerable to overfishing than bony fish (tunas, snappers, groupers, billfish, etc.). Sharks are top predators of the oceans, have slow growth and low natural mortality rate. Due their internal fertilization (not external as bony fish) sharks produce a low number of pups and their gestation period is very long. As consequence, sharks catch rate cannot be the same as for the bony fish.
2. We foster a change of view on sharks, they are not man eater's creatures, but they actually are highly vulnerable animals. I think that our mascot, smiley and funny, helped to create some sympathy for sharks. During the activities, we also try to change the fear that children feel toward sharks, into respect and admiration. We explained to them, that that when we enter to the sea, we entered to sharks home, and we have to do it with caution, respecting the marine life that lives there. We also explained to children on the evolution of sharks and their role in the world: the sharks are ancient creatures, inhabit our planet long before the dinosaurs, which is why we have to respect and protect them, as humans care for the older people.
3. At the end of each activity, we explained to children the greatest threats that sharks have (overfishing, pollution and habitat destruction) and we exposed how they can help to save sharks during their daily lives. For example, emphasise the importance of keeping our beaches and river clean, because when we are polluting the bays and shores, we are also polluting the nursery areas of many sharks and we are increasing mortality of sharks' juveniles. Another example of help is transmit the information received during the activity to friends and family, and suggesting to their parents release the sharks when they are captured alive

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

The Shark Route was well received by communities; we had several volunteers (members of different communities) that helped us during the activities. Teachers and students' families were enthusiastic about the project, since children not only learned but also had fun; they spent special days that we believe will stay in their memories.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, for our organisation this project is a priority because we strongly believe that the basis for the change in the generations is the education: students are the future fishermen and management resources, thus we are indirectly encouraging a generation of more responsible fishing of marine resources and the environment in general. We are convinced that this project has been very successful and has been well received by communities and at the same time, we know that there are other schools who are very interested in receiving this initiative. In order to continue the project, we will send two proposals for funding (\$ 10,000); we will sell T-shirts and stickers (\$ 1,500). Also, we would like to involve the coastal tourism sector to get accommodations and other expenses for future activities (\$ 2,500).

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

We are planning to make a brochure about the project and we want to make a video for distribution among organisations and national media interesting on the project. In Costa Rica there are very few

initiatives aimed toward marine education, so we think that this video will be well received from the media. Also we are sharing our educational experience in our web page (www.misiontiburon.org) and in our Facebook, Mision Tiburon Costa Rica.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

We planned 12 months for this project and I believe that we comply with the provisions. However, I believe that if we had planned the project better, looking over the holidays, we could finish this initiative about 2 months ago.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Exchange rate: 1 £ = 694.5 colones

Item	Budgeted Amount (£)	Actual Amount (£)	Difference (£)	Comments
4 Banners design	360	360	0	
4 Banners printings	360	360	0	
Mascot design	215	215	0	
Mascot elaboration	215	700	485	For the mascot elaboration, we decided to invest more resources to make it a unique and resistant one. Our idea is to continue using it during the extension project that we hope to get.
Informative brochures design	285	285	0	
Informative brochures elaboration	430	430	0	
T-Shirt elaboration	715	715	0	
Travels to the communities	1075	1075	0	
Snacks for students	1075	1500	425	We invest a bit more in the snacks because we don't consider in the budget the teachers and the community members who attended to the activities
Games materials	1000	575	425	We invest less resources because we used reusable materials for the activities
Photographic camera	215	215	0	
Total	5945	6430	1335	

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

I believe that this initiative has been very successful and has been a great experience for me that definitely I would like to expand. In this way, the next step will be to seek more funds for this project and try to involve more fishing communities in shark conservation. I think that

environmental education projects have to go hand in hand with all research and conservation initiatives. Therefore, I look forward to working with both: with students in marine education projects, and with their parents (fishermen) in shark conservation and management projects.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, the RSGF logo was used on informational materials such as posters, brochures, t-shirt that was distributed in the fishing communities during the activities. In addition, RSGF logo is located on the website of our organization (www.misiontiburon.org) and we will include it in the video that we will make about the project.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank RSGF because Shark Route it was my first project and the first project of Mission Tiburon, our new organization. So it was very important for my professional life, because REGF has encouraged me to follow my goals and I hope this is the first of many projects carried out by Mision Tiburon. As I mentioned above, it has been a great experience for me, very enriching. My professional base is research marine biologist, but work with children has been very rewarding, and I hope to continue doing it in the future, and balancing research and education. Thanks!