

The Formation of Young Conservationists at the Guapi-Assu Conservation Centre, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

II Report for the Rufford Foundation

The Formation of Young Conservationists at the Guapi-Assu Conservation Centre is developed in the Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu REGUA, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil with support of The Rufford Foundation and The Brazilian Atlantic Rain Forest Trust BART. REGUA develops activities in 5 different fields such as:

- Patrolling 5.700 hectares of forested areas with the support of 7 Park Rangers
- Reforestation and Recuperation of a Wetland Area
- Tourism in the Villa Sao Jose
- Environmental Education in the Guapi Assu Conservation Centre
- Research on *Crax blumenbachii* Reintroduction and Ornithology Inventory

Within the field of Environmental Education the project Formation of Young Conservationists aims to form knowledge, values and practices for the conservation of Mata Atlântica within a group of youngsters that live in the adjacent communities of REGUA.

In August we implemented 50% of the project or 14 out of the 28 workshops planned for 2006.

Most lesson material to support the coordination work was found in REGUA's library as follows.



Support material for the workshops

With support of the Rufford Foundation the young conservationists received 20 sets of school material including 20 backpacks and 20 magnifying glasses.



Backpacks granted by the Rufford Foundation

Also with support of the Rufford Foundation the young conservationists received 3 books: The Municipality of Cachoeiras de Macacu History and Geography, Threatened Fauna of Brazil and Atlas of Brazil. Other material bought was 5 sets of a game produced by the National Institute of Geography and Statistics to introduce youngsters into Brazil's profile.



Lesson material granted to the young conservationists by the Rufford Foundation

In summary follows the activities developed and the main topics approached during the 14 workshops implemented:

2. Environmental Educator selection procedure

Out of 9 candidates Andre Luiz was selected to become the Environmental Educator for the Formation of Young Conservationists and School Visit Programme. Andre Luiz is a Biologist, dedicated to the field of Environmental Education and lives in the Guapiaçu community.

3. Young Conservationists selection procedure

Out of 31 curious teenagers 15 young conservationists were selected, all students, 50% boys and 50% girls, within the age of 12 to 14, equally situated in tree adjacent communities. Other 5 youngsters that participated in the past years of the programme were invited and join this year activities, they are the veterans. A group of 20 pupils form the Young Conservationists 2006.

4. Introduction to REGUA

The young conservationists were introduced to REGUA's activities during 2 field trips with the guidance of REGUA's Park Rangers complemented with classes in the Guapi Assu Conservation Centre with support of a multimedia projector.



Left: Visit to *Crax blumenbachii* a reintroduction project in REGUA. Right: The researcher for the reintroduction of *Crax blumenbachii*, Cristine Steiner coaching the young conservationists visit

5. Introduction to Mata Atlantica theory and practice

The young conservationists were introduced to Mata Atlantica issues during 2 field trips with the guidance of REGUA's Park Rangers complemented with classes in the Guapi Assu Conservation Centre with support of a multimedia projector. It was basically approached topics such as physiognomies of Mata Atlantica, the clearing process trough time, levels of threat and current efforts for its conservation. During other field trips these topics are continuously discussed.

6. Ornithology field activity

The young conservationists were introduced to ornithology with the support of Birders Exchange that donated the binoculars, with Wetland Trust specialist' Phil Jones and Kevin and REGUA's local birders Leonardo and Adiley during 3 field trips.



Ornithology with Phil Jones and Kevin – Wetland Trust and Adiley - REGUA

7. Introduction to Internet

The young conservationists were introduced to internet with the support of the Rufford Foundation during 6 hours in the local school of information technology. This topic was approached as a mean to gather information for school homework, for courses and jobs opportunities.

8. Diagnostics of two rivers: the Guapi Assu and Estreito

The veterans (5) participated in a capacity building course for teachers about conservation of Mata Atlantica and elaboration of project proposals. The veterans fully enjoyed the course and produced a project proposal with the involvement of the other young conservationists (15). The project aims to develop tree activities:

- To identify the problems of the rivers that pass trough their communities; the Guapi Assu and the Estreito Rivers.
- To apply a questionnaire with the communities of Estreito, Matumbo e Guapi Assu to investigate the community perception about the rivers situation
- To present the findings in two community meetings one at the Guapi Assu School and the other at the Matumbo School.



Field trip to investigate the situation of the Guapi Assu and Estreito Rivers



Field trip to investigate the situation of the Guapi Assu and Estreito Rivers

9. Support the Reforestation Project

The young conservationists participated in the Reforestation Project working in the nursery. The Reforestation Project cycle was approached and it is composed of the following stages;

- a) Identification of trees and its seeds in REGUA's forested areas
- b) Collection and storage of seeds
- c) Preparation of soil in REGUA's nursery
- d) Germination of the seeds in REGUA's nursery
- e) Preparation of the fields
- f) Transfer the plant to the field and maintenance
- g) Codification of the plant into the data set
- h) Monitoring the data set

The young conservationists will support further the Reforestation Project by doing topics a, b and f.



Workshop in REGUAs nursery

10. Medium term evaluation theory and practice

As it was planned in the project proposal a medium term evaluation was applied. There were individual interviews to consider any difficulty as well as a review of the topics approached followed

by written exam and group presentation. Out of the 20 young conservationists 3 youngsters left and 3 new youngsters have been integrated into the group after a written exam and interview.



Left: Medium term evaluation study group. Right: Medium term evaluation group presentation