

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	Maria Carolina Monterrosa
Project title	Proyecto Help Colombia – Community based sea turtle conservation program in the Colombian Caribbean.
RSG reference	1023-C
Reporting period	September 2011-September 2012
Amount of grant	£24819
Your email address	monterrosac@gmail.com
Date of this report	November 24 th 2012

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
Protection of nests and females (March-October 2011; March-June 2012)			X	The protection of the nest and females was a success. 75% of the nests were protected and all the hatchlings born were released with the participation of the community members and fishermen commitment.
Assisting fishing activity (12 months after receiving the grant)			X	The biggest success of this objective was to help the leader fisherman, to obtain his boat in order to increase his income all year around independently from the turtles. His commitment with the programme is now helping to educate fishermen from other beaches, opening a great opportunity for the expansion of the conservation area.
Educational programme (Since March until 12 months after receive the grant)			X	The knowledge and environmental friendly attitude of the community children is a visible success of these three years working in the area. Their commitment with the conservation and their new social networking is a big joy for the team.
Sale of alternative activity products	X			The results obtained in this matter are not the expected because of the low commitment of the young women. Despite the effort of the Foundation team to give them a nice place to work and all the materials they need to produce the stuff to sell, they were not constant neither committed to us, making difficult the commercialisation of the paper products. A new job possibility in the area, coming from a tourism facility, made their interest decrease, becoming a nice activity of their leisure. The products made in that time, were sold in the lodging of the community, but even that was reason to convince them of work consistently in the paper office. The young girls loved the office and spend part of their free time improving the technique in order to improve the products to be sold.

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

The most important difficulty within the alternative activities was the low interest showed by the women in the paper office. A new tourism facility in the area, gave them a new source of income and their interest decreased. The Foundation tried to bring more teenagers who can not to work because of their age, and teach them the new techniques and all the facilities they have with this activity. There were 15 new girls and some boys participating, and making the stuff to sell to the tourists.

The other difficulty during this year was a hard social situation in the adjacent area of Mendihuaca Beach. Since the first's days on June until the middle of July, was not possible to patrol the beach at night due to the security situation. The solution, was to patrol the beach at sunrise, to continue registering the turtle activity but during these days, was not possible the tag of the nesting females.

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

1. **The consolidation of the fishermen participation** in the conservation issue making possible the protection of all the hatchlings born in the beach and tag and recapture the nesting females. Both, aspects really important in the biological objectives of generate information about the nesting population in the area.

2. **The purchase of the boat for the leader fisherman.** For him, be the owner of the boat means to have two parts of the profit each day of fishing. His income increases and his commitment with the turtles grow each day, because he said the turtles have gave him his boat, and that was something he always wanted. His satisfaction with the fishing and the feeling of be a conservation leader, have been decisive in his awareness of other fishermen in the area, opening the possibility of extend the impact area of the protection activities in the coming nesting season.

3. **The participation of the older children in the beach conservation activities** was one of the biggest challenges in the beginning of this project. After their participation in the turtle afternoon, they felt motivated to go to the beach and share with Sabas his activity during the night, having the opportunity of see a nesting female, help Sabas to tag and measure it and finally, be able to see the emergency of the hatchlings.

These teenagers are the first "turtle guides" of the programme, and soon they will be ready to go with tourists and other children to teach about sea turtle conservation.

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

There are two groups beneficiated with the project: the fishermen committee and the San Rafael's children and young women. For San Rafael community the Foundation has become a meeting place where the children found a refuge to play, learn and share with other children. The Foundation team has become a part of the community and that let us to realise the children necessities and try to help them to solve in some way. In the afternoons, the children arrive to the Foundation looking for some help with their school homework and the parents feel confident and grateful with this help.

The fisherman committee has been beneficiated since the beginning with the improvement of their fishing gear and living conditions, and those who joint the conservation activities as part of their daily routine, this year were really glad with the acquisition of the fishing boat for leader fisherman.

They have realised the status that be part of the programme gave them among the community and the children’s recognition is one of the most important benefits they have received.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. This is the third year of community based conservation, and the benefits of the model are evident. The awareness among the young people and their attitude with the environment and the participation of the fishermen committee allowing us to obtain the biological results we have got. These years of work, have gave us important elements to show in different scenarios, like schools, companies, local and national authorities and universities, looking for financial assistance from national industries to maintain the project and consolidate it.

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

The final document is our principal tool of socialization of the results. It will be sent to the national involved actors like NGOs, authorities, universities. The communities impacted by the project, were participated of the final presentation in order to show them the activities and the results, inviting them to join us the next year. The Foundation researchers will participate in national symposia and meetings about conservation or marine science to show the results of the project. In November, we were invited to a national meeting convened by the Ministry of Environment, with the objective of consolidate the actual information and define national objective and necessities with the marine turtles. This invitation was recognition to the Foundation work the last 5 years.

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

The project was executed from September 2011 to August 2012. The length of the projects was the anticipated in the proposal.

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. Local exchange used: £1= 2700 COP

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Subsistence Payments	£8464	£8464	£0	The project team was established as thought since the beginning of the project and the budgeted money was fully executed.
Equipment	£1197	£1197	£0	The proposed equipment was purchased and the amount required was fully executed.
Consumables	£4350	£3750	£600	The campsite improvement was not justified this year due to the low number of fishermen in it, so, this money was used for strengthen the acquisition of furniture and long-time elements for the children within the environmental education programme.

Travel/ Transport	£2152	£2352	£200	£200 saved from the turtle office was used for an air ticket to Cali, in order to assist a National Sea Turtle Conservation Meeting.
Sustainable Activities	£7100	£7500	£400	The money saved from the campsite improvement (£600) was invested in elements and furniture for the paper office and turtle shop. £200 was not invested in the turtle shop because many things from the paper office were used for it.
Dissemination	£1556	£1556		
Total	24819	24819		

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

This year was evident that the financial sustainability of the project cannot depend of the women participation. Instead, we have been thinking about the possibility of have a place to sell sea turtle allusive elements, and sea animals conservation stuff in general. The incomes from this store, will help us to obtain money for maintain the project without depend of the women and so, it will let them see, how sea turtle products are really appreciate among people, and may be, will improve their participation in the alternative activities.

The other important thing is to find national sponsors, in order to have local participation and the possibility of make permanent the social project, benefiting the youngest of the community and so, changing the future of the turtle's nests and females.

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 in every project presentation in the community or turtles meeting with authorities or ONG's and was used in the Project Presentation folders that have been used in order to get national funding.

11. Any other comments?

This has been a long way working with RSG financial help, and the results let us to show to the national conservation community a new model that is being now recognized by the authorities and other interested institutions. To get national support is the biggest challenger now, in order to be able to continue our project.