

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. 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. 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	Ashlie Gaos
Project title	The ComunicArte Project (CAP)
RSG reference	15.01.08
Reporting period	March – October 2008
Amount of grant	3,880.00 pounds sterling
Your email address	ashliegaos@tortugamarina.org or ashliegaos@yahoo.com
Date of this report	October 6, 2008

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

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Hand-painted roadside billboards depicting life cycle of olive ridley sea turtle			X	About 20 community members participated in this project over the course of 3 weeks. Men, women and children of various segments of the community (school, yoga farm, PRETOMA volunteers, tourists, locals and CAP) contributed to drawing, painting and installing these billboards that are meant to educate the viewer about sea turtles of the area.
Implement workshops on sustainable living – garden project		X		A new organic 'art garden' project was started in July. Lessons were taught with the support of the local school teacher about composting, organic foods, reducing garbage production by growing local, fresh, unpackaged food. In addition, the school cafeteria will use food grown in the garden. In the future, CAP would like to address other areas of sustainable living practices.
Trash awareness campaign and puppet show			X	This project was a huge success, drawing people in from various parts of the community. Trash was collected and given to CAP and the local school children created puppets and costumes from the trash. Puppets were used in the Puppet Theater at the Earth & Art festival depicting the life cycle of the sea turtle and the dangers they face over the course of their lives. The projects and dialogue led to a group of men in the community starting a monthly trash clean-up on the beach and a new recycling bin program in town.
Story telling and bookmaking			X	The final art exhibit featured beautiful, hand-made and illustrated books by students describing the lives of sea turtles.
Public environmental murals			X	Two public murals were completed with the collaboration of local teens and youth. One depicts the jungle and wildlife of the Punta Banco region. The other illustrates soil, agriculture and how our use of the land can directly affect

				our standard of living and the health of our ecosystem.
Creation and distribution of 'zine	X			This project did not come to fruition this year as artists and collaborators did not seem to gravitate towards it. Perhaps it was not an appropriate activity for such a rural environment.
Fundraising art projects to contribute to trash hauling and disposal		X		The women in Punta Banco became very involved in creating jewelry from beads, seeds, shells, bottle caps and other found objects to sell to tourists. Over the course of a one month period, approximately \$100 was earned toward trash disposal. This project has the potential to be very successful and of great value to the local women as a source of creativity and income. CAP would like to do much more of this type of project in the future.
Film documentation of project for public viewing and other promotional events			X	The raw footage was about 15 solid hours of video. This film is currently being edited by Robbyn Leonard and a copy will be distributed to anyone who is interested.

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

In the beginning of the project, people were skeptical about the work CAP was doing. They had little or no exposure to art and were somewhat intimidated by the term and by the new presence of the program. However, after CAP resident artists began working with the local school and organizing free, open-to-the-public workshops at the local market, more and more people began participating, sharing their ideas, expressing their gratitude and taking the work to higher levels.

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

I believe that the three most important outcomes of the project were 1) a heightened sense of community cohesion, 2) an increased level of concern regarding Punta Banco's environmental state, and 3) the inspirational influence that community art projects had on all participants.

In terms of a heightened sense of community cohesion, the CAP project pulled in members of all different parts of the community. We had a US primatologist working in the region collaborate with CAP artists to present a monkey conservation and puppet making lesson in the local school. Also, members of the nearby Yoga Farm and the PRETOMA turtle nesting volunteers worked in the school and participated in all the workshops offered. Local adults (both men and women) participated in the billboard painting, jewellery making, sewing and organic farm projects.

All the projects had an underlying theme that focused on the environment or caring for the environment and it was beautiful to see such a wide breadth of involvement. People who ordinarily



would not spend time working together suddenly got to know each other as a result of participating in the CAP workshops and events.

Usually it takes years, if not longer, to witness the changes that projects like CAP bring about in local perception and attitudes. However, I had a surprising opportunity to see first-hand some of the fruits of our labour while in Punta Banco. Towards the end of this year's project, one of the local men, Paulo, came up to one of the CAP artists and expressed his gratitude for our commitment to educating and activism around conservation and environmental stewardship. He said that he was so moved by seeing outsiders come into his community and devote their time and energy to these ends that he had begun a monthly committee for beach clean-up. The very next day, he arrived with 4 other men and a tractor pulling a cargo trailer and proceeded to spend 4 hours pulling layers of trash off the beach and loading it in the hot sun. Later that week several members of the community sorted the trash into garbage and recyclable materials and a local resident of Punta Banco donated the funds to have the trash hauled away and disposed of. I cannot put into words how good that made us all feel.

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

I have already addressed this question in some detail above. But I would like to add a word about the sense of pride and accomplishment that participants feel by finishing an art project and sharing it with the community. Upon completion of the billboards and murals, I heard many community members proudly tell their friends and family what part they drew/wrote/painted. In addition, the students at the Punta Banco School were thrilled to see their art work beautifully displayed for the community to see at the Art & Earth Festival. I feel that the Puppet Theater that the school created and performed for the town during the Festival brought much of our work full circle, as it touched on conservation, sea turtles, poachers, the dangers of trash to wildlife, and our responsibility to care for the planet. People clapped wildly after the performance and the children were puffed up with pride when they took their bow in front of the set. By seeing others place importance on the local environment or natural resources, others began to see these things as assets as well. Especially local businesses that have a tendency to shirk their responsibilities toward maintaining a clean, trash-free community.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This is my life's work and I plan to continue it for many years as long as I can find the funding or create a source of financial income to allow these projects to be ongoing in multiple communities in Costa Rica.

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

I plan to schedule film showings upon completion of the documentary we made this year in addition to traveling art and photography exhibits, publishing a small book on environmental and community art, presenting at the NAEA (National Art Education Association) and promoting this educational outreach model to other conservation organizations.

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

The RSG was used beginning in March of 2008 and continues to be used as we speak, in October of 2008.

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.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Personnel Program Coordinator Assistant Educator Guest Speakers/Biologists	£753 £502 £251	£753 £502 £251	None	
Instructional Materials	£1,791	£1,172.81	£618.19	There were several reasons why we spent less than estimated. One reason was that film and projectors ended up not being needed. We had to go with digital prints and did not use slides or slide projectors at all. We also had several donations of digital cameras. Also, I was not able to acquire a laptop, as requested.
Food/Events Art & Earth Festival and Film showing	£163	£328.89	+£165.89	When we got a free documentary filmmaker to come on the trip and offer to make a film for us, we decided that it was important to put funds aside to show the film in one or more theaters. This is what caused the increased cost.
Marketing Costs	£240	£347.12	+£107.12	The website creation is more costly than as described in budget. As there was some extra funding, and we really need a website, the funds were allocated to this category.
Fundraising for Self-sustainability		£415.43	+415.43	Again, as there was a surplus due to less costly art supplies, we created a new category for expenditures. It became quite obvious that we needed to work toward sustainability. Therefore, we budgeted in projects that will bring in funds, such as the creation of postcards for sale, chocolate bar wrappers with proceeds towards project, and the purchase of more

				jewelry supplies for the women's group to make and sell for trash disposal.
TOTAL	£3,880	£3770.23		

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

I feel that it is crucial that we hire a local artist/activist to offer on-going art workshops and projects throughout the year in Punta Banco. As it stands now, we are able to offer the program for a few months out of the year. I know that by sustaining a presence, CAP is more likely to make an impact on the way people live and perceive of their environment. In addition, I would like to become more involved in the Punta Banco development committee so that the work we do is always tied into the interests and desires of the local residents. I would also like to develop more art projects and skills training for locals to create and market their own artefacts, both as a means for fundraising in order to implement more environmental projects and as a means for making money for their families. I am working on developing a relationship with the Universidad de Costa Rica to create internships or residencies for their environmental education and art students in Punta Banco in the hopes that local youth will build lasting relationships with them. Lastly, I would like to develop a green building (sustainable materials and methods) program in the more distant future, offering workshops to locals and outsiders that highlight smart, long-term, affordable construction for various dwelling spaces that are suitable to very hot, tropical climates.

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, RSG was publicized during our Earth & Art Festival in August. The RSG logo will be featured on our website, in our documentary and in all other promotional or educational events, such as the planned photo exhibit in San Francisco, California and the documentary inauguration scheduled for early next year.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to thank RSG for helping make this wonderful project happen. I saw many people moved and changed for the better throughout the development of the CAP program and feel grateful to have gotten the chance to get it off the ground after so many years of planning.